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## INTRODUCTION

In the last two *Spycraft* releases, *U.S. Militaries* and *World Militaries*, we've focused on real-world forces across the globe – their personnel, resources, conflicts, histories, training, and ways to use them as agent options and backdrop support in your games. This book concludes our exploration of the military arena with a journey into the world of small-scale squad combat – and the places it happens.

*Battlegrounds* introduces a variety of historical, modern-day, and future settings within which espionage or military campaigns may be posed. The information contained in this book is useful to *Spycraft* games of any type, but shines in games portraying the military giants of our time, and their titanic campaigns of ideological or territorial superiority. The next time you find yourself hard-pressed for an evening of RPG fun, all you need do is flip through one of this release's Mission sections for a rapid-fire one-shot encounter. Likewise if you're short a scene in your latest serial. And for a special treat, you might use one of those criminal geniuses' master plans the agents fail to stop as a launching pad for this book's most exciting material – an all-new post-apocalyptic setting drawn from current real-world events right outside your window!

### WHAT THIS BOOK CONTAINS

*Battlegrounds* is broken into six chapters, as follows.

**Chapter 1: Afghanistan** presents one of the most notable military landscapes of the mid- to late-20th century, caught between the super powers of the Cold War.

**Chapter 2: Bosnia** strives to present one of the longest-maligned territories in the world, with roots in modern conflict dating to World War I and before.

**Chapter 3: Central and South America** covers the Marxist factions, drug cartels, and other forces waging bitter revolutionary skirmishes and battles of personal interest through some of the deepest jungles on the globe.

**Chapter 4: Vietnam** focuses on the bitter historical struggle between communist and capitalist ideals in one of the least hospitable terrains ever encountered.

**Chapter 5: The Last War – And After** is *Spycraft's* homage to a classic but often overlooked genre of fiction and roleplaying: the end of the world. From the modern day to post-collapse, this chapter presents an all-too-possible road upon which we might already be traveling, and the terrors that await us at road's end.

**Chapter 6: New Rules** presents many optional mechanics to support squad-style play and alternate military play styles (including the conditions inherent in any post-apocalyptic campaign).

Long-term gearing up rules are introduced, allowing agents to choose a precise set of gear that they keep from mission to mission (rather than giving it back to a central clearing house, as seen in typical *Spycraft* games). Military and non-military avenues are given, along with different gear schemes based on the missions undertaken, and explanations for using every aspect of the standard *Spycraft* gear system in conjunction.

With agents potentially hanging on to gear for indefinite periods, we've also included more comprehensive rules for how vehicles and other gear can be damaged and repaired, factoring in general abuse, preventative maintenance, and cannibalization.

Rules for scavenging new parts for old items are also presented, along with ways to find food in the wild. Both rules sets may be used during missions and during "downtime," expanding the options available to agents beyond the bounds of standard mission structure.

Realistic medical treatment rules are also offered, including alternate injury effects and ways to recover from them.

Updated weapon of mass destruction rules offer tools for the aspiring global dictator – or criminal mastermind – and material on radiation poisoning further supports the horrific post-apocalyptic scenario seen in Chapter 5.

Next up is an assortment of never-before-seen vehicle stats for transports and weapon platforms found on modern battlefields, with historical notes and complete game play notes.

Finally, *Battlegrounds* presents an agent-centric set of mass combat rules – but they're not what you may think. Instead of detailing troop movements and complex maneuvers involving thousands or tens of thousands of soldiers, these simple mechanics provide a fast-paced backdrop for any scene taking place in a war zone. With just a few die rolls, the GC can determine whether an agent team moving through a battlefield is plagued by an enemy sniper or random shrapnel, and effortlessly present plausible intensity and scope against which the team's actions occur.

Remember, agents: nowhere is safe from the ravages of war, but every war produces heroes. Somewhere out there, glory awaits you on the field of battle...

# BATTLEGROUND

water. The water is clean for the most part, filtered through the earth until it reaches the baseline and cleansed of impure elements.

## THE ACTION – OPTION #1

The Soviet-backed PDPA forces have sent a Spetsnaz unit to clear out a mountain complex containing elements of the local *mujahideen*. These resistance fighters have been responsible for repeated attacks upon PDPA convoys in the region.

The unit has three objectives. The first is to clear every room in the complex. This is accomplished either by elimination of the enemy or secured detaining of the enemy for later interrogation. The second objective is to clear the mountain of traps. Each room must be swept and searched. The third objective is to search through materials in the complex for any sort of information regarding locations and plans of other *mujahideen* in the area.

When the agents enter a section of the complex, roll a d20. Upon a roll of 11-20, a squad of **Mujahideen Fighters** is within the room. Whether they are armed and prepared is the GC's decision as appropriate.

## AGENT DESCRIPTION

Read the following aloud to begin.

A group of mujahideen have been raiding PDPA convoys between Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif. Six ambushes have occurred in as many months. The assaults occur after hitting a checkpoint in Pol-e Khomri, a town midway between the two cities. After months of intensive searching within the Hindu Kush mountains, the guerrillas' base has been found.

Your squad is within 100 feet of the entrance, which is flanked by two guards. They seem to be very dedicated to their post, speaking to each other without even looking. A rock overhang shades them from the harsh sun above and they are protected by brush and rock, making a very rudimentary bunker. The rock you currently crouch behind juts up abruptly, giving you partial cover from the enemy and enough space to hide behind without being detected.

## GEARING UP

The GC may either allow the agents to gear up per the standard *Spycraft* rules with a Threat Code of "Red," or, for a more realistic experience, use the following alternative Gearing Up rules.

This mission has no Threat Code and the agents do not gain any personal gear. Instead of selecting weapons and standard-issue gear, the agents are assigned weapons and gear according to the number of personal BP at their disposal, as follows.

