

Flashpoint Levant

Operation Damascus Steel

Aug. 17th, 1989

Situation

Our scenario starts in the early 1980's, during the peak of the Lebanese Civil War. Israel did not intervene during the civil war due to successful US diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the conflict.

This resulted in Syrian forces gaining a chokehold on Lebanese territory and deploying Syrian and Soviet SAM sites at their leisure. This deemed Operation Peace of the Galilee not viable due to the great number of SAM sites posing a high threat to any Israeli aircraft attempting to operate in the theatre.

On the 17th of January 1988, units of the Syrian army entered Beirut to dismantle the government which it had previously negotiated a peace treaty with and install a new pro-Syrian government, effectively occupying the country.

The international community quickly condemned the Syrian government for its behavior and employed economic sanctions against Syria. They also demanded for the immediate withdrawal of Syrian military forces. The sanctions and demands were of little effect.

The occupation of Lebanon was bloody. No civilians supported the new government and some took up arms against the occupying Syrian forces. Israel resumed their ground campaign with the aid of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) and remnants of the Lebanese Armed Forces loyal to the previous government. Their attacks were effective and they slowly advanced towards Beirut from the southern border.

The UN had a presence in Beirut prior to the events of January the 17th, however after the Syrian army had entered they withdrew due to the overwhelming military might of a nation's entire army against a peace keeping force. They retreated south to Naqoura to establish a new base of operations and fortified the city whilst the UN security council held an emergency meeting.

A blockade was established by naval vessels belonging to the US & UK. More reinforcements were sent to Naqoura. The consensus of the security council was to safeguard the sovereignty of neighbouring nations and to commence dialogue with Syria.

Diplomatic talks fell apart on June the 29th when a Syrian patrol boat opened fire on a merchant vessel, sinking and killing all the crew. Tensions skyrocketed and with the situation already being at breaking point in the region over the last few months (especially with Operation Praying Mantis a month earlier - an attack on Iranian forces for the retaliation deploying mines in the Persian gulf which nearly resulted in the loss of a USN frigate), resulted in a US Navy retaliation against Syrian anti-ship batteries as well as coastal SAM (SA2 & SA3) sites.

The buildup of troops and other ground-based military hardware was starting in Turkey as hopes were starting to fade that the situation could be resolved via diplomacy. Troops were from partner UN nations which included the US, UK, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia & France.

This however resulted in a Syrian build-up too, resulting in the occasional skirmish on the border with Turkish forces.

The coalition deployed several ships on the eastern Mediterranean sea, most notably the Stennis (CVN-73) and G. Washington (CVN-74) aircraft carriers along with their escort vessels as well as the LHA-4 Nassau to provide a platform for the USMC to deploy amphibious attack vessels for land warfare if needed.

The aerial fleet consisted of a mix due to the different nations participating. Some were frontline aircraft and some were reserve. The USAF deployed F-16s, A-10s and F-15s from Incirlik, whilst the USN & USMC deployed F/A-18s, F-14s and AV-8Bs. France provided a few Gazelle squadrons as well as a Mirage squadron. The UK had several aircraft as well, such as Harriers from 1st Squadron and Tornados to provide anti-ship, SEAD and anti-runway capabilities. There was also a mixture of various tankers and AWACS aircraft to provide various forms of support.

The coalition group isn't expecting an easy fight and is preparing for a long lasting conflict. It is evident that the Soviets have been providing SAM sites (satellite photography has shown shipments heading towards Syria), MiG-29s (recently detected by AWACS in Syrian airspace) as well as naval vessels (last seen heading towards the ports of Tartus and Latakia).

On September the 8th at 0200 local time, a well organised surprise attack occurs. Syrian forces push into Turkish territory. They capture a handful of border cities easily despite the garrison of Turkish troops, they begin to close in on Antakya and Kumlu. Hatay airport has been captured by Syrian troops, although only a civil airport, it is a very valuable asset at this early stage. Syrian marines have also started landing on the beaches of Samandagi and the Soviet gifted ships have commenced bombardment of Antakya.

It was made evident with the build up of coalition forces that an attack was due to happen so Assad has ordered a preemptive strike, his aims are to gain a bargaining chip at the negotiation table.

The coalition was caught by surprise but managed to halt the Syrian advance after a few miles. This is where our scenario begins.

