

FITNA

GLOBAL WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST

RULES



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Fitna – Global War in the Middle East (2013-?) is a 2 to 6 player, grand strategic level, card driven wargame depicting the various military confrontations in the Middle East and the emergence of IS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria), from 2013 into the near future. The game allows players to simulate a major confrontation between global actors (the US and Russia) and regional actors (Israel and the Sunni and Shia states), who are supported by their respective allies, involving militias of all kinds, but also Daesh (IS) and the Kurdish Peshmergas. The game thus allows you to play several hypothetical conflicts that could arise in future years. You can choose to play any camp (except IS which is activated through event cards) and in doing so test your own strategies.

The number of players (from 2 to 6) depends on the scenario selected. Optional rules always allow 2 players to game any multiplayer scenario.

Each turn represents two months of real time and is divided into as many phases as there are players. Each phase is subdivided into 7 segments (see the sequence of play). The 95 cards constitute the driving mechanism of the game. They allow for the generation of events, moving units, launching offensives, taking reinforcements or replacements, and influencing combat resolution.

2.0 GAME COMPONENTS

Each copy of Fitna contains the following:

- One A1 format map of the Middle East, containing force pools, time tracks and the international tension track;
- 288 double-sided counters;
- one deck of 95 cards ('Assets' & 'Events');
- 5 'Special Joker' cards;
- 6 player aid sheets;
- a rules booklet;
- a scenario booklet;
- one six-sided die (D6).

2.1 THE MAP

The map represents an extended version of the Middle East's Fertile Crescent between the Persian Gulf and the eastern Mediterranean. It covers Kuwait, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, as well as those parts of Israel, Turkey, Iran, Jordan and Saudi Arabia affected by the conflict. The map contains 115 spaces linked via dark grey lines representing the main axes of communication. Each space depicts one of three different types of terrain in the region (clear, mountainous or marsh), which can contain cities, oilfields or holy sites. Spaces outlined in red represent political, economic or strategic objectives to be captured. Certain spaces have a defence bonus (-1 or -2) representing the natural defensive value of the space's topographical environment.

2.2 PLAYER AID SHEETS

The Player Aids include the detailed Sequence of Play and contain charts and information summarising the main rules, as well as the Combat Results Table, its modifiers and effects.

2.3 SCENARIO BOOKLET

The scenario booklet includes 11 scenarios allowing the players to simulate:

- 1) The civil war in Syria: 2012-2013 (tutorial scenario for 2 players; 6 turns);
- 2) The fight against IS: 2014-2015 (the maximum extension of IS; 3-4 players; 6 turns);
- 3) The Kremlin counter-attacks: Russian intervention in Syria and the PKK rebellion in Turkey, 2015-2016 (3-4 players; 6 turns);
- 4) The collapse of IS: 2017-2018 (3 players; 9 turns);
- 5) Iraq invades Kuwait again (2 players; 6 turns);
- 6) The Sultan awakes: Turkish military intervention in Iraq and Syria (3 players; 9 turns);
- 7) The struggle for Kurdish independence (4 players; 9 turns);
- 8) Limited war between Iran and Saudi Arabia (2 players; 9 turns);
- 9) Tsahal vs. Hezbollah: Israel attacks Lebanon and Syria (2 players; 6 turns)
- 10) Regional war in Syria involving Israel, Iran, Turkey and Russia after the US withdrawal (5 players; 6 turns);
- 11) Fitna: Global War in the Middle East (the full campaign: 6 players; 12 turns).

2.4 PLAYING PIECES

The playing pieces comprise 288 counters (including markers), the 95 Asset and Event cards, as well as 5 Special Joker cards.

2.5 DIE

Players use a standard six-sided die (D6) to resolve combat and random events.

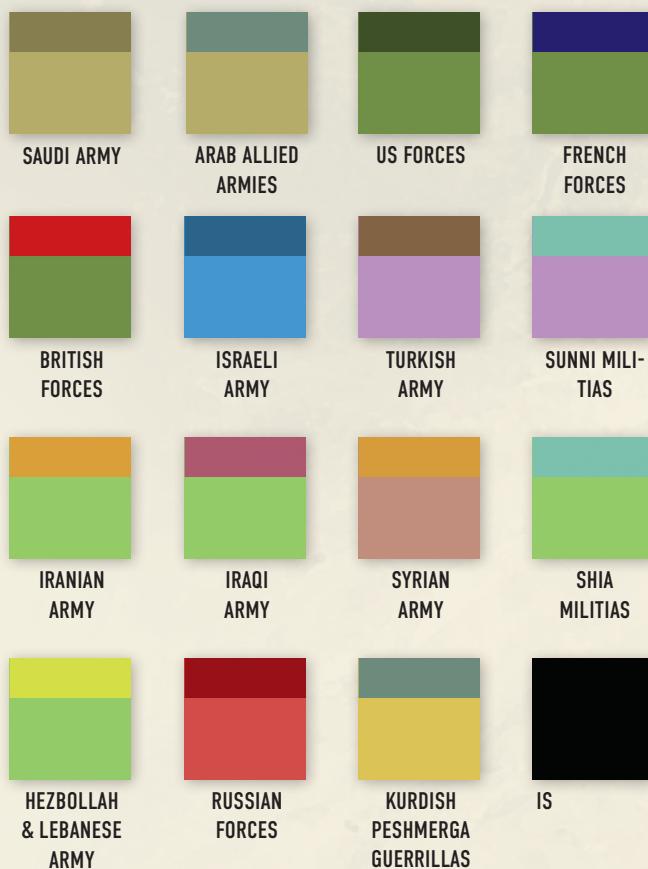
3.0 COUNTERS

The counters represent all the eligible military units liable to play a role in the various scenarios, along with various markers. Combat units represent corps (XXX), divisions (XX), brigades (X), regiments (III) and groups of Kurdish Peshmergas or IS jihadis. They can move and fight on the map subject to the game's rules, apart from certain Kurdish units, which are village garrisons and cannot move **except when they retreat**. Entrenchments cannot move, or be moved, and do not count for stacking.

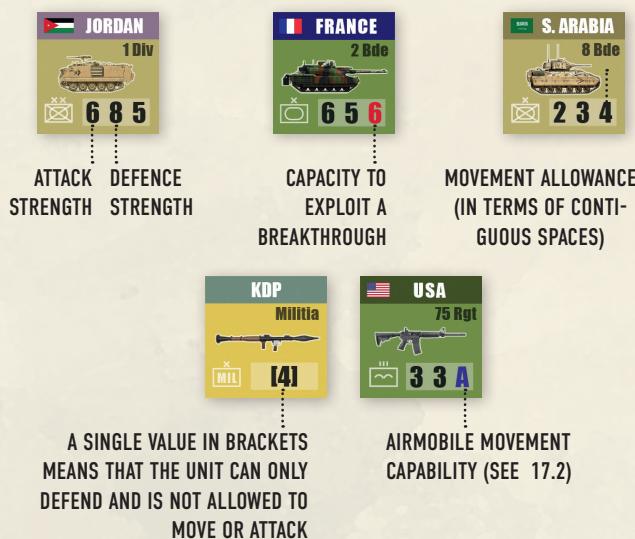
Turkish corps-level units (XXX) represent motorised and mechanised infantry units of 15,000 to 20,000 men, their combat vehicles and armament (including artillery and helicopters). Divisions represent units of 8,000 to 12,000 men with all their armament. Brigades

and regiments represent units of 2,000 to 3,500 men with all their armament. Armoured divisions and brigades (tanks) are represented by a tank silhouette and a movement factor in red, indicating their capacity to exploit a breakthrough during the offensive segment. Units are identified by their actual or historical designation.