## BP\* Weapons and Gear\*\*

1-25	AKS-74 assault rifle + 3 clips, ballistic knife***, 1 flashbang grenade, Kevlar vest, headset radio, nightvision goggles and desert camouflage Spetsnaz fatigues.
26-50	AKS-74 assault rifle + 3 clips, Tniitochmash PSS Silent service pistol + 2 clips, ballistic knife***, 2 flashbang grenades, ½ lb C-4, Kevlar vest, headset radio, nightvision goggles and desert camouflage Spetsnaz fatigues.
51-75	AKS-74 assault rifle + suppressor, night vision sight (2nd generation) and 4 clips, Tniitochmash PSS Silent service pistol + 2 clips, ballistic knife***, 2 flashbang grenades, 2 smoke grenades, ½ lb C-4, Kevlar vest, headset radio, gas mask, nightvision goggles and desert camouflage Spetsnaz fatigues.
76-99	AKS-74 assault rifle + suppressor, ACOG sight and 4 clips, Tniitochmash PSS Silent service pistol + 2 clips, ballistic knife***, 2 flashbang grenades, 2 fragmentation grenades, 2 smoke grenades, ½ lb C-4, Kevlar vest, headset radio, gas mask, nightvision goggles and desert camouflage Spetsnaz fatigues.
100+	AKS-74 assault rifle + suppressor, ACOG sight, underbarrel grenade launcher and 4 clips, Tniitochmash PSS Silent service pistol + 2 clips, ballistic knife***, 2 flashbang grenades, 2 fragmentation grenades, 2 smoke grenades, 2 CS gas grenades, 1 lb C-4, Kevlar vest, headset radio, gas mask, nightvision goggles and desert camouflage Spetsnaz fatigues.

\* Per agent.

\*\* The agent gains only the weapons and gear listed for his total BP allotment. He does not gain any of the items listed for lower total BP allotments.

\*\*\* See the *MAG Expansion Vol. 1* PDF.

## EVENTS

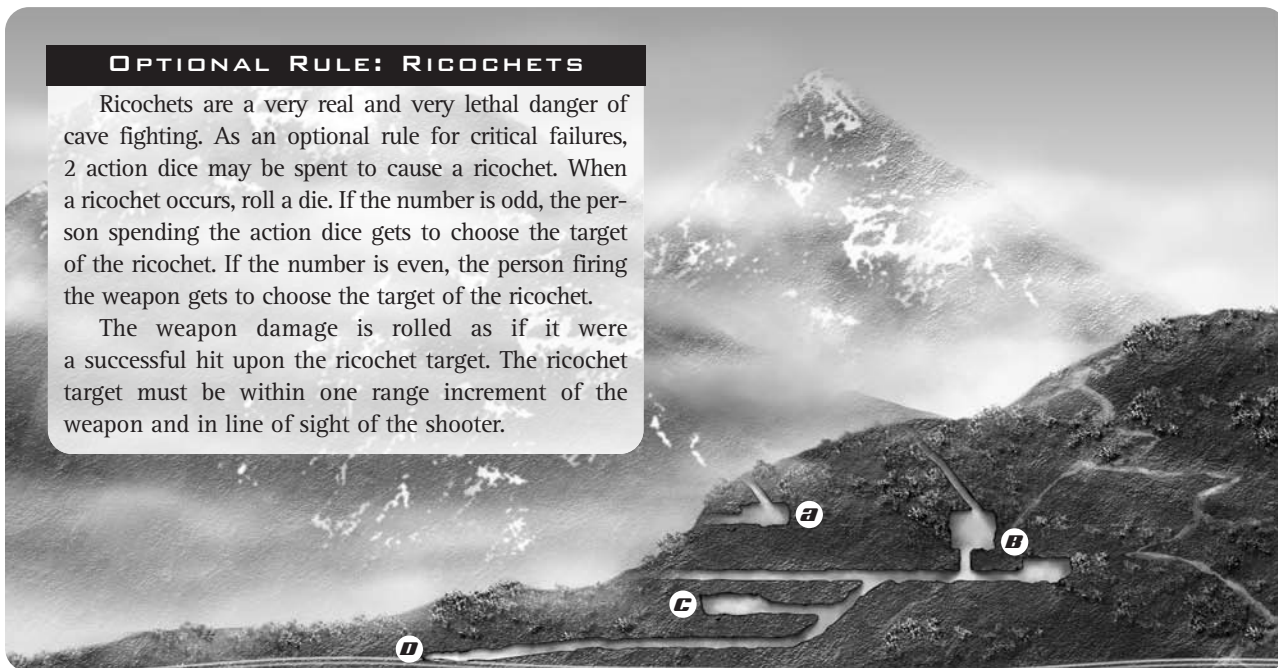
Within the Water Table (D), a member of the Afghan Secret Police is found tied up, guarded by a full squad of **Mujahideen Fighters**. His name is Amet Najjib. He was presumed dead when he disappeared a month back after proof of an ambush upon his patrol route. His statistics are the same as a **Mujahideen Fighter**. When freed, he will attempt to help clear out the complex in thanks to his saviors.

# AFGHANISTAN

## OPTIONAL RULE: RICOCHETS

Ricochets are a very real and very lethal danger of cave fighting. As an optional rule for critical failures, 2 action dice may be spent to cause a ricochet. When a ricochet occurs, roll a die. If the number is odd, the person spending the action dice gets to choose the target of the ricochet. If the number is even, the person firing the weapon gets to choose the target of the ricochet.

The weapon damage is rolled as if it were a successful hit upon the ricochet target. The ricochet target must be within one range increment of the weapon and in line of sight of the shooter.