Comms plan

Operation Damascus Steel Comms plan	
Name	Freq
Turkey ATC (Incirlik, Anapa, Gaziantep and Hatay)	249.000
OverlordBot ATC	249.700
Cyprus ATC (Akrotiri ATC)	248.000
FARP ATC (FARP Lancelot and Helena)	124.000
FARP ATC FM	24.000
Common	253.000
AI Awacs 'Darkstar'	133.000
Human GCI 1	134.000
Human GCI 2	135.000
OverlordBot VHF	136.000
OverlordBot UHF	255.000
OverlordBot FM	40.000
Tanker 'Shell' KC135MPRS	137.000
Tanker 'Arco' KC135	138.000
Heli common	30.000
CVN-73 George Washington	126.500
CVN-74 John C. Stennis, CV-59 Forrestal and LHA-4 Nassau	127.500
AI AWACS 'Magic'	133.500
AI AWACS 'Image' - Akrotiri AWACS	133.700
Tanker 'Texaco' KC130	134.500
Tanker 'Texaco' S-3B - Recovery tanker	135.500

Weapons

	BANNED	RESTRICTED	COST	AIRFRAMES	MAX AA	MAX AG	
AA MISSILES				General	20	60	
	AIM-9X	AIM-54A-Mk-47	10	A-10A	20	120	
	AIM-120B	AIM-54A-Mk-60	10	A-10C	20	120	
	AIM-120C						
	AIM-54C-Mk-47						
	R-77						NOTES:
							Weapons not explicitly listed are free
							Everything is subject to change
	SD-10						
BOMBS							
	GBU-38	CBU-87	15				
	GBU-32(V)2/B	CBU-99	10				
	GBU-31(V)1/B	Mk-20	5				
	GBU-31(V)2/B	GBU-12	30				
	GBU-31(V)3/B	GBU-16	30				
	GBU-31(V)4/B	GBU-10	30				
	GBU-54(V)1/B	GBU-24	30				
	CBU-97	AGM-62	30				
	CBU-103						
	CBU-105						
	RN-24						
	RN-28						
AG MISSILES							
	M151 - HE APKWS	AGM-65D	30				
	M282 - APP APKWS	AGM-65H	30				
	AGM-154A	AGM-65G	30				
	AGM-154C	AGM-65K	30				
	AGM-84E	AGM-65F	30				
	AGM-84H	AGM-65E	30				
		AGM-65L	30				
		AGM-88C	30				
		AGM-84D	30				
	BRM-1 90MM	C-701IR	15				
	GB-6	C-701T	15				
	GB-6-HE	C-802AK	30				
	GB-6-SFW						
	LS-6-500						
	LD-10						
	CM-802AKG						

Regions

0 - Turkey and Cyprus

Staging ground for the NATO coalition.

1- Hatay

On the border with Syria, it's where most Armed recon missions are located.

2 - Aleppo

First fixed wing area, lightly defended by only a few SAM sites and have plenty of strike missions and the first set of BAI and CAS

3 - Latakia/Coast

Following Aleppo, all efforts are moved to the coast, location of the first SA-5 site, and the important Bassel Al Assad airbase.

4 - Palmyra

Keeping the momentum, the region is bombarded due to its strategic importance.

6 - Homs

Homs is the next step in the war, the region houses the Syrian air defense academy, an SA-5 site and several important industrial areas.

7 - Damascus

The seat of power, the last stand and where we will finish the campaign, expect heavy air defenses and more modern aircraft here.

Missions

For what missions pilots can expect, well there's some variety honestly:

Strike: Missions designed with infrastructure and installation destruction, examples are factories, fuel tank farms, warehouses, c2 and FOBs.

BAI: A middle ground between CAS and Strike, those missions will not have immediate impact on the frontline, but will undoubtedly help the cause by denying supplies and reinforcements.

SEAD/DEAD: SAM and EWR sites you have to destroy to open the way for friendlies.

Anti Ship: As the name suggests, on those missions you hunt and sink ships from the Syrian navy.

CAS: CAS missions are missions in which you help troops engaged in combat or soon to be engaged both in close quarters battles or open fields.

OCA: Destruction of airport installations and parked aircraft, as well as runways to prevent enemy aircraft from taking off.

Armed Recce: Missions designated for helicopters, usually infantry formations, checkpoints and light units in general, protected by small weapons and manpads, on those missions, pilots can transport and deploy troops to assist on the objectives.

CAP: CAP taskings will assign pilots to the first region with active missions, the mission will only be completed after all missions are completed on the region you got assigned to. Those missions do not award tickets.