

THIRD OPTION

Global Clandestine Operations



Copyright 2023
Dan Verssen Games (DVG)

Designed by
Joe Fernandez

Table of Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Playing the Game
 - 2.1 Overview & Glossary
 - 2.2 Player objectives
 - 2.3 General and Key Concepts
 - 2.4 Missions
 - 2.5 Threat Levels
 - 2.6 Mission Types
 - 2.6.1 Find, Fix & Finish (F3)
 - 2.6.2 Capture
 - 2.6.3 Sabotage
 - 2.6.4 Rescue
 - 2.6.5 Recon
 - 2.6.6 Raid
 - 2.6.7 Mission Generator
 - 2.7 General Scoring
- 3.0 Game Components Descriptions
 - Mission Mat
 - Mission Cards
 - Team Cards
 - Team Counters
 - Hostile Unit Counters
 - Asset Cards
 - Enemy Cards
 - Enemy Action Cards
 - Event Cards
 - Charts & Tables
 - Game Markers
 - Mission Log
- 4.0 SAC Teams and Enemy Units
 - 4.1 Special Activities Center (SAC)
 - 4.2 Special Operations Group (SOG)
 - 4.2.1 Ground Branch
 - 4.2.2 Maritime Branch
 - 4.2.3 Air Branch
 - 4.3 Recon Group (RG) General
 - 4.3.1 Air and Space
 - 4.3.2 Recon Group Teams
 - 4.3.3 Operatives
 - 4.4 Enemy Units
 - 4.4.1 Fighters
 - 4.4.2 Intel
- 5.0 Setup
 - 5.1 Mission and Team Selection
 - 5.2 Asset Selection
- 6.0 Sequence of Play
 - 6.1 Flow Chart
- 7.0 Mission Execution
 - 7.1 Overview

DVG

- 7.2 Random Mission Generator Card
- 7.3 STEP 1 Planning Phase/Setup
- 7.4 STEP 2 Reconnaissance (Recon) Phase
 - Action Round
 - 7.4.1 Casualties, Hits and Kills Action Rounds (cont.)
 - 7.4.2 Mission Abort
- 7.5 STEP 3 Direct Action Phase
 - 7.5.1 Enemy Awareness
 - 7.5.2 Infiltration
 - 7.5.3 Actions at the Objective
 - 7.5.4 Target Type Protocols
 - 7.5.5 Exfiltration
 - 7.5.6 Drone Strikes
- 8.0 Scoring
 - 8.1 Difficulty Modifiers & Optional Rules
- 9.0 Operations
- Designer's Notes
- References
- Credits
- Appendix: Description of Cards

1.0 Introduction

Take command of the Central Intelligence Agency's Directorate of Clandestine Operations SAC: Special Activities Center otherwise known as the "Third Option". Prepare, plan, and conduct highly classified covert missions across the globe against America's toughest enemies to safeguard U.S. and allied interests around the world. Select missions or operations and recruit the best teams available to conduct covert paramilitary actions across the world with varied threat levels. Recruit Teams while balancing asset procurement and planning. Neutralize enemy intelligence units in order to enhance the success of your mission by organizing selected Recon Group teams before your strike. Execute your plan deploying Ground Branch's Special Operations Group teams during an intense Direct-Action phase where all mission elements come together or fall apart.

Third Option uses a Mission Mat, card play, markers, and dice to create a unique player experience that allows the selection of teams and strategies to conduct missions with precision and expertise. Player teams are represented in the game by cards and corresponding counters which are placed on the Mission Mat. These cards represent teams that may be further enhanced by individual assets (equipment, abilities, etc.), and as part of the abstraction, they differ slightly in numbers and

Third Option: Global Clandestine Operations Rulebook capabilities. Missions can be played individually or as part of multi-mission operations. A random hostile draw mechanic and dynamic gameplay ensure no two missions are ever the same.

There is a significant abstraction in Third Option. Teams and Units do not have specific numbers, casualties may refer to something other than killed or wounded, and asset, event, mission and enemy action cards also provide information and actions that are general in nature. The rulebook and the Designer Notes section will have more detail on this topic.

Game Components

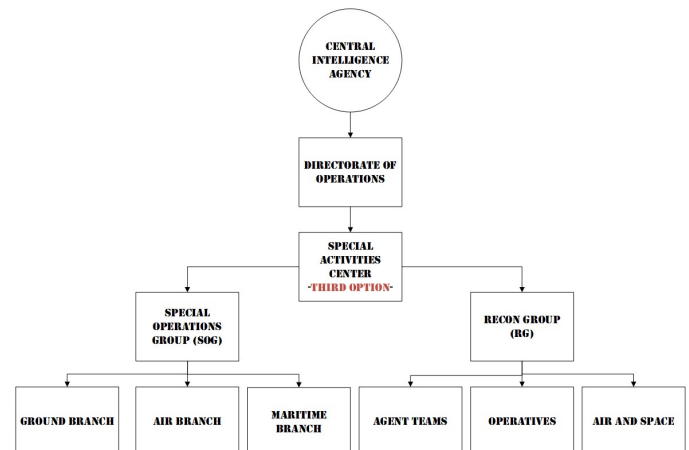
- Mission Mat
- XX Counters
- 25 Team Cards
- 24 Asset Cards
- 17 Mission Cards
- 17 Enemy Action Cards
- 28 Event Cards
- Six x D10 Dice (2 Green, 2 Blue and 2 red)
- Four x D6 Dice (Yellow)
- Player Aid with Chart with Tables
- Player Play Aid Flowchart
- Mission and Operation Log Sheets
- Rulebook

2.0 Playing the Game

2.1 Overview

Third Option is a solitaire game played on a Mission Mat where the player selects, deploys, and maneuvers teams and assets representing U.S. clandestine services with an emphasis on paramilitary actions against adversaries around the world. A “Phase” system is used along with dice, cards, and counters to play out varied missions. The world map is divided into the six Areas of Operations (AOR) for the United States military Central Command. Within these geographical areas, the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and the U.S. Intelligence apparatus execute covert activities against hostile forces who threaten the national security interests of the United States and its allies. These Missions require the use of covert methods and plausible deniability by the government and are carried out by the Central Intelligence Agency, Special Activities Center (SAC) also known as the “Third Option”.

Third Option Organizational Chart



As the player, you take control of the highly secretive SAC division in order to plan and execute missions in dangerous, volatile, and unpredictable areas across the globe. The careful and detailed planning, reconnaissance, and execution of missions assigned will determine the success of the individual missions and/or a combination of missions to make up operations located at the end of the rulebook. Gameplay is divided into three easy-to-follow PHASES clearly identified in the rulebook, flowchart, and Mission Mat for easy reference.

Players select a “Mission Card” which provide all the information necessary to plan and complete successfully clandestine paramilitary Missions around

the world. A Random Mission Generation Card provides players with an array of random missions to play or include as part of multi-mission Operations. No two missions are ever the same.

Glossary

The game uses a few acronyms and terms detailed below:

- SAC** – Special Activities Center
- SOG** – Special Operations Group Team
- SOCOM** – U.S. Armed Forces Special Operations Command
- RG** – Reconnaissance Group Team
- Fighters** – Enemy Combatant Units
- Intel** – Enemy Intelligence Units
- Recon** – Reconnaissance
- Direct Action** – Combat related activities
- Non-Kinetic** – Non-Combat activities
- Kinetic** – Combat activities
- SIGINT** – Signal Intelligence source (Telephone, Internet, satellite etc.)
- HUMINT** – Human intelligence source (Spies, informants etc.)
- Infil** – Infiltration (Entering a hostile area)
- Exfil** – Exfiltration (Leaving a hostile area)
- D10** – Ten-sided die (0 equals 10)
- D6** – Six-sided Die
- DRM** – Die Roll Modifier.

2.2 Player objectives

Players are required to select (or random draw), “Mission Cards” which provide all the information necessary to plan and complete various missions and operations around the world.