1 square = 5'



## VENTILATION SHAFTS

Each major section of the cave complex has at least one large ventilation shaft that rises through the mountain to the surface above the bunker. Spotting the shaft from above ground is very difficult (Spot DC 20); it is well disguised by brush and rocky outcroppings. Thermographic image scoping will make this task easier (-5 to Spot DC) as heat rises through the shaft.

## ***A Window TO GENOCIDE***

Bosnia and Herzegovina have a history as a military and political flashpoint that stretches the length of the twentieth century. Some historians have said that World War I was the birthing cry of the 20th century, and it was in the streets of Sarajevo, when a Bosnian Serb nationalist shot Archduke of Austria-Hungary Franz Ferdinand, that the first shot of that war was fired. In many ways, the Bosnian war saw the chaos and destruction sown at the beginning of the century reaped at century's end.

The war in Bosnia is a conflict that defies definition. At its core, it appears to be a civil war, in which political disagreement has torn the nation asunder. But there is a deeper current to the conflict, drawn from years of ethnic and nationalist propaganda, an aggressive campaign by neighboring nations to divide and conquer the nation, and clandestine international support for the chaos there.

All of these factors led the Bosnian conflict to become the bloodiest and most chaotic war in Europe since WWII. Alliances were made and broken whenever one side saw a potential advantage. Every attempt at peace was met with open arms, only to be summarily dismissed weeks later. The conflict witnessed the birth of "ethnic cleansing" – the most horrific and systematic application of genocide since the Nazi Party's 'Final Solution.'

So why Bosnia? What could make this little country such a powder keg? In this chapter, we will explore the history, factors and decisions that made the Bosnian war such a savage conflict, and discover what agents can do to stop it.

## ***THE WAR ZONE***

Bosnia-Herzegovina is a small, nearly landlocked former republic of Yugoslavia, located on the western half of the Balkan Peninsula. Originally, the republic was two separate nations – Bosnia and Herzegovina – that grew together as they shared a common political, economic and cultural development over the centuries. Herzegovina composes the southern 20% of the country and is home to the republic's coastline, a scant 13-mile strip on the Adriatic Sea.

During the conflict, Bosnia-Herzegovina was broken into three distinct regions. The "Serb autonomous zones" of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, under control of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), occupied the eastern and northern territories of the country. The Croat Community of Herzeg-Bosnia, under the control of the Croatian Democratic Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina (HDZ), occupied the southwestern portions; and the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) occupied the center of the country.

Despite its enormous reputation, the country is little larger than the state of Tennessee, and is bordered by the Republic of Croatia to the north, south and west, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (known in 2004 as Serbia and Montenegro) to the east. All told, the region comprises nearly 20% of the total area of the former Yugoslavia.

Like much of the Balkan peninsula, Bosnia-Herzegovina is perched atop the Dinaric Alps, characterized by unbroken, jagged hills and mountainous terrain criss-crossed by rocky streams and rivers. Lowlands are few and far between, mainly in the deep valleys cut by the region's largest rivers. The Bosnian region is heavily forested, covered in deciduous and mixed woodlands that



become large stands of conifers at higher elevations. Large game such as wild elk and deer still wander the forests, making for good hunting.

To the south, Herzegovina is a dry and stony wilderness, save for the Neretva river valley, whose flatter terrain and more fertile soils make fine land for farming, particularly towards the coastline.

Weather in Bosnia is typical of south-central Europe; falls and springs are damp and grey, winters severe and prone to freezing winds and heavy snows, and summers tend to be muggy and hot. At the higher elevations, summers are generally shorter and cooler. The weather is the most pleasant from May to October, the driest and warmest part of the year. Evenings tend to be cool, regardless of season.

## **PEOPLE AND CULTURE**

The ethnic and political landscape of the Balkan states is complicated, to put it lightly. At the beginning of the Balkan wars, Yugoslavia was a Communist league, comprised of 6 member republics – Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia. The republics shared a rotating presidency that controlled federal elements, most important of which was the Yugoslavian National Army.

The region is also home to 6 major ethnic groups: Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Montenegrins, Macedonians, and Slovenes. When Tito built the Yugoslavian government following WWII, he conceived each republic as a homeland for a particular ethnic group in the interest of diffusing tensions and creating stronger national identities. There was only one major exception – the region of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is perhaps the most ethnically and culturally diverse region in the Balkan states. The people are composed of three distinct ethnic groups – Serbs, Croats, and Muslims (also known as Bosniaks). All of groups are of South Slav stock, and have broad faces, dark hair and dark eyes. All these groups speak the same language, though it is called “Bosnian” in the Muslim areas, “Croatian” in the Croat-controlled areas and “Serbian” in Serb zones. The major difference is that the Muslims and Croats use Latin script, while Serbs use Cyrillic.

Religion is likewise varied. When the Ottomans seized control of Bosnia, many Orthodox Christians converted to Islam in order to improve their ability to travel and trade. Though today the peoples of Bosnia are mostly secular, religion remains an important part of their ethnic and nationalist identity – nearly all Serbs are Orthodox, while nearly all Bosniaks and Croats are Muslim.

Thanks to the diversity of its population, there is no majority ethnic group in Bosnia, which is split fairly evenly between Muslims (51%), Serbs (23%), and Croats (21%). However, this multiculturalism is not indicative of true integration: while big cities like Sarajevo and Mostar are characterized by interethnic marriages and cross-pollination, most of the country remains ethnically subdivided by geography and tradition (a feature that became a major contributing factor in the war).

Traditionally, the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina live in small communities and villages typical of central and Eastern Europe – small homes line narrow streets, surrounding a central square or church that forms the heart of the town. These villages are often secluded and ethnically exclusive. It is not unusual to see traditional small farms and villages perched precariously on steep slopes and hilltops, surrounded by small grounds for grazing sheep or subsistence farming. Many of these communities have changed little for hundreds of years, and Slavic and Ottoman influence on architecture and culture still show through.

