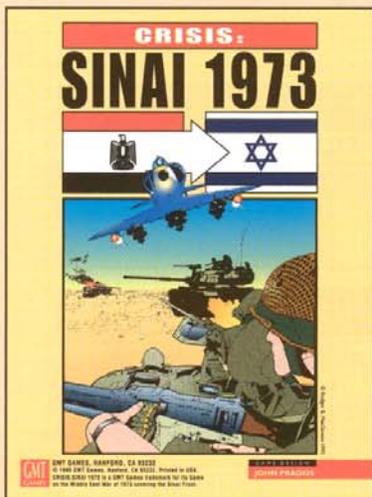


CLOSE-UP COVER FEATURE

Tel Aviv or Bust: Conducting an All-Out Egyptian Attack

BY LEE FORESTER



Sample Game Counters:

EGYPTIAN FORCES		

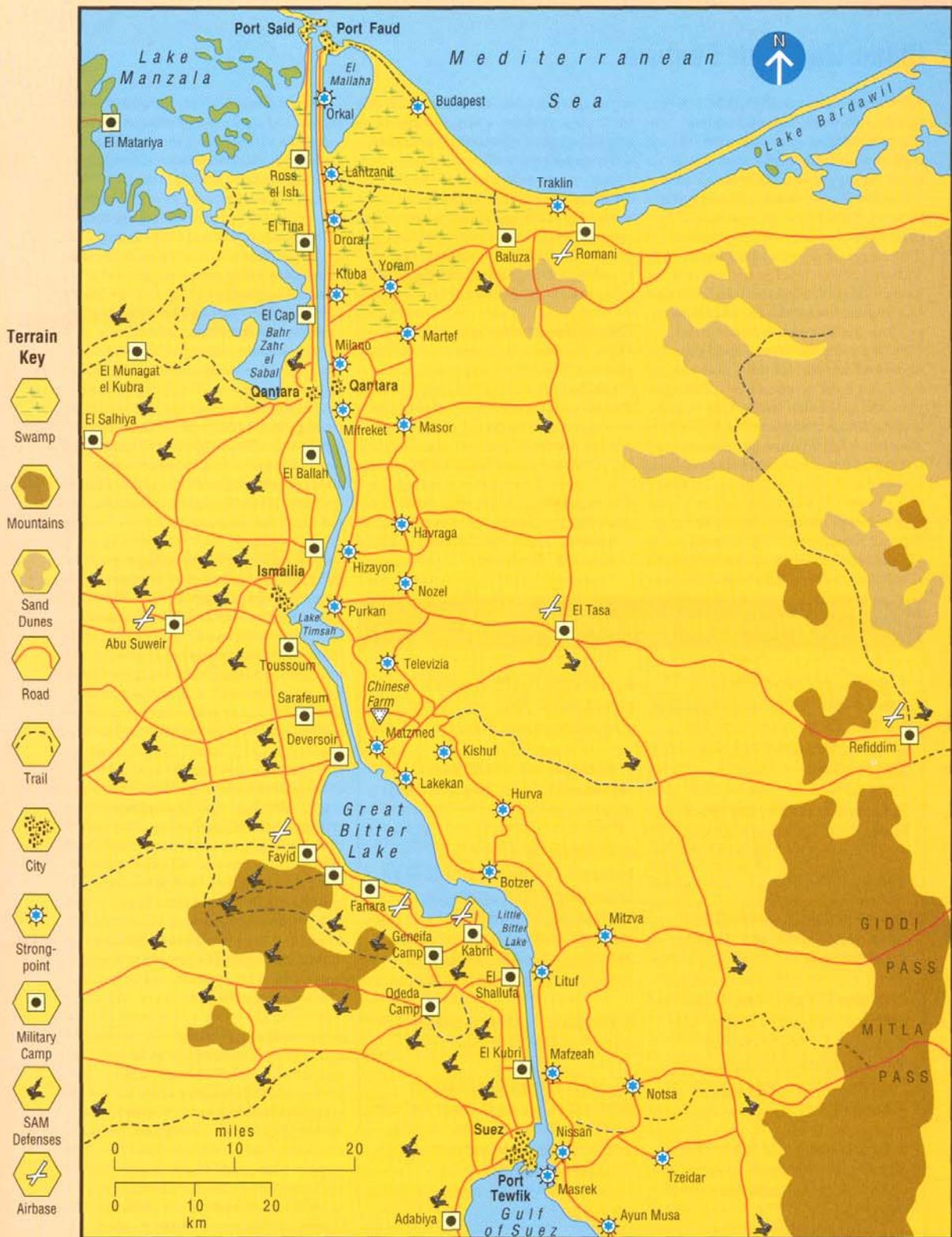
There are a number factors in **CS '73** which encourage an all-out Egyptian attack. The force-ratio is most favorable for the Egyptians at the beginning of the game. The Israeli Air Force will not become truly effective until 10 days or so (20 turns) into the game, once the battle for the Golan Heights has been decided and the bulk of the airforce is committed to the Sinai. The tank recovery rules favor the attacker, especially when supported by artillery and air strikes, because the defender cannot take the attacker's wreckage markers, while the attacker *can* take the defenders. Attackers are more likely to be able to put defenders out of supply before combat, which the Egyptian player can easily do by employing airborne and air mobile brigades. Most importantly, only through an aggressive offensive can most Egyptian