2.3 General and Key Concepts

Actions conducted by the player in the game are either Kinetic or Non-kinetic. Kinetic actions are combat activities that are violent, and extremely dynamic in nature. These result in the killing of hostiles.

Non-Kinetic actions are covert activities which undermine hostile actions by virtue of their surreptitious nature. Although exact team and unit numbers are abstracted, the player can recruit teams according to special attributes (detailed on each card) which may have a higher number or modifier used to increase operational success. Generally speaking, player teams represented by cards and composed of five to ten soldiers/agents and referred to as “team(s)”. Enemy

fighters and Intel units are represented by counters and are referred to as “unit(s)”.

A few key concepts to keep in mind which are prevalent throughout the game:

- Every player’s team card represents one team.
- Enemy units are represented by “Fighter” and “Intel” counters.
- All To-Hit values on cards and charts are “EQUAL or LOWER than” unless otherwise stated.
- Die Roll Modifiers (DRM) are cumulative.
- An Action Round consists of one attack roll for each player/enemy team/unit counter participating in the engagement. The action round is considered over after all hits/kills have been assigned. Action Rounds always start by drawing one Event card.
- All enemy fighter units present at the “Mission Target” act as the “shields” to any mission type and must be successfully engaged before moving on to the main mission target and egress.
- The term “Casualties” is treated as an abstraction and does not necessarily correlate with killed or wounded every time.

These concepts will be detailed, repeated and reinforced later in the rulebook.

2.4 Missions

Missions are defined by cards which can be selected individually, drawn randomly from a deck or played sequentially if playing an operation. Missions vary in location, threat levels, victory conditions and asset point allocation. Mission objectives are different for each mission type. A “Mission Generator” card is used to generate additional random missions beyond the ones provided allowing players to create their own missions and narratives.



2.5 Threat Levels

“Threat Level” is a game mechanic which simulates hostility levels in different geographical areas and spaces around the world, which correlate to U.S. Department of Defense and SOCOM operational areas. Threat levels have a direct impact on asset procurement and operational planning. Generally, Low threat areas pose a lesser technical and operational threat to the mission

while Medium, and High-level areas pose significantly higher challenges to the successful completion of a mission.

The three threat levels represented in the game are as follows:

Low-Areas of operation with a lower than usual technical and operational sophistication.

Medium – Areas of operation with an average level of technical and operational sophistication, which represents a challenge on some missions.

High -Areas of operation with higher level of technical and operational readiness which represent a significantly more dangerous opponent.

2.6 Mission Types

There are six mission types in Third Option. These missions represent the core mission types, and vary in threat levels, scope and preparation. Missions can be played individually, by type, threat level and/or area. Missions are linked together to form more coherent operations (See Operations 9.0). Mission specific counters are placed on the Mission Area box on the Mission Mat.

2.6.1 Find, Fix, and Finish. Also known as “F3” is a designation for missions that target a specific threat with the intent to neutralize; either by capturing or terminating the designated person or group. F3 missions require the placement of a “F3” counter representative of the individual(s) being targeted. The Target counter always attacks by itself with a to-hit number of 2. (Chart A6)

2.6.2 Capture. A Capture mission’s objective is to capture a designated target alive for rendering, interrogation and/or trial. Capture missions require the placement of a “Capture” counter on the Mission Area box representative of the individual(s) being targeted. Refer to Chart A9 to determine roll requirements.

2.6.3 Sabotage. A Sabotage mission’s objective is to significantly reduce the enemy’s capacity to damage U.S. and allied capabilities. Place the “Sabotage” missions counter on the Mission Area box. Sabotage missions do not conduct the initial roll for enemy Fighter Units. Fighters may be encountered via card or events and these are engaged accordingly. Sabotage (and Recon) missions are resolved after any enemies encountered in the mission. Refer to Chart A5 for resolution.

2.6.4 Rescue. Rescue missions are highly complex operations with the purpose of rescuing hostages held in enemy controlled areas. Rescue missions require the

placement of a “Hostage” counter on the “Objective Area” representative of the individual(s) being rescued.

2.6.5 Recon. Recon missions are executed to obtain intelligence and enemy dispositions in a hostile area of operations. Recon missions do not conduct the initial roll for enemy Fighter Units. Fighters may be encountered via card or events and these are engaged accordingly. These direct-action firefights do not constitute a compromise of recon teams. Any teams captured in a recon mission constitute an automatic mission failure. (Chart A5)

2.6.6 Raid. Raid missions are conducted in order to destroy and kill enemy assets and/or personnel in a specific hostile controlled area. Place the “Raid” mission counter in the Mission area box. Also place one additional fighter to the enemy fighter unit pool.

2.6.7 Mission Generator. The included Mission Generator bot card is designed to provide the player with extended play as well as build-your-own mission design options (See 7.2).

2.7 General Scoring

The player’s goal is to achieve major objectives of the mission or multi-mission operation while at the same time avoiding loss of teams. There are some additional factors to take into consideration. (See Section 8.0).

3.0 Game Components Descriptions

Mission Mat-The Mission Mat is where game pieces are placed and where the game is played. It contains basic information related to tracking teams/units, locations, gameplay, flow and other important quick references. It should guide the player through the various phases of mission planning and execution.

Mission Cards – Mission Cards define mission parameters including type of mission, location, threat level, and purchase points, as well as enemy disposition requirements to play a particular mission in the game.

Team Cards – Team Cards are detailed descriptions of the player pieces that will be procured and used throughout the game. There are six types of team cards divided into two groups:

Special Operations Group-Ground Branch, Maritime Branch and Air Branch.

Reconnaissance Group- Teams, Air & Space, and Operatives.

Team Counters – Represent player’s SOG and RG teams which are used to represent team cards and used when assigning hits.

Hostile Unit Counters – Fighters and Intel are represented by counters which are placed according to random rolls unique to each mission type. The hostile unit values vary by threat level types which are detailed in Chart A2.

Asset Cards – Asset Cards are procured and utilized by the players. They provide additional resources to enhance the completion of missions. Their cost varies according to the level of help the asset may provide and/or threat level. Asset purchase costs are located on the top left of each card and count towards the total for purchase of the player’s hand.

Enemy Action Cards – Enemy Cards used to determine enemy actions during the Direct-Action Phase. Enemy Cards are re-shuffled after each mission and placed face down on the designated boxes on the Mission Mat.

Event Cards – Event Cards represent unforeseen events which occur during a mission. Event Cards are re-shuffled and placed face down in the Event Card area after each mission.

Charts & Tables – Charts and Tables provide the player with a quick reference to resolve various game decisions, mechanics and functions.

Game Markers – Game markers (Counters) are used in the Mission Mat to track location and status of teams and units, hits, infiltration, exfiltration, awareness etc.

Mission Log – The Mission Log is used to record individual missions as well as Operation scores and outcomes. The player is free to make copies of the Mission Log document.

4.0 SAC Teams and Enemy Units

"Great results can be achieved with small forces." -Sun Tzu

There are several types of teams and units in Third Option and they are divided into player teams and enemy units (Bot). Friendly teams are represented by Team Cards with a corresponding counter which is used in the Mission Mat to keep track of teams during mission phases and actions. Enemy units are represented by counters which are placed in the Mission Mat and act as hostile forces during gameplay. All teams in Third Option represent a tactical group of individuals, and not a specific number of soldiers, operators, agents or intelligence officers.

4.1 Special Activities Center (SAC)

The Special Activities Center (SAC) is a division within the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency responsible for covert and paramilitary operations against enemy and hostile regimes, groups and/or individuals who threaten the national security of the United States and its allies.

Players use a combination of team and asset cards to conduct operations. There is a total of six team types in Third Option divided into the two main sections of the Special Activities Center (SAC). These are the *Special Operations Group (SOG)* which consists of Ground Branch, Maritime Branch and Air Branch, and the *Reconnaissance Group (RG)* which consists of Air and Space, Teams and Operatives. Selecting, organizing, equipping and successfully deploying elements of the two groups is the main objective of the player. The Appendix contains descriptions of the cards.