## **IMPORTANT LOCATIONS**

Sarajevo, in the approximate center of the country, is Bosnia-Herzegovina’s largest city and has been the economic, political, and cultural capital for nearly 1,000 years. Located in the deep narrow valley on the banks of the Miljacka river, the city consists of a dense core, surrounded by a number of quarters which reach up the various slopes, and several municipalities located in open ground at its western end. Sarajevo remained under siege for most of the war by the Bosnian Serb Army, who used the terrain to mercilessly shell the city from the hills nearby.

Sarajevo was a vital strategic point during the war. The UN mission began with efforts to keep Sarajevo Airport open for humanitarian aid, and eventually based most of its mission there. Half a million people – approximately 11% of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s population – lived in the city, and it remained the besieged government’s seat of power throughout the conflict. But most importantly, Sarajevo was a symbol for the heart of the country – a trait that each faction wished to claim for its own.

Like Sarajevo, the southern city of Mostar was besieged for a good portion of the war. Formerly known as one of central Europe’s most breathtaking cities, it was noted for its strong interethnicity and connection to its Ottoman roots. Its most notable feature was the historic *Stari Most* (Old Bridge), a 500-year-old high arched bridge soaring over the Neretva river that was destroyed in 1993 during the siege by Croat troops.

## ***The Warriors***

### ***Columbia***

#### **COLUMBIAN ARMY**

**Missions:** Colombian military forces conduct several types of patrol operations in the jungles and mountains where insurgent forces hide. *Reconnaissance* patrols are designed to locate enemy troop positions and gather intelligence on enemy movements. *Tracking* patrols are charged with trailing and locating a specific enemy or unit, either with the intention of gathering additional intelligence on the subject or destroying said subject when it is located. *Ambush* patrols move into an area with heavy enemy traffic. Once in place, the patrol waits for an enemy element to move into a “kill zone,” enabling the patrol to destroy the enemy unit quickly and hopefully with minimal risk to the patrol. *Assault* patrols move against a known enemy position, attempting to outflank and overrun the position, capturing it and destroying any enemy forces present. After the assault, the area is routinely swept for prisoners and any possible intelligence. More information on patrols can be found on page 104 of the *U.S. Militaries Sourcebook™*.

**Manpower:** The typical Colombian squad consists of eight to twelve men, depending on the type of squad and the mission involved. Squads are typically led by a senior NCO, and divided into two fire teams. A junior NCO leads each fire team. Each fire team usually has one machine gunner, and the squad has a radiotelephone operator (RTO) to maintain contact with higher headquarters. Tracking patrols will usually have at least one member per fire team who is skilled in tracking.

**Gear:** The standard rifle is the Colt M16A2, and the standard sidearm is the Colt M1911A1. Each squad or fire team also has at least one Maremount M60 machine gun, and one rifleman in each team usually has an M203 grenade launcher.

**Vehicles:** The Colombian army uses a wide variety of jeeps and trucks for troop movement, and has received some HMMWVs from the U.S. military. Additionally, the Columbians have a small fleet of UH-1 Huey and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at their disposal, also supplied by the Americans. The helicopters are used primarily for troop transportation in the mountain highlands, although they can and are occasionally configured for use as gun ships.

**Allies:** Currently, American troops in Columbia are serving in an advisory and training function only. However, as the current war on terror escalates, it may only be a matter of time before U.S. military advisors turn into U.S. military ground forces in the region.

#### **FARC INSURGENTS**

**Missions:** In addition to patrol missions similar to those carried out by Colombian Army forces, the FARC engages in a wide variety of terrorist activity, to include kidnappings, assassination, sabotage, and drug smuggling.

**Manpower:** FARC units are a guerrilla force, and as such they defy conventional structuring. Squads are assembled based on the requirements of the mission, although units are frequently organized along regional or family lines.

**Gear:** In addition to weapons received from outside forces sympathetic to their cause, the FARC uses funds from their relationship with the drug cartels to purchase arms and equipment on the black market. Many FARC cells also use whatever weaponry and gear they can scrounge from battlefields.

**Vehicles:** Like most insurgent forces, the FARC employs a wide variety of “liberated” civilian vehicles. Owing to the mountainous and undeveloped terrain of the area, off-road vehicles are extremely popular.

**Allies:** Despite Colombian claims to the contrary, the FARC seems to enjoy some popular support in certain regions of the country, especially in the “drug triangle” in southern Columbia. In addition, the FARC is rumored to have strong connections with several powerful drug cartels throughout South America.

### ***Falklands***

#### **BRITISH COMMANDOS**

**Missions:** During the Falkland Island crisis, the primary missions undertaken by the elite Special Air Service included *reconnaissance*, *raids*, and *diversionary* actions. Members of the regiment infiltrated the islands, selecting suitable landing sites for troops. Thereafter, they launched lightning raids on lightly-defended key locations throughout the islands, frequently taking their objectives without bloodshed. They also provided diversions for larger strike forces, infiltrating behind enemy lines and launching surprise attacks, thus drawing attention away from more conventional ground forces.

**Manpower:** During reconnaissance missions, the SAS deployed small, four-man teams to infiltrate, scout, and avoid enemy contact. These teams were lightly armed, with an emphasis on stealth instead of firepower. Raids and diversionary actions were conducted by larger squads, usually numbering seven to ten men in a team, with squadrons made up of several squads for larger operations.

**Gear:** The standard weapon of the SAS is the FN-FAL Self-Loading Rifle (SLR).

**Vehicles:** During the Falklands incursion, SAS units deployed mainly by helicopter and Klepper canoes.

**Allies:** The SAS frequently operated alone in the Falklands, but could depend on support from Royal Marine units, as well as Royal Navy ships and aviation assets.