In the Yom Kippur war of 1973, the Egyptians planned and executed a limited attack intended to secure the Suez canal and defeat the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) when it inevitably counter-attacked. Such a plan, combining the strong anti-tank capability of Egyptian infantry with the protective air defense umbrella of the Egyptian SAM network, is a standard approach when playing the Egyptians in **Crisis: Sinai '73**. But there is another way. Players are not restricted to the historical Egyptian strategy. In fact, much can be said in favor of an all-out Egyptian attack. What follows is an outline of one possible version of such an attack. It seeks to defeat the Israelis before they have a chance to counter-attack, and assumes the full campaign scenario with optional Sudden Death Victory Conditions and variable UN Cease-fire.

sudden death victory conditions be achieved, which may result in an automatic victory or induce a forced UN peace while the Egyptians are in a good position.

The first job for the Egyptian player is to select his chits for the Sudden Death Victory Conditions. This step is crucial, and great care should be taken here, because the chit draw will dictate in large part your strategy. Each player has ten possible chits. Two chits can be freely chosen, and then three more are randomly drawn from the remaining eight. If any player fulfills four of his five sudden death victory chits, he wins instantly.

So you see why this step is so important!



RBM Sketch Map of area covered by **Crisis: Sinai 1973** game map. By Rodger B. MacGowan ©1997

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Your draw of chits will decide whether you can go for a Sudden Death Victory or not. If your chits include four of the following: 1, 4, 5, 6, 10, then you should try to achieve a Sudden Death Victory. If you have three of them, plus chit 2 or 3, you may want to consider it. If you don't, then I suggest ignoring Sudden Death Victory (unless developments in the game allow it) and go instead for a UN imposed cease fire by achieving *any* four Sudden Death Victory Conditions (of the 10, not the 5 you hold) and waiting for the UN cease-fire die-rolls to go your way. The plan outlined below will try to achieve either a Sudden Death Victory, or failing that, a UN cease-fire with four conditions from chits 1, 4, 5, 6 and 10.

In summary: your mission is to capture seven Bar-Lev forts not adjacent to the Suez, capture El Tasa, eliminate 75 VPs of Israeli ground

units, capture a hex of either Giddi or Mitla pass, and put a large group of Israeli units out of supply. Naturally, if things go very well, once these objectives are achieved you can continue the attack in order to destroy the IDF and prevent any counter-attacks. The offensive will proceed in three main phases, and assumes that you set up the Egyptian units in their respective set-up zones.

Phase I: The Crossing (turns 1-6)

There are five main goals for the first phase of the Egyptian attack:

1) get the entire Egyptian army across the Suez ; 2) capture every Bar-Lev strongpoint; 3) destroy the Israeli air defense tracks; 4) position the Egyptian army for Phase II (the main strike); and 5) destroy as much of the IDF as possible. Achieving these goals in 4-6 turns is very ambitious, and should challenge the most veteran CS '73 player!