4.2 Special Operation Group (SOG)

The Special Operations Group or SOG is responsible for covert paramilitary operations where plausible deniability and secrecy is required. SOG components are highly trained personnel usually recruited from the top U.S. Special Operations Forces. They operate in teams of various sizes, and is divided into; Ground, Air, and Maritime branches.

4.2.1 Ground Branch

SOGs Ground Branch is responsible for covert direct-action missions when the U.S. government requires total deniability of their existence and actions. Team members better known as Paramilitary Operations Officers, and Specialized Skills Officers are recruited from the U.S. military Special Operations Forces (SOF) community. SOG teams are considered the most secretive special operations force and the tip of the spear.

The game includes nine separate teams identified as Teams Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, Foxtrot, Golf, Hotel, and India. Each team has a cost which is the number on the top left green box and may include special attributes such as infiltration, exfiltration and/or drone strike modifiers. Their inherent “To-Hit” combat value on a D10 roll varies from team to team. Ground Branch can operate in both the Reconnaissance, and Direct-Action phases however, ground Branch teams deployed for



Reconnaissance Phase actions cannot continue to the Direct-Action Phase.

4.2.2 Maritime Branch

The Maritime Branch of the SOG is responsible for the successful amphibious infiltration and/or exfiltration of Ground Branch teams into hostile areas of operations. Maritime Branch personnel and equipment is the most advanced available and may include Special Boat Squadrons, submarine and other highly covert methods of delivery.

Missions that require maritime infiltration or exfiltration may recruit a maritime asset. Maritime teams do not have a 'To-Hit' value and cannot engage enemies. Instead, they provide a positive DRM for the selected maritime (only) infiltration/exfiltration roll.



4.2.3 Air Branch

The Air Branch of the SOG is responsible for the successful air insertion (infiltration) and/or exfiltration of Ground Branch teams into a hostile area of operations. Air Branch personnel and equipment are the most advanced available, and includes, helicopters, stealth aircraft, commercial aircraft, and other highly covert methods of delivery.

Missions that require air infiltration or exfiltration may recruit an SAC Air Branch teams support in order to enhance a successful infiltration/exfiltration.



4.3 Recon Group (RG) General

The Recon Group (RG) is responsible for covert activities related to, targeting, active & passive surveillance, non-direct action clandestine operations, Air and Space surveillance, and cyberwarfare. Tactical teams within the SAC can also carry out these actions while deployed in hostile and austere environments. A large covert operation typically has components that involve many or all of these categories as well as SOG Teams.

4.3.1 Air and Space

Air and Space utilizes airborne and space platforms to provide secure and timely satellite communication,

imagery as well as historical and real time intelligence during missions. Players may recruit and deploy an Air and Space team. Air and Space teams do not have a 'To-Hit' value and cannot engage enemies. They provide a -1 DRM for Recon Group Team actions, and maintain "Enemy Awareness" value at zero during Infiltration and up-to but not including "Actions at the Objective" section of the Direct-Action phase. Chart A1.

4.3.2 Recon Group

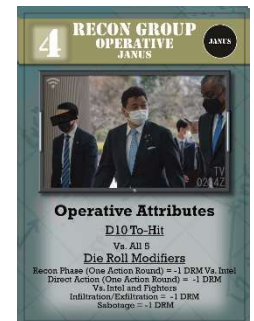
Recon Group Teams are a cadre of government agents and contractors who conduct covert passive and active surveillance, counter-intelligence and cyberwarfare. Recon Group Teams are the backbone of the Recon Group and are crucial for the gathering of Recon Phase intelligence, and non-kinetic actions against enemy Intel units. They may deploy in a limited capacity during the Direct-Action phase in order to lower enemy awareness.

The game includes ten separate Recon Group teams identified as Marcus, Able, Romulus, Friar, Remus, Horus, Hiram, Don-Q, Ronin and Specter. Team costs and To-Hit numbers may vary. Recon Group teams operate in both; Recon, Direct-Action and may continue from the Recon Phase on to participate in the Direct-Action Phase.



4.3.3 Operatives

Operatives are highly trained U.S. government intelligence officers who conduct a myriad of covert intelligence operations throughout the globe in the interest of U.S. national security. Operatives have both, a non-kinetic and kinetic to-hit capability, and also provide unique mission support. There is a limit of one operative deployed per operation.



4.4 Enemy Units

Enemy units are divided into two main types: Fighters and Intel. These units are part of the artificial intelligence bot and non-player controlled They represent hostile forces during missions. Their numbers and disposition depend on the mission type, random dice rolls, and potential events, and enemy action cards.

4.4.1 Fighters

Fighters are hostile combatants responsible for all kinetic actions against the player during the Direct-Action Phase and under certain circumstances during the Recon Phase and are represented in game by “Fighter” counters. Fighters have a basic D10 To-Hit number depending on the Threat Level they are operating in. (Table A2)

Low – Equal or Less than 3

Med – Equal or Less than 3

High – Equal or Less than 4

4.4.2 Intel

Enemy Intel units are the main hostile force for all non-kinetic actions against the player represented by counters. Intel units represent active and passive counter-surveillance, spies and cyberwarfare components. They have a one D6 based To-Hit number which is used regardless of the threat level area they are deployed. Chart A2

5.0 Setup

The Mission Mat is used by the player to place cards, counters and keep track of movement and mission progress. The mat is divided into several identified areas where the player places mission, event and enemy cards as well as counters and markers.

5.1 Mission and Team Selection

Select a mission to play from the Mission Cards or select at random (9.0). Based on the purchase point number located on the upper left of the Mission Card, procure mission components which include; SOG and RG teams as well as other Assets from the Assets card deck which can help achieve mission goals while minimizing potential problems, and increase survivability. Asset point costs are located on the upper left corner of the Team and Asset Support Cards and may be restricted by a mission’s location or threat level. Ensure the total amount of assets does not exceed the Mission Card Asset Point allowance and threat area availability. Take into consideration the mission parameters carefully and select the best combination of teams and assets possible for the successful completion of the mission. Each Mission Card has the required type and quantity of dice rolls to make in order to assign the number of enemy fighters and intel which the player will go against initially during gameplay. Rolls vary for each threat area and mission. More on 7.3 (Phase 1)

5.2 Asset Selection

The player may purchase “Asset Cards” using the Asset Point value of a mission card as part of their mission asset supply. Assets provide varied enhancements to the player’s teams which may add or enhance their capabilities and vary in cost, scope and impact. Asset selection and procurement is made during the Player’s Planning Phase and before enemy disposition is known. It is important to select assets that will enhance the mission’s goal as well as the team’s effectiveness.



6.0 Sequence of Play

Sequence of Play

1. Select Mission or Operation
2. Recruit Team and Assets (Equal or Less than the total Mission Asset Points).
3. Place Friendly Teams on Mission Mat.
4. Roll for enemy Fighters/Intel. Place them in Recon Phase area.
5. Shuffle and place three Enemy Action Cards Face Down in Mission Mat.
6. Shuffle and place Event Cards in Mission Mat.
7. Conduct Recon Phase actions.
8. Conduct Direct Action Phase actions.
9. Score mission/operation.

The basic sequence of play is divided into three main areas called “Phases” and they are; PHASE 1: Planning Phase, PHASE 2: Recon Phase and PHASE 3: Direct-Action Phase. Phases are played sequentially. Details of each phase and detailed gameplay in section 7.0.

6.1 Flow Chart

Third Option includes a flow chart which details the sequence of play, and highlights the different options for the player at different stages of a mission. Use the chart to help you navigate the different Phases and areas of the game as you become familiar with the system.

7.0 Mission Execution

“No Plan survives first contact with the enemy”

7.1 Overview

Actions in Third Option are either kinetic or non-kinetic in nature. Kinetic actions involve the use of lethal force in order to complete a mission and is considered warfare. The SACs Special Operations Group (SOG) which consists of “Ground Branch”, “Air Branch”, and “Maritime Branch” are mainly responsible for kinetic actions in the game.