## GRENADA

### US MARINE FORCE RECON

**Missions:** During Operation Urgent Fury, Recon Marines conducted both *reconnaissance* operations and *assault* operations. Reconnaissance missions were designed to pinpoint enemy locations and gather intelligence about enemy dispositions and movements. Assault operations were then planned against enemy positions, with the intention of engaging and destroying the enemy force.

**Manpower:** Marines deploy in squads consisting of three four-man fire teams and led by an NCO. During reconnaissance missions, the four-man team is deployed, while the entire squad, or even a platoon, fights together during an assault operation.

**Gear:** During Operation Urgent Fury, the standard rifle of the Marine Corps was the M16A2, and the standard sidearm was the M1911A1. Additional weapons available the Marines at the squad level were the M60 machine gun, the Talley M72 law rocket, the M203 grenade launcher, and the M21 sniper rifle.

**Vehicles:** Marine Force Recon soldiers specialize in deep reconnaissance and infiltration. As such, they do not have ready access to vehicles other than those used for insertion into a mission area, such as helicopters or Zodiac rafts.

**Allies:** As part of a larger invasion force, the Marine Force Recon could call upon support from Army and Marine units operating within the AO, as well as off-shore assistance from U.S. Naval vessels and air support.

## NICARAGUA

### SANDINISTA MILITARY FORCES

**Missions:** Sandinista forces routinely engaged in *pacification* missions, where a Sandinista patrol would move into an area suspected of harboring Contra forces and round up likely ringleaders and the like, interrogating, torturing and occasionally executing prisoners to flush out their prey.

*Assault* operations against known control positions were also common and involved artillery and air strikes as well as conventional ground forces. Given the irregular nature of their opposition, Sandinista forces were not very discriminatory in their target select, and civilian casualties were high.

**Manpower:** Sandinista military patrols usually consisted of a platoon of four or more squads, each containing twelve men and led by an NCO. A single squad usually conducted patrol operations, allowing a single platoon to cover a larger area. Assault operations could be handled at the squad level, but were more commonly carried out by platoon-sized or larger elements, depending on the nature and strength of the enemy position.

**Gear:** The Cubans and Soviets supplied the Sandinista Army, and most of their arms and equipment reflected this. The standard rifle carried by all squad members was the AK-47. Usually, one squad member carried a RPD light machine gun, and two or more members would carry RPG-7 rocket launchers.

**Vehicles:** Most vehicles of the Sandinista Army were "liberated" from the Somoza government. Vehicles supplied by the Soviets included BRDM and BTR-60 armored personnel carriers, and Soviet-manufactured helicopters such as the Mi-17 "Hip" transport helicopter (see *World Militaries*, page 116).

**Allies:** The Sandinistas received military advisors from Cuba and the Soviet Union, who helped to train their forces in counter-insurgency tactics. However, Cuban and Soviet troops served in a strictly advisory position, and were not deployed to combat regions (at least not overtly).

### "DEATH SQUADS" (Contra forces in Nicaragua)

**Missions:** Death squads were not hardened front-line fighters. They tended to avoid protracted firefights if at all possible. Typical death squad missions included kidnappings, assassinations, subjugation of local populations, and harassment and interdiction.

**Manpower:** Like most irregular forces, these units drew heavily on conscription from the local populace. However, members were selected based on loyalty to the cause and their capacity for violence and terror. CIA and American military advisors trained the Contras; their training included basic weapons and tactics, psychological operations, interrogation, infiltration, and counter-intelligence operations.

**Gear:** Contra death squads used a wide variety of weaponry. Most equipment was vintage surplus, some dating back as far as World War II, with more modern equipment supplied to either side by the Americans or their proxies.

**Vehicles:** Since they were unconventional forces, death squads did not have ready access to military vehicles. As such, privately owned or "liberated" civilian and military vehicles were the norm. Four-wheel drive vehicles were preferred, given the rough, mountainous terrain of the region.

**Allies:** By their very nature and the manner in which they operated, death squads alienated many potential allies. Even the most sympathetic supporter was hard pressed to condone the indiscriminate targeting of civilians. However, Contra forces received covert aid and support from military advisors from the American government, even after the U.S. Congress forbid further support in light of the Contras' terrorist activities.

## INTRODUCTION

The Cold War reached its hottest point in a corner of Southeast Asia. The ideological conflict between capitalism and communism erupted into open warfare in Vietnam, spilling over into the neighboring nations of Cambodia and Laos.

Following the conclusion of the Korean War in 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower espoused the “Domino Theory,” arguing that if communists supported by the Soviet Union succeeded in conquering a sovereign nation, particularly in Southeast Asia, then neighboring countries – Thailand, Burma, and Indonesia, in this case – would thereafter fall to Soviet-sponsored communist takeover, leading to uncontrolled expansion of communist governments. Eisenhower’s successors embraced this theory, relying on it as a directive to halt the spread of communism anywhere in the world, and specifically in Indochina. The United States adopted a policy of containment regarding the spread of communism in Southeast Asia, simultaneously promoting democratic and capitalist forms of government.

The war began with the first communist insurgent activity in South Vietnam in 1957. In 1962, American military advisors began to arrive in South Vietnam, with the first American combat troops – two Marine battalions – landing in March, 1965, to defend Da Nang air-

field. Nine months later, nearly 200,000 American troops would be on the ground in Vietnam, leading to the eventual maximum troop strength of 540,000, combined with some 50,000 Australian and Canadian soldiers.