3.1 UNIT COLOUR CODES



3.2 COMBAT UNIT VALUES



3.3 UNIT AND GAME ABBREVIATIONS

- AA: Air Assault (UK)
- AB: Airborne
- Arm: Armoured
- BAH: Bahrain
- Bde: Brigade
- Cdo: Commando (UK)
- CRT: Combat Resolution Table
- Div: Division
- EGY: Egypt
- FR: France
- Gd: Guard
- GOL: Golani
- Hezb: Hezbollah
- IRG: Islamic Revolutionary Guard (Iran)
- IRQ: Iraq
- JOR: Jordan
- KDP: Kurdish guerrillas in Iraq
- KUW: Kuwait
- LEB: Lebanon
- MD: Mechanised Division
- MEB: Marine Expeditionary Brigade (US)
- Mech: Mechanised
- MEU: Marine Expeditionary Unit (US)
- Mil: Militia
- NG: National Guard (Saudi)
- OMN: Oman
- OP: Operational Point(s)
- Para: Paratroop forces
- PKK: Kurdish guerrillas in Turkey
- Pr Gd: Presidential Guard (IRQ & SYR)
- PYD: Kurdish guerrillas in Syria
- QAT: Qatar
- Regt: Regiment
- RDP: Régiment Dragons Parachutistes (FR)
- SF: Special Forces
- SYR: Syria
- UAE: United Arab Emirates
- UK: United Kingdom
- VP: Victory Point(s)
- YEM: Yemen

Military units must always be placed in a space on the map, or in the owning player's Force Pool. All combat units have two 'steps' and are full strength on their front side and reduced strength on their reverse side. A pale strip indicates the reduced strength side of a combat unit.

The **Attack and Defence values** indicate a unit's capacity for combat as expressed in strength points. Entrenchment counters have no combat strength and do not count for stacking. Units stacked on an entrenchment benefit from a defensive bonus of -1 in addition to the space's intrinsic defence value.

A unit's **movement allowance** determines how far (in term of contiguous spaces) it can move during its movement segment. Entrenchment counters cannot be moved. Once set up in a space, an entrenchment counter remains

in place unless it has been occupied by an enemy unit or destroyed as a result of an offensive. A player can build new entrenchments by using Combat Engineer Asset cards.

4.0 STACKING

Stacking is the ability for a player to stack up to **3 military units in a single space**, including a maximum of 1 corps (for the Turkish player). This rule reflects the limited capacities for logistical support and tactical coordination of troops deployed in the same zone.

There are two exceptions to this rule:

- **4 IS units can stack together in the same space** because they have 1 step only (NB - The 2 step Al Baghdadi counter benefits from the same exception).
- **US and Russian units added to the map as a result of US or Russian military intervention, and Israeli units added in Haifa through play of a Reinforcements card may temporarily overstack** (see 27.1 and 28.0, and the Special Rules for Scenarios 9, 10 &11) until the end of the controlling player's next phase.

Entrenchment counters and other markers do not count towards the stacking limit. Units of different players and units of allied factions controlled by a player cannot stack together unless specifically allowed (see 20.0 for details).

5.0 CONTROL OF SPACES

A space is controlled by the player whose units are in the space – the space is friendly-controlled for that player's units. If two players have units stacked together in the same space, then the player whose units have the highest total defence strength controls the space. During an offensive, the targeted space is disputed and (temporarily) controlled by no player. A space without any units is controlled by the last player to have moved a unit through it. By definition, at the beginning of a scenario, every player controls the empty spaces in his own country.

Each player has a 'storage' area for his forces on the map (Force Pool), where he can stock reinforcements that have yet to arrive, and eliminated units that may be rebuilt during the game.

6.0 SETTING UP THE GAME

Lay out the map between the players. The Asset and Event cards are placed on two separate piles, face down, next to the map. The 'International Tension' and 'Turn' markers are placed on the relevant track. The counters are then placed according to the instructions for the selected scenario. Each player then takes a Joker counter, and certain players are allocated a Special Joker card.

The player with the initiative (see 7.0) then chooses a hand of 4 cards in total, by looking through the Asset

and/or Events piles and selecting cards as he wishes. He is followed by the second player, then the third, and so on. The cards are then reshuffled and returned to their place.

7.0 INITIATIVE

Each scenario indicates which player has the initiative and plays first **each turn**, and also the order of play of the other players.

7.1 OPTIONAL RULE

In those scenarios with at least 3 players they may, if they wish, opt for the following initiative rule; at the start of each turn, each player selects the card(s) he wishes to use to obtain Operation Points. The players reveal these cards simultaneously, and the player who has undertaken to spend the most Operation Points plays first, the next highest total plays second, and so on. In the event of a tie, the scenario's own initiative rules determine the order of play of those players who have committed the same number of OPs. Once a player has committed to spend his OPs, his card(s) is/are discarded and he uses the OPs when it is his turn to play. Once discarded, these cards cannot be eliminated by play of an Event card.

To avoid the classic dilemma of the last turn of a scenario, in which the player who plays last enjoys a genuine advantage, players who have chosen to follow the normal order of play as determined by the scenario, may choose to apply this optional rule for the final turn.

8.0 THE CARDS

The 95 cards indicate a particular support that can influence combat (the Asset cards) or an action/event (the Event cards), as well as a number of Operation Points (OPs) ranging from 4 – 8. The cards are used as desired to generate events or to perform certain actions – moving units, launching offensives, or influencing combat. Each player chooses 4 cards at the start of the scenario, and at the end of his phase draws new cards at random to bring his hand back up to 4 cards. Each card is sufficiently clear to explain its meaning and the manner in which to play it, but it is important to read them carefully and to pay attention to the conditions of use.

At the start of each scenario, each player creates his hand of 4 cards by examining all Asset and Event cards used in the scenario and selecting 4 of them. Once play has begun, at the end of each of his phases, a player brings his hand back up to 4 cards – when necessary – by drawing cards from the Asset and/or Event draw piles. The cards may not be examined until they have all been drawn. After being played, each card is placed face-down in a discard pile next to the corresponding draw pile. Each discard pile is reshuffled with its draw pile once every three turns – at the beginning of turns 3, 6, 9, and 12 – to create a new draw pile. This increases the fog of war. If a

draw pile runs out of cards then the discard pile is immediately shuffled to create a new draw pile (this is in addition to the reshuffling every 3 turns).

8.1 ASSET CARDS

These cards (red titles) influence combat or cancel the use of certain cards **played by other players**. The majority of the Asset cards only have an effect during one single offensive. If a card's effects last **until the end of the turn**, then that is specifically indicated on the card. As a reminder the player can place a marker on the map or on the relevant space on the Time Track, or he can place the card in front of him before discarding it at the end of his turn.

IS jihadis can only use Asset cards marked with the ● symbol; Kurdish Peshmergas can only use Asset cards marked with the ○ symbol. However all the other players can use these cards as well, unless specified otherwise. Only the Syrian and IS players can use the "Chemical Weapons" card (#19) as an Asset.

8.2 EVENT CARDS

These cards (blue titles) generate events, specific actions, or allow the arrival of reinforcements or replacements. Note that certain cards can only be played after a particular game turn (and obviously not at the very start of the game) or after another card has been played previously, in order to reflect the geopolitical realities. Note as well that certain cards are permanently removed from the game once played as an event. Some cards are also withdrawn from the game before play (see Scenario Booklet) to reflect the particular context of each scenario.

Once play has begun, players are free to draw cards – when necessary - from the Asset pile or the Event pile, or both. After being played, cards are placed face-down in a discard pile next to the corresponding draw pile, waiting to be reshuffled with the draw pile once every three turns – turns 3, 6, 9, and 12. This increases the fog of war.

8.3 HIGH TENSION CARDS

15 cards (6 Asset and 9 Event) are the High International Tension cards, identified as such by a red mention on the card. These are the most powerful cards in the game, representing the growing involvement of the United States and Russia in the game. When the High International Tension rule comes into play (once International Tension reaches Level 5) the cards are added to their two respective piles, which are then shuffled again. These cards remain in the game, even if International Tension goes back below Level 5.

9.0 JOKERS

Jokers represent special resources (financial, logistical, the supply of sophisticated weapons) as well as discreet diplomatic support. At the start of the game each player has a Joker counter for his nationality. When he plays his

Joker a player can immediately draw 2 cards. The jokers can be played at any point in the game, even during **another player's phase**. In certain 2 player scenarios each of the players has two Joker counters instead of the one. Once played, a Joker counter is removed from the game.