Non-kinetic actions such as, reconnaissance, spying, passive & active surveillance, and hacking are covert in nature. Non-Kinetic assets in Third Option includes Recon Group Teams, Operatives and Air & Space. Operatives may engage in both kinetic and non-kinetic actions.

These are just general concepts to provide the player with a framework on the general actions that take place in the game. There is significant abstraction when referring to combat.

7.2 Random Mission Generator Card

Third Option includes a random mission generator card the player can use to generate individual random missions, or generate a random or specific mission type as part of operations. The card contains all the information required for use including geographical areas, threat levels, random point generation for both; player teams and assets, and hostile forces. This card can be used anytime to play a quick mission.

To use the card:

Roll the required dice noted on the card for the mission type an area selected in the following order. Write down the results.

1. Mission Type (1xD6)
2. Threat Level (1xD6)
3. Mission Location (1xD6)
4. Infiltration Method (1xD6)
5. Exfiltration Method (1xD6)
6. Roll either D6 or D10 and/or combination thereof for Asset Points, Fighters and Intel according to the Mission type using the dice number and type as instructed on the card.

Asset Points Low - 1xD6 Med - 1xD10 High - 2xD6	MISSION 1xD6	Threat Level 1-3 = Low 4-6 = Med 7-9 = High
1 = Recon 2 = Capture 3 = PS Ops 4 = Sabotage 5 = Recon 6 = Sabotage		
1 = CENTCOM 2 = SOUTHCOM 3 = AFACOM 4 = EURCOM 5 = CENTCOM 6 = INDOPACOM		
Fighters Low - 1xD6 Green Med - 1xD10 Submarine High - 2xD6 No Roll		
Intel Low - 1xD6 Med - 1xD10 High - 2xD6		
Objective Successfully Complete Mission		
Land Sea Air		
Infiltration Method 1xD6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Exfiltration Method 1xD6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Place Mission Counter on Mission Mat		

PHASE 1

PLANNING PHASE

“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.”
– Sun Tzu

7.3 Planning Phase/Setup

During the Planning Phase the player selects a Mission Card from the available 6 mission types. Players can select a particular mission, randomly draw one, or generate a mission using the mission generator card. Also note the player may select one of the included operations or make his own. Once selected, the player must first (before any other action) select his team and support assets based on an assessment of the mission. Teams and Assets are recruited by expending “Asset Points”, a number located on the top left corner of Mission Cards. Team and Asset Support costs is located on the top left corner of each SOG and RG card. The total cost of Team/Asset cards cannot exceed the Asset Points defined by the Mission Card.

Once all friendly teams have been recruited, assign and distribute them to their respective deployment boxes; Place the SOG Team counter on the Direct Action (Phase 3) area of the Mission Mat. And the Recon Team counter on the Recon box of the Recon (Phase 2) area.

Place all SOG and RG team counters on separate opaque containers or if using one container place the RG counters first. Care must be taken in the assignment of teams to either phase, taking into account specific assignments. For example:

Important note regarding SOG Teams in the Recon Phase: SOG Team(s) assigned to the Recon Phase cannot participate in the Direct-Action Phase. There is an event that allows for an exception, but players are advised to take this into consideration before the assignment of SOG Team(s) to this phase. For the most part, the bulk of SOG teams should be placed and used in the “Direct Action Phase”.

After ALL friendly teams and Asset Support has been acquired and allocated to the Recon and Direct-Action boxes on the Mission Mat, the player then conducts random die rolls for Hostile units - this accounts for

intelligence gaps and fog of war. Each Mission Card has a red “Fighters” and blue “Intel” box. Depending on the mission type and threat level the player rolls a combination of either one or two D6 dice and or D10 dice for the number of enemy units to be placed on the Mission Mat. All “1” results on a D6 roll are re-rolled. All “1” or “2” results a D10 roll are re-rolled.

Shuffle the “Enemy Action” cards and place (face down and without looking) three cards in the assigned “Enemy Action” boxes in the Mission Mat numbered one to three.

Place hostile Fighters and Intel units in the corresponding boxes within the SOCOM command area of the Mission Mat where the mission will be happening.

Place the corresponding “Infiltration” and “Exfiltration” markers on their respective boxes (Air-Sea-Land) on the Phase 3 area of the Mission Mat.

Once you have completed procurement and placement of all player teams and enemy units you are now ready to move to the “Recon Phase” to start non-kinetic actions, and in some cases, limited kinetic actions.

Note on dice roll modifiers:
Dice roll modifiers or DRMs are a central mechanic in the game.
Generally, when attacking lower dice rolls are good for the player and bad when being attacked.
Negative (-) DRMs help the player while positive (+) DRMs affect negatively.

Important Note Regarding Cards
Information/instructions on any card supersede the rulebook.

Important Note Regarding To-Hit Values
All To-Hit values on cards and charts are “**EQUAL or LOWER** than” unless otherwise stated.

PHASE 2

RECONNAISSANCE PHASE

"Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet." - Gen. James Mattis

7.4 Reconnaissance Phase

The Recon Phase is where a Mission starts. During this phase your Recon Group (Teams, Operatives and Air & Space) attempt to obtain intelligence, and neutralize hostile Intel assets in support of the Direct-Action phase. Recon Phase non-kinetic activities are abstracted actions where RG and hostile Intel units attempt to neutralize each other using varied covert methods of surveillance, electronic monitoring, hacking, social media manipulation and limited (violent) actions which fall short of full kinetic action or combat.

In some instances, the use of kinetic assets such as SOG teams, and drone strikes are allowed (more on this below), but the primary goal of a successful Recon Phase execution is the neutralization of hostile Intel assets before the start of the Direct-Action phase. The U.S. player initiates non-kinetic action.

Place all enemy Fighters and Intel on their respective boxes on the Recon (Phase 2) area. Recon phase actions are simultaneous and executed on a one-to-one basis. One RG Team vs one hostile Intel unit.

Recon Phase Drone Strike Protocol

The player may attempt an *ad-hoc* Recon Phase drone strike on an F3 type mission provided the player has the drone strike asset card and the area of operations allows it. The decision to attempt a drone strike during the Recon Phase is final, and cancels any further Recon-Phase and Direct-Action Phase play.

To execute a Recon Phase drone strike, your team must be equipped with Air and Space, a Drone Strike Asset Card, at least one Operative, one SOG Team (assigned to Phase 2) OR two RG Teams, AND before starting actions against enemy Intel units:

DVG

sDraw one **Event Card** from the Event Card deck and resolve the "Recon Phase" section of the card.

Roll for availability and launch. Only one of the Operative, SOG or RG Team DRM applies. DRMs are for the D6 roll only. (See Chart A7)



Note: The chances for success during the Recon Phase are significantly lower than a Direct-Action drone strike attempt. Failure to obtain a hit, results in an automatic mission failure. A result of 'Unavailable' will end any further Recon Phase drone strike attempt, in which case the mission may continue normally and the Drone asset is not expended.

Action Round

An Action Round consists of one attack roll for each player/enemy counter participating in the engagement. The action round is considered over after all hits/kills have been assigned. (See 7.4.1)

Recon Phase Action Rounds

Place RG Team and/or Operative on the "Non-Kinetic" RG and enemy Intel unit counters on the "Action Area" of the Mission Mat.

Recon Phase Action Round Sequence:

- Place RG Team counter and all Intel unit counters in "Action Area" of the Mission Mat.
- Draw one Event Card for each action round and resolve.
- Roll one D10 for each RG and one D6 for each enemy Intel counter. Actions occurs simultaneously.
- Compare the "To-Hit" numbers of each team taking into account any applicable DRMs. Chart A2
- Hits are assigned randomly to player teams. Randomly draw the number of hits received from the RG Team counters in the opaque container or any other alternate random method. Place a "Hit" counter on any friendly Team hit.
- If either roll is **LESS** or Equal-To the "To-Hit" number the team/unit receives one (1) hit, PLACE Hit markers appropriately on the Team card. Two hits on any one team and that team becomes a casualty. Friendly teams who are removed are during the Recon Phase are placed

in the Casualty area of the Mission Mat and are removed from play for the rest of the mission. Enemy units become casualties (i.e., Combat Ineffective) and placed in the Enemy Casualty box on the Mission Mat.

