DESIGN NOTES FOR ASHQELON RESEARCH CENTER SCENARIO
(REVISED)
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   Shortly after I got Divided Ground, I down loaded the Ashqelon Research Center scenario, which was created by Will Leister, from one of the websites that has scenarios for all games of the Campaign Series by Talonsoft. To be honest I was disappointed in the scenario. It was poorly organized, especially in its O.B. and scenario files, and it did not play well. So I left it on file and largely ignored it for a long time. Recently I called it up again in hopes of improving on it, not just for myself, but for other gamers as well. I first started making changes to the scenario in various places but quickly found that this made a bad situation worse. So I printed out the O.B and scenario files on paper and started making my corrections on them and from these rebuilt the whole scenario from scratch.

   Before going into what I did to change the scenario, let's see what was wrong with it in the first place.

1. The premise of the scenario was all wrong. In 1974 the United States did not have the Neutron Bomb, so how could the Israelis be working on it, considering that their nuclear program was decades behind that of the Americans.
2. The date of the scenario was wrong. In March of 1974 the Israelis and the Syrians were still fighting a war of attrition up in the Golan Heights and Syria (mostly artillery duels and commando raids). Considering that the Israeli intelligence services were at their maximum alertness, there is no way that the Syrians could move such a force to the Sinai with out the Israelis knowing about it.
3. Even if the Syrians did do it, they could only set up in a six mile wide strip of land east of the Suez Canal which was held by the Egyptians. From there they would have to traverse through the length of the Israeli held Sinai Peninsula with out being seen. Not likely to be happening.
4. Although the 1973 War proved that multi-national Arab forces could operate under a joint command, the different Arab forces would be fighting with their own equipment and under their own colors and uniforms. They would not be dressed in Syrian gear.
5. The Orders of Battle for both sides consisted of a bunch of independent battalions, companies, and platoons in a single force. There was no command structure and what few headquarter units that there were in the O.B.'s were independent with nothing under them, thus they could not serve their primary purposes in the game.
6. The reinforcement schedule for both sides was haphazard and irregular, plus a lot of units in the O.B.'s were not used in the scenario so why have them there at all, especially for a hypothetical scenario.

   In short, the scenario ended up being a throw together type of scenario which started off fine in its early construction but was finished in a hurry because the author wanted to get

it up on the charts by a certain deadline. Given all that it had against it, one would ask why bother with it at all. Well I saw some potential in it and so decided to make what I think it was meant to be.

To star off with, I checked the map file. I found nothing wrong with the map file, in fact it was the best part of the original scenario. (Probably the first thing that was worked on.) So the next file to work on was the O.B. file. I printed out the old O.B, file, after labeling all the independent units, to see exactly what each side had. I then eliminated units that obviously would not be used because there was no need for them, the best examples being the Syrian bridge-laying vehicles. (With no rivers or anti-tank ditches in the scenario, why have them?) I then traded obsolete units for more modern ones, such as the T-34/85 and Sherman M50 Mk 2 units for more modern T-62 and Isherman units. Next I started constructing modified O.B.s with proper force, battalion, and company organizations, complete with the necessary headquarter units. I left the number of leaders about the same for both sides although I opted to make most of them motorized. This meant putting the units in identifiable units, with real designations that I borrowed from the 1973 War for both sides.

For the Israelis I organized them into three forces. First was the Ashqelon Garrison Force. It was composed of several units. We had the Ashqelon Militia Company which is stationed in the city of Ashqelon itself. The Ashqelon Research Center Guard force which normally manned the perimeter in individual positions but during the emergency are concentrated at the front gate. There was an infantry battalion from the famed "Golani" actually garrisoning the Center as well as a mixed reserve anti-aircraft company. There were two reserve tank companies, a mixed artillery battalion, and an anti-tank gun company scattered in various places on the map. While these were reserve units, their mission was to provide the initial defense against an attack of the Center until the Relief Force arrived. The Relief Force consisted of an armored brigade, an airmobile paratroop company, and several battalions/companies of artillery. One will notice that these units had sub-units from many different brigades in the Israeli Army. This reflects the urgency of the mission and the fact that the Israelis were gathering the first units that have been mobilized in any brigade to make up the force. They did this in the 1973 War with good success and eventually the units were returned to their parent brigades once they pulled up to the front. The third Israeli group was something that I personally added to the scenario. These were the Israeli settlers occupying the outer kibitzes on the map. The settlers were from the new Patch 2.0 that I recently upgraded my game with. They will defend their kibitzes against the Arabs and slow them down in their advance north from the Sinai as well as providing and early warning for the Garrison Force.

The Arabs were divided into two groups. The Composite Force was the main attack force. It was an Egyptian led force as Egypt is supplying most of the mechanized forces in this mission. It consisted of an Egyptian armored brigade which in itself contained two armored battalions, a mechanized battalion, and a mixed anti-tank battalion. It also had a Jordanian motorized infantry battalion, with an attached recon squadron which is sole reconnaissance unit for the whole force. There was also an Iraqi motorized infantry battalion reinforced by a tank company. There was a Syrian commando battalion,

mounted in helicopters. And finally, to round out the Composite Force, was a FROG Battalion. Each of these units had a particular mission in the scenario. The Egyptian armored brigade, minus an armored battalion, was to proceed up the main road and capture the Research Center, eliminating any Israeli forces that got in its way. The separate Egyptian armored battalion, supported by the Jordanian motorized infantry battalion, was to proceed up along the coast and capture the city of Ashqelon, thus securing that flank and then sending what forces it can spare east to assist in capturing the Research Center. The Iraqi motorized infantry battalion was to proceed north to capture the out lying kibitzes and thus secure the Arab right flank. The Syrian commando battalion was to fly north and set up ambush positions to delay the Israeli Relief Force as it came down from the north. The other Arab force was the Ashqelon Arab Community. These consisted of angry mob units, another new unit from the Patch 2.0, who held the town center of Ashqelon at the beginning of the game. Their job was to divert Israeli forces towards them. They will not last long in the game, but at least they provide plenty of martyrs for future Arab terrorist groups.

I changed the premise of the scenario to that of the Arabs attacking the Israeli ability to produce nuclear weapons. This was more in line with the historical backround of the times. I also moved the attack to 1975, a date that would have been after the end of all fighting related to the 1973 war, but when the various Arab nations were still in a form of an alliance (before Egypt broke ranks and made peace with Israel in the late Seventies). I also made this an Egyptian led mission. The only false premise I included in this scenario was that Israel had pulled back to the eastern third of the Sinai Peninsula, thus giving the Arabs a chance to sneak a force in under the cover of sandstorms. (Israel did not pull back in the Sinai in stages until after the peace treaty between her and Egypt was signed.) While I kept the same number of planes to each side, I restricted them to a few types each, not use every different type one in the arsenal as Mr. Leister did. I also kept the types of helicopters used down to one type on each side. All other scenario information remained the same.

I would like to thank Mr. Leister for his original scenario and for the opportunity to make it into a better one than what it originally was. Enjoy it.