

PUTIN STRIKES



**Game Design
by
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Description

This is a two-player game in which solitaire play can be easily ‘fudged,’ and in which one player (the “Russian player”) commands the Kremlin’s forces, and the other (the “Allied player”) commands a polyglot international coalition opposed to him (see 2.5). This isn’t a simulation of the “opaque (a.k.a. gray) war” techniques most recently used by the Russians in the Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Rather, it’s designed to facilitate the examination of the strategic possibilities (along with their operational undertones) inherent in the larger situation. That is, it models the parameters of possibilities if Putin decides to go all out – taking

advantage of the democratic West’s increasing befuddlement by the *jihad* – to make one quick blitzkrieg-like strike to grab Russia’s western “Near Abroad.”

1.2 Scale

Each turn of play equals half a week of ‘real time.’ Each hexagon on the map represents 20 miles (32.5 km) from side to opposite side.

1.3 Game System in General

I’ve dubbed the system I’ve used in this design the “Big And Dumb Armies Simulation System (BADASS). It’s based around the central idea large First World armies almost always begin major wars well trained and fully equipped. Unfortunately for those in their frontline units, both the training and equipment usually only

make them ready for the previous war, not the one they're about to fight. Beyond that, the initial period of such wars is characterized by only a partially abandoned peacetime psychology among the officers and enlisted. That is, no one as yet appreciates what it means operatively to be in an all-out war. All that comes together to give overall performance a high-risk, volatile and fragile quality: no one as yet knows what's actually possible or wise to try to accomplish. Seemingly powerful units therefore easily become "disrupted" – especially as gauged in relation to similar units' performances later, after everyone's been thoroughly schooled in the art of war as it exists in the present. The system therefore doesn't play – when looked at on a step by step basis – in a way common to operational-level simulations. The whole thing has a *Go* like quality to it. That commander will succeed best who – rather than reacting to or launching operations opportunistically one at a time – plans his campaign and then campaigns on that plan. Of course, it's also true "no plan survives first contact with the enemy." So, even as you plan, you must do so while leaving within your scheme of operation at least some capacity for opportunism. Strategy is not simple; it is complex.

1.4 More Particularly

In this design I also wanted to adapt the system to explore the philosophic backlash that seems to be building throughout First World militaries in regard to the increasing organizational dominance of brigades over divisions. That is, even as the former have increasingly come to be the unit-of-choice at both operational and strategic levels, there's growing concern in the literature that brigades may be too large to employ the dexterity needed in counterinsurgency operations while also being too small to hold up for long in any force-on-force shootouts between First World opponents. Hence the contrasting characteristics generated by the differences in size between brigades and divisions are highlighted.

Old Hands Note. *No ZOC and no supply rules as such. The whole thing represents only the first month of a superbly well supplied campaign by First World armies all fighting on or near their home turfs (presumably) in the summertime. So the supply difficulties inherent in that kind of situation are built into the movement, combat, disruption and replacement rules.*

2.0 COMPONENTS

2.1 Description

The components to a complete game of *Putin Strikes (PS)* include these rules, the mapsheet and a sheet of 228 die-cut counters (also called "units" and "unit counters"). Players need to provide themselves with one or more standard (six-sided) dice to resolve probabilistic events that occur during play.

2.2 The Game Map

The Game Map displays the militarily significant terrain found across the western edge of Russia and its immediately adjacent border lands when portrayed at this scale. A hexagonal ("hex") grid is printed over it to regulate unit placement and movement similar to the way squares are used in *Chess* and *Checkers*. A unit is always in only one hex at any one instant. Each hex contains natural and/

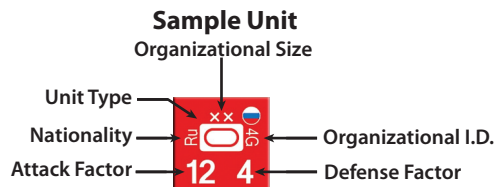
or manmade terrain features that may affect movement and combat. The map's terrain representations have been altered slightly from their exact real-world configurations in order to make them conform to the hex-grid. The terrain relationships from hex to hex are, however, accurate to the degree necessary to present players with the same space/time dilemmas that would be faced by their real-world counterparts if this war were actually waged. Each hex on the map has a unique four-digit number printed in it. They're provided to help you find specific locations referred to in the rules. For example, the city of Bryansk is in hex 3023. Those grid numbers also allow you to record unit positions if a match has to be interrupted and taken down before it can be completed.

2.3 Counters

Most of the counters in the game represent combat units, while others are provided as memory aids and informational markers. Carefully punch out the counters. Trimming the "dog ears" from their corners with a fingernail clipper greatly facilitates handling and stacking during play and enhances their appearance. Each combat unit-counter shows several types of information: side, type, attack strength, defense strength and organizational identification. The orders of battle are drawn from the most up-to-date open-source materials available on these armies.

2.4 Sample Units

A typical division is pictured immediately below. It has an attack strength (or "attack factor" or "A.F.") of "12" and a defense strength (or "defense factor" or "D.F.") of "9." Note that numeric data are only printed on one side of each of the counters. The significance of that is explained in section 10.0.



2.5 Sides

Each unit's side and nationality is shown by its color scheme and a two-letter abbreviation. All Russian (Ru) units are printed white on red; Allied units are printed as follows (with the commonality that none of them have any shade of red as their background color).