1) *The crossing.* This can be a bit tricky, and I encourage players to try this out solitaire a few times before taking on a real opponent. Choose locations for your bridges that connect to road networks and which are easily defensible. Make sure that an engineer is stacked with each bridge so that you don't lose any time getting the bridges up and working. It is fine to point a bridge into an Bar-Lev hex, since you will be able to remove any defenders before your bridge begins to function. Actually, it is a good idea to do so, because any Egyptian engineer remaining to work the bridge can defend in the Bar-Lev strongpoint itself. Make sure your artillery is placed right up against the Suez so that it can offer maximum support for the crossing operation and into Phase II if the artillery has not been able to cross yet.

Use all extra engineers to ferry your infantry brigades across. Do not waste one single engineer for one single turn! Once all of your infantry brigades have crossed, ferry your AT units. Do *not* use bridges for such units; bridges should be used for the first few turns only to transport armor and mech units (first brigades and then battalions with any left-over capacity). Once these have crossed (say turn 5 or so), use the bridges to move your short-ranged artillery across, and then finally your heavy artillery and HQ units. Near the end of the crossing operation, you will be able to move the odd AT unit and HQ across with unused bridge capacity (since artillery are two stacking points and some bridges allow for 3 to cross). Time is of the essence, so do not be sloppy about your crossing operation. Ideally you want to begin Phase II on turn 5 or 6.

After reducing the Israeli Detection Track (see #3 below), use your air and artillery to hit as many non-armor, non-leg infantry units as possible. It is fine to bombard armor if you are planning on attacking the hex later in the combat phase, but Israeli armor units regenerate at an alarming rate, so often it is best to avoid striking them until you have combat units in

Egyptian Sudden Death Victory Conditions

1. Control any seven Bar-Lev strongpoints that are not adjacent to the Suez Canal. *Easy, definitely pick it as one of your two chits that you chose.*

2. Capture or destroy any Israeli bridge or bridge equipment unit. *Pretty tough if the Israeli player defends them well.*

3. Control Baluza. *A tough nut to crack, and I recommend avoiding it if possible.*

4. Control El Tasa. *Much easier to take, and you want to capture this town anyway, since it controls almost all north-south movement. You may want to chose it as one of your optional chits.*

5. Control any hex of Giddi Pass or Mitla Pass. *Another fairly easy victory condition, and is part of the overall plan.*

6. Eliminate 75 VPs of Israeli ground units. *Relatively easy to do if your offensive goes well.*

7. Eliminate 200 VPs of Israeli ground units. *A lot tougher. Don't pick this chit!*

8. Eliminate 10 steps of non-transport, non-helicopter Israeli air units. *Very difficult unless the Egyptian player is on the defense and the Israeli is attacking into the SAM belt. Since this will hopefully not happen in this game, avoid this chit.*

9. Eliminate 14 steps of Israeli air units. *As above, but even worse.*

10. Place at least fifteen Israeli steps out of Supply at the end of any Egyptian player turn. *Not too bad, as all those airborne and airmobile brigades are designed to do. I recommend holding these assets for just such a mission.*

place to take advantage of whatever losses you inflict.

I do not recommend sending out commandos on their own during this phase. They are then only targets for Israeli counterattacks. Keep them stacked with combat units to utilize their AT capability. Also keep a good number of them in the Air Box for insertion via helicopter later in the game. Commandos have a number of good uses, but independent operations far to the front is not one of them.

Don't give in to the temptation to bridge hex 2729 or attack there with your amphibious tanks. These tanks are weak, and vulnerable to counter-attack. Keep your bridges close to one another to ease defending them against Israeli counterattacks. Use your amphibious units in conjunction with regular troops. Remember that they can recross to the Egyptian side if they like and then cross again at a better place. Their disadvantage is their brigade size, but they are good for absorbing losses in attacks. I don't recommend letting them operate independently, as they can do little alone and are easily crushed. Use them in conjunction with your stronger forces.