10.0 SPECIAL JOKERS

In certain scenarios 'Special Joker' cards allow the Israeli, Iranian (or the player controlling the Lebanese Hezbollah), Russian and American players to launch a series of devastating strikes on their opponents without having to use the standard cards. Each Special Joker card is sufficiently clear to explain its function and its use. These cards represent these four countries' classical capacity to dissuade; between them they create a certain 'balance of terror'. They cannot be cancelled by any other card. Once played a Special Joker card is removed from the game. In certain scenarios the Iranian player has two Special jokers (one for Iran and one for Hezbollah).

11.0 STRATEGIC DEPOTS

A player can always move 2 units and launch 1 offensive **in his phase** without spending a card to do so, by using fuel and ammunition stocked for this purpose. He declares he is using the 'Strategic Depot' rule. However, if he uses this particular rule, he may not allocate cards to obtain OPs during his **phase**. If he wants to use more OPs, he must expend one or two cards to do so, and therefore may not use the Strategic Depot rule.

12.0 SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Players adhere to the following sequence of play for each game turn.

12.1 INITIATIVE PLAYER PHASE

(player determined by the scenario **unless using the optional rule explained in 7.1**)

1. **EVENTS** - The active player plays one, several or no **Event** cards; he places his reinforcements and any replacements on the map. He can exchange one of his cards (and one only) with another player, declaring the exchange publicly (the other players know about it thanks to their own intelligence services!) but without revealing the card exchanged.
2. **SUPPLY** - Check lines of communication and supply for every unit (of all players). Place an 'Isolated' marker on every unit out of supply.
3. **PLANNING** - (expending and allocating Operation Points)
 - The active player decides how many cards (1 or 2) he will select **from his hand** to acquire OPs; he discards them immediately without being able to use any of their other functions. He then breaks down his Operation Points, announcing how many OPs he is allocating

to movement, and how many OPs to combat. If he is unsure, he would be advised to divide his OPs equally.

4. MOVEMENT - Each OP allocated to movement allows 2 units to be moved on the map. All movement must be completed before moving on to the combat segment.

5. OFFENSIVES - Each OP allocated to combat allows the player to launch 1 offensive with a stack of a maximum of 3 units (4 for IS) – resolve the offensive(s) - **immediately** remove Isolated markers from units whose supply lines have been re-established.

6. STRATEGIC MOVEMENT - The active player may move a single **in-supply** unit in a friendly-controlled space to another friendly-controlled and supplied space no matter the number of contiguous **friendly-controlled** spaces travelled (even if this unit has already moved, or has fought during the combat phase).

7. ADJUST CARDS - The active player draws cards **from either or both draw piles until he has 4 cards in his hand**. If he already has more than 4 cards (e.g. he has played his Joker counter), he keeps them but may not draw any more cards. **Note that a player may never discard a card without effect in order to draw another card – each card must either be played or kept in his hand.**

12.2 REMAINING PLAYER(S)

The second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth players repeat the same sequence in turn, depending on the chosen scenario.

When the last player has finished his phase, the Turn marker is advanced one space on the Time Track, the first player starts the new turn, and so on up to the end of the scenario.

13.0 TURN 1

During the first turn of the game, certain events may occur during the set up phase depending on the scenario (a coup d'état for example). Certain cards cannot be played (this information is stated on the cards). A player may have a number of 'free' OPs in the first turn (see scenario rules). Be aware that the first turn may be longer than the others.

14.0 SUPPLY

The supply status of each unit is either '**in supply**' or '**isolated**', while a space is either '**supplied**' or not supplied. During the Supply segment of his phase, the active player checks the supply status of every unit on the map. Those that cannot trace a communication line to a valid supply source are no longer in supply; an Isolated marker is placed on them. A valid supply path is an uninterrupted line of continuous **supplied spaces controlled by a player** linking a unit to a source of supply. A unit is **ultimately** supplied from a supply source in its country's colour.



14.1 OUT OF SUPPLY EFFECTS

Isolated units only have 2 movement points (no matter their type) and they fight with a 2 column shift penalty (in attack and defence). They cannot take any replacements. Tank units may not use exploitation. Reinforcements cannot arrive in isolated spaces. When a friendly **in-supply** unit stacks with a previously **isolated** unit, the latter is immediately **in supply** – **remove its Isolated marker**. When an offensive results in an isolated unit re-establishing its communication line to a friendly supply source then it is immediately **in supply** – **remove its Isolated marker**.

14.2 Arab Allies and the Free Iraqi Army may only be supplied from Saudi Arabia.

Exceptions:

- Jordanian and Egyptian units may also be supplied from Jordan.
- Kuwaiti units are always **in-supply** when deployed in Kuwait.

14.3 Sunni & Al Sham militias deployed in Iraq must be supplied from Saudi Arabia.

14.4 The Free Syrian Army and Sunni & Al Sham militias deployed in Syria must be supplied from Turkey or Jordan. Units of this kind deployed in Tripoli (Lebanon) are always **in supply** (**supplied** by the local populace).

14.5 Shia militias must be supplied either from Iran, or from an Iraqi, Iranian or Syrian supply source. Shia militias deployed on the South Litani space are always **in supply** (**supplied** by the local populace).

14.6 Lebanese Army and Lebanese Hezbollah units are in supply everywhere in Lebanon. These units can also be supplied from Damascus.

14.7 Kurdish Peshmerga guerrilla units are in supply as long as they are on a space marked with the symbol of their own organisation: KDP for the Iraqi Kurds, PYD for the Syrian Kurds, PKK for the Turkish Kurds. If they are outside their own political zone, they must trace a valid supply line to a friendly controlled space bearing the symbol of their own organisation (KDP, PKK or PYD).

14.8 IS jihadi units are **in supply** (**supplied** by the local populace) as long as they are in a space marked with the IS symbol. If they move out of the zones controlled by IS, they must trace a valid supply line to a friendly controlled space bearing the IS symbol.

14.9 Russian troops must trace supply to Tartus or Latakia.

14.10 US and Western units (French and British) are supplied from one or other of these different sources, depending on the scenario being played: Incirlik (Turkey), Netanya (Israel), H5 (Jordan), Baghdad (Iraq), Kuwait City (Kuwait) or any supply source in Saudi Arabia.

15.0 REINFORCEMENTS & REPLACEMENTS

At the beginning of each game, any reinforcements are placed in batches (Batch 1, 2, etc.) on the Force Pools of the players concerned, as laid out in the scenario instructions. Reinforcements arrive in batches. Every time the active player plays a Reinforcements card during his Events segment, he immediately draws a replacement card and has the choice between receiving a batch of reinforcements or taking replacements.

- If he opts for reinforcements, he receives his first batch of reinforcements (see scenario), then the second, etc. He can only take one batch of reinforcements per turn.
- If he opts for replacements, he can choose to rebuild one previously destroyed unit or to upgrade two reduced-strength units already on the map to their full-strength status.

Reinforcements, like replacements, are placed on any space(s) that are friendly-controlled and supplied from their own country, unless the scenario rules say otherwise. They must be placed in compliance with stacking limits. Reduced units rebuilt to full strength must be in supply. The following rules apply in all cases:

- Jordanian and Egyptian reinforcements arrive in Jordan (H4 or H5); other Arab Allied reinforcements arrive in Saudi Arabia;
- The Egyptian and UAE airmobile brigades can arrive on any friendly controlled and supplied space on the map (they are air transported);
- US, French and British reinforcements arrive on any friendly controlled and supplied space on the map **that is supplied in accordance with 14.10**;
- The three Iranian paratroop brigades as well as the 2 Iranian Hezbollah units arrive on any friendly-controlled and supplied space on the map;
- Russian reinforcements arrive in Tartus or Latakia;
- Shia militias arrive in any space controlled by the Iraqi or Syrian player, depending on the scenario;
- Sunni and Al Sham militias arrive in any space controlled by the Turkish or Saudi players in Syria, Lebanon or Iraq, depending on the scenario, or in any empty space in these three countries. Depending on the scenario, they may also be placed in Saudi Arabia in a space bordering Iraq, or in Turkey in a space bordering Syria.