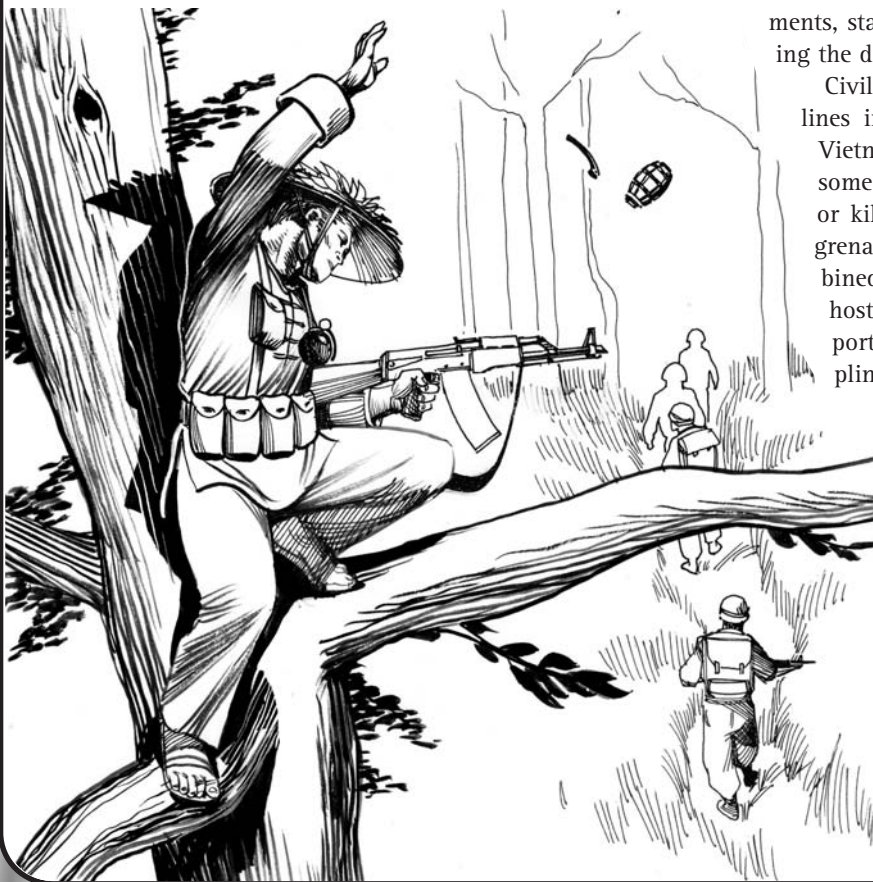
Initially an internal conflict, the Vietnam War spilled out of the borders of North and South Vietnam into neighboring Laos and Cambodia. The North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces found both safe routes for troop and supply movement and populations receptive to their philosophy and methods.

Formally described as a “low-intensity conflict,” the Vietnam War exhibited the difficulty attempting to fight a conventional war against irregular and indigenous enemies. Vietcong forces found great popular support from civilians in both North and South Vietnam, allowing them to conduct a guerrilla war and campaigns of terrorist attacks with impunity. Conversely, American forces, though numerically and technologically superior, found the prosecution of a war with no defined front line of conflict or safe rear area to be extremely difficult, and were often seen as invaders or aggressors instead of allies and defenders.

The war in Southeast Asia caused tremendous division within the citizens of the United States. Anti-war demonstrations and riots became all-too-common, with National Guard troops being used to quell riots at some universities, resulting in the deaths of four students at Kent State University. Thousands of young men – including two future Presidents – used various methods to avoid serving in the war, such as education deferments, stateside National Guard duty, or simply avoiding the draft by moving to Canada.

Civil unrest along racial, political, and economic lines in the United States affected soldiers in the Vietnam War. Fratricide was a recurring problem in some military units, with the practice of “fragging,” or killing a superior officer with a fragmentation grenade, becoming almost commonplace. The combined stresses of vicious combat in a constantly-hostile environment and a perceived lack of support from the home front led to morale and discipline problems in combat units.

The Vietnam War shattered the myth of American military invincibility, and forever changed how nations fight wars. Technological and numerical superiority were no longer seen as guarantors of victory; new tactics and weapons for conducting irregular warfare against irregular troops fighting on their home turf were developed. Lessons learned by American forces in Vietnam assisted other nations in later conflicts, most notably Soviet forces during the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan.



## ***THE WAR ZONE***

Southeast Asia is hot. Very hot. The northern border of Vietnam is only a few miles south of the Tropic of Cancer, and the entire region endures high temperatures year-round. During the monsoon season, which runs from May until January, heavy rains soak the region, turning the earth into mud and flooding the Mekong River delta at the southern end of Vietnam. The highlands of central Vietnam are covered in dense tropical rain forests, leading into a mountainous north. Cambodia is dominated by low, flat plains, with a mountainous region in the north, along the Laotian border. Laos itself is mostly mountains, with some plains and plateaus.

The annual monsoons, while destructive, are essential to production of the region's staple crop, rice. Paddies cover just about any piece of flat, arable land. After the growing season is over, the weather cools by a handful of degrees, and the dry season sets in. The thick mud becomes dry, choking dust, filling the air with thick red and tan clouds.

North Vietnam's capitol, Hanoi, lies roughly 30 miles inland of the Gulf of Tonkin, relying on the major seaport of Haiphong for shipping. During the war, Hanoi is well-defended by surface-to-air missile and anti-aircraft artillery sites, with several thousand soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army in the area as well. The region surrounding Hanoi is a regular target of American bombing missions, but the American aircraft operate under strict target restrictions, and much of the city is immune to attack as a result. Further protection for Hanoi is assured when North Vietnam places a prison camp for captured American airmen in the city limits, knowing that American pilots won't risk injuring or killing their fellow aircrews with a poorly-aimed bomb.

North Vietnam, formally named the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, is ruled by the Lao Dong, or Workers Party – officially, the Communist party had been dissolved in 1945. The Lao Dong aligned itself with the Soviet goal of global communism, focusing first on the capitalist half of the divided nation. A regular armed force is raised, supported and equipped by the Soviet Union and Communist China, and a guerrilla army called the Viet Cong evolves out of the Vietminh rebels who broke French control of the nation after World War II. The Viet Cong is tasked with infiltrating the capitalist south, to prepare the way for northern invasion through assassination, fomenting revolution, and terror attacks.

Hanoi's opposite number in the South is Saigon, renamed Ho Chi Minh City after the war. Located on the northern edge of the Mekong Delta, Saigon is a sprawling city, dominated by French colonial architecture and

the American military presence. Bicycles, motor scooters, civilian cars, jeeps, and 2-½ ton cargo trucks clog the city streets, and the air is filled with the sound of helicopters and transport and combat airplanes. Bars, brothels, and other establishments designed to separate the American soldier from his paycheck are everywhere, and children barely out of diapers try to sell cigarettes, jewelry, watches, and myriad other items. The often-corrupt South Vietnamese government – civilian or military, depending on the year – is based here, and the Viet Cong infiltrate the city to spy on, destabilize, and openly attack the American-supported capitalist regimes. The city's atmosphere is one of barely-controlled chaos, with danger and intrigue around every corner. Agents of all forces – military, government, and otherwise – find fertile ground for espionage and adventure. French expatriates abound, years after Vietnamese independence. Intelligence agencies from around the world conduct operations out of their national embassies, doing their best to figure out what's going to eventually happen to the country, and how best to profit from it.

The South Vietnamese and American forces have, on paper, similar goals – to prevent the expansion of Soviet-sponsored communism into South Vietnam through military strength. American soldiers, airmen, sailors, and marines are expected to support their Vietnamese allies, providing the assistance of a better-trained and better-equipped fighting force. Early in the war, South Vietnamese officers interpret the American mission as using air power and artillery to fight the war for them. South Vietnam's president prefers to use his army to defend against a coup – to no avail, as a cabal of generals overthrows the civilian government in 1963.

Until 1968, Saigon is a relatively safe area for Americans and South Vietnamese. The city is far enough away from the border between the two Vietnams that large-scale communist attacks are highly unlikely. During the Tet Offensive in January 1968, communist forces approach within a few miles of the city, with handfuls of infiltrators entering Saigon to conduct extensive terror attacks. Following the offensive, the city is never quite the same, and insurgent attacks remain fairly common.

Northeast of Saigon, the Chaine Annamitique mountains rise, twisting back to the northwest to form the boundary between Vietnam and Laos. Lush green jungle covers the mountains, except for the scattered areas laid bare by American defoliants. This region is home to some of the most bitter fighting of the Vietnam War. Footpaths and primitive roads – little better than animal trails – snake through the jungle, connecting villages still living at an Iron Age technological level. These paths are also an infiltration route for communist insurgents, branching off from the Ho Chi Minh Trail

## INTRODUCTION

The preceding four chapters have examined real-world conflicts, from their beginnings to their conclusions. This chapter takes a slightly different approach, presenting a grim vision of a possible future conflict ending in apocalypse. The following material is a loose framework that GCs may use intact or strip-mine for ideas as they see fit.

Each of the real-world conflict chapters included a sidebar about ending the world. With the exception of the super flu described below, any of these options can be adapted into the events of this chapter with a little creativity. If desired, however, the conflict presented below stands on its own.

## THE END OF THE WORLD

The world as we knew it took a little over a year and a half to die. The following timeline provides a month-by-month summary of the events leading up to the current post-apocalyptic situation, giving agents a comprehensive overview of the way their world ended – or allowing the GC to begin his game at any point during the global collapse of civilization.

### SETTING THE STAGE

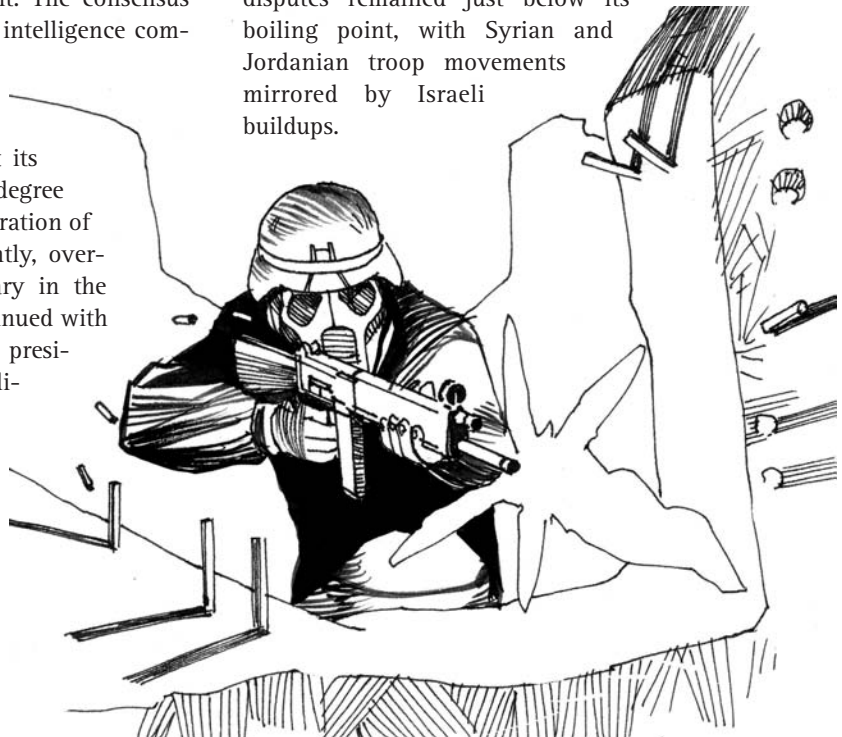
The Last War, as it is commonly known among its survivors, had no clear starting point. The consensus among the surviving members of the intelligence community is that the beginning of the end was the American response to the attacks of September 11th. The United States didn't stand alone, but its Middle East policies incited no small degree of global outrage, inspired a new generation of fanatics, and, perhaps most importantly, over-committed the most powerful military in the world. As the occupation of Iraq continued with no end in sight after America's 2004 presidential elections, the strain on a military reduced so heavily during the 1990s became telling, with morale and unit readiness at lows not seen since the post-Vietnam years.