2) *Bar-Lev strong-points*. I recommend ferrying infantry brigades (with an extra commando unit to discourage hasty counterattacks) directly adjacent to Bar-Lev strongpoints, and then attacking in conjunction with heavy armor units still on the west side of the Suez. Such supporting units attack at 1 / 2 value, but with the help of the infantry already across the canal, you can attack at high odds. Including a commando in such attacks gives you a relatively painless way of absorbing any losses, though you should not have any. Each unit on the Egyptian side of the canal should be used to attack Bar-Lev strongpoints at good odds every turn, because after the first few days, you will not have any time to go back and capture any Bar-Lev forts you bypass. Plan and practice your attack to capture *every* Bar-Lev strongpoint in the first 4-5 turns. You will be glad

you did! This whole phase requires planning, because you also want armored units near the bridges on the turn they cross, so that they have enough movement points to actually make the crossing. Again, a few dress rehearsals solitaire will help you greatly.

There are a number of Bar-Lev strongpoints in the northern sector in the marsh. Since I recommend that the Egyptians mainly hold and not attack in this area, you may have enough time to spare a few units for clearing Bar-Lev hexes at the beginning of Phase II. But remember that anyone out mucking about in the marsh will not be available to defend against an Israeli counter-attack.

3) *Air Defense Tracks*. The Egyptian air force should use the first turn to hit the Israeli Detection track. Since air units begin in the Ready 2 box on the first turn, you will only get one sortie per air unit. The advantage to doing this on the first turn is the -4 detection drm for the Israelis and the -1 drm for Egyptian air strikes. Start by flying single aircraft with a strike rating of 1. Do not escort these flights, as you will simply lose both the escort and the striking aircraft if you are detected. With normal die rolling, you should be able to knock the Detection Track down to 1 or 0 on this turn, with minimal air losses on your part. Your goal is to get it down to 0, so that it will take a LONG time for the Israeli player to repair it.

With the Israeli Detection Track down, you accrue two big advantages. First, the Israeli player will only rarely be able to intercept you, and secondly you will be unhampered by Israeli SAM fire. This means that you can use your air force to full effect, and the Israelis will have to attack your planes at their airbases (i.e. into the teeth of the Egyptian SAM defense network) if he wishes to destroy your air force. Knocking out the Israeli Detection Track is a key element in the success of an all-out Egyptian attack, so if your die-rolling is abysmal and the Israeli Detection Track is intact at the end of the first turn, you will need to

either continue the air attack on the next turn you fly (facing much higher losses) or reconsider your plans for an all-out attack. The attack may still succeed, but without the support of the Egyptian air force, it will not proceed as quickly, and may culminate before you have achieved all your victory conditions.

I don't recommend attacking the Israeli SAM track, because you will be able to knock it down some through land operations (Phase II below), and if the Detection Track is out, then no SAM fire is allowed anyway. If your air attacks go very well and you have extra capacity, focus on hitting artillery, AT and mechanized infantry units. The main factor for ground strikes is to hit only targets in favorable terrain, since Egyptian planes have such weak strike factors. Attacking armor is better than nothing, though, because you still get VPs for destroying them, and the Israeli player will have to move a unit over to control the hex to get a maximum chance at tank recovery at the end of the turn. Try to avoid using air units against targets in defensible terrain, unless the target is a crucial one.

4) *Positioning for Phase II*. You want to get your units all across the Suez, but keep them under your SAM umbrella until you are ready to strike. You will need most of your strength up front, which means that units will need to stop reducing the remaining Bar-Lev forts if you have not already done so. It is better to leave a few in Israeli hands than to delay Phase II for too long. Try to move your units such that they can surround and attack El Tasa the first turn (without a hasty attack), and hit whatever Israeli forces are defending forward, mainly in the center and the south. Establish in your mind your goals for the first turn or two of Phase II, and position your units to take advantage of it. Make sure you have enough artillery across to support your attack, since only a few of the long range units can help from the west side of the canal. Also check to see that your HQ's are across or can move across, so that you do not inadvertently move out of

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command. You want to minimize the time your initial attacks take so as to minimize their exposure to Israeli air power.

As a side note, try to disguise your true intents by setting up in defensive formation in defensible terrain as long as it doesn't slow down your attack. It may be that you can lure the Israeli player in closer if he thinks you are going to play defensively. As a final protective ploy, be sure not to loan him your copy of *C3i* until after your first game!