Even if the active player can only take one batch of reinforcements per turn, he may still play other Reinforcements cards during the same turn in order to take replacements in addition to, or in place of, his reinforcements

16.0 PLANNING (ALLOCATION OF OPERATIONAL POINTS - OPS)

The active player decides how many cards (a maximum of 2) he wishes to play to procure Operational Points (4, 6 or 8 depending on the card selected). He then decides how many OPs he will allocate to movement and to combat respectively. He announces his choice, and this decision may not be altered. *Example: a player has 6 Operation Points that he allocates 3-3; he can move 6 units (3 x 2) and launch 3 offensives.*

The relevant markers can be placed on the Time Track to serve as a reminder. Note that certain scenarios allow a number of free OPs to the player holding the initiative in the first game turn.

17.0 MOVEMENT

During his Movement segment, a player may move twice as many units (not stacks) as he has allocated OPs for movement. *For example, if he allocates 4 OPs for movement, he can move 8 units (4 x 2).*

17.1 NORMAL MOVEMENT

Units move along a contiguous path of friendly-controlled or empty spaces free of enemy units, according to their movement allowance. *For example, an armoured division with 4 movement points can move 4 spaces.* All movement must be completed before starting the combat segment. The type of terrain does not affect movement. Stacking limits apply only at the end of the movement segment, not during it. Isolated units all have a movement allowance of 2.

17.2 AIRMOBILE CAPACITY

Several units present in the game (particularly paratroops) have an airmobile movement capacity (by helicopter), symbolised by an "A". These units can conduct either standard airmobile movement or an airmobile assault. Alternatively, they can move as normal units with a capacity of 3 movement points.

17.2.1 STANDARD AIRMOBILE MOVEMENT

A unit using standard airmobile movement may move from a friendly-controlled and supplied space to any other friendly-controlled space on the map linked to a friendly supply source.

17.2.2 AIRMOBILE ASSAULT

A unit making an airmobile assault may move from a friendly-controlled and supplied space, up to 6 contiguous spaces, passing over enemy controlled spaces, but must stop its movement on a space clear of any enemy units (even if the space had been under enemy control at the start of the turn). A unit conducting an airmobile assault is automatically in supply until the end of the owning player's combat segment. If at the end of the active

COMBAT RESOLUTION TABLE

Die	-8 or less	-5 to -7	-2 to -4	-1 to +1	+2 to +4	+5 to +7	+8 to +10	+11 to +13	+14 to +17	+18 or more
1	AR*	AR*	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	EX	EX	DR
2	AR*	AR	AR	AR	AR	EX	EX	EX	DR	DR
3	AR	AR	AR	EX	EX	EX*	EX	DR	DR	DR*
4	AR	AR	EX	EX*	EX*	DR	DR	DR	DR*	DS
5	AR	EX	EX*	EX*	DR	DR	DR	DR*	DS	DS
6	EX	EX*	DR	DR	DR	DR	DR*	DS	DS	DS

player's **combat segment**, this unit **has not established** a valid supply line, it becomes **isolated** instead and the appropriate marker is placed on it. Due to the heavy concentration of anti-aircraft weapons, AWACS and interceptors (helicopters are very vulnerable), airmobile assaults can never fly over the territories of Turkey, Israel, Iran or Saudi Arabia (except of course, for units from those countries).

17.3 STRATEGIC MOVEMENT

During the Strategic Movement segment of his phase, the active player can move a single in-supply unit (even if the unit has already moved and fought) to a **friendly**-controlled and supplied space through an uninterrupted path of **friendly**-controlled and supplied spaces. In particular, Strategic Movement allows a player to fill a gap on the ground before the next player takes his turn.

18.0 OFFENSIVES & COMBAT

A player may launch as many offensives as he has allocated Operation Points to combat. For each offensive, he moves a stack (of a maximum 3 units) (**the attacking force**) from a **single** space to a **single** adjacent space occupied by enemy units i.e. belonging to another player(s) or IS or Kurdish units (**the defending force**). As a consequence, a maximum of 3 units can participate in a single offensive (or 4 when a player launches an offensive with IS troops). The offensive is then resolved following the normal combat rules (see below). Unlike most wargames, a single stack of units can attack several times in a row, as long as the active player has enough OPs to do so. In the same manner, a targeted space can be attacked several times during the turn. A stack of units that has just won an offensive and occupied the liberated space can continue the offensive by attacking another adjacent space occupied by **enemy units** if he has sufficient OPs to do so. This rule reflects the repeated offensives launched by both belligerents during a 2-month turn.

18.1 COMBAT RESOLUTION

Not all the units in a given stack are required to take part in

an offensive. Those not taking part remain in the initial space.

Those involved in the combat must occupy the target hex if the attack is successful.

The active player adds the attack strength of all the units taking part in the offensive and compares the result with the total defence strength of the defending unit(s) present in the target space. The difference (positive or negative) indicates the initial column for resolving the offensive on the Combat Results Table (CRT). This initial column can be modified by several factors.

18.2 COLUMN SHIFTS

The active player adjusts the column to be used to resolve the offensive according to the following factors:

- **A space's intrinsic defence value:** 1 or 2 column shifts to the left (in favour of the defender).
- **Entrenchment:** 1 column shift to the left (in addition to the space's intrinsic defence value).
- **Asset cards:** 1 to 5 column shifts according to the card.
- **Isolation:** Isolated units are penalised by a 2 column shift against them.

Note: All these modifiers are cumulative. Players calculate the difference between the sum of the attacking and defending modifiers.

For example, the Iraqi 1 Mechanised Division (6-6-4), 5 Infantry Division (4-4-3) & 9 Armoured Division (8-8-4) in Mosul (18 attack points) attack the Turkish 66 Mechanised Brigade (2-3-5) (3 defence points) deployed in Dahuk (1 column to the left because of the defensive ground). The Iraqi player supports the offensive with Close Air Support (3 columns to the right). The basic difference between the attack and defence factors is +15 (+14/17 column) in favour of the Iraqi player and the difference between the column shift modifiers is 2 columns to the right (3 minus 1) also in favour of the Iraqi player; the final column used on the CRT to resolve the offensive is therefore the final column to the right (+18 or more), even if theoretically the Iraqi player should have benefitted from a 2 column shift in his favour.

18.3 ASSETS

During an offensive, any players can use Asset cards. The defender announces first which Asset card(s) he intends to

play (or defenders if units from more than one player are stacked together) and then any other player may play Asset card(s) in support of the defending force. Then the attacker announces any of his own card(s) he is committing, are if and finally any other player may play Asset card(s) in support of the attacking force. The Asset cards are sufficiently self-explanatory to understand their impact and conditions of use. The effects of most Asset cards apply for a single offensive only. If this is not the case, this is specified explicitly on the card itself. Two identical cards (*Close Air Support* for example) cannot be played during the same offensive.

18.4 COMBAT RESULTS

Once the attacking player has determined the exact column to use, he rolls a die and cross indexes its result on the relevant column of the CRT.

- **AR*** (Attacker repulsed with severe losses): All units of the attacking force lose 1 step (they are reduced, or possibly eliminated) and withdraw to their original space.
- **AR** (Attacker repulsed): The attacking force loses 1 step from one of its units and the whole stack withdraws to its original space.
- **EX** (Exchange): Both the attacker and the defender lose 1 step each from one of their units. If the defender is eliminated, the attacker occupies the space with all the engaged units; if not, the attacker withdraws to his original space.
- **EX*** (Exchange with heavy losses): The attacker and the defender each lose 2 steps. If the defender is eliminated, the attacker occupies the space with his surviving units; if not, the attacker withdraws to his original space.
- **DR** (Defender retreats): The defender loses 1 step from one of his units and withdraws to an adjacent friendly controlled space. The attacker gains control of the space and occupies it with all his engaged units. His armoured units (tank silhouette and movement factor in red) can exploit the breakthrough by occupying an adjacent space free of enemy units.
- **DR*** (Defender retreats with heavy losses): The defending force suffers 2 step losses (to be split amongst 2 units if possible) and withdraws to a friendly adjacent space. The attacker suffers 1 step loss but gains control of the space and occupies it with all his engaged units. His armoured units (tank silhouette and movement factor in red) can exploit the breakthrough by occupying an adjacent empty enemy-controlled space.
- **DS** (Defender surrenders): All defending units are eliminated and placed in the replacements section of the appropriate Force Pool. The attacker gains control of the space and occupies it with all his engaged units. His armoured units (tank silhouette and movement factor in red) can exploit the breakthrough by occupying an adjacent empty enemy-controlled space.

