**OPERATION DESERT MERIDIAN**

**Background Briefing**

Around 1995, a separatist organization known as the "Coalition for Regional Autonomy" (CRA) began operating in the disputed Meridian Province. These militants claimed to represent local indigenous populations and established a government-in-exile in a neighboring state. The CRA received substantial support from Regional Power Alpha and later from international backers including equipment and "advisors."

Operating from secure bases across the border, CRA forces conducted regular strikes against Security Force patrols in Meridian Province. Central Authority forces responded with cross-border operations, resulting in several significant clashes. Despite attempts at diplomatic resolution through international mediation in 1998, intermittent fighting continued. A tentative ceasefire collapsed following civil unrest in regional population centers.

**Tactical Situation**

Meridian Province encompasses vast arid territory with sparse settlements and limited population. Conventional warfare tactics rarely apply in this environment. Combat typically involves rapid, intense encounters between mobile "strike groups" attempting to control strategic transit corridors and intercept opposition forces. The most common engagements involve ambushes and chance encounters between patrols.

**SIDE A (Regional Power Alpha & CRA Fighters)**

**Resources:**

* 1 Mechanized Regional Command Element
* 18 Heavy Armor Vehicles (Type-5M)
* 3 Light Reconnaissance Vehicles
* 16 Armored Personnel Carriers
* 12 Infantry Squads with anti-armor capabilities
* Limited artillery support

**Vulnerabilities:**

* Lower overall cohesion rating (14)
* Divided command structure between conventional forces and militants
* Limited air reconnaissance capabilities
* CRA forces restricted from movement during initial phase

**Key Challenges:**

* Must secure settlement area before reinforcements arrive
* Need to neutralize enemy heavy armor advantage
* Operating with divided forces entering from separate axes
* Breaking enemy force while preserving own combat effectiveness

**Strategy:**

* Deploy CRA militant force near central settlement
* Bring armored elements from two directions to create pincer movement
* Utilize terrain features for defensive positioning
* Priority target: neutralize enemy's advanced heavy armor

**SIDE B (Central Authority Forces)**

**Resources:**

* 1 Combined Joint Task Force Command Element
* 4 Advanced Heavy Armor Vehicles
* 4 Wheeled Reconnaissance Vehicles
* 14 Modern Infantry Fighting Vehicles with support weapons
* 10 Infantry Squads with enhanced training
* Mobile mortar platforms

**Vulnerabilities:**

* Forces divided between two command structures
* Extended supply lines
* Limited knowledge of militant positions
* Challenging terrain limiting mobility options

**Key Challenges:**

* Coordinating operations between different national contingents
* Neutralizing entrenched position at settlement
* Exploiting mobility advantage before enemy consolidates
* Achieving force concentration despite separate entry points

**Strategy:**

* Rapid deployment from multiple axes to divide enemy attention
* Utilize superior armored vehicles as breakthrough force
* Secure settlement as central operational hub
* Employ reconnaissance elements to identify enemy weak points

**Terrain Analysis**

* Open plains with minimal cover
* Seasonal drainage channel (currently dry) with loose substrate affecting mobility
* Elevated rocky areas with scattered vegetation providing defensive positions
* Small settlement consisting of simple structures
* Limited maintenance track providing north-south access

**Operation Parameters**

* Duration: 12 tactical phases
* Side A Victory Conditions: Break enemy force cohesion and secure settlement by phase 10
* Side B Victory Conditions: Break both enemy force elements and secure settlement by phase 12
* Special Condition: CRA militant elements cannot operate during initial phase