Allied Abbreviations & Color Schemes

NATO Multinational: black on white

Belarus (Be): black on orange

Czech Republic (Cz): black on yellow

Estonia (Es): black on leaf-green

Finland (Fn): blue on white

Germany (Ge): white on black

Hungary (Hu): black on tan



Latvia (La): black on brown

Lithuania (Li): black on gray

Moldova (Md): white on green

Poland (Po): red on white

Slovakia (Sl): black on olive drab

Sweden (Sw): yellow on dark blue

Ukraine (Uk): black on sky blue



2.6 Unit Types

Air Assault*

Armored Cavalry

Clandestine Operations

Infantry Army Headquarters Support

Static Defense Force

Mechanized (Infantry) or Combined Arms

Motorized Mountain Infantry

Tank



**This one symbol is used to ease the visual identification of what would otherwise be several sub-types of elite special operations units that all share certain characteristics. See 3.6 and section 9.0 for details.*

2.7 Unit Organizational Sizes & Identity Abbreviations.

Unit Sizes*

XXXX – army headquarters

XX – division

X – brigade

II – battalion

**If a unit's size symbol is beneath a bracket, that means it's an ad hoc formation put together just for this campaign rather than being a regular unit that's normally maintained in its nation's armed forces.*

Russian Unit Abbreviations

A – Airborne

C – Commando

G – Guards

KSDD – Kaliningrad Special Defense District

M – Marine

OGT – Operational Group Transdnistria

S – Spetznaz

Vos – Vostok

Allied Unit Abbreviations

AB – Airborne

AM – Airmobile

Arm – Armored

IW – Iron Wolf

KNG – Kurzeme National Guard

LNG – Latgale National Guard

NDVF – National Defense Volunteer Force

Por – Pori

R – Rifles

RD – Rapid Deployment

RG – Rogachev Guards

RNG – Riga National Guard

S – Belarus Spetznaz

SO – Special Operations

T – Territorial

V-F – Very High Readiness Joint Task Force

VNG – Vidzeme National Guard

ZNG – Zemgale National Guard

2.8 Static City Garrisons & the Static KSDD Garrison Unit

The city garrison/control markers represent agglomerations of the various constabulary and militia formations that would invariably play an important role in the urban combat of this war. With the single added exception of the Russian KSDD division-sized (8-8) “garrison division,” they’re the only static units in the game. They never move from their hexes of placement, nor do they ever attack (whereas the KSDD 8-8 can attack). At the same time, however, the city garrisons are never eliminated from play (the KSDD may be eliminated), merely switching sides (shown by flipping over their counters) each time their cities change hands due to combat. See 10.3 for more details.



2.9 No Printed Movement Factors

Unlike most wargames, the “movement factors” (or “M.F.”) of the units aren’t printed on the counters. All the non-static units in the game have a common MF of six. See sections 8.0 and 9.0 for more details.

2.10 Marker Counters

The following counters (a.k.a. “markers” and “chits”) are included in the game as informational and memory aids. Their functions are explained in specific sections of the rules that follow.

Russian Baranovichi Base Marker (see 3.3)

Turn Marker (see section 5.0)

Russian Army-Level Support Marker (see 10.17)

Airpower Marker (see section 11.0)

Atomic Blast Markers (see section 13.8)



3.0 SET UP & HEX CONTROL

3.1 Sides

First the players should decide between themselves who will control which side, and then sort all the units in the counter-mix based on that decision. The Russian (Ru) player controls all that nation’s

units, while the Allied player controls all the non-Russian units. Also note that stacking rules are fully in effect for both sides during set up (see section 6.0).

3.2 City Control/Garrison Markers

With the sides chosen, both players should cooperatively set up a control/garrison marker (see 2.8) in every city hex on the map. At the start of play the Russian player controls all the city hexes located in “Russia proper” (everything generally east of the border line running from 2502/2601 to 3334/3335), plus Donetsk (3241), Tiraspol (1239) and Kaliningrad (0509). The Allies control all the other city hexes on the map.

3.3 Russian Belarus Base

Though it’s not shown on the map as such, the Belorussian town of Baranovich is in hex 1318. Place the Russian base marker in that hex (see 2.10). Other than as given below in rule 3.6, the base has no values of its own; it’s merely included as a mnemonic for the Russian player. Remove it after set up has been entirely completed.

3.4 Russian First

The Russian player should first set aside, within easy reach, all 12 of his airpower markers. He then starts and completes his ground force set up before the Allied player begins to set up that other side’s ground units.

Design Note. *The idea behind the rule above is the Russians’ preparations for this campaign would require – at the least – several weeks of massive troop and logistical movements. Those preparations would of necessity be so extensive, it seems doubtful they could to any degree be kept hidden from the Western intelligence community. Of course, it’s also true maskirovka (strategic deception) has been a core ingredient in Soviet/Russian military art and craft for the past 100 years. Accordingly, based on your own appreciation of the situation, you should feel free to experiment with an Allies-first set up sequence, or even an alternating one-unit-at-a-time sequence (if you’ve got that degree of patience).*

3.5 Russian Main Force Set Up

The KSDD static unit (8-8) must be set up in Kaliningrad city (0509). The *Operational Group Transdnistria* (OGT) unit must be set up in any one hex of the Russian player’s choice in that region (1135 to 1240). The Russian player may set up to one full stack in Crimea (2145), though he’s not required to set up any units there. Similarly, he may, within normal stacking limits, set up in the five hexes of the Donetsk People’s Republic, though, again, he’s not required to set up any units there. The rest of the non-air-assault Russian units are set up anywhere in Russia proper (see 3.2 above). In further regard to all this, see the Design Note at the end of this section.

