

SINAI

The Arab-Israeli Wars, '56, '67, and '73 DEVELOPER'S NOTES

by Hank Zucker

This is an article of interest to *Sinai* Players and prospective *Sinai* Players. In it I shall share a few thoughts on new air strike rules, a revision of the 1973 ceasefire rule and give a few suggestions on tactics and strategy that have been found to work in the game.

GENERAL TACTICS

The all important tactic to use wherever possible and any other time as well is *defense in depth!* It is the way to survive, because the only way you can be eliminated is to be surrounded. If you have a nice 9-8 in some unmercifully exposed position, have a 2-8 directly in back of it in some safe unexposed hex. That way when the infidels attack and push back your armor, it has someplace to go without getting hurt. Without the backup, it would have nowhere to run or hide.

Defense in depth is even more important in the 1973 and later scenarios because of the second Movement Phase. If you don't defend in depth, the enemy may be able to gain several hexes by pushing back one or two defenders several hexes. If there is a back up unit, the enemy can not gain more than one hex on his second Movement Phase.

Surround your enemy before attacking him, if at all possible, because that is the one way to eliminate him. Going along with this idea, be sure to make your attacks on any given place in the right order. The order of the attacks can make the difference between merely pushing back the enemy and eliminating him. Often a successful attack on one unit and an advance after combat can leave another unit surrounded.

ISRAELI TACTICS

Take advantage of terrain. The Israeli units are faster than the Arabs and, most importantly, they can go where Arabs do not dare. This rule is most useful in '67, because there is so much terrain the Arabs can't go into. It's really a lot of fun (and advantageous, as well) to be able to move overland while the enemy is road bound. You can threaten him with encirclement and

make him withdraw without a fight. You can also retreat off the road while he sits on the road and surrenders. It's a decisive advantage in the wilds of the West Bank and the sands of the Sinai. Keep most of your infantry in the West Bank or Golan areas. Move them through the rough terrain and cut off the Arab units. Remember that the armor can move two hexes per Movement Phase through the sand. Use this ability to cut off the Egyptians.

Don't forget that Israel's defense was and is based more on her fortified settlements than anything else. The game reflects this. Remember that the Arabs can't take a *nahal* (fortified settlement) with a unit on it. They can only knock the unit off the nahal. The unit can then move back on the nahal on the next Israeli Player Turn. Also remember that the strength of the unit doesn't affect this process. A weak battalion in the right place can stand off a whole army. If Israel is ever on the defensive, either overall or locally, *use and preserve the fortified settlements.*

Always keep an airmobile battalion handy. One never can tell when opportunity might present itself to drop down an airmobile unit and put half an Arab army out of supply. Jordan is especially vulnerable to this. Look how nicely an airmobile unit dropped onto the East Bank of the Jordan on any road hex west of Amman can, in conjunction with any Israeli unit to the north, cut off the West Bank from the Jordanian map edge.

Note: Drop airmobile units into rough terrain wherever possible as they have a disturbing tendency to get overrun when they're dropped out in the open.

ARAB TACTICS

The Arab Player has only one advantage—he has more units. Not more strength, and certainly less concentrated strength, but in a game set up to favor a defense in depth, sheer mass of units is itself an advantage. Also, the more units you have, the more expendable any one unit is. This means that you can

afford to risk a unit or two of yours to eliminate a stronger Israeli unit. A trading situation is nearly always to the Arab tactical advantage. The loss of even one or two of the Israeli 9-8 armor units can severely cripple the Israeli attack. The Arab Player has no individual units which are anywhere near as important. It is worth any two or three units the Arab has to kill one of those armor units. Do it.

Also remember that you get Victory Points for eliminating Israelis. In '67 the Israeli doesn't get any Points for eliminating your units, and in '73 he gets only half as many points as you do. Use this advantage. Victory Points are also awarded to you for destroying the fortified settlements.

Watch for the airmobile units. They can be deadly. One airdrop can sometimes win the war for the Israelis. Remember that the airmobile units cannot drop into an Arab Zone of Control; so station some weak unit in any place that is vital, like along the supply line to the West Bank.