5) Destroying IDF units. If the Israeli player is aggressive or simply doesn't subscribe to this fine magazine (shame on him), he may move up close to you. If he does, punish him! You have artillery and air units. Move to attack, hit the hex with artillery and air strikes, then run him over. Be sure to mention to him how close to the canal the Israelis historically defended, which may entice him into doing the same. This is your opportunity to inflict casualties without much chance of loss, so use it. If the Israeli player is more cagey, you will probably not be able to engage him until Phase II with your army. Certainly take whatever he offers! As I mentioned above, stay within your SAM umbrella until you begin Phase II, and if he stays out of this area, you will need to content yourself with bombardments and airstrikes.

Phase II: The Attack

You have two main goals here: control key terrain and destroy the IDF. These goals are complementary of course, because if you control the terrain, you will be able to choose advantageous battles in which to destroy the IDF. Crucial terrain features include El Tasa, the Lateral Road and Mitla/Giddi. Once you have El Tasa, you will have effectively split the Israeli forces, because it will be impossible for them to shift quickly on a north/south axis. This will not only give you plenty of warning of a counter-attack, but also puts the Israelis in a dilemma: to shift from one area to another, they will need to use rear-area tracks, and any

units moving will be unable to aid in the defense, allowing the Egyptians the perfect opportunity to continue their attack. Splitting the IDF will also allow you to employ a smaller holding force to defend against one force while you attack the other, since defending does not require as much strength as attacking. I prefer containing the northern Israeli units while attempting to crush all Israeli units south of the line xx.16 or so. Naturally, if the Israeli has already shifted more forces to the south, you may need to reconsider.

As your attack develops, don't forget to overrun the Israeli SAM sites, permanently reducing his SAM capability. I recommend gloating about this to your opponent, which may cajole him into trying to defend them. The SAM sites really aren't that defensible, and if he tries to defend them, by all means, engage and destroy him. The SAM sites are really of only secondary importance (assuming you are keeping his Detection Track down to 0), though they do have great propaganda value.

Phase III: The Pursuit

Let's assume you have achieved the objectives set forth at the beginning: You have possession of almost all the Bar-Lev strongholds, you have eliminated a good number of Israeli ground steps, you have Mitla and/or Giddi, you have taken El Tasa and put a large group of Israeli ground units out of supply. If you had a good Sudden Death Victory chit draw, congratulations, you win! If not, you still have at least four Sudden Death Victory Conditions, so you will have a good chance of achieving an UN Cease-fire. Assuming the Israeli player has not achieved any Sudden Death Victory Conditions, every day turn (i.e. every other turn) your chances of getting a UN cease-fire (rounded to nearest percent) as follows:

No VCs: 5%
One VC: 1%
Two VCs: 5%
Three VCs: 12%
Four VCs: 49%

During this phase, don't let up! Your goal is to roll a victory for yourself, but in case you have bad luck, you might as well destroy the IDF while you're waiting! As long as you still have the momentum, continue to eliminate as many ground units as possible, because the Israeli air force cannot control the ground. Attrition will tell against the IDF if you can keep up a favorable exchange rate. Of course, do not be careless here, and beware of an Israeli end-run that aims at taking some of your bridges. Be particularly careful if you attack into the area near Refiddim (4523) while holding Mitla/Giddi, because you will not be able to reinforce easily between the two, while the Israeli player is connected by a good track running from 4625 to 4829.

The Culminating Point

Worst case scenario: you've had terrible die-rolling, the Israeli player has rolled box-cars on his last 3 counterattacks, you couldn't knock out the Israeli Detection Track, you've made some errors, your opponent has played well, and the attack has just plain faltered. Oh well! You need to be careful here to identify the culminating point of the attack, the time when the momentum is lost and the initiative begins to shift to your opponent. If this occurs, *do not* continue the attack. Instead, you should announce proudly that your *spoiling* attack has worked marvelously, and it is time to pull back to good defensive positions. You may now chuckle contentedly about the prospect of watching the IDF shatter itself against your formidable defenses. It is important to identify the culminating point as soon as possible, because that will minimize your unnecessary exposure to Israeli air strikes.