3.6 Russian Air Assault Set Up

The Russian player may decide, on a locale-by-locale basis, if he wants to use some of his air assault units to provide last minute reinforcements to his Belarus base and/or Transdnistria and/or the Kaliningrad Special Defense District (the whole district, not just the city). He should announce his decisions in that regard and then openly roll a die for each of the locales he’s chosen to reinforce in

that way. Make one such roll for each chosen locale. The formula is: the die roll result is halved and all remainders are rounded up, yielding a final result of one, two or three units. It’s not required the Russian player match his die roll in reinforcement units for each locale; he may send fewer units than his rolling allowed. With those numbers determined, the Russian player may choose the units to be sent from among his 16 air assault units and place them in their rolled for locales. Don’t distinguish between divisions and brigades in this instance; one air assault unit counts as “one unit” for this purpose no matter its organizational size. Units bound for Belarus may only set up in that specific base hex; units going to Transdnistria or the KSDD may set anywhere within those regions. The remaining air assault units are then set up as described above in 3.5 for the rest of the Russian main force. That completes the Russian set up.

3.7 Allied Set Up

After the Russian player has completed that side’s set up, the Allied player should begin his set up by first setting aside, within easy reach, all 18 of his airpower markers. The NATO V-F, German, Swedish, Finnish, Czech Republic, Slovakian and Hungarian units are also all temporarily set aside in that same way. Then all the units in the Allied order of battle belonging to those nations with territory on the map are set up anywhere inside their respective nations.

3.8 Allied Turn 1 Reinforcements

After completing step 3.7, the Allied player should openly roll a die and consult the his reinforcement table. The indicated reinforcement contingent should be sorted from the off-map pile created in 3.7 and placed readily at hand for entry into play during Turn 1’s first phase. (See sections 5.0 and 12.0 for more details.)

3.9 Hex Control

Hex Control is the term used to describe which side owns (“controls”) city hexes and the KSRL (see 4.7) at different times during

Set Up Note. *Early in 2016, just as we were getting ready to go to press with this project, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced they would, during the year, set up three new divisions, all of them to be based near the Ukrainian border. They declined to provide further details at that time, though they later gave one of the new units, a mechanized rifle division, the designation of 150. Accordingly, we’ve added that unit, along with three generic tank and two generic mechanized divisions to the counter-mix, with the still anonymous group identified with the letters A through E. The 150th and any two of the other divisions now become part of the Russian Main Force units set up in Russia Proper as described above in 3.5. The way the Russians have been doing this kind of thing, one already extant brigade is chosen to serve as the cadre for each new division being stood up, while the rest of the division is then filled out with new units. So, for example, to bring on a tank division, the Russian player must permanently remove one tank brigade from his starting force. Similarly, one mechanized brigade must go in order to bring on a mechanized division. Any mix of the 150th and two of the other new divisions is allowable, as decided by the Russian player and after making the appropriate brigade deductions*

play. Hex control is only important when considering those hexes. The control status of a hex changes the instant a unit of the other side is in it at the end of move or attack action. The control status of each hex may change any number of times during a game as units of the two sides enter and reenter them.

4.0 HOW TO WIN

4.1 In General

In general, the game is won and lost in one of three ways: by a final “victory point” (“V.P.”) reckoning made at the end of Turn 8, or by “sudden death” if the Russian VP total “zeroes out” or, again by “sudden death,” due to the eruption of a massive strategic nuclear exchange or the overthrow of the Putin regime (see section 13.0). Only the Russian player has a VP total.

4.2 Tracking VP

At the start of play the Russian player begins with 24 VP, which works out to two VP for each “Initially Russian-Controlled City Hex” on the map. (See the Terrain Key on the mapsheet.) Each time he gains control of a city hex exclusive of those 12 initially controlled city hexes, he gains a VP. Whenever he loses control of any city hex exclusive of those 12 initially controlled city hexes, he loses a VP. Whenever he loses control of one of his 12 initially controlled city hexes, he loses two VP. Whenever he regains control of one of his 12 initially controlled city hexes, he regains two VP. That adding and subtracting may go on any number of times, for the same and/or different city hexes, all through play. All VP changes go into effect instantly, and the overall VP score should be kept open track of, on a sheet of scratch paper, by one or both players.

4.3 Winning & Losing on VP

At the end of Turn 8, if the Russian player has 36 or more VP he’s declared to have won the game at that time. Alternatively, if the Russian player at that time has 35 or fewer VP, the Allied player is declared the winner. If, at any time, the Russian VP total goes to zero, play stops and the Allied player is declared to have won the game. No draws are possible.

4.4 Losing a Friendly City

When a friendly-controlled city is lost to enemy control, in addition to adjusting the Russian VP total, show that locale’s change of status by flipping over its control marker (see 2.10) to show the gaining side’s symbol. The control change also instantly generates a garrison force for the gaining side in that locale.

4.5 Strategic Nuclear Exchange & Regime Overthrow

Each time the Russian player launches a nuclear strike, he gambles he may lose the game at that moment. Any result other than strategic nuclear exchange or regime overthrow means play continues. See rule 13.8 for more details.

4.6 Allied St. Petersburg Victory

If the Allied player has simultaneous control of all three hexes of St. Petersburg, that prestige loss is again likely great enough to bring on the overthrow of the Putin regime. Accordingly, if that

condition pertains, for even just an instant, play stops and the Allied player is declared the victor.

4.7 Russian Geo-Strategic Victory

If, at the end of Turn 8, the Russian player has failed to win under the provisions of rule 4.3, he may still win irrespective of his VP total based on the criteria presented here. That is, he wins at that time if he controls all the hexes of the Kaliningrad Supply Rail Line (KSRL; see the Terrain Key), including its start and end points (Kaliningrad and Smolensk), as well all the cities in the three Baltic Republics, Russia proper, Transdnistria and the Donets People’s Republic.