Entrenchments are automatically destroyed when the defender loses control of the space where the entrenchments were situated.

18.5 LOSSES

When a force suffers 1 (or 2) step loss(es) then the owning player flips 1 (or 2) full-strength unit of his choice to its (their) reduced-strength side. If there are no more full-strength units, then a reduced-strength unit of the owning player's choice is eliminated and placed in the replacements section of the appropriate Force Pool. In the case of an attacking force with units of more than one player, the active player decides. In the case of a defending force with units of more than one player, the player who controls the space decides (see 5.0).

In the case of attacking non-player Kurdish or IS units, the player who activated them decides which unit(s) take(s) the losses. In the case of defending non-player Kurdish or IS units, it is the player controlling the country where the space is located who decides on losses. IS units are destroyed after the first step loss except the Al Baghdadi counter, which has 2 sides and behaves like a normal 2 step unit.

18.6 RETREATS

Defending units forced to retreat must withdraw into an adjacent space controlled by the same player who controlled the target space (or controlled by the faction in the case of Kurdish or IS units). If they cannot do so, then they may retreat into an adjacent empty space controlled by another player (but not the space the offensive was launched from). Retreating units must conform to stacking limits at the end of their movement. If the only adjacent space available means breaking the stacking rules, the retreating units are moved to the nearest connected friendly-controlled space that satisfies stacking limits, even if it is further away. If a unit is unable to retreat, in particular because it is surrounded by enemy units, it is eliminated and is placed in the replacements section in the appropriate Force Pool.

18.7 ADVANCE AFTER COMBAT

All attacking units involved in an offensive must occupy the liberated space following a victorious result. Therefore the active player has to think carefully about the troops he decides to commit to his offensive, to avoid leaving a vacant space behind him. It is sometimes better to commit only two units in order to keep control of the start space. Surviving armoured units involved in the offensive can, if the player wishes, then exploit the breakthrough by moving into an adjacent empty space controlled by another player.

19.0 ENTRENCHMENTS

An entrenchment does not count for stacking. Only one entrenchment can be placed on any one space. If he plays the *Combat Engineers* card during his Events segment instead of playing it during the Combat segment, the active player can place 2 entrenchment markers on two

friendly-controlled and supplied spaces of his choice. Once a player has no units left in a space, due to moving them out or as a result of combat, the entrenchment marker is removed.

20.0 ALLIED UNITS AND STACKING OF MULTIPLE FACTIONS

Depending on the scenario, some players may have control of certain allied units. Units from different, even allied, factions may not stack together unless specified below or in the rules for the scenario.

20.1 TURKEY

- In Scenarios 6 & 7, the Turkish player controls the units of the Free Syrian Army (Syrian rebels) as well as the Sunni and Al Sham militias active in both Syria and Iraq. These units may stack and fight with Turkish units.

- In Scenarios 10 & 11, the Turkish player controls the units of the Free Syrian Army as well as the Sunni and Al Sham militias active in Syria. These units may stack and fight with Turkish units.

20.2 SAUDI ARABIA

- In Scenarios 8 & 11, the Saudi player controls the units of the Free Iraqi Army, as well as the Sunni and Al Sham militias active in Iraq. These units may stack and fight with Saudi units.

20.3 IRAN

- Iranian units may stack with Syrian units and may fight together if controlled by the same player in an optional two-player game.

- In Scenario 8, the Iranian player controls the Shia militias and Iranian Hezbollah units and these may stack and fight with Iranian units.

- In Scenario 9, the Irano-Syrian player controls Lebanese Army units, but these may only stack and fight with Syrian units and not with Iranian units. The Shia militias may stack with either Iranian or Syrian units.

- In Scenarios 10 & 11, the Iranian player controls Lebanese Army units, Shia militias and Lebanese and Iranian Hezbollah and these may stack with Iranian units.

20.4 SYRIA

- Syrian units may stack with Iranian and Russian units and may fight together if controlled by the same player in an optional two-player game.

- Syrian and Iraqi units may never stack and fight together, even in an optional two-player game.

- In Scenarios 1 & 2, the Syrian player controls Lebanese Hezbollah units and these may stack with Syrian units.

- In Scenarios 3, 4 and 6, the Syrian player controls both Lebanese and Iranian Hezbollah units and these may stack with Syrian units.

- In Scenarios 10 & 11, Lebanese and Iranian Hezbollah units may stack with Syrian units. However, the Hezbollah units are controlled by the Iranian player, and so the Syrian player must ask the Iranian player's permission (which the latter is at liberty to refuse) to move and fight with Hezbollah units that are stacked with Syrian units.

- In Scenario 4, the Syrian player controls the Shia militias that start in the Syrian Force Pool and these units may stack and fight with Syrian units.

20.5 IRAQ

- Iraqi and Syrian units may never stack and fight together, even in an optional two-player game.

- In Scenario 2, the Iraqi player controls the Iranian Hezbollah units and these may stack and fight with Iraqi units.

- In Scenarios 3, 5, 6 & 7, the Iraqi player controls the Shia militias and these units may stack and fight with Iraqi units.

- In Scenario 4, the Iraqi player controls the Shia militias that start stacked with Iraqi units or in the Iraqi Force Pool and these units may stack and fight with Iraqi units.

20.6 RUSSIA

- Russian units may stack with Syrian units and may fight together if controlled by the same player in an optional two-player game.

- Russian units may not stack and fight with Iranian units, except in Scenario 9, where Iran and Russia are controlled by the same player.

- In Scenarios 10 & 11, the Russian player has control of the Russian troops, which is to say that the Syrian player may not activate them during his turn, even if they are stacked with his own troops (except in the optional two-player game).

20.7 ISRAEL

- In Scenario 9, the Israeli player controls the units of the Free Syrian Army, but these may not stack and fight with Israeli units.

- In Scenario 10, the Israeli player controls the Jordanian units, but Israeli, Turkish and Jordanian units may never stack and fight together, even when controlled by the same player in the optional two-player game.

20.8 IS (DAESH)

- No other units may stack and fight together with IS units; but from time to time a player may take control of IS units by playing an IS card.

20.9 KURDISH PESHMERGAS

- Kurdish units from the different factions (KDP, PKK & PYD) may only stack and fight together in Scenario 7.

- No other units may stack and fight with the Kurdish Peshmerga units, unless explicitly specified by the scenario (e.g. the two specified US and French units in Scenario 4).

21.0 CAVEATS

To avoid a Third World War (due for example to the activation of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, or by a direct attack between nuclear states) and to respect local geopolitical constraints, players must adhere to the following restrictions:

- Russian units may not attack or strike Israeli units deployed in Israel and the Golan Heights; they may only attack or strike Israeli units in Syria or Lebanon if Israel has captured Damascus.
- Israeli units may not attack or strike Russian units, unless the latter have attacked or struck Israeli units.
- Russian units may not attack or strike Turkish units in Turkey, nor may they penetrate into Turkey.
- Turkish units may not attack or strike Russian units, unless the latter have attacked or struck Turkish units deployed in Iraq or Syria.
- Russian units may not attack or strike US, French or British units, and vice versa.
- Turkish, US, French and British units may not attack or strike each other.

22.0 INTERNATIONAL TENSION

The International Tension Track reflects the growing tensions potentially leading to the intervention of US troops on the ground and of the deployment of further Russian contingents to the Middle East. When in use, this rule allows the players to add the High Tension cards (see Rule 8.3) to the game as soon as International Tension reaches Level 5. Each scenario indicates the tension level at the beginning of the game. When the tension level reaches 10, the USA intervenes massively and Russia heightens its involvement in the Middle East. Each player in the game receives a free batch of reinforcements (or replacements) on Level 6 and again on Level 10.