It may be that you are very close to a UN cease-fire, but the IDF is resurgent and the attrition ratio has shifted against you. I personally don't like staking an entire game on a few die-rolls (in this case for the cease-fire) so I recommend pulling back and waiting to see how the Israelis fare on the attack. If you have grouped your bridges fairly close, you shouldn't

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have a hard time defending them. As long as you can hold the bridgehead, your chances of victory are excellent, since you'll have most/all of the Bar-Lev strongpoints, a number of towns, all the bridges and VPs for all the dead IDF units. Defend at least a few hexes forward of the canal, to give you room for all your artillery, keep all the Bar-Lev forts in your possession and utilize defensible terrain.

Here are some general hints on Egyptian play:

- Try to cut Israeli mobility by controlling key roads. This allows you to achieve local superiority much more easily. Because of the high movement point cost of off-road terrain, roads are more important in this game than in many others.
- Don't be afraid of using Hasty Attacks and don't be afraid of losses. If you achieve an even attrition rate, you will eliminate the IDF while you still have considerable strength left. Try to get at least exchanges, so you can attack again in the exploitation combat segment. Fortunately, artillery can be used again in exploitation combat, while planes that have flown cannot be used for the rest of the turn. This effectively means that each artillery unit equals two Israeli planes - an Egyptian advantage!
- That having been said, the key to winning the game of attrition is high-odds attacks. That way if you roll poorly, you get the exchanges, but if you roll well, you lose nothing. You will have to find the right balance between the number of attacks you make and the odds of those attacks - it depends on the stage of the game, the force ratio and your opponent.
- Choose only 2 or 3 attacks per turn, and focus all your air and nearby artillery to bombard these hexes first. This will reduce the defending combat strength, and when you take the hex (whether during the normal combat phase or the exploitation combat segment), you take possession of any Israeli tank wrecks.
- Use your armor battalions to give you combined arms stacks. An especially sneaky and annoying way to get extra tank battalions is to use replacement points to bring the Egyptian infantry brigades up to strength (the ones that were broken down to cross the Suez), and then keep the armored battalions for combined arms.
- The decision whether to use artillery for combat shifts or bombardment requires some finesse. If the defender is in good terrain, and/or it is a night turn, use the maximum shifts possible. Otherwise bombardment may yield better results. Often a mix of the two is good, but remember to apply column shifts in an all or nothing manner, since SNAFU rolls will reduce them by one or two. This is by the way a hidden advantage to bombardment: no SNAFU roll. I don't bother bombarding leg units unless they have a Hasty Move marker.
- Keep artillery units stacked in good terrain (inside the SAM umbrella whenever possible) to prevent unnecessary losses to air strikes and / or marauding Israeli armor. If the Israeli player is focusing on them, you can consider sticking in AT units with the stacks to help absorb losses.
- Air units: after 1st turn, use +2 pilots for ground support (which aren't affected by the pilot rating), and the rest for air strikes. Keep the MiG-21s for interception (i.e. don't bother escorting missions if the Radar track is out). That way he has to escort whatever strike he does, not wanting your MiGs to intercept his strike planes, wasting F-4s that could have been used for ground strikes. If you escort your strikes, he can kill your MiGs and then kill your striking planes too. If you don't knock out his radar, then be conservative. Strike only hexes you will attack, or non-armor non-infantry units (i.e. artillery, mech. inf., etc.) Don't try to get foot troops unless under hasty marker, they're simply too tough. I have never tried to attack Israeli air units directly because it is so difficult to get a hit, and the effects of eliminating Israeli planes is diluted, since a percentage of them are off at the Golan front anyway (i.e. you need to eliminate 2-3 planes before you reduce the number of planes facing you by 1). For this plan, stick to using your air force to influence the ground war.
- Use air strikes for recon of rear areas if you're interested. You are allowed to examine stacks that are subject to attack, and you may be able to find out where those Israeli bridging units are that way. Near the front, you can use artillery for the same effect.
- Keep your airmobile brigades and commandos in reserve for the right moment, when you cut off 15+ steps for a Sudden Death Victory Condition. Remember that you get VPs for putting units out of supply, so don't use your airmobile units in combat. Drop them far behind the enemy so that he stays out of supply even if you attack him with other units and he retreats. Because supply is judged at combat, you can get lots of VPs, good combat results and a Sudden Death Victory Condition. I suggest getting such brigades back into the Air Display as soon after their mission as possible so they can pull off such an attack again. Don't squander these units as regular infantry. Resist the temptation to use them too soon. If the Israeli Detection track is out, you will be able to use these units freely. Otherwise, night missions are probably the best.
- You will suffer some losses, so brace yourself for it. Think of how much you are making the Israelis lose. I recommend using your replacements as soon as possible. This keeps your momentum and can be depressing to the Israeli player. Stack AT units with attacking groups and armored formations, so you can take losses from them due either to combat or air strikes. You start with a good number of AT replacements, and when the Soviets intervene, you will receive even more. A step of an AT lost is a much smaller reduction in combat power than an infantry or armor step, and such replaced units move up more quickly when eliminated because of their high movement allowance.

