

DESIGN NOTES FOR SYRIAN STRONGHOLD (REVISED)

**By
Alan R. Arvold**

Syrian Stronghold is the last of the scenarios designed by Kurt Miller. It is supposed to be a hypothetical scenario occurring during the 1973 War between the Israelis and the Syrians. It is a scenario that came with the original game. It is a badly flawed scenario as is usual for all of Kurt's works. It depicts an Israeli assault upon a Syrian stronghold some where in northern Israel during the early days of the war. The main problem with this premise is that in reality the Syrians never got that far and really had no real intention of doing so as their goal in the war was the recovery of the Golan Heights. I therefore took it upon my self to improve it and changed the scenario to occurring in Lebanon in the mid Seventies, a more realistic and historical simulation. Oh, by the way, the files are titled Fortress in the game and I continued the practice in my revision.

The Mapboard

The mapboard used the Mediterranean region series of terrain hexes and I decided to leave it alone with no changes. I have it now representing a hypothetical region in northern Lebanon where the new scenario is taking place.

The Order of Battle

In Kurt Miller's scenario, the order of battle for both sides was a menagerie of units from all four wars and of course made no sense, especially in their placement within formations. So I scrapped the whole order of battle and made a new one from scratch. The Syrians receive part of the 7th Infantry Division, plus a FROG brigade. The Israelis receive an armored division. I used the 1973 organizations as a starting point then made improvements to the organizations to reflect new and/or more modern equipment and vehicles that were assigned to those units in the immediate post war years. Both sides receive leaders down the battalion level.

The Scenario

The new scenario is based on the situation in Lebanon in the mid to late Seventies. In 1975 the Lebanese Civil War broke out. The Syrians backed the Muslim factions in the war and the Israelis backed the Christian factions. Historically the Syrians sent about 40,000 troops into northern Lebanon, supposedly to keep the Israelis out, but in reality to train terrorist and set up cells which they would send down into Israeli to make terrorist attacks. The Israelis were initially content to train Christian militias to defend southern Lebanon and by extension, the northern Israeli border. However, by 1978 the Christian militias were weakening from the continued battle with the Muslims and the terrorist

cells were able to establish themselves in southern Lebanon and make raids across the border into Israel. In response to this the Israelis launched Operation Litani, which cleared the terrorist cells out of southern Lebanon and drove them back north. There were no clashes with Syrian forces though as Israel did not go far enough north to cause any. This would change in 1982 when the Israelis again invaded Lebanon and did this time go far enough to the north to engage the Syrian forces there. But that is beyond the scope of this scenario. The new scenario, which occurs in 1976, presupposes this; that when the Syrians moved into northern Lebanon, they did so with far more sinister intentions. Their plan was to slowly move their way south, down the Lebanese-Israeli border, and set up bases for their FROG and SCUD missile units with which to bombard northern Israel, just like they did in the years before the 1967 War when they controlled the Golan Heights. The Israelis get wind of the plan and decide to nip it in the bud before it gets started. They invade Lebanon, heading to the north to engage the Syrians directly. In this scenario, one of the invading Israeli divisions assault a recently discovered FROG brigade which is being defended by part of the Syrian 7th Infantry Division. In a way the Syrians see the coming battle as a retribution for the defeat they suffered in the 1973 War as the Israelis have in their force the 7th Armored Brigade, the very brigade that stopped the Syrian 7th Infantry Division in its tracks during the early days of that war.

I have kept all of Kurt Miller's scenario parameters, including the objective hexes, but I had to change the victory point levels to reflect the new orders of battle. I also had to change the date and scenario description to reflect the new scenario.

Bonus Scenario

I have included a bonus scenario, Syrian Revenge, here in this set. It is based upon the scenario Divided Ground by William Jenkins. This scenario can be found on the Blitzkrieg Wargamer's Club website in the Internet. Jenkins's scenario was a lot like Miller's, a hypothetical battle between the Syrians and the Israelis in the early days of the 1973 War. And like Miller's it has a fictional mapboard, an order of battle for both sides that contain units from all four wars, and has mixed formations that shows that Mr. Jenkins has not idea how military formations are organized. The scenario itself is nothing more than a meeting engagement. I changed this to make it a meeting engagement in the aftermath of the Syrian Stronghold scenario. To start off, I made some minor changes to the map, like giving names to some of the more prominent features, changing the compass direction so the coastline is now the Mediterranean coastline, and changed a few bridges so they are now heavy duty types, good enough to support tanks. The original orders of battle I scrapped and completely revamped it, giving both sides an armored division. The scenario itself happens just after Syrian Stronghold, with the Israelis withdrawing from Lebanon. The Syrian FROG and SCUD brigades have been driven back into Syria and the Israelis decide that it is time to go home. The Syrians, much angered over their "loss" have moved an armored division in front of the withdrawing Israelis in hopes of securing some success out of what is overall a failed operation. The scenario follows most of the guidelines of Jenkins original scenario, including the same

objective hexes, although the victory point levels have been changed to reflect the new orders of battle changing the date to a one years after the 1973 War.

Conclusion

This is the last of Kurt Miller's scenarios. Hopefully, my improvements have made better situations of them. Enjoy.