Players can influence the International Tension level by playing certain cards (including their Special Joker) or by carrying out certain actions:

- First time Russia attacks a Turkish unit in Iraq or Syria: +2
- First time Israeli and Iranian units fight each other on the ground: +2
- First time Iranian and Saudi Arabian (or Arab Allied) units fight each other on the ground: +2
- First time units controlled by the Syrian, Iraqi or Iranian player enter Turkey or attack Turkish territory: +2
- First time Israeli units capture Damascus: +2
- First time Israeli units capture Beirut: +1
- First time Russian and Iranian units attack or strike each other: +1
- First time Iranian and Turkish units attack or strike each other: +1
- First time Turkish units capture Aleppo: +1
- Each time IS takes control of one of the following cities: Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, Aleppo, Damascus, or a space in Turkish territory: +1

22.1 INTERNATIONAL TENSION EFFECTS

- **Level 5:** Add the High Tension cards to the two decks (Assets & Events), and shuffle.
- **Level 6:** All players immediately receive their next batch of additional reinforcements (or replacements) (See Rule 15).
- **Level 10:** The US intervenes massively on the ground (see Rule 27.1); Russia automatically receives all remaining reinforcements and rebuilds all its units on the map to full strength; if already played, Russia regains its Special Joker card to be used again. All remaining players receive a batch of reinforcements (or replacements).

23.0 COUPS D'ETAT

Coups d'état may occur in Iraq and/or in Syria, either during the setup of certain scenarios, or by play one of the two relevant Event cards. A player cannot play a *Coup d'état* card before Turn 3; as soon as the card is played the International Tension level rises by +1 and the card is permanently removed from play.

23.1 LOYAL FORCES

When a coup d'état occurs elite units identified by an "L" symbol remain loyal to the regime and do not have to test their allegiance (see cards #67 & 68). The remaining units must roll a die to test their loyalty; if they fail, they may be eliminated (i.e. they have disbanded) or they may join the rebellion. In the latter case, they are replaced on the map by an equivalent unit from the Free Syrian Army or the Free Iraqi Army. Militias remain loyal to the regime and do not have to test with a die roll. The two units of Syrian militia are an integral part of the Syrian army and remain loyal to the regime.

23.2 COUP IN SYRIA

If a player plays card #67 during Scenarios 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 & 11, a coup d'état takes place in Syria (read the card for the context). The Syrian player rolls a die for each unit that has to test its loyalty:

- 1-2:** The unit joins the rebellion;
- 3-4:** The unit is eliminated and returned to the Syrian player's Force Pool;
- 5-6:** The unit remains loyal.

When several units in the same space join different camps, the one(s) with the highest total defence strength keep(s) control of the space and the other(s) withdraw to the closest friendly-controlled adjacent space free of any enemy units. In event of a tie, the force loyal to the regime keeps control of the space. Units eliminated as a result of the coup are placed in the replacements section of the Syrian player's Force Pool and may be returned to the game through the replacements rule.

23.3 COUP IN IRAQ

Scenarios 8 and 11 begin with a coup in Iraq (read the

card for the context). This event can also occur if a player uses card #68 in Scenarios 2, 3, 6 & 7. The Iraqi or Iranian player rolls a die for each unit that has to test its loyalty:

- 1-2:** The unit joins the rebellion;
- 3-4:** The unit is eliminated and returned to the Iraqi player's Force Pool;
- 5-6:** The unit remains loyal.

When several units in the same space join different camps, the one(s) with the highest total defence strength keep(s) control of the space and the other(s) withdraw to the closest friendly-controlled adjacent space free of any enemy units. In the event of a tie, the force loyal to the regime keeps control of the space. Units eliminated as a result of the coup are placed in the replacements section of the Iraqi player's Force Pool and may be returned to the game through the replacements rule.

24.0 WAR IN LEBANON

If a player plays card #41 during Scenarios 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 & 7, Israel launches an offensive into Lebanon in an attempt to destroy Hezbollah. Israeli and Lebanese units are not deployed on the map; instead, the active player rolls a die for each of the Lebanese Hezbollah units deployed on the map:

- 1-2:** No effect;
- 3:** The unit is reduced;
- 4-6:** The unit is eliminated and removed from the game.

This card cannot be played on Turn 1; playing it increases the International Tension level by +2.

25.0 IS (DAESH)

For ethical reasons, IS (the self proclaimed Islamic caliphate, or Daesh) is not represented by a player in the game. Instead, IS troops are activated through Event cards, reflecting the manipulation of IS by all the regional actors, as in real life. Each scenario specifies the presence, or not, of IS troops in the game and their initial deployment.

25.1 IS COUNTERS

IS counters may only stack and fight with other IS counters (25 in all). Except the Al Baghdadi counter (representing IS' staff and its Elite Division), which has 2 steps, all other IS units only have 1 step to reflect their mediocre resilience. IS counters are always placed face down on the map (IS symbol uppermost), to hide their combat potential, reflecting their ability to merge into the population and also maintaining a degree of uncertainty. Even when he takes control of IS, a player may not check IS units' strength until he is resolving the offensives he has declared. As soon as the combat has ended, the surviving IS counters are flipped again to hide their combat value.

The combat values of IS counters fluctuate between 6-4 and 1-2 to reflect the very diverse and variable quality of

the jihadists and their weaponry. There are three IS decoys, which are removed from the game when turned over to resolve combat. The Al Baghdadi counter moves and fights as a normal unit by expending OPs. All other IS units do not have a movement allowance; instead, they have an "X" symbol in place of a movement factor; these counters can only move by launching an offensive into an adjacent hex occupied by non-IS counters. If their offensive is victorious, they occupy this new space. If not, they return to their initial space. This rule depicts the local and tribal organization of IS.

All IS units (except Al Baghdadi) are eliminated as soon as they suffer a single step loss. They may retreat after combat. Eliminated units are placed face down in the IS Force Pool. They can return to play when a player plays the IS Activation card and brings back into play 3 previously destroyed IS units.

25.2 IS ACTIVATION

From time to time player can activate IS and manoeuvre its counters by playing one of the Daesh cards (#50 to 53) during his Events segment. He randomly picks 3 counters (face down) from the IS Force Pool, and places them on any space or spaces controlled by IS, or on any unoccupied space or spaces showing an IS symbol (Sunni tribal areas neglected by the powers in place and sympathetic to IS' agenda). If the Al Baghdadi counter is not yet in play, the player activating IS can choose to put it in play, and only draw one other counter; if the Al-Baghdadi counter is reduced, he can choose to return it to full strength and only draw other 2 counters.

The player controlling IS receives 2 OPs for each oilfield on the map controlled by IS; *for example, if IS controls 3 oilfields on the map, he gets 6 OPs (3 x 2)*. He can use these OPs to move the Al Baghdadi counter (1 OP) and to launch offensives following the normal rules. If IS does not control any oilfields, the player in charge of IS can always move the Al-Baghdadi counter and launch 1 offensive (with or without Al Baghdadi).

25.3 COMBAT RESTRICTIONS

Because of their Jihadist nature and the absence of international support, IS troops in combat can only use Asset cards marked with the ● symbol.

25.4 IS SUPPLY (SEE RULE 14.8)

25.5 COUNTER-INSURGENCY

A Daesh card can be countered (the card is lost if it has been played) by another player immediately playing card #27 Counter-Insurgency; in this case, no more Daesh cards can be played until the end of the turn (unless it is to gain OPs).

25.6 BACK TO NORMALITY

After having activated IS and resolved all IS offensives, the

active player returns to the normal course of his own turn. He can play other Event cards, then activate his own units.

26.0 KURDISH PESHMERGAS

The Kurds are not represented by a player on his own (except in Scenario 7). They are activated by cards, like IS, reflecting the fact that they are largely manipulated and exploited by regional and global actors. Each scenario specifies the presence, or not, of Kurdish troops including their deployment on the map. The spaces controlled by the Kurds contain a green and yellow symbol identifying exactly which Kurdish faction is represented: KDP for the Iraqi Kurds; PYD for the Syrian Kurds; PKK for the Turkish Kurds. Kurdish units from one faction may not move into or be supplied by a space from another Kurdish faction (except in Scenario 7). Players are not allowed to move through Kurdish zones occupied by Peshmerga units unless explicitly specified by the scenario. Correspondingly, Kurdish units may not stack (and therefore fight) with counters from other nationalities, unless explicitly specified by the scenario.