Design Note. *In regard to the hex-by-hex control status of the KSRL, if you need a mnemonic aid, use coins or Bingo chips (or some of the many blank counters you probably have in your collection of other games) to designate Allied controlled hexes along its path.*

5.0 PLAYING & ENDING TURNS

5.1 Turns & Phases

Each match of PS lasts no more than eight turns. Each turn is divided into four major segments – called “phases” – as shown in the outline below. Each turn’s sequence is generally the same, with the single exception no replacements will arrive during Turn 1.

5.2 Turn Sequence Outline.

- Replacement & Reinforcement Phase
- Airpower Phase
- Alternating Actions Phase
- Administrative Phase

5.3 Replacement & Reinforcement Phases

See section 12.0 for details.

5.4 Airpower Phases

See section 11.0 for details.

5.5 Alternating Actions Phases (AAP)

The Russian player always executes the first action in every AAP. During every AAP each player executes one action of his choice, followed by the other player, alternating between the two until one player announces he will pass. When one player has passed, the other player is free to conduct another action. If that player decides to pass, that AAP is ended. If, however, he executes an action, the option to play passes back to the person who initially passed. That process may go on indefinitely, but once both players pass in immediate sequence, the AAP is over for that that turn.

5.6 Mutual Exhaustion

If neither side has any undisrupted (see 7.3 and 7.4) units left anywhere on the map, that will also suffice to end an AAP.

5.7 Number of Actions

Within the parameters described above and in the following sections, there’s no abstract limit on the number of actions the players may perform in each turn’s AAP. Within those strictures, any type

action may potentially be conducted any number of times, and in any order, during each AAP. See section 7.0 for further details.

5.8 Administrative Phases

If neither player has won the game by the start of Turn 8's Administrative Phase, make a final check of the situation as described in rule 4.3. During the earlier turns, use the Administrative Phases for airpower marker retrieval, disruption recovery and general housekeeping on and around the mapsheet (see 5.8, 7.3 and 7.4).

5.9 Unique Turn 1 Rules

These rules apply only during Turn 1. During that turn's Airpower Phase, the Russian player adds two to his air superiority dice roll (see 11.1). If the Allied player gets air superiority on Turn 1, he may not use his airpower to interdict any hexes in Russia proper (see 3.2) that turn. Similarly, no Allied ground unit may move or attack into any hexes of Russia proper during Turn 1. Last here, the first Russian action of Turn 1's AAP must be either a move or attack across a border hexside into Allied territory.

6.0 STACKING

6.1 Description

Stacking is the term used to describe the piling of more than one friendly unit in the same hex at the same time. Opposing grounds units will never stack together; only friendly units stack together.

6.2 Stacking Rules

The stacking rules are only in effect at the end of each action. During actions, any number of friendly units may enter and pass through any otherwise enterable hex (see section 8.0). If, at the end of any action, any hexes are found to be over-stacked, the player owning the units in those hexes must eliminate and recycle enough excess units there, of his choice, so as to bring the hexes into compliance with the stacking rules.

6.3 Stacking Limit

Up to two divisions may stack in a hex. Brigades are each considered to be a third of a division for stacking purposes. Within that overall limit, friendly brigades and divisions may stack together. On the Allied side international stacking, attacking and defending is allowed; however, see 8.10, 10.13 and 10.14 for crucial details.

6.4 City Garrison-Control Markers

City Garrison-Control Markers don't count for stacking. There may be up to two divisions in a hex that also contains a city garrison. Note, though, the Russian KSDD static 8-8 unit does count for stacking as a division.

6.5 Airpower Markers

Airpower Markers have no effect on friendly or enemy ground unit stacking. Note, though, there's never more than one of them in any one hex at any one time. See section 11.0 for details on their use.

6.6 Informational Markers

The informational markers pictured in rule 2.10 have no stacking values, and they may be placed in any hexes according to the rules for their respective uses.

6.7 Examining Stacks

Both players are always free to examine all stacks on the map and the map sheet, both friendly and enemy.

6.8 Stacking Order

The top-down/bottom-up order in which units in a hex are piled together has no significance.

7.0 ACTIONS IN GENERAL

7.1 Order of Actions

During each turn's AAP both players alternate – with the Russian player always going first in each AAP – choosing and conducting “actions” one at a time.

7.2 Choice of Actions

Broadly speaking, both players have two actions from which to choose. Those actions are: 1) move a friendly force; or 2) launch an attack into an enemy occupied hex. The Russian player has a third option in that he may choose to conduct nuclear attacks. Note the order they're listed there has no significance in play: actions may be executed in any order.

7.3 Disruption & Recovery

At the end of any move or attack action in which they've just taken part, all the involved units are “disrupted.” Show that by flipping them so the side with only their nationality abbreviation is upward. Disrupted units remain disrupted until the Administrative Phase, at which time both players should cooperatively flip over all the disrupted units on the map to undisrupted status (such that they again show their numbered sides). Note that participating in the defense of a hex doesn't cause those defending units to be disrupted.

7.4 Disruption Effects

Disrupted units may not move or attack in any way. Further, all disrupted brigades defend with a defense factor of one while all disrupted divisions defend with a defense factor of three. Again note that undisrupted units defending against an enemy attack aren't disrupted due to having made that defense. Similarly, already disrupted units that are attacked more than once during an AAP may potentially survive any number of such efforts against them; there are no multiple disruption effects or automatic eliminations simply for being disrupted.