- Each Action Round played requires an event card draw prior to roll.

The RG attack procedure is to roll one D10 using the “To-Hit” number and any applicable DRMs for the selected RG Team, determine if the hostile Intel has been neutralized. Attack rolls are simultaneous, meaning that both sides roll at the same time and apply results immediately. The engagement continues until one side is declared victorious by eliminating all units from the opponent side. This applies to all resolutions; kinetic and non-kinetic.

Example: Two Recon Group Teams roll two D10 (without DRMs) with a result of 6 or less against a single enemy Intel unit. The enemy D6 roll results in a 2. The non-kinetic action is successful and the hostile Intel unit is removed and placed in the “Enemy Casualties” box of the Mission Mat after receiving two hits.

The procedure for the hostile Intel is to roll one D6 per Intel Unit, (Chart A2) if the result is 5 or 6 the attack is successful and the Recon Group team receives one hit, after the second hit the RG Team becomes a casualty and moved to the “Friendly Casualties” box in the Mission Mat. A result of 4 for LOW and 3 or 4 for MEDIUM, re-roll the D6 dice once. A result other than 5-6 the attack is unsuccessful. A reminder that hits on Player units is random. Chart A2.

All friendly and hostile units attack during an Action Rounds, until either the RG team(s) or hostile Intel units are completely removed from play as casualties.

If all Recon Group teams assigned to the Recon Phase are successfully removed by enemy Intel, it’s considered to be a successful hostile counter-surveillance/detection action. The player rolls one D6 and adds that number of Fighters to the Fighters box on the Recon Phase area of the Mission Mat. Additionally, set the “Enemy Awareness” Track to +1. Air and Space assets never become casualties. Hostile Intel removed are considered out of action and placed in the “Enemy Casualties” box in the Mission Mat.

Player side Kinetic Actions during the Recon Phase can only be executed if an SOG Team was assigned to the Recon Phase during the Planning Phase. This means that if all Recon Teams are casualties and you have an SOG Team assigned to the Recon Phase the SOG Team may continue the Action Rounds with a -1 DRM against Intel units. This option is only available after all Recon Teams have been removed as casualties. If the SOG Team is successful it is not moved to the direct-action phase unless allowed by a card.

No player teams may be moved AFTER hostile deployment, with the only exception being the movement of Recon Group teams from the Reconnaissance Phase to the Direct-Action Phase or if allowed by a card.

The enemy bot may conduct Kinetic Action during the Recon Phase only if there are 6 or more fighters in the Recon Phase Fighter’s box, and all enemy Intel units become casualties.

If the conditions above have been met, one (1) fighter unit initiates an attack against Recon Group teams and in the absence of Recon Group teams, the enemy fighter unit attacks an Operative. Draw an **Event Card** from the Event Card deck and resolve the “Recon Phase” section of the card.

Enemy Fighters Attack Roll			
Roll one red D10 for each fighter unit (Chart A2)			
LOW	Threat Area	To-Hit	Equal or Less than 3
MEDIUM	Threat Area	To-Hit	Equal or Less than 3
HIGH	Threat Area	To-Hit	Equal or Less than 4

A successful roll assigns one “Hit” marker, a second successful roll removes one RG team. The removed RG team is a casualty and placed in the “Friendly Casualty” box on the Mission Mat. Likewise, two successful hits on the fighter unit render it a casualty.

If all Recon Teams become casualties the Reconnaissance Phase is a failure. Roll one D6 for LOW and MEDIUM Threat mission areas and one D10 for HIGH threat mission areas. Add the resulting number of fighters units to the enemy fighter pool and do not roll for awareness during the next phase. Mark the awareness track to “+1”. If all RG and all enemy intel units become casualties, there is no further action.

Move all remaining RG assets to the RG box of the Direct-Action Phase area. Move all remaining hostile Intel and fighters to their respective boxes in the Direct-Action Phase areas.

The player may opt to abort the mission after the Recon Phase. An abort mission is a failure.

7.4.1 Casualties, Hits, Kills and Action Rounds (cont.)

An Action Round consists of one attack roll for each player/enemy counter participating in the engagement. The action round is considered over after all hits/kills have been assigned. Asset cards may generally be used at any time.

Important note. Keep in mind that attacks are simultaneous and placing hits and killing enemy units does not remove them from play immediately. Both friendly and hostile units get a chance to attack before being removed as part of the simultaneous action.

Both Kinetic (Combat) and Non-Kinetic actions are conducted in the same manner. The SOG or Recon Group teams who will participate in the action are placed on their corresponding boxes in the "Action Area" part of the Mission Mat. Dice are selected and rolled according to specific team attributes (DRM's etc.); Enemy Intel units roll one 6-sided die for each Enemy Intel who is participating on the action, while SOG, Recon Group and enemy fighters roll one 10-sided die for each team/unit in the Action Area.

Rolls are simultaneous, and assessed independently. The To-Hit numbers are compared for each team/unit and hits are assigned. For each hit, place one "Hit" marker on the player team card or enemy counter. Two hits on any team/unit and the team/unit are placed in the "Casualty" box of the Mission Mat for either friendly teams or enemy units.

Player hit assignment are random. When assigning hits randomly draw the SOG counters from an opaque container and place a hit marker on the corresponding card. Or use any other random method. Hits are assigned and placed on enemy units sequentially. For example, if you score two hits on two enemy intel units assign one hit to each and not two hits to one.

The term casualty is an abstraction which applies to all units who are hit and removed from play regardless of which side it is. Even though non-kinetic action would not constitute a casualty it is simplified as such for this game's purposes. Likewise, direct action casualties are also an abstraction for a team that is no longer combat capable for whatever reason like comms failure etc.

7.4.2 Mission Abort

Players may choose to abort the mission before moving on to the Direct-Action Phase. This has no direct impact on gameplay if playing a standalone mission. However, when playing missions as part of an operation, executing a mission abort prevents the player from losing potential asset points for the next mission when a mission failure would require the subtraction of -X amount of asset procuring point(s) for next mission. An abort is a failure without the enhanced penalty of asset point subtraction in an operation. More on Sec. 7.5.2.

PHASE 3

DIRECT ACTION PHASE

"We sleep safely at night because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us."
— Winston S. Churchill

7.5 Direct Action Phase

The Direct-Action Phase is where the mission comes together - or falls apart. Kinetic actions are simultaneous and executed on a one-to-one team/unit basis.

Starting with your teams, the RG team counter from the Recon Phase area to the Direct-Action (Phase 3) RG box. Do not move any assigned/remaining SOG assets (Unless an event is drawn during the Recon Phase allowing you to do so). Move all remaining hostile units from the Recon Phase to the Direct-Action phase into their respective Fighters and Intel boxes. Ensure the "SOG" counter is on the Direct-Action area of the Mission Mat to use as a tracking counter representative of all SOG teams in play during the Direct-Action phase.

7.5.1 Enemy Awareness

Enemy Awareness is the state of hostile units in the area of operations during the Direct-Action Phase. The Direct-Action Phase area of the Mission Mat provides a track to record enemy awareness during the Direct-Action Phase by placing the "Infiltration" counter on the Mission Mat track. Enemy Awareness impacts all hostile attack rolls on friendly forces by potentially providing a DRM for the base hostile "to-hit" number during the phase. The track has four values based on the awareness and a resulting D10 roll (A2):

- 1 = Shock (-1 DRM) To All Hostile Attack Rolls
- 2 to 5 = LOW (0 DRM) No DRM Applied
- 6 to 9 = MEDIUM (+1 DRM) for all Hostile Attack Rolls
- 10 = HIGH (+2 DRM) To All Hostile Attack Rolls

For example; if an enemy unit in a medium threat area has a to-hit number of 3, a medium awareness raises that number to 4, making all fighter attacks more effective. Recon Group teams located in the Direct-Action Recon Group area, may attempt to lower enemy awareness. Remaining enemy Intel units may attempt to increase awareness before the start of Infiltration.