26.1 KURDISH COUNTERS

The 20 Kurdish counters represent the active forces of the Peshmergas (“fighters” in the Kurdish language) of the 3 factions represented in the game. The static units (with a defence factor in brackets) represent garrisons, which may not attack and may only move as the result of combat if they have been attacked. Garrisons that cannot retreat are eliminated on a result of DR. The mobile units represent small, well-armed and well-trained Peshmerga divisions. Eliminated Kurdish counters are placed in the Kurdish Force Pool and can re-enter the game by the play of Peshmerga cards.

26.2 KURDISH ACTIVATION

From time to time a player can activate the Kurdish fighters and manage their counters by playing one of the *Peshmerga* cards (#43 to 46) during his Events segment. He chooses a unit from the Kurdish Force Pool, placing it on a controlled space of the same faction (KDP, PYD or PKK); or he can instead upgrade two reduced Kurdish units on the map to full strength. He then has 4 OPs to move the mobile Kurdish counters and launch offensives, following the normal rules for planning, movement and combat. Kurdish units of different affiliations may neither stack nor attack together (except in scenario 7), due to permanent rivalries between their leaders.

26.3 COMBAT RESTRICTIONS

Kurdish fighters may only benefit from limited support, namely those Asset cards marked with a ● symbol. They can nevertheless receive close air support if a supporting player agrees to provide it. Because of their territoriality

the garrisons of a Kurdish faction (PKK, PYD or KDP) may never retreat into a space that does not belong to the same faction. Except in Scenario 7, Kurdish units from a particular faction may not move into Kurdish territory belonging to other factions (spaces indicated by the name of the faction) nor may they retreat into Kurdish territory belonging to other factions; if they are forced to retreat and do not have an available space of their own faction, then they are eliminated.

26.4 KURDISH SUPPLY (See rule 14.7)

26.5 KURDISH RIVALRY

A *Peshmerga* card can be countered by another player immediately playing card #24 *Kurdish Rivalry*. In this case, no other player can play a *Peshmerga* card until the next turn. Note that the *Kurdish Rivalry* card has no effect on card #75 *PKK Rebellion*, which can still be played as normal.

26.6 BACK TO NORMALITY

After having activated the Kurds and resolved all offensives, the active player returns to the normal course of his own turn. He can play other event cards, then activate his own units.

26.7 PKK REBELLION

During the setup of Scenarios 3 and 7, or if someone plays card #75 *PKK Rebellion*, a general PKK rebellion occurs in Turkey. In this case, the person who played card #75 places a single PKK garrison unit on every PKK space in Turkey not occupied by a Turkish unit. He then places the two mobile PKK Peshmerga units (5-4-2 & 4-3-2) on any space, or spaces, of his choice controlled by the PKK and free of Turkish units. The remaining garrisons are placed in the Kurdish Force Pool. Except in Scenario 7, where one individual takes the role of the Kurdish player, these PKK units are then activated via the *Peshmerga* cards as with all the other Kurdish fighters. As long as there are still PKK units on the map, the PKK rebellion is on-going. In practice, this means that the player who plays the *PKK Rebellion* card must also play a *Peshmerga* card to be able to launch offensives in the same turn.

As soon as the Turkish player controls all the spaces marked PKK in Turkey, the PKK rebellion is over and the PKK units are permanently removed from play, other than those that have found refuge in Syria or in Iraq. However if these surviving units are subsequently eliminated, they may never return to play.

26.8 PYD & KDP

Due to their strong local footprint, the Kurdish units of the PYD and KDP can reappear in any space within their faction's hold, as soon as someone plays a *Peshmerga* card and as long as that space is not occupied by any other unit.

27.0 US INVOLVEMENT

The fact that there is no initial American player in the game follows the policy of disengagement from the Middle East as expressed by the current American administration, even if Scenario 5 postulates an immediate engagement of US forces alongside the International Coalition. By using Rule 33, players can however agree amongst themselves to create scenarios that provide for an immediate involvement of the United States in the game.

27.1 US MILITARY INTERVENTION

US units intervene directly in the game if:

- 1) **Kuwait is attacked (Scenario 5)** – US forces come under the International Coalition player's control;
- 2) **Jordan is attacked** – US forces come under the Saudi player's control (Scenario 8 & 11) or that of the Israeli player (Scenario 10);
- 3) **The Haifa Space (or Netanya) in Israel is attacked or occupied by non-Israeli unit(s)** – US forces come under the Israeli player's control;
- 4) **The Incirlik Space in Turkey (US Base) is attacked or occupied** – US forces come under the Turkish player's control;
- 5) **International Tension reaches Level 10**; in this case, US forces come under:

- the Iraqi player's control in Scenarios 2, 3 & 4;
- the Turkish player's control in Scenario 6;
- the Saudi player's control in Scenarios 8 & 11;
- the Israeli and the Turkish players' control in Scenario 10 (see details in Scenario 10).

The player controlling US forces immediately draws 2 cards (as a bonus) from any draw pile and picks up the US Joker along with the US Special Joker Card, with which he immediately launches massive air strikes against 4 enemy spaces (within the limits of the caveats outlined in [21]). He then places the 6 following units on any **supplied friendly**-controlled spaces on the map: 75 Para Regt (3-3 A), MEU Regt (3-4-6), 1 Para Bde [82 AB Div] (4-4 A), 1 & 2 Para Bde [101 AB Div] (4-4 A), 3 Arm Regt (6-5-6). The following turn he automatically receives the following reinforcements: 1 & 2 MEB (6-6-6), 1 Arm Bde [3 MD] (8-6-6), 2 & 3 Mech Bde [3 MD] (5-6-6).

If there are not enough eligible spaces to place the initial 6 units or the reinforcements on the map, then they are placed overstacked and must conform to stacking rules by the end of the player's next phase or they will be eliminated.

US supply is explained in Rule 14.10.

27.2 US APPROVAL TO PLAY CERTAIN CARDS

To play cards #33 *Mother of All Bombs* and #82 *Carpet Bombing* the active player needs to get the formal approval of the United States (unless he himself controls the US). He rolls a die and checks the result according to his nationality:

- **Anyone attacking IS:** approval on 1-5;
- **Israeli player:** approval on 1-4;
- **Turkish player:** approval on 1-3;
- **Saudi player:** approval on 1-2.

The test fails automatically for any other situation or player. If the active player does not succeed in getting US approval he loses the card, which is then discarded.

28.0 RUSSIAN INTERVENTION

Historically Russia intervened directly in Syria in September 2015, to avoid the collapse of Bashar el-Assad's Syrian regime. As a consequence, Russian troops are deployed in Scenarios 3, 4, 6, 9, 10 & 11, with the possibility of engaging supplementary Russian reinforcements. Unless the scenario states otherwise, Russian units are controlled by the Syrian player. They must trace a valid supply line to Tartus or Latakia.

When International Tension reaches Level 10, Russia increases its engagement in the Middle East. The player controlling Russian forces draws a bonus card and immediately places all the Russian reinforcements not yet in play, or which may already have already been eliminated, in Tartus or Latakia (overstacked if necessary); any reduced Russian units are rebuilt to full strength. If the player has already played the Russian Special Joker card, he may pick it up again to be played a second time.

If Russia has not yet intervened, the Syrian player (or the Iranian player in Scenario 8) immediately draws 1 bonus card from either draw pile and takes the Russian Joker and the Russian Special Joker card; he then places the 3 following units as immediate reinforcements on Tartus and/or Latakia (or on any supplied friendly-controlled space on the map if these two spaces are not accessible): 22 Para Regt (3-3 A), 56 Para Bde (4-4 A), 810 Marine Bde (4-4-5). On the following turn, the player receives as reinforcements the 3 following units on the same conditions: 205 Mech Bde (4-4-5), 6 Arm Bde (6-5-5) and 7 Para Div (8-10-5). Russian supply is explained in Rule 14.9.

29.0 ALLIANCES

FITNA is principally designed as a multiplayer game. It is this dimension of permanent negotiation, modelled on reality, which gives the game its whole interest and gives the players the feeling of getting into the skin of the local actors. In the scenarios designed for more than two players, the best way to win generally consists of entering into alliances with other players, just as in reality. Two or three players can win at the expense of the rest if they form intelligent alliances, even if just temporarily. On the other hand, it is possible that everybody loses! The logic is not that of a zero-sum game. Two players may exchange a card each (and one only) during their Events segment, providing they let the other players know. On the other hand, they do not have to intimate the cards they have

exchanged. Of course both players must be happy to take part in an exchange of this kind.