8.0 MOVEMENT

8.1 Friendly Force Defined

A “friendly force” is defined as one or more divisions or brigades in the same hex that are moved together to a common destination hex. No splitting off and moving away sub-stacks on separate courses is allowed during a single move action, though it's permissible to leave stay-behind units in the starting hex as well as dropping off other units in hexes along the course of a move. It isn't necessary to activate all the units in one hex as part of one action; one or some might be left inactivated by the owning player, as he chooses on a case-by-case basis. Further, a unit activated for movement need not actually move in order to complete its activation. It might simply be disrupted in place, thereby avoiding having declared a “pass.”

Design Note. *You won't see the technique described above used much in actual play. It's there, however, if you feel you need it.*

8.2 City Garrisons

City Garrisons are never part of a moving force, though moveable units are allowed to be in a combined mobile-static force in city hexes, and then potentially move away, leaving behind the garrison unit along with, possibly, one or more other units you don't want to move. The same is true for the Russian 8-8 KSDD static unit.

8.3 Minimum Movement Guarantee

There's no minimum movement guarantee for any moving force. A force may only enter a hex if it has the movement factors available to pay the full cost involved in making that move (see below).

8.4 Movement Summary

All movement takes place from hex-to-adjacent hex within the strictures given below and summarized on the Terrain Effects Chart (TEC) in section 14.0. No force may ever give or loan MF to another force, nor may any hexes be skipped during movement.

8.5 Enemy Units & Movement

In general, no moving force may enter a hex containing one or more enemy units of any kinds. For the exception, see section 9.0.

8.6 In-Hex Terrain Effects on Movement

A force must usually expend one MF to enter a clear terrain hex (but see 13.10). For a hex to be considered clear terrain, it must be all clear without other kinds of terrain in it. To enter other types of hexes, a force must generally expend more than one MF. For example, each forest hex entered by regular (non-air-assault) movement costs two MF, while each marsh hex costs three MF. Also note no Chernobyl High-Radiation hex may ever be the final hex of any force's move.

8.7 Cities

Cities are considered to exist in hexes that are otherwise clear terrain.

8.8 Water Hexsides

Water hexsides exist in three types: river hexsides, lake hexsides, and all-sea hexsides. The latter two categories may not be crossed by units using regular movement (as opposed to air assault movement; see 9.1). River hexsides may be crossed by normal ground moving units by expending one extra (+1) MF to do so. "Extra" means in addition to the MF cost for the terrain in the hex being entered. So, for example, a regularly moving unit crossing a river into a rough hex would pay a total of three MF: two MF to enter the rough hex and one extra MF to cross the river. All-sea and all-lake hexsides may only be crossed by air assault movement.

8.9 Column Movement

Units using regular ground movement may double their MF to 12 whenever they conduct a move action such that they don't start or

end it in any hex immediately adjacent to any enemy ground unit or garrison/control marker. Further, they may not move adjacently past any enemy ground unit or garrison/control marker during the course of the move itself. Air assault units may not make use this column movement bonus when making air assault moves.

8.10 Inter-Allied Move Actions

Allied units belonging to different nations may move stacked together in the same action; however, the penalty for doing so (due to irreducible inefficiencies in all such international operations) is that the moving force has an MF of five instead of six.

8.11 Polish Territorial (T) Units

These units may only move into hexes in Poland and the KSDD (also see 10.15).

8.12 NATO V-F Movement Restriction.

The NATO V-F unit may never move into hexes in Russia proper (see 3.2 and 10.16).

9.0 AIR ASSAULT UNITS

Design Note. *The units identified by the symbol typically used to represent heliborne movement capability (see 2.6) represent an agglomeration of elite formations with similar capabilities. Those capabilities range from helicopter transport, to parachute insertion, to infiltration movement, to riverine and amphibious movement – and they are capable in those regards to a degree that sets them apart qualitatively from all other main force units. Rather than present a separate rule for each such sub-type of special capability, after play-testing showed they all came out to much the same thing in the on-map operational sense, this unified approach was found to work well enough for our purposes at these time and space scales.*

9.1 Movement

If a moving force consists only of one or more air assault (see 2.6) divisions and/or brigades, that force pays only one MF per hex, no matter the in-hex terrain involved, and such forces don't pay any water hexside crossing costs. Units using such movement may even "fly over" all-sea and/or all-lake hexsides and hexes, as well as hexes containing enemy units and/or garrisons. The air assault units may not stop their move in such hexes; they may only move over them, and all at a cost of only one MF per hex. Also note, if one or more air assault units is moving within a force that also contains one or more non-air-assault units, those air assault units may themselves only make use of regular movement (and its attendant costs) during that action. Air assault movement is subject to aerial interdiction (see rule 10.5 and section 11.0 for more details).

9.2 Number of Air Assault Movements

Within these strictures, air assault units may make any number of air assault moves per game. Also note, however, each such move may be no longer than six MF; column movement is never available to air assault units, and air assault and regular movement may not be combined during the same action.

10.0 ATTACKING & DEFENDING

10.1 In General

Attacking is always voluntary. The mere fact of enemy adjacency doesn't necessitate combat. No attack action may have more than one enemy occupied hex as its objective. No unit in a hex being attacked may be withheld or excluded from the defense of that hex. To execute an attack action, first designate the hex being attacked along with those of your units that will be participating in the action. Multi-hex attacker deployment is allowed, and not all units in a hex containing one or more attacking units need participate in an attack, only those you designate. That is, though all the units you choose to include in an attack must be immediately adjacent to the chosen objective hex, single attack actions may consist of units attacking from up to all six hexes adjacent to the targeted hex.

