



**COIN Series, Volume IV**

**Second Edition**

# PLAYBOOK

**by Mark Herman and Volko Ruhnke**

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# FIRE IN THE LAKE TUTORIAL

By Steve Carey

## First-time players should start here!

Welcome to the Tutorial for *FIRE IN THE LAKE*. Its intent is to walk you through the game step-by-step, demonstrating important core system mechanics while also providing familiarity with some of the various options available to each faction. As such, teaching the game proper is the primary goal of this example-of-play rather than depicting optimal strategy.

Since this Tutorial is crafted around a hypothetical 4-player session, the rules for the non-player factions will not be utilized. This should make it easier for you to learn the game’s basics by ignoring rules section 8 in its entirety.

Let’s start by sorting the cards into their three corresponding historical periods as listed in their upper left hand corner: 1964, 1965, and 1968. We’ll be using only a portion of the 1964 deck, so set aside all the 1965 and 1968 cards as they won’t be needed for this demonstration.

Normally the play deck is prepared more randomly, with or without historical cards (2.1), but for this Tutorial we will sequence the following 12 Event cards, along with *Coup!* card #125, placing them face-down in the order listed below to form a 13 card mini-deck. From bottom to top:

13. (bottom card) *Colonel Chau*, #112
12. *Economic Aid*, #43
11. *301st Supply Bn*, #51
10. *Claymores*, #17
09. *Sihanouk*, #75
08. *Coup!* card #125, Nguyen Khanh
07. *Booby Traps*, #101
06. *Henry Cabot Lodge*, #79
05. *Brinks Hotel*, #97
04. *Gulf of Tonkin*, #1
03. *Green Berets*, #68
02. *Trucks*, #55
01. (top card) *Burning Bonze*, #107

The other twelve 1964 cards will not be used in this session, so they can be returned to the box.

Next, refer to rules section 2.1 and carefully setup the Full Game (1964-1972) as indicated (back pages of the rulebook). There is no need to build the complete card deck unless you’re planning to continue the game upon the Tutorial’s completion.

First a few comments on setup. While the NVA Control North Vietnam and three Jungle (1.3.2) spaces in Laos/Cambodia (1.3.4), these do not contribute towards the NVA victory level (NVA Control + Bases, 1.9) because their Population level is 0. The NVA do get credit for their 4 Bases however, as indicated by their victory marker starting in the 4 space on the Track to begin play.

Note that each faction receives their own Pivotal Event (2.3.8). Such cards serve as a face-up “home” card separate from the main deck, available for use (to preempt an Event card 5.1.4 or to possibly trump another faction’s Pivotal Event) only when the Faction is Eligible and the card’s prerequisite condition(s) are met. (This example will not go far enough into the scenario for these conditions to be met.)

Also, the default RVN leader (2.4.1, printed on the map) to begin the Full Game is Duong Van Minh. His bonus of +5 Aid when the ARVN perform a Training Operation is active at the start of play. Minh’s lingering effect will remain valid until a new RVN leader replaces him or he is cancelled via a Failed Attempt on the next *Coup!* card (2.4).

Further, take note of the two overflow boxes (1.3.8). Overflow boxes are used when too many pieces occupy a space and are therefore helpful in reducing map clutter.

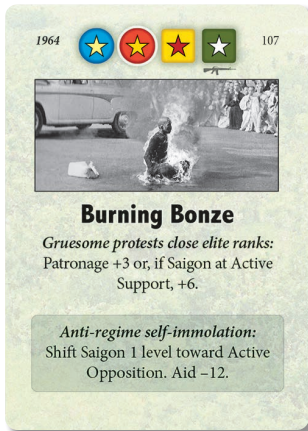
Now turn over the top card, *Burning Bonze*, as the first card of the game. Also reveal the next card, *Trucks*, which becomes the preview card for the subsequent turn.

Finally, have one of the four faction foldouts (that say “United States”, “North Vietnam”, and so on) nearby for referral throughout this Tutorial.

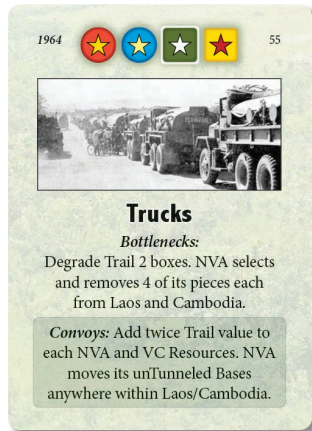


South Vietnam, 1964.

## PART ONE – Events, Operations, and Special Activities



Played card



On deck

### GAME TURN 1, Burning Bonze

Looking across the top of the *Burning Bonze* card, the faction order (2.3.2) for the turn (from left to right, 2.3) is: VC (blue), NVA (red), ARVN (yellow), and US (green). At the start of any scenario all the factions begin Eligible (2.3.1), so the Viet Cong will have first consideration on this card.

The VC examine the top unshaded portion (pro-COIN) Event of the card, and also the bottom shaded portion (pro-Insurgent) Event. On dual Event cards such as these (5.2), either the top or bottom Event is allowed to be performed on a turn, never both.

The VC initiate play by deciding to execute the shaded Event (5.1), “Shift Saigon 1 level toward Active Opposition. Aid -12”. Move the blue VC token from the Eligible box to the 1st Eligible Event portion of the Sequence of Play (SOP) chart located on the map.

The effect of this Event is dramatic to begin the game – Saigon’s Passive Support marker is shifted one level towards Active Opposition, making the space Neutral (1.6.1). This results in the marker’s removal because the absence of any such marker in a space indicates that it has no Support or Opposition, and is therefore Neutral (1.6.2).

This causes the US’s victory marker (Support + Available, 1.9) to drop 6 spaces on the track (6 is the population value of Saigon, 1.3.3) from 38 to 32.

The ARVN faction is also impacted by this Event because Aid (1.8) is lowered by 12. Move the Aid marker on the track from 15 to 3. There is no immediate effect on ARVN resources (which remain at 30), however resources granted to the ARVN via Aid will dwindle accordingly during the next Coup Round (6.2.3).

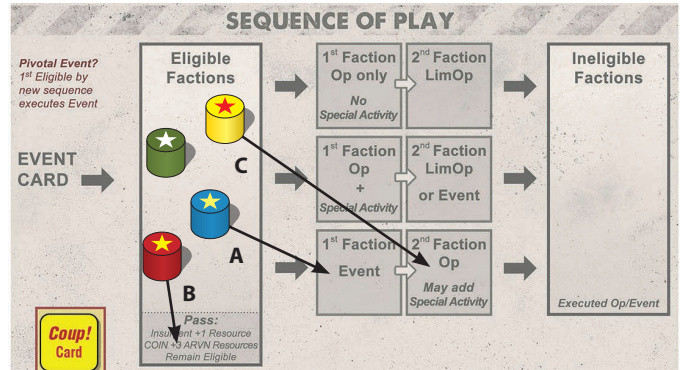
Events don’t cost resources to enact, so the VC player-turn is done.

The NVA is the next listed faction, potentially being 2nd Eligible (2.3.4). Checking the Sequence of Play chart, we see that since the 1st Eligible faction (VC) performed the card’s Event, the 2nd Eligible faction may perform Operations (Op) & an accompanying Special Activity.