30.0 FOG OF WAR

To reflect the Fog of War, players are not allowed to check the composition of an enemy stack. They will only discover the true value of a stack after they have launched an offensive against it, or after playing an *Armed Drones* card (#91–92). **Players must also keep the number of cards in their hands secret (especially when cards have to be removed by another player).**

31.0 HOW TO WIN

A player wins the game by achieving the victory condition(s) described in each scenario. If there is any doubt about which player controls a space, it is the player whose units or militias have the greatest number of defence points deployed on it who controls the space. Victory conditions have been defined to match as closely as possible the geopolitical realities on the ground. When two players are playing a multi-player scenario (by following the arrangements laid down in the scenario), a player must achieve the same victory level (minor, major, decisive) for all the countries he controls for that level to be confirmed. If a player obtains a minor victory with one of the countries he controls and a decisive victory with the other country he controls, he only wins a minor victory overall. In other words, a player cannot “sacrifice” one of the countries he controls to the advantage of the others (*for example “sacrificing” Israel to the advantage of Turkey, or Iraq to the advantage of Syria*).

Alternatively, players can agree to determine victory in a simpler way (even if this method is less realistic) by calculating and totalling Victory Points as described below.

31.1 CALCULATING VICTORY POINTS (VPs)

When there is mutual agreement to use this method, players calculate their VPs by adding the Victory Points of every controlled space within the main area where the scenario takes place: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Kuwait, as appropriate. A player cannot count spaces in his own country for Victory Points (except for a Syrian or Iraqi player fighting to gain control of his own country.) Spaces controlled by Kurdish or IS units at the end of the game do not count for any player.

- Religious city (Karbala & Najaf): 4 VPs
- Objective (space outlined in red): 3 VPs
- Oilfield: 2 VPs (Mosul, as an objective and an oilfield, counts for 3 VPs).
- All other spaces: 1 VP
- **Iranian Bonus:** If the Iranian player can establish an uninterrupted line of communication (contiguous and in-supply spaces) between Iranian territory and a coastal space on the Mediterranean: +10 VPs

- **Saudi Bonus:** If the Saudi player can establish an uninterrupted line of communication (contiguous and in-supply spaces) between the Saudi and Turkish territories: +10 VPs

Players then compare their respective VPs. The level of victory depends on the difference between them:

- **Minor victory:** 5 more VPs than your opponent(s);
- **Major victory:** 10 more VPs than your opponent(s);
- **Decisive victory:** 15 more VPs than your opponent(s).

Any other result is considered as a stalemate.

32.0 SCENARIOS

Players can select scenarios of variable length (from 6 to 12 turns each; see the Scenario Booklet). A 6 turn scenario generally lasts 2-3 hours; the 12 turn campaign can last 6 hours. Each scenario stipulates the special rules, the victory conditions and unit deployment (including reinforcements). All the scenarios can be played by two players, even those designed for three or more players. It is strongly recommended that the tutorial Scenario 1 be played first to become familiar with the game's mechanisms, even though they are simple and fluid.

33.0 DESIGN YOUR OWN SCENARIO!

For those who wish to explore the range of possibilities and adapt the scenarios provided to the evolving geopolitics of the region, all you have to do is to select the cards and counters of your choice. Within FITNA you have all the forces (including the militias) present in this part of the Middle East; you simply choose your actors and go shopping! Players will easily find all the necessary information on the Internet to create their own credible scenarios and come up with a coherent set of victory conditions. You can also connect to the Nuts! Publishing website <https://www.nutspublishing.com> to download updated versions of the rules and new scenarios.

34.0 DESIGNER'S NOTES

My professional expertise in the Middle East, my long experience as a player along with the experience I gained through the publication of my wargame *Bloody Dawns: The Iran-Iraq War* by the High Flying Dices Game company in 2017, helped me enormously in designing FITNA, especially in making sure that the game remains fluid and realistic.

The key difficulty was finding the best game system to reproduce at one and the same time, the struggle against IS, the civil wars in Iraq and Syria and the major conflicts that could arise tomorrow in the region, from the Levant to the Persian Gulf. It was a real challenge, but the result has lived up to expectations! After several attempts, I opted for a grand strategic card driven game, with a point-to-point

map and 2 month turns. The card driven system maintains suspense, forcing the players to make difficult decisions and to prioritise and co-ordinate their actions carefully.

I conceived FITNA with two principle ideas in my head: to create a simple, fluid game to allow players, even beginners, to concentrate on their strategies and the search for alliances; and to put the players into the skin of the local actors, to give them the keys to allow them to unlock for themselves the reality of the force balances and the geopolitical issues on the ground. In that respect FITNA should perhaps be seen as more of a 'woardgame' - i.e. a mixture between a boardgame and a wargame.

CARDS

The cards introduce an element of fun, of surprise and unpredictability, as well as having a strong pedagogical dimension. They force the players to take difficult decisions, as in real life, ensuring that no game will be like the game before. With 4 cards in the player's hand, a prudent policy is to draw 2 Asset cards and 2 Event cards. Each player can then play one as an Event, one to gain OPs, and two to influence the combats of one or another of the other players, or to cancel one of your opponent's cards. Do not forget that if you play your cards before it's your turn, you will not have enough cards to do what you would wish in your own phase. Playing your Joker counter at the right moment can make the difference between victory and defeat! It is often prudent to keep your Joker for the last turn, because it is frequently in this turn that many events and sudden developments occur. Card #37 *Cyber War*, is a really powerful card, in many ways representing a contemporary version of Blitzkrieg, particularly at the start of a game; but do not forget that it can turn against you if your opponent manages to mobilise his hackers; you may lose a card in turn! Read the instructions on each card carefully before playing it, because some of them have very specific conditions of use. The Special Joker cards bring a dimension of real conventional deterrent to the game. Be very careful before using your Special Joker, because once played you will no longer be able to threaten your adversaries with its use; in fact this card can have a devastating boomerang effect if one of them plays his Special Joker against you.

A balanced hand to begin the game (for novice players) would ideally consist of 1 *Air Strike* (if available) to weaken the space that you wish to attack as a priority, 2 *Reinforcements* cards to take at least one batch of reinforcements, while using the other to expend the 8

OPs associated with this card, and 1 *Mobile Artillery* or *Leadership*, because these cards cannot be negated.

STRATEGIES

Read the victory conditions for each scenario carefully. You will see that you can develop different strategies to achieve your objectives, particularly in relation to the alliances you develop. In fact there are many ways to win: multiplying military offensives to conquer objectives is one of them, but not the only one. You can also concentrate your efforts on economic or asymmetric warfare (by playing the right card at the right moment), which can sometimes be more rewarding. Remember that if you do not garrison IS or Kurdish spaces, your opponents can generate Jihadi forces or Kurdish Peshmergas in them at the worst possible moment for you. Do not forget that when your opponent does not have sufficient cards in his hand, he is like a lame duck!

A strategy that can pay dividends is to begin by raising the International Tension level (on the International Tension track) to get the High Tension cards in the game, and then to calm the situation down to avoid a massive military intervention by the United States which generally upsets everything, and can wreck your own strategy.

In any case, remember that destroying enemy units does not win a single Victory Point; only gaining objectives (as described in the scenario) can win them! A coherent military strategy aims to conquer key spaces; but not to destroy enemy units for the simple pleasure of destroying them. Remember also that offensives are always costly, especially in terms of losses. Launching offensives extravagantly is only a valid strategy when you have sufficient militias to sacrifice, and sufficient reinforcement and replacement cards to replace your losses on the board. Keep in mind that the best way to conquer territories is to build powerful stacks of three units, because they can launch as many offensives as you have OPs to do so. In consequence, be prepared to defend key spaces with sufficient units able to resist an opponent's repeated attacks. Remember also that card #90, *UN Security Council*, can end the game immediately; adapt your strategy accordingly.

Finally, maintain uncertainty around your intentions, particularly if you are forging alliances in the game with several players. Fortune plays a role in the game, as in real life, but the surest way to win consists of counting on strategy, experience and solid alliances. ●



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