10.2 Attack Odds

Total the attack factors of all your participating units, which is the "attack strength" (a.k.a. "attack factor" or "A.F.") of that force. Divide that number by the totaled defense factors ("D.F.") of all the defending enemy units in the hex being attacked. Round down any remainder, then set that resultant whole number next to a one on its right to obtain a ratio. For example, if 50 attack factors are attacking into a hex with a DF of 15, that odds calculation would go as follows: 50 divided by 15 equals 3.33, which is rounded down to 3. That three is then set next to a one, to get a combat odds ratio of 3:1 ("three-to-one").

10.3 City Defense

City garrison/control units have no defense factors printed on them; rather, each one's DF is six each time it's attacked. That DF remains available even if there are also friendly mobile units in the city to aid in its defense. Garrison units never suffer disruption, nor do they attack. Friendly non-garrison units aren't in any way inhibited from attacking from city hexes due to the presence of that place's garrison. Each garrison counts as a brigade for combat loss purposes, and they must be the last unit given up when fulfilling a defensive combat loss requirement. Also see 2.8.

10.4 In-Hex Terrain Effects on Combat

If the hex being attacked is a rough hex, reduce the calculated odds by one. For example, what would otherwise be a 2:1 attack would, if launched into a rough hex, instead become a 1:1. If the hex being attacked is a city hex, reduce the odds by two shifts. For example, a 4:1 attack into a city would become a 2:1. Also note terrain never benefits the attacker; it only benefits the defender.

10.5 Water Hexsides

If all the attacking units in an attack are attacking across a river hexside, shift the odds an additional column leftward ("additional" meaning in addition to any shifts called for by in-hex terrain). If one or more attacking units is attacking across a non-river hexside, that water-barrier hexside shift is lost to the defense. Similarly, if one or more attacking units is air assault, the river shift is lost, no matter the exact position of the air assault unit(s) in relation to the river. Only air assault units may attack across all-lake or all-sea hexsides (and, again, they do so without any shift

penalty). No air assault attacks are allowed across all-sea hexsides unless that hex separates two hexes with land in them (as, for example, between 0409 and 0509).

10.6 Concentric Attack Bonus

In general, when you attack a defended hex from two diametrically opposite hexsides; or when you do so from three hexes with an uninvolved hex between each of those attack hexes, or when you do so from more than three hexes, you have achieved "concentricity." (That is, you have your objective surrounded.) To determine your concentric attack bonus for a given battle, roll a die; divide that result in half and round down any remainder. In that way a concentric attack bonus may vary from zero to three rightward column shifts.

10.7 Final Combat Resolution

After the Combat Results Table odds column has been determined and all applicable odds shifts have been applied, the attacker rolls a die and cross-indexes that result within that odds column to get a "combat result." For example, a result of "6" rolled for an attack made at 3:1 odds yields a combat result of "0/3."

10.8 Combat Results

Combat Results are given in terms of brigades lost by the involved forces of one or both sides. The number printed to the left of each result's slash applies to the involved attacking units; the number printed to the right of the slash applies to the involved defending units. For example, a combat result of "1/2" would mean the involved attacking force must lose a total of one brigade, while the involved defending force must lose a total of two brigades. In each battle the defender must always completely absorb his combat result before the attacker absorbs his. There is never any carry over of a combat result from one battle into any other battle or phase or turn. Any combat losses in excess of those involved are ignored.

10.9 Apportioning Losses Among Brigades

With one exception, both players are free to apportion his own side's losses among his involved attacking or defending units as he sees fit. The exception is: if a defending force contains a city garrison unit, it must be the last one given up.

10.10 Divisions & Brigades in Combat

Each division is the combat-loss equivalent of three brigades. If you have only divisions in your attack or defense force, combat results of one or two inflicted against that force are fully ignored. (Attacking divisions, just like attacking brigades, are always disrupted no matter the numeric portion of their attack result.) If your involved force is a mixture of brigades and divisions – with one exception – the numeric combat result must be fully absorbed by your brigades before any result is applied to any division present. That exception is for city garrisons, which must always be the last unit given up no matter what other units are involved.

Example: A defending force consists of three brigades and a division, and that force receives a combat result of five. The three brigades in the force are eliminated, leaving two factors that go unabsorbed because the division would only be affected by a result of three or higher.

10.11 Advance-After-Combat

At the end of every attack, whenever the defender's hex is left empty of all non-garrison/control units, the victorious attacking units may advance-after-combat into that hex. Stacking limits must be observed. Such advances aren't part of any move action; they don't cost any MF, but advancing units must still observe normal terrain prohibitions. Advancing-after-combat is an option; it's never mandatory. The decision to advance must be made immediately after each battle is resolved and before that of another is begun. It's not necessary for advancing attackers to stack-full a newly won hex; the victorious player may send just one or a few units. There's never any defender advance-after-combat; victorious defenders simply hold in place. After an attack (and possible advance-after-combat) all surviving units from that attack force are disrupted.

Design Note. There are no retreats-after-combat. Defending forces absorb all combats for their side as unit losses.

10.12 Repeat Attacks

Any given hex may potentially be attacked, by one or both players, any number of times in each turn's AAP. Each such attack, however, constitutes a separate action.

10.13 Inter-Allied Attack Actions

Units belonging to the same alliance may attack together in the same action; however, the penalty for doing so (due to irreducible inefficiencies in all such international operations) is the attack force suffers a one-column leftward shift (in addition to all other applicable shifters).

10.14 Inter-Allied Defenses

There is no penalty for inter-allied defenses on either side.

10.15 Polish Territorial (T) Units

These units may only attack into hexes in Poland and the KSDD (also see 8.11).

10.16 NATO V-F Combat Restriction

The NATO V-F unit may never attack into hexes in Russia proper (see 8.12 and 3.2). Further, this unit may never attack (alone or in conjunction with other Allied units) until it has itself been attacked by the Russians. Within those constraints, it otherwise moves and defends normally from the time of its initial entry into play (see 12.9).