Direct Action Phase non-kinetic actions are simultaneous and executed in Action Rounds. RG Team(s) vs enemy Intel and are conducted before the enemy awareness roll, and done in the same manner as in the Reconnaissance Phase. For every hostile Intel unit that remains in the enemy Intel area, move the awareness track in favor of the enemy up-to "+2" maximum. The primary mission of Recon Group teams during the direct-action phase is to lower enemy awareness. RG Teams may not engage hostile forces in kinetic (combat) actions unless otherwise stated in the team's card.

If there are no enemy intel units, the player may reduce awareness by converting one Recon Team to a "casualty" status for every awareness he wants to reduce. From example: Player rolls a 10 on the Awareness roll which places the awareness marker on +2 DRM on all enemy attacks. There are no enemy Intel units but the player has two Recon Teams available. The player may opt to place the two Recon Teams in the "Casualties" box and decrease enemy awareness by two. Note that casualties will affect final mission scoring. (See 9.0) Enemy Intel units in the Direct Action (Phase 3) area do not engage in any action.

7.5.2 Infiltration

Infiltration is the method SOG and any attached RG teams use to enter the mission area. Their ability to enter undetected is a factor for the success of the mission. The three available Infiltration methods are: Land, Maritime and Air, and are listed on the mission card as a requirement. To conduct Infiltration, roll one D10 and check the result against the Infiltration Track located on the Direct-Action Phase area of the Mission Mat. Place the "Infiltration" marker on the corresponding space.

Air	Equal or Less than 7
Maritime	Equal or Less than 7
Land	Equal or Less than 7

Note that some Asset Support Cards and SOG Maritime, Air teams who support the Ground Branch provide additional DRMs in order to enhance Infiltration success. A failed infiltration roll increases Enemy Awareness +1. Adjust Enemy Awareness track if applicable. After Infiltration draw one Event card and resolve.

Objective Rally Point (ORP) Drone Strikes and Mission Abort.

Move the SOG Assault Team counter to the ORP (Objective Rally Point) box on the Direct-Action Phase

Third Option: Global Clandestine Operations Rulebook track. At this point conduct the following actions in order, and only if applicable:

Resolve Combat- Conduct Action Round(s) if any enemy is present at the ORP.

Continue Mission-Determine if you have enough teams and asset support to successfully complete the mission without catastrophic losses and capture.

Conduct Drone Strike- The player has the option to conduct drone strikes to kill the target on F3 Missions or when directed specifically by mission/operations. Drone strikes cannot be used on Recon, Sabotage, Raid, or Capture missions as well as in some areas such as EUROCOM. See sec. 7.5.6 "Drone Strikes".

In order to conduct a drone strike, the player must have purchased the "Drone Strike" asset card. There are also several factors that increase the chance of success such as Recon and SOG Group teams with specialized skills, and asset cards.

The use of a Drone Strike is determined at the ORP. Regardless of outcome, all drone strikes result in an enemy awareness of +2. After a Drone Strike (Whether successful or not) all teams move directly to the "Egress" area.

Abort Mission-If you determine the chances for success to be minimum and choose to end the mission you may attempt an abort and emergency extraction of your teams. Move SOG and or RG teams counters to the "Egress" box, roll 1xD6 a result other than 6 the emergency extraction call is successful. If unsuccessful, place one fighter on the "Egress" box in addition to any that may have been added by a failed Egress roll. Engage any Fighters and move team(s) to the Last "Draw Event" space before Exfiltration, resolve event. Continue to execute Exfiltration. A D10 roll which equals 10 renders the exfiltration a failure. Continue to draw event and exfiltration roll.

If only 1 friendly team remains you must conduct a capture check. Roll one D6, if the roll equals 6, place the one team in the "Friendly Assets Captured" box.

An Abort Mission is a Mission failure whether the emergency Exfiltration was a success or failure.

"He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight." -Sun Tzu

DVG

Continue Mission by moving the SOG Team marker to the 1st "**Move to Contact-Reveal Enemy Action Card 1**" box on the Mission Mat. Flip the "First Enemy Action" Card from the assigned Enemy Action space. Conduct and resolve enemy action.

Continue Mission by moving the SOG Team marker to the next "**Draw Event Card**" box. Draw one Event Card from the Event Card deck and resolve.



7.5.3 Actions at the Objective

Continue Mission by moving the SOG Team marker to the next "**Actions at the Objective-Reveal Enemy Action Card 2**" box. This area is where friendly teams must defeat defenders before entering the "Mission Target Box". All Hostile fighters who are present on the Mission Mat act as defenders of whatever the mission target is. Flip the second "Enemy Action" Card from the assigned Enemy Action space. Conduct and resolve enemy action. At this point and if there are any fighters in the fighters' box of the Direct-Action Phase area, combat ensues. Kinetic actions are simultaneous, and executed on a one-to-one team vs. unit basis. Place all SOG Ground Branch teams counters/in an opaque container. Combat is resolved via Action Rounds.

An Action Round consists of one attack roll for each player/enemy counter participating in the engagement. The action round is considered over after all hits/kills have been assigned. (See 7.4.1)

Action Round Sequence (Same as Phase 2 Recon Phase):

- Place SOG Team counter and all Intel unit counters in "Action Area" of the Mission Mat.
- Draw one Event Card for each action round and resolve.
- Roll one D10 for each SOG Team and one D10 for each enemy Fighter unit. Actions occurs simultaneously.
- Compare the "To-Hit" numbers of each team/unit taking into account any applicable DRMs. Charts A1 & A2.
- Hits are assigned randomly to player teams. Randomly draw the number of hits received from the SOG counters in opaque container or

any other alternate random method. Place a “Hit” counter on any friendly Team hit.

- If either roll is **LESS** or Equal-To the “To-Hit” number the team/unit receives one (1) hit, PLACE Hit markers appropriately on the Team card. Two hits on any one team and that team becomes a casualty. Friendly teams who are removed are during the Direct-Action Phase are placed in the Casualty area of the Mission Mat and are removed from play for the rest of the mission. Enemy units become casualties (i.e., Combat Ineffective) and placed in the Enemy Casualty box on the Mission Mat.
- Each Action Round played requires an event card draw prior to roll.

If all of the player’s teams become casualties the mission is over and scored as a failure. If all hostile fighters have been killed, continue mission by moving the SOG Team marker to the “**Draw Event Card**” box. Draw one Event Card from the assigned Event Card deck and resolve.

Continue Mission by moving the SOG Team marker to the “**Mission Target**” box. This area is where friendly teams arrive at their objective and execute their Primary Objective as stated on the Mission card.

Any time when all player teams become casualties the mission ends and it’s marked as a failure.

7.5.4 Target Type Protocols

Find, Fix, and Finish-F3. Place a “F3” counter representative of the individual(s) being targeted. The Target counter must be killed and acts in the same manner as an enemy Fighter.

Capture. (Chart A9) Place a “Capture” counter representative of the individual(s) being targeted for capture. The Target counter acts as a Fighter. Refer to Chart A9 “Enemy Capture”. Roll 1D6 if result is:

1-4 = Target Surrenders - Place Hostile counter with SOG Team. +5 Bonus Victory Points.

5 = Combative Target – Target makes ONE attack against one SOG Team with one D10, and a to-hit of 2 or less (No DRMs). After attack is complete place the Target counter with SOG Team marker.