In Europe, the impetus of the European Union to form a unified continental economy (and military) ran afoul of residual nationalist movements – violently, in some cases. Turkey's resistance to changing its theologically based legal system to one more acceptable to its neighbors was the final straw necessary for widespread discontent to become overt opposition. Polish citizens, seeing their already-shaky economy receiving its death-blow from EU trade agreements, entered a state of near-revolt against their government. Conversely, in Western European nations, labor movements rose up against EU expansion into Eastern European markets and their abysmally low labor prices.

With the exception of North Korea's continued nuclear program, Asia remained relatively quiet during the immediate prewar years. The shaky Japanese economy stabilized, with its effects being felt throughout the region. Domestic strife continued in Hong Kong, with Taiwan using these problems to reinforce its own desire for continued sovereignty.

Civil wars continued throughout Central Africa before the Final War, and UN peacekeeping missions proved largely ineffective in the face of widespread ethnic violence. The United States, already heavily committed in other areas, was loath to intervene, and few European nations save for France had any motivation to assist.

The specter of radical Islamic fundamentalism loomed large in the Middle East. The continuing occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan maintained high levels of tension between the Arab world and the U.S. and Europe. The ebb and flow of Israeli territorial disputes remained just below its boiling point, with Syrian and Jordanian troop movements mirrored by Israeli buildups.



## RECONSTRUCTION

An agent who suffers a critical injury may require additional assistance to set things right, as shown in the Recovery column of Table 6.1: Critical Injuries (see page 106).

**Healing:** The agent's body naturally heals this critical injury in time. The critical injury and all of its effects are lost when the agent's wound points return to maximum.

**Prosthesis:** The agent must be fitted with an artificial limb that provides at least partial function before he may offset *any* of the penalties inflicted by this injury. This process cannot begin until the agent's wound points return to 1 or higher. Assuming the agent has access to the proper facilities, a prosthetic leg or foot costs 4 BP or \$750, while a prosthetic arm or hand costs 8 BP or \$1,500. Once prosthetic fitting begins, the agent must make a complex Dexterity check with an interval of 1 week and a DC of 100. With success, the agent fully adjusts to his prosthesis, and the penalties inflicted by the missing limb are reduced to ½ standard (rounded up). If the agent suffers a second identical injury, however, the agent loses the prosthesis and may never gain another.

**Surgery:** Invasive or reconstructive surgery is necessary to correct this injury. This process requires a complex Profession (Doctor) skill check with an interval of 1 hour and a DC equal to 20 × the number of wound points the agent possesses below 0 (min. 100). The agent's Constitution modifier is applied to each of the surgeon's Profession (Doctor) skill checks. Further, the agent may spend his own action dice to increase the surgeon's check results. He may not affect the procedure in any other way, however, as he is (hopefully) unconscious for it. If the complex skill check is successful, the injury is healed once the agent's wound points return to maximum. If the surgeon suffers 2 consecutive critical failures, the procedure fails and the injury becomes permanent.

**Therapy:** Long-term psychological and/or medical care is required to heal this injury. This process cannot begin until the agent's wound points return to 1 or higher. Once therapy begins, the character providing care selects 1 damaged ability and makes a complex skill Profession (Psychologist) check with an interval of 1 week and a DC equal to 10 × the agent's original score in the target ability. The agent may spend his own action dice to increase the psychologist's check results, but may not affect the procedure in any other way, as he must leave himself in another's hands for the process to work. If the complex skill check is successful, the agent regains 1 lost point in the ability. If the psychologist suffers 2 consecutive critical failures, the procedure fails and the agent suffers 1 additional point of damage with the target ability.

## GEAR ABUSE AND MAINTENANCE

With the standard single-mission format, agents needn't worry about the effects of extended use upon their gear. Such operations usually occur over a matter of days, at the end of which all surviving gear goes back to the Agency's stockpile. For agents on long-term missions, however, those in the field for weeks or months at a time – or after the end of the world – this luxury may become a distant memory. These agents must make do with gear that's often a single bad firefight away from literally falling apart in their hands.

**Special Note:** These optional rules frequently refer to *repair checks*. This general term is used to denote a skill check with whatever skill is most appropriate to repairing a specific item. For example, Craft (Gunsmithing) is used to repair a firearm, while Mechanics is used to repair a motorcycle. If an agent possesses a feat or class ability that grants a bonus with improvised repairs, he may choose to apply its benefits to any appropriate repair check – though his error range for that check is increased by 1 to reflect the fact that he's applying a temporary solution to a permanent problem.

## ABUSE

During a long-term mission, every gear item gains an additional trait: abuse. This is a measure of the material fatigue and general wear and tear the item accumulates over its service life.

An item may gain abuse as follows.

- Each time an agent suffers an error when using, repairing, or modifying an item, the GC may spend 2 or more action dice to apply a number of points of abuse equal to the number of action dice spent divided by 2 (rounded down). This action die cost is increased to 3 per point of abuse if the item possesses the dependable (DP) quality. If the GC wishes to activate the error as a critical success, he must spend additional action dice to do so.
- Each time an item suffers enough damage to enter a new damage threshold, it gains 1 point of abuse. This replaces the standard effect of damage thresholds. *For more information about damage thresholds, see the Modern Arms Guide, pages 23–25.*

An item's error range is increased by the current number of abuse points it possesses. If an item's error range ever rises to 1–11 or greater, it is immediately destroyed and is may only be used for cannibalization (see page 109).