10.17 Russian Army-Level Combat Support

In the Russian Army there's a shortage of the kind of combat support, communications, electronic and cyberwarfare units that are relatively plentiful in the Allied armies. Accordingly, the Russians have concentrated the units of those types they do have at army headquarters level for combat support commitment from there. The Russian order of battle therefore contains 11 of those markers (one for each army in their overall order of battle; see 2.10). Each of them may be openly committed by that player, no more than one per combat, as the last step in each one's resolution, to any of his attacks and defenses anywhere on the map. If support is given to a battle in that way, the odds calculated there remain unaffected

by that commitment. If, however, a battle takes place and the Russian player doesn't provide such support, the odds for that combat are shifted one column in favor of the Allied side. Each HQ may be committed to one support effort per AAP, and those commitment don't in themselves count as a separate actions. Each HQ is automatically available for one such use every turn, and no HQ may ever be eliminated or used to satisfy any portion of any combat result. Their counters aren't kept on the map; they're provided merely to serve as mnemonic aids for the Russian player.

10.18 Russian Vostok Special Actions Marker

Once per AAP, the Russian player may commit this marker to support any one of his attacks anywhere in the Baltic republics or the Ukraine. To determine it's effect in the supported attack, he rolls a die and subtracts one from that result (to get zero through five). That's the number of attack factors he then adds to his attack strength. If the final result comes up a zero, the Vostok unit is permanently eliminated from play. The marker is never kept on the map; it's there merely to serve as a mnemonic for the Russian player, and it has no combat values of its own.

Design Note. The Vostok Battalion is a "clandestine operations" unit. Its specialty is organizing and militarizing ethnic-Russians living in the near abroad to come out and fight for the Motherland.

11.0 AIRPOWER

11.1 Air Superiority Phases

In general, at the start of every turn's Air Superiority Phase, both players openly roll two dice (exception: see 12.8). The player getting the higher total generally has "air superiority" for that turn (reroll ties and also see 5.9). If you had air superiority the turn before, add one to your roll this turn; though that addition may never be greater than one no matter how many turns you may have had air superiority. Subtract the lower rolled total from higher roll total: the winning player gets that many airpower markers. He immediately places all those markers as described below. Note there will never be a turn in which both players have airpower markers deployed on the map at the same time.

11.2 Placement

In general, an available airpower marker may be placed in any hex on the map (exception: see 5.9). Friendly and enemy ground unit presence has no bearing on this. Note, though, no more than one marker may be placed in any one hex. All available markers must be deployed.

11.3 Range

In general, every aircraft unit on the map effects the hex in which it's placed and all six of the surrounding hexes (exception: see 5.9). That's termed its "range." If the ranges of two or more friendly airpower markers overlap, there are no additive effects because of it.

11.4 Airpower's Effect on Enemy Movement

For an enemy unit or stack to make a regular ground move into a hex that's in range of one or more of your airpower markers,

it must pay an extra MF to do so per each such hex entered, for both in-hex and hexside costs. Further, no air assault movement may take place in the range of an enemy airpower marker. Any air assault units moving into range would have to do so using regular ground movement costs and prohibitions. Your own airpower markers have no effect on the movement of your own forces. Note that enemy airpower presence in a hex doesn't absolutely prohibit your units making regular ground moves into and/or through such hexes; it merely makes it more expensive in terms of MF.

11.5 Airpower in Combat

If you make an attack into a hex that's in range of one or more of your airpower markers, your attack gains a one column rightward shift (cumulative with all other applicable shifts). Conversely, if an enemy attack is launched against one of your forces, and that defending force is in range of one or more of your airpower markers, that defense benefits from a one-column leftward shift (cumulative with all other applicable shifts). Those shifts never amount to more than one column per battle, no matter how many markers are in range.

11.6 Deployed Airpower Markers

Deployed airpower markers remain on the map until the AAP of that turn comes to an end, at which time they're retrieved for use again in the next turn. Airpower markers are never subject to elimination or any kind of recycling; all the markers are always available for use as described above.

12.0 REPLACEMENTS & REINFORCEMENTS

12.1 In General

The divisions and brigades of both sides that eliminated in conventional (non-nuclear) combat are recycled for possible later "replacement" back into play. Allied units lost in Russian nuclear attacks are never eligible for recycling, nor are units of either side that are lost while defending against concentric attacks. City garrisons are never recycled; they merely flip over in place so as to display their locale's current ownership. Similarly, the Russian KSDD and OGT units are never recycled; once eliminated they're permanently removed from play.

12.2 Procedure

At the end of each battle, roll a separate die for each of the divisions and brigades of both sides that were eliminated during that engagement. As each unit is rolled for, place it in the Turn Track box the number of which corresponds to the die roll result added to the present turn number. For each division roll a die and place it on the track that many turns in the future (one through six). For a brigade, roll the die and halve that result, rounding up all remainders (for a result of one through three). For example, say it's Turn 2 and a recycling brigade has a "3" rolled for it. That unit would be placed in the Turn 4 box on the track. Those units that get a result that would bring them back into play after Turn 8 are permanently out of play. Within those strictures, any division or brigade may potentially go through the recycling process any number of times per game.