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- Don't count on combat reserves, since they're fickle. You will roll a SNAFU when you need them most. I tend not to use them for this reason.

- Stack units from different divisions together so you can support them with both army and various divisional artillery and leaders. Two divisions can work in tandem this way to increase flexibility.

- Keep up the pressure no matter what. The Israeli side is very brittle if forced to retreat constantly.

- Protect your HQ's and especially leaders at all costs. Keep some reserve unit stacked with them, and keep them in good terrain. The loss of a leader or two will really hurt your combat ability.

- Plan for exploitation combat, so you know what you'll do if you get an exchange or if the Israeli stacks retreat and you advance. You must

set up and plan for both. You'll feel pretty silly if you execute a brilliant first series of attacks, but then cannot follow up because you are out of position. This is one of the trickier but potentially more rewarding aspects of CS '73.

- Commandos: Using commandos for ambushes is good, especially vs. combined arms stacks, since it negates the combined arms bonus of +2. Keep commandos stacked with regular army units for their ability to take a step loss and apply an extra +1 or +2 to the AT strength when defending. Commandos operating independently away from the bulk of the Egyptian army are simply asking to be destroyed by Israeli armor forces. Another commando tactic (very historical) is to use them to harass retreating Israeli armor. Since they don't have to attack when adjacent, you can move them behind Israeli stacks up to their full movement allowance without incurring a

Hasty Attack penalty (since they won't be participating in the attack).

- Tank Recovery: These rules are the key to victory through attrition, so study them! Basically, you want possession of the hex after a battle to destroy any opposing tank wrecks. Because it is so easy to recover tanks, this greatly multiplies the effective losses you inflict, and it is the reason I recommend using bombardment heavily before a combat you think you will win.

The corollary of course is that you may wish to take some of your losses in tanks in the attack, since you will have a 2/3 chance of recovering whatever steps you lose that way. Some bad die-rolling may make you wish you hadn't, of course, so I usually prefer to burn up my AT replacements first. But with a few armor replacements to cover bad die-rolling, this is an excellent tactic for the Egyptians too, not just the Israelis.

- Defending bridges: Since there are serious restrictions on movement on the western side of the Suez, I recommend a full defense on the eastern side, where you can move freely. If you try cross back, you will only be able to do so piecemeal, and will probably be defeated piecemeal, due to the rules restricting such movement. If the Israelis luck out and force a crossing, cut it off on the east side to put him out of supply and slow him down. If your attack goes well, it will never come to this, of course!

I hope this plan has inspired you to consider the potential of an all-out Egyptian attack in CS '73. It is complicated and not without risks, but the potential rewards are even greater. I would love to hear how well this plan works for you, and let me know if you come up with the perfect counter-plan as the Israelis!

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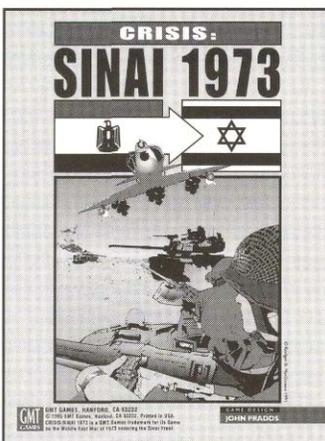
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