6 = Guarded Target - Add one fighter to the Mission Target box. Engage fighter, apply any awareness and/or threat level DRMs if applicable. Once the bodyguard fighter is killed, roll 1xD6 a result other than a “6” the target is successfully captured. Place the Target counter

with SOG Team marker. A result of 6, the Target is killed-Mission failure.

Sabotage. (Chart A5) Place a “Sabotage” marker on the Mission target box. When SOG Teams arrive to Mission target box roll 1xD10. (Chart A5) Roll for Sabotage Success. A “Successful” result, provides the following DRMs for subsequent non-Sabotage missions only in multi-mission or campaign game. +1 on Mission Target area rolls for Raid and F3 missions.

Rescue. (Chart A4) Place a Rescue marker on the Mission target box on the Mission Mat. When the Mission Target box is reached by the SOG teams, roll one D10. Using Chart A4 determine the success of the Rescue mission.

Recon. Recon missions do not require a Fighter unit roll. Place a “Recon” marker on the Mission Target box. When SOG Teams arrive to Mission target box roll one D10 using Chart A5 roll for Recon Success. A “Successful” result, provides the following DRMs for subsequent non-recon missions only in multi-mission games and/or operations.

+1 on Infiltration and Exfiltration rolls.

+1 on Drone, Sabotage, Capture, Rescue and Raid Mission Target area rolls.

Raid. Place a “Raid” marker on the Mission Target box. Add 3 *additional* Fighters to the objective.

After a Mission Target execution, move the SOG Team marker to the next “**Draw Event Card**” box. Draw one Event Card from the assigned Event Card deck and resolve.

Move the SOG Team marker to the “Egress” box and “**Reveal Enemy Action Card 3**” and roll 1xD6:

1-3 = Add one fighter to the Combat Area and resolve combat.

4-6 = No enemy Reinforcements on Egress route.

Resolve Combat- Conduct Action Round(s) if any enemy is present at the Egress area.

Move the SOG Team marker to the next “**Draw Event Card**” box. Draw one Event Card from the assigned Event Card deck and resolve. If one SOG team remains, roll one D10 for a Capture check. If D10=10 the team is captured and placed in the “Friendly Assets Captured” box. RG Team(s) present at the end of the Direct-Action Phase must exfiltrate with the SOG Teams. If an SOG Team is captured all RG assets attached are also captured. Any result other than a 10 avoids capture. (Chart A8)

7.5.5 Exfiltration

Exfiltration is the method SOG and any attached RG teams use to exit the mission area. Their ability to successfully exit the area of operations is an important part of success and may affect scoring. The three available Exfiltration methods are: Land, Maritime and Air, and are listed on the mission card as a requirement. To conduct Exfiltration, roll one D10 and check the result against the Infiltration Track located on the Direct-Action Phase area of the Mission Mat.

Air	Equal or Less than 7
Maritime	Equal or Less than 7
Land	Equal or Less than 7

Note that some Asset Support Cards and SOG Maritime, and Air teams who support the Ground Branch provide additional DRMs in order to enhance Exfiltration success. Some Missions like Rescue and capture may have additional restrictions on exfiltration and will be noted on the Mission Card. After exfiltration is complete the mission is over. Proceed to scoring on the Mission Log.

7.5.6 Drone Strikes

The player has the option to conduct drone strikes to kill the target on an F3 Mission or when directed specifically on operations. Drone strikes cannot be used on Recon, Sabotage, Raid, or Capture missions as well as on some areas such as EUCOM.

In order to conduct a drone strike, the player must purchase the "Drone Strike" asset card. There are also several factors that increase the chance of success such as Recon and SOG Group teams with specialized skills, and asset cards.

Drone Attack sequence (Chart A7):

1. Roll for availability-9 or less.
2. Roll for Launch Success-8 or less.
3. Roll for Damage (apply DRMs).
4. Remove enemy units according to results.

Additionally, a PHASE 3 Drone Strike receives an additional -1 DRM for every 2 RG Teams used. Does not apply to Phase 2 Drone Attack.

8.0 Scoring

"I'm Pretty Sure My Last Words Will Be "Well Shit, That Didn't Work" – Unknown

Missions are scored individually. A successful mission is one that is completed with the assigned mission

achieved, and the successful exfiltration of all or partial teams.

Important note on scoring and casualties. Although the term 'casualty' as used in the game does not necessarily refer to killed or wounded but as part of an abstraction were player teams become either compromised or otherwise ineffective to continue the mission and therefore, they are taken out of play and referred to as casualties. Some examples are; communication failures, detection by enemies, equipment breakdown, multiple casualties etc.

Scoring on a game that uses random enemy creation and where the same mission may unfold and play significantly differently, is a challenge. So, to clarify a mission is successful if it is completed-period. However, there are several tiers/levels of success that are applied. Scoring reflects how well the mission was planned and executed, as well as the unexpected opposition actions. Teams that become casualties are not necessarily destroyed as a team. They may be available for future missions, and considered to be extracted with the remaining active teams at mission's end with the notable exception of "captured." (See 7.5.4)

Tier One Operator (Exceptional). Completion of all Mission parameters with at least an 80% or Higher active (not Casualties) teams, rounded in the player's favor, and a successful exfiltration.

Tier Two Operator (Outstanding). Completion of all Mission parameters with at least an 50-79% or Higher active (not Casualties) teams rounded in the player's favor, and a successful exfiltration.

Tier Three Operator (Standard). Completion of all Mission parameters with at least an 25-49% or Higher active (not Casualties) teams rounded in the player's favor.

S.N.A.F.U. - (Below-Standard) Completion of all Mission parameters with 25% or less (not Casualties) teams rounded in the player's favor, and a successful exfiltration.

F.U.B.A.R. Everything that could go wrong did. Mission objective was not completed-Mission Failure.

8.1 Difficulty Modifiers and Optional Rules

For Players who may find themselves struggling constantly with missions the following modifiers may be applied at any point before the beginning of a mission.

LOW and MEDIUM Threat Area Missions - +1 Asset Points.

Third Option: Global Clandestine Operations Rulebook
HIGH Threat Area Mission - +2 Asset Points *or* add the “Air and Space” Recon Group Card at no additional cost to any mission.

As an option players can also adjust the Asset procurement numbers according to the result of enemy rolls. If an enemy rolls one third-or-less than the maximum (a result of 2 on 1xD6 or 3 on a 1xD10 roll) players can subtract four asset procurement points from their total in order to increase difficulty.

9.0 Operations

Operations in Third Option are a series of linked missions with a target goal culminating in the successful execution of the last mission. Operations are given codenames, and divided into individual missions which may affect the next mission and ultimately the success of the operation. Completing missions successfully provide players with additional assets or points for use on follow-on missions. Each mission has a Victory Point and the potential to provide modifiers, special actions and/or assets to subsequent missions. Unused Asset Points are not pooled from one mission to the next. Any mission which scores at a “Tier One Operator” level adds an additional +1 asset point to the next mission.

OPERATIONS

Operation Furious Tempest

Following an attack on a U.S. Embassy in the Middle East, the Special Activities Center was tasked with locating and killing the terrorist cell, and leader responsible for the attack. Deploy your teams and assets, locate, and kill the group and their leader.

Mission Order:

Recon CENTCOM/LOW Threat – Locate Cell’s location.

If successful add +1 in Asset Points for next mission.

Failure, subtract -1 in Asset Points for next mission.

Raid CENTCOM/MEDIUM Threat - Attack and Kill all fighters at objective area.

If successful add +2 Asset Point next mission.

Failure, subtract -1 in Asset Points for next mission.

F3 CENTCOM/LOW Threat - Find, Fix and Finish Target.

Move to objective Kill/Capture Terrorist leader.

DVG

Operation Righteous Sword

Reports of chemical agents used against civilian targets at a border area point towards a former Soviet bloc scientist in the service of the rogue regimen responsible for the attacks. Locate and capture the scientist.

Recon CENTCOM/LOW Threat – Locate Cell’s location

If successful add +2 in Asset Points for next mission.