12.3 Reentry Hexes

In general, during the Replacement & Reinforcement Phase of Turns 2 through 8, recycling units eligible for reentry into play that turn are brought back by being placed in any friendly controlled city of their respective home country. That means, for example, Latvian units may only recycle into play via friendly controlled Riga (1606). If an eligible city isn't available through which to reenter a given unit, that unit is permanently out of play. Exception: Recycling Allied units belonging to countries that don't have any national territory on the map containing cities may recycle into play via any west edge map hex that's not occupied by any Russian ground unit at the time of that placement. Further, recycling Russian units may do so only through otherwise eligible cities in Russia proper (see 3.2), and/or via east map edge hexes in that same area that aren't occupied by any Allied ground unit at the time of that reentry. Stacking counts in the placement of recycling units. Within all those strictures, specific entry hexes are chosen for each reentering by the owning player, decided by him on a unit-by-unit basis.

12.4 Recycling Units

Recycling units appear on the map in their undisrupted state. The Russian player places his reappearing units before the Allied player has placed his.

12.5 Allied Reinforcement Contingents

These units are ground units and airpower markers that enter the game only after play has already begun. There are no Russian reinforcements, while there are eight contingents of Allied reinforcements. To determine his arriving reinforcement contingent for the following turn, the Allied player should openly roll a die and consult his table below.

Allied Reinforcement Table

Die Roll	Reinforcement Received
1	NATO Airpower or VHRJT
2	Germany
3	Sweden
4	Finland
5	Czech Rep or Slovakia
6	Hungary

12.6 Initial Arrivals

During set up, as given in rule 3.8, the Allied player openly rolls a die and consults the table above. If, for example, he rolled a four, he should then take the Finnish units he'd temporarily set aside (see rule 3.7), and place them on the Turn Track in the Turn 1 box. During Turn 1's Replacement & Reinforcement Phase, he may place those (and later turns') arriving units in any friendly controlled city hex(es) on the map that lie(s) in the territory of any of the Allied nations and to which a path of hexes, free of Russian ground units and air interdiction, may be traced from the west edge of the map. Alternatively, he may place arriving reinforcements in any hex on the map's west edge that contains no Russian units (air interdiction OK). Stacking counts in the placement of arriving reinforcements. Note those strictures are slightly different from the ones used for reentering recycling units.

12.7 Later Arrivals

During every turn's Replacement & Reinforcement Phase (including that of Turn 1), the Allied player should make a roll to determine the next turn's reinforcement contingent. He's guaranteed one contingent will arrive every turn, so more than one roll may be necessary as the various slots on the table give up their contingents. The Russian player may not in any way abort the arrival of any reinforcement contingent, though he can effect where it may be entered, as described above. Also note two of the slots on the table – one and five – each have two contingents listed. When the Allied player rolls such a double contingent, he should roll a second die. On an outcome of one, two or three, he gets the leftward contingent; on a roll of four, five or six, he gets the rightward. Of course, when that slot on the table comes up again, he then gets the other contingent.

12.8 NATO Airpower

When the NATO Airpower reinforcement contingent arrives (which, just as for ground units, still involves the one-turn set-back process), those six markers are added to the initial pool of 12 Allied airpower markers and, henceforth, the Allied player rolls three, rather than two, dice during the Air Superiority Phase (see 11.1).

12.9 NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VHRJT or V-F)

When this unit's entry is triggered, a second step must be carried out in order to determine its exact combat strength upon entry. To determine that strength, the Allied player should immediately roll two dice. That number (two through 12) is the combat strength of the task force. If the unit arrives with a strength of 7-7 or higher, it's considered a division for all purposes; if it enters with a strength of 6-6 or lower, it's considered a brigade for all purposes. Once a strength is determined for the unit, it remains unchanged for the rest of that game. Within these strictures, the task force may recycle.

13.0 RUSSIAN NUCLEAR ATTACKS

Design Note. *Official Russian doctrine is that they won't hesitate to use tactical nuclear weapons to ensure the defeat of any invasion of their homeland. The following rules are written so as to model that doctrine and its potential effects in this potential war.*

13.1 Attack Availability

Only the Russian player may make nuclear attacks. The assumption is, if both sides started doing so the game would effectively be over (see 13.8 below).

13.2 Targeting Eligibility

The Russian player is allowed to target any non-city hex on the map inside Russia proper that doesn't at that moment contain any of his own side's ground units.

13.3 Targeting Restriction

No city will ever be nuked during play.

13.4 Attack Resolution

Nuclear attack is an action (see 7.2). When he announces he wants to make one, the Russian player should openly roll a die and then both players consult the Nuclear Attack Table to find the row that corresponds to the terrain in the hex being attacked. The die roll result is cross-indexed with that terrain type to find the result. Apply those results and the action is over.

13.5 D Results

All ground units in the target hex are disrupted, no matter their organizational size (previously disrupted units merely continue in that state).

13.6 EB Results

Permanently eliminate all the brigades in the target hex and disrupt all the divisions there.

13.7 EA Results

Permanently eliminate all the units in the target hex, no matter their sizes.

13.8 Strategic Nuclear Exchange or Putin Overthrown

As a last step in the resolution of every nuclear attack, the Russian player rolls two dice. If the rolled total is two, the game is over due to the fact his action triggered an all-out strategic nuclear exchange between the two sides. All human life on Earth ends, and the Allied player is considered to have won the game on moral grounds. If the result is a 12, the game is also over, this time due to the overthrow of the Putin regime by dissident elements within his government and/or the military. Again, the Allied player is considered to have won the game, but this time on practical grounds.

13.9 Blast Markers

Within the strictures given above, there's no limit on the number of times any given hex may be nuked per AAP or over the course of any entire game. Each time a strike is made into a hex, no matter the operational result, place a mushroom cloud blast marker there (see 2.10). If there are one or more blast markers in a hex, the normal entry costs for the in-hex terrain there are increased by one for each such marker. So, for example, a twice-nuked clear hex could be entered at a cost of three MF.

14.0 CREDITS

Credits

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