Another thing to worry about in some '56 and '67 scenarios is Command Control. It will hurt, but with some planning and the use of a trick or two, you can minimize the problems it creates. If you need a unit to cover a certain area, either for defense, or to be able to make some sort of advance, keep at least two units in the area and keep one on an odd numbered hex, and one on an even numbered hex. This way, one of the units will always be able to move and/or attack.

Note: Keep your Egyptians and Syrians away from map edges.

MASTER PLAN: 1967 HISTORICAL

As you have undoubtedly noticed, this scenario is a bit unbalanced in the military sense, but then so was the real war. We have made the scenario playable and play balanced by the simple expedient of basing the victory on *when* the Israeli achieves his goal, as opposed to whether or not he does

achieve the goal—which is probably a foregone conclusion. The biggest recommendation for the scenario is that it works. It is a fine simulation of the Six Day War. To win and win big, the Israeli should do what the real IDF did.

Israeli:

First Game-Turn in the Sinai: Overrun everyone in the Gaza area that you can, and attack the rest on the Combat Phase. Surround the Egyptian 4-1 and get him. Push back the 3-1 and send a couple of armor units winging south and out using the track through the rough. Penetrate. Speed counts. Unless he's really good you should be able to run right through the Arab. Don't lose anything. You have maybe a battalion to spare. No more. Send a brigade or two, at least one of which is armor, west along the coast road. Your main thrust should be along the southern road area as he can and should bottle you up a while on the other roads, though you do have to put pressure on them. The Mitla and Giddi passes are your goals at first. You can also flank the whole area of the passes either north or south. When you get past the rough, and into the sand, it's over and you've got it. But try to get there in the First six Game-Turns while you've got that automatic supply. Your supply line will never reach the canal.

Forget about Syria as a major offensive at the start. Use at the most two 5-1's to attack it. Move everyone else in the area toward the Jordanian border to be in position to attack. Entruck one of the 6-1's and send him around by the Dead Sea to flank the Jordanians.

Arab:

Turn and bow three times towards the east. It can't hurt, and it might unsettle your opponent.

In the Sinai, *ordered* retreat is the order of the day (so to speak). With half your army arbitrarily running each turn there is little else you can do. Try not to lose any more units than you absolutely have to. If you can manage a trade for any Israeli brigade-sized unit, do it. The general principle of defense in depth *must* be followed. You've got to send a couple of your armor brigades around the roads to the coast road. You have to have somebody up there to slow down the Israeli advance along the road or whatever else you do won't matter. The units that start up there won't last long. Be careful that he doesn't crawl through the sand and surround you. Use the little patches of rough terrain as part of your defense in central Sinai.

Syria is completely ineffective in 1967. Realize it. Accept it. And don't let it worry you.

Jordan can be better. On the first Game-Turn you must reorganize. Look and see who's in a position to be cut off (e.g. the 25th and 26th brigades). Move them; you can't afford the loss. Watch for the Israeli flanking maneuver. If you're not very careful it will work. Pull back all your units that

start in the 2900 file; they're too exposed. Don't try for an advance. Try to hold on to a relatively defensible position. The name of the game is delay. Above all else, watch out for that airmobile battalion!

MASTER PLAN: 1967 JIHAD

This is a fun scenario. The Arabs get their revenge and the Israelis have to struggle a lot. But struggling can also be fun if there is the hope of victory at the end of the struggle. There is. A good Israeli Player can fight his way uphill to smash the Arabs even from his down-on-the-floor start position. It has been done. Of course, a good Arab can take Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and have a high old time himself.

Arab:

Attack! Attack! Attack! Take Jerusalem right off. Grab the Negev. Don't set up all your Egyptians in the Gaza area or they can be bottled up. Place some of them further south along the border. The Israeli can't defend the Negev, so take it. Push on. Don't let the Israelis get on the offensive. You may not recover. Destroy every *nahal* that you can. They *are* his defense. The Jordanians can be strong, but they *must* watch their flanks and their rear. Remember that the Israeli can still out-manuever you. Nothing is so disheartening to the Arab Player than to see his brilliant attack crumble because the Israeli found a nice place to drop the airmobile battalion, leaving the entire Jordanian Army unsupplied. I've seen it happen. Maybe you should send a few Egyptians to help the Jordanians. The Syrians should be able to get a *nahal* or two if they concentrate all their power (such as it is). But they can only get away with this if the Israeli is too busy elsewhere to hit them back.

Israeli:

You set up second and you have to do it right or you've blown it all. You can't defend the southern Negev, you haven't got the units at the start to do it. So don't try. *Use the nahals!* You *must* keep at least two of the *nahals* around the Gaza intact. You should start with about half your starting units on the Egyptian front. Defend, at least at first, the *nahals* at 2424 and 2420, and the pass through the rough terrain in Negev. This defense, coupled with a defense around Gaza, can hold off the Egyptians for a goodly amount of time. Remember that your unmobilized units immediately mobilize if attacked, so you can use them as part of your initial defense.

Do *not* let the Arab take Tel Aviv. You'll need it when your automatic supply runs out. Jordan is best handled from the flanks or rear. Try to cut him off rather than attack. Use your ability to out-manuever him. Keep your infantry in the West Bank area for this reason. Try to get some unit moving north along the Dead Sea. You'll start to cut off Jerusalem. Watch for an interesting place to drop the airmobile unit.

MASTER PLAN: 1973

Arab:

Grab what you can get while you can get it. You probably won't be able to grab for very long. Then defend in depth and hope you still hold enough for victory when the ceasefire is declared. You've got plenty of units and should not be afraid of trading some of them for real estate. Remember, when Victory Points are calculated, each Israeli hex is worth five units lost to your side, so if you can keep a hex at the end (which is when it counts) you come out ahead unless you've lost five units to keep it. Be careful you don't get carried away and keep a hex that is very costly in the middle part of the game or you'll run out of units to maintain your good old defense in depth until the game ends.

In Syria you *must* destroy two *adjacent* fortified settlements on the first turn. Preferably hexes 3604 and 3705 or thereabouts. Try (carefully) advancing in and cutting his communications, at least somewhat. You can't hold out against the Israelis for all that long unless he sends nearly everyone to the Sinai, so just try to slow him down. The Iraqis, when they arrive, are your major defensive power and your *only* offensive power. So use them wisely. Keep them near the middle of the front so they can maybe shift north or south as needed. While on rough terrain and under the SAM umbrella they have a defense of 44, and the Israelis must use nearly half the power he should have up there to move them. Destroy any *nahal* he leaves vacant. It will always hurt him. Lastly, and most importantly, roll a lot of ones on the Jordanian Participation Phase.

In the Sinai you've got to cross the canal quickly and move inland. You've got enough units to both spread out and defend in depth. Do both. You *must* take every hex of the Bar Lev Line on the first two or three Game-Turns. You *need* that road. And every hex you don't take will be a spear in your flank. Note that when within two hexes of a SAM the combination of two fives (strength Points) and a four will be invulnerable unless he can attack it from three adjacent hexes. This is quite useful! You can afford to lose a lot of every thing, except those 5's, because you've got so many units. The Sinai is where you can win or lose the game because Syria is a forgone losing proposition. Be creative—take risks. A cautious, conservative Egyptian will always lose to all but a veritably incompetent Israeli.

Israeli:

Your big problem is, of course, the Sinai. Ridiculous as it may seem with about half a dozen units, you've got to defend in depth. Hold the roads! He can't go around you very easily. If you defend in depth he won't be able to push you back more than a hex a Game-Turn. On your first turn, move up adjacent to him. You have to make him fight for every hex along the roads. Your big advantage is that he's unsupplied in the

sand. That makes it a lot easier for you to flank the roads than for him to flank them. You're also a lot more mobile. You can concentrate for attacks and then spread out for defense on your second Movement Phase (by the way, the Arab should use this technique too as best he can). Try to hold the blue north-south roads. Without them Arab communications are very poor. Note that the northern half of the main blue road is out of the SAM umbrellas.

Don't let the fact that you are on the defensive for the first six or eight GameTurns prevent you from making selective counter-attacks. If you don't he'll get too far and be a problem to push all the way back. When it's time to push him back, remember the old can opener principle. Get a flank of his and roll it up. The southern end is usually convenient for this while the northern end is usually anchored in the swamp or the Mediterranean. If he gives you a chance to go through the middle of his line, do it. But if he's good you won't get the chance.

One last thought on the Sinai...Hold on to whatever part of the Bar Lev Line you can, as long as you can. He will never be secure in an advance if you have any supplied units there. Whatever you do, don't lose any of your 9-8's. You need every single one when you're on the attack.

While we're discussing 9-8's and other useful things, a word about your mobilization is in order. The idea is, of course, to adapt to what the Arab is doing, but in general, everybody who mobilizes in the staging area near Gaza or south of there must be sent into the Sinai. Probably around a third or so of the units that mobilize in the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem areas should also be sent into the Sinai.

Syria is easy. You completely dominate. The first thing you have to do is to preserve all the fortified settlements that the Syrians didn't take on the first Game-Turn. The airmobile battalions can be quite useful to this end. Once you get a few units up there, attack. Drive towards the SAM unit. You probably shouldn't attack the SAM from the air as there are more important things to do with your air strike markers. Split the Syrian front in two by driving to that rough terrain behind the Syrian fort line. Watch the Iraqis, they're the only ones strong enough, on the attack, to hurt you. Take advantage of the *nahal* as safe places to retreat into if you are attacked.

ISRAELI AIR STRIKES

The most effective force in the Mideast is unquestionable the Israeli Air Force. It has had complete domination of the skies since 1956. Its pilots and ground crews are unsurpassed there. Only great quantities of SAMs can effectively reduce its dominance.

Sinai was designed and developed with 1967 as the main scenario. In 1967 the Israeli ground forces were so far superior to the Arab ground forces that we didn't pay that much attention to the air forces. As is mentioned in my comment on the Air Strike rule, the air support of ground attacks was

built into the combat strength of the Arab units (they were lowered). This was by far the simplest way to handle it, and it worked fine in the SAMless 1967 sky. The air interdiction of Arab ground movement could not be factored-in as to be realistic. The Israeli Player had to have the ability to pin a few chosen units, but he obviously couldn't pin all Arab units. The designer made a reasonable judgement as to how much pinning the Israelis could do, assuming they were simultaneously aiding ground attacks. Where I now feel he went a bit wrong was in giving each air strike marker the ability to add *three* to the cost of leaving a hex.

Three was a bad choice because it requires the Israeli Player to either underkill or overkill, i.e., he has the choice of adding enough to the cost of leaving a hex to slow down, but not stop an Arab mechanized unit from leaving a hex, or using two markers and wasting part of the effectiveness because he is adding a higher number of Movement Points to the cost of leaving a hex then he actually needs to pin the unit. I probably should have mentioned all this to the designer (Jim Dunnigan) who is generally a reasonable fellow and would probably have let me give the Israelis three times as many markers each worth only one Movement Point exit penalty. But the '67 historical scenario worked so well that I wasn't sufficiently bothered by all this to mention it.

1973 is another matter. For one thing, the SAMs make the skies much more messy and the solution arrived at is as simple and as neat as possible. But it is not as accurate as possible. The proximity of a SAM unit increases the defense of Arab movement. The rationale is that the Israelis weren't flying air support missions under the SAM umbrellas. Unfortunately for the accuracy and neatness of the SAM rules, this was not the case. The Israelis lost a great many Skyhawks because they *were* flying those missions under the SAM umbrellas. They received heavy losses, but accepted them to accomplish their goals.

It therefore seems to me that in the game the Israeli Player should be able to negate the effect of the SAMs on the Defense Strength of a particular hex-full of Arabs as long as he risks losing the planes he does it with. He can't, however, interdict, Arab movement Accordingly: *Proposed New Airstrike Rule*

1) The Israeli Player has three times as many air strike markers as he is given in the Scenario rules. (As the counter sheet doesn't provide this many, the player must mark the back of counters used only in 1956 scenarios.)

2) When used to pin Arab units, each marker adds *one* (only) to the cost of leaving that hex.

3) When used to attack a SAM unit use the procedure given in the rules folder. Use groups of three markers to represent the equivalent of one (old) marker. If the attack is unsuccessful, a group of three is eliminated.

4) Airstrike markers may be placed on hexes inside the SAM umbrellas. They may be

placed there only to reduce or nullify the SAMS aid to Arab defense, not to add to the cost of leaving a hex.

5) At the beginning of an Israeli Combat Phase, after resolving any air attacks on SAM units, the Israeli Player may place any number of airstrike markers on any hexes under a SAM umbrella that his ground units will attack on that Combat Phase. Each air strike marker present in a hex while it is attacked will reduce the defense multiple of the Arab units in the hex by one level. Example: One air strike marker will reduce Defense Strengths that would otherwise be quadrupled to being only tripled, Two markers present in a hex being attacked will reduce Defense Strengths that would otherwise be quadrupled to being only doubled. Air strike markers only negate the defense advantage of the SAM. They can never reduce a Defense Strength below what it would be if the SAM weren't there.

6) Air strike markers placed under a SAM umbrella to reduce the SAM's aid to Arab defense may be attacked by the Arab Player, before the effect of each such air strike marker on Defense Strength is calculated. This is done as each such marker is placed. If the air strike marker is eliminated, it does *not* affect the attack. Attacks against these air strike markers are made at an Attack Superiority of 1 (one). A result of "retreat" will eliminate the air strike marker. Each air strike marker may only be attacked once a Game-Turn. The Arab Player receives *one* (only) Victory Point for each marker eliminated by any means.

7) A given air strike marker may only be used once on a given Game-Turn. Air strike markers used to reduce Defense Strength are removed (not eliminated) as combat against their hex is resolved.

8) Except where specifically contradicted in these rules, all rules in the rules folder apply exactly as written.

ARAB AIR FORCES:

In 1973 the Arabs had a couple of air forces of their own. They weren't nearly as effective as the Israeli Air Force and a third of them were kept in reserve—usually in underground bunkers. Also, the number of sorties they flew per plane per day was probably about a third or less of the sorties the Israelis flew. But nonetheless, they did have planes in the air supporting their own attacks against the Israelis. When in the air they had a tendency to be shot down by the Israelis (and their own missiles—an Israeli problem too) and probably succeeded more in making the Israeli planes chase them, (and thus diverting Israeli planes from attacking Arab ground units) than in actually affecting Israeli ground units.

Proposed Arab Air Strike Rule

1) Egypt and Syria each get four air strike markers. These could be drawn on the back of 1956 or 1967 counters. Note that Jordan has a very small air force, and doesn't get any markers.

2) Arab air strike markers may not be used to add Movement Points to the cost of Israeli units leaving a hex, as the Arab air force never had the air superiority needed to effectively interdict enemy movement.

3) Arab air strike markers may be used to aid an attack by Arab ground units against an Israeli held hex. Each air strike marker on a hex during an Arab attack on that hex will add two to the total Attack Strength of the attacking units.

4) As each Arab air strike marker is placed on the map, the Israeli Player has the option to immediately intercept it. The Israeli Player may use one (only) of his air strike marker to intercept the Arab Marker. He immediately rolls the die. A one, two, or a three means the Arab air strike is eliminated, and will not affect any combat. A roll of four or five will have no effect. A roll of six means the Israeli marker is eliminated.

5) If the Arab air strike marker was placed either inside pre-1967 Israel, or more than five hexes from a supplied unit of its own nationality, the Israeli Player may make successive interceptions of it until he eliminates it, instead of the one try restrictions given above in rule 4.

6) Except where specifically detailed, Arab air strike markers function like Israeli air strike markers, e.g., when one is eliminated, the Israeli Player gains a victory point. Arab airstrikes should only be used in conjunction with the Proposed Israeli Air Strike Rule.

AIR POWER POSTSCRIPT

These rules are a product of some discussion with other people around SPI, some relatively hard data, and some fudging—in other words the standard design process. They could have been made still more realistic, but at the usual expense of making them much more complex. Warning; they have not been playtested very much, but they should work rather well. In any case, they will add interest to the air aspect of the game.

CEASEFIRE REVISION

The ceasefire is often a little too easy to get once requested. The ceasefire rule in *Sinai* was the last to be worked out, and was done when no one involved had time to think about it. Also, an optional rule about violating the ceasefire once it was declared was somehow lost between this typewriter and the printer.

What I would suggest is that only a roll of "one" or "two" be used to get the U.N. to declare the ceasefire (instead of one, two, or three). The Player who requested the ceasefire would then immediately get two Movement Phases. Following these, the non-requesting Player would get a full Player Turn, after which the game is over. I think this will be a good way to simulate violation of the ceasefire for a day. Even if you don't use the violation half of this suggestion, you really should use the die roll modification.

SINAI AND GENEVA

At the Geneva talks Israel agreed in principle to a withdrawal from at least some of the

occupied territories. One of Israel's main assertions was that her pre-1967 borders were not readily defensible. She could not afford either the financial or psychological strain of mobilizing all her forces whenever the Arabs massed a sizable portion of their forces at the borders. The Israelis argued that the occupied territories provided a buffer zone that keeps the Arabs out of Israel proper.

One of the more interesting, informative, and maybe even relevant things you can do with *Sinai* is to test this assertion.

Play a game using the 1973 rules, except that you should use the pre-1967 borders. Set up the Egyptian first wave of reinforcements in the middle of the *Sinai* and the second wave along the Suez, *Sinai* side. Set up the Syrian first wave of reinforcements along the 1973 fort line, which doesn't exist, by the way (neither do any of the 1973 fortified settlements or the Bar Lev Line).

Use all the special first Game-Turn rules except the one that lowers the strength of the fortified settlements (the Israelis won't make that mistake again). See what can happen.

OR...

Try the same thing, but with *everybody* mobilized and all reinforcements already arrived. Let each Player set up his units wherever he wants in the proper countries. Arab Player first. See what can happen this way.

OR...

Play negotiator. Argue with your opponent until you agree on borders and whether or not there should be any demilitarized zones. Then decide what mobilization level for each Player to start at. Then let the Arabs attack.

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incidentally, has led to a bit of graveyard humor around SPI. In the course of doing things, we talk about starting a particular game or doing a particular game and referring to the game's title. For example, starting *Frigate* or doing *Frigate*. With a title like *World War Three* these usages take on another overtone; for example, "I think we'll start *World War Three* in about two weeks," or "Are you going to be involved in *World War Three* or are you going to stick with what you're doing now for a while?" An interesting sidelight.

The design on *World War Three* is just about finished now and we have included an example of the game map in this issue of *Moves*. As you can see, we have converted the world into a "Cylinder". This, at least, solved the problem of going around the world. If you leave one edge of the map on the 1500 row, you enter the other side of the map on the same row and thus do not lose your relative position. Of course, going over the poles present more difficulty. But, given the mechanics of the game, this is not much of a problem except for the Russian nuclear submarines using the Polar icecap to get to the open sea. Of course, American and Allied nuclear submarines may well be under the icecap, the two fighting it out, but we think this will be a rather minor eventuality and, when it does occur, we'll simply let it take care of itself off the map.

Our version of *World War Three* hypothesizes a non-nuclear World War Three. In other words, something of a repeat of World War Two only with slightly rearranged cast of characters. This solves many of our design problems, although, obviously, a nuclear World War Three would be over in one Game-Turn. Our *World War Three* game will have numerous "what ifs" if only because many of these elements (weapons primarily) are "unknown" qualities to their own users. There are a number of things, of course, we are certain about concerning the game. First of all, it will be a primarily naval game. Not entirely, of course, but the emphasis will be more on naval operations than was the case in our *World War Two* game. This is obvious if only because the majority of the playing surface, just as it is in the "real world", is covered with water. There are a few critical supply lines, most have been concerned with the transport of oil. Oil, fortunately, is not an overwhelming consideration. Western Europe and Japan are most dependent upon oil although, in the case of Western Europe, only about half of their energy needs come from oil and half of the oil they must receive is rather nearby. That is, obtainable from countries bordering the Mediterranean. In addition, the Western countries in general have one considerable advantage over the Soviet Union. The Western nations being "consumer oriented" nations can afford to cut back on their production of consumer goods in war-time and, thus, reduce considerably their raw material needs. The Soviet Union has less consumer "fat" but then most of the Soviet Union's natural resources are obtainable from within the Soviet Union's boundaries. One of the elements in the game will be the possibility of an outbreak of nuclear war. This, of course, would end the game right there. This rule, as it looks now, is something like a showdown where if both sides put up too much "ante" the world blows up, the game is over, and, as if it matters, whoever was ahead in points at the time of the blow up is the "winner".

We'll have more to report on this game in our next issue of *MOVES*. We expect it to be quite interesting, especially the first turn in which all of the "what if" elements of the situation become known quantities.