Failure -1 Asset Point for the next mission.

Capture CENTCOM/LOW Threat - Capture scientist.

If successful add +1 in Asset Points for next mission.

Failure, subtract -1 in Asset Points for next mission.

F3 CENTCOM/LOW Threat - Find, Fix and Finish Target.

Mission Aborts are treated as failures

Operation Thunderdome (Drone Attack)

SIGNIT has identified a high ranking adversarial general responsible for dozens of attacks against U.S. and allied personnel, as well as innumerable atrocities against civilians in his country. There is a small window of opportunity where we can execute a precise drone strike on the general and his staff with minimal collateral damage/casualties before he returns to his country and disappears.

Mission Order:

Recon INDOPACOM/HIGH Threat - Fix Target location.

If successful deploy “Air and Space” Team card at no additional cost. If unsuccessful +1 DRM on drone attack roll.

F3-Kill INDOPACOM/HIGH Threat – Conduct successful drone strike and exfiltrate successfully. Alternate-Continue assault with SOG Teams and Kill Target.

Operation Fighters Without Borders

American and allied nations doctors have been kidnapped in the African east coast by pirates. Locate and safely extract the hostages.

Mission Order:

Recon AFRICOM/LOW Threat - Fix hostage’s location.

If successful +1 DRM Rescue Roll (A5) and +1 Asset Point for next Mission.

Failure -1 Asset Point for the next mission and +1 DRM Rescue Roll (A5).

Rescue AFRICOM/LOWThreat-Conduct successful rescue operation.

Operation Archangel

A rogue state is dangerously close to finishing upgrades to their Uranium enrichment facilities. Aerospace assets have identified the exact location. Infiltrate and destroy the control area of the facility. Neutralize all hostiles.

Mission Order:

Recon INDOPACOM/Medium Threat – Identify facilities' perimeter systems and vulnerabilities.

If Successful add +2 in Asset Points for next mission.

Failure, subtract -2 in Asset Points for next mission.

Sabotage INDOPACOM/HIGH Threat

Penetrate the nuclear facility insert malicious code into the mainframe. Plant and detonate high explosive.

Place four Fighters at objective area.

Build Your Own Operation

Third Options mission building allows players to build their own missions and/or operations. To play your own missions, choose a name, identify a geographical area(s) and set the mission order according to the desired outcome. For example; find an area of interest, start with a Recon mission followed by a F3, Raid, Capture or Rescue. Or set up different types of missions spanning the entire globe. Players may choose to use the Mission Generator or random card draw in all or some of the missions for the drafted operation.

Designer's Notes

Third Option is a work of fiction, with the game loosely based on public data regarding the organization and execution of U.S. covert operations. Teams and assets are generally, and very broadly representative of what these types of operations, and indeed our real capabilities, may be. That said, Third Option abstracts many elements that include team composition, deployment and intelligence gathering. Some aspects like combat actions are fairly straight forward, with varied DRMs, cards and events take into account what some teams and assets may be more adept at conducting specific actions during specific events like combat, craftwork, covert warfare and the like. We can also infer that missions of this nature are going to have at their disposal, anything and everything required for a successful outcome. But we can also probably agree that it wouldn't make for a very good game.

Enemy units are randomly generated and that may turn a 'milk-run' type mission into a very hard one, or 'normal' missions insofar operations of this nature in game may turn out. Event cards and assets acquired may also affect significantly and skew mission parameters one way or the other. Some die rolls may affect the entire mission, like a failed hostage rescue for example. Ultimately this is a game, and die rolls represent the unknown. Fog of war, or what Clausewitz referred to as "*Friction*" he wrote, "[is] *the concept that differentiates actual war from war on paper.*" This is true for all games which require die rolls for any sort of resolution, and Third Option is no different in that sense. Conversely, there are cards which may ensure the success of a particular part of the mission like infiltration/exfiltration and other areas. But the overriding narrative is that missions of this nature are so dynamic that something can go wrong at any time, even under ideal circumstances.

There is what we plan and what actually happens. Likewise die rolls are a mechanic of randomness. A die roll may make or break a mission. As in real life operations go wrong. Equipment fails (comms specially), unexpected events happen, timelines turn to delays - in short, certainties do not exist in the real world, and that is also reflected in games. For example, betting on a card that seems to promise instant success (without Plan B or C or D!) is not a sustainable, nor very smart strategy. Players can only plan and mitigate risk. In the end 'dice friction' trumps all in Third Option. Take for example "Operation Red Wings", as narrated by Marcus Luttrell in the book "Lone Survivor". This is a

prime example when everything that could go wrong did-and in spades. Even with our seemingly immense capacity to conduct war, U.S. special operators, pilots and servicemen lay dead in the mountains of Afghanistan after a series of cascading catastrophic actions. Comms failed; events transpired in grotesque synchronicity, hard to foresee and extremely difficult to mitigate by actual planning. The types of operations gamed here are bold and also attempt to somewhat (and very broadly and abstractly) mimic extremely complex missions. The “Recon Group” concept and teams are based on the CIA’s “Political Action Group”. The types of missions conducted by the PAG are outside the scope of the game so I opted to create a fictitious section within the Special Activities Center called the Recon Group.

The game is also designed to be highly ‘modable’. Operations and missions may be created to fit a particular narrative as well as an operational overview to a tactical scenario for other games (including RPGs). A few notes regarding abstractions and gameplay. I attempted to provide players with a compelling narrative experience via a simple to play game with the expectation it fills a unique space in the hobby. I often find myself criticizing war and law enforcement popular culture content for their lack of authenticity, aesthetics, and technical errors. Games are no different, especially when designing games within a historical framework. My wife has to remind me it’s only a show and meant to be enjoyed. So, in “Third Option” I attempted to find compromise between a plausible reality, and a work of fiction. I present this work as a fun to play game first and foremost, and it is my hope you enjoy it.

References and Further Reading(FM 6-20-10)

“Small Wars Journal”, MAJ Charles Faint and MAJ Michael Harris

“Surprise, Kill, Vanish”, Annie Jacobsen

“U.S. SOCOM”, USSOCOM/SOCS-HO Staff

“Inside the CIA”, Ronald Kessler

www.CIA.gov [Wayback Machine]

“Lone Survivor”, Marcus Luttrell

Credits

Designer – Joe Fernandez

Artist – Ben Rawlings

Developer - DVG

Playtester’s - Joe Fernandez, Ian Davies, Mike S., William C., David Roberts and Brian Olmstead.

Prototype VASSAL Module – Greg Amos.


Rulebook Proof and Editing – Norman Stewart and David Roberts.

Dedicated to America’s warriors who have, and continue to sacrifice themselves to protect our homeland and way of life without pause.

Appendix: Description of Cards

v

Mission Type and Theater.



Card Type


Enemy Actions for Specific Threat Areas

- Add 1x Fighter.
- Add 1x Fighter.
- Add 1x Fighter.

Team Name and Type

Team Cost

Counter Designation



Team To-Hit, Modifiers and Information

Team Attributes

To-Hit
Vs. Fighters 7
Vs. Intel 8

Die Roll Modifiers
Land/Sea/Air Infiltration -1
Drone Strike Direct Action Phase only DRM -1

Card Cost

Card Name

Applicable Threat Area



Description and effects of card

Asset Support
Direct Action Phase
Assign to one SOG Team
Provides a -1 To-Hit DRM (May Be Reassigned).
If Assigned Team Becomes Casualty Remove)
Do Not Discard

3

VETERAN OPERATOR


L M H

Number of Asset Points Available

Infiltration and Exfiltration Requirements

Mission Type and Area

Threat Area Level



Objective

Infiltrate Successfully.
AFRICOM- Locate and Kill Pirate Leader
CENTCOM- Locate and Kill Recruiter

Infiltration Method - Sea
Exfiltration Method - Air

Place F3 Counter on Mission Mat

Amount and Type of Dice to Roll for Fighters & Intel

Mission Objectives and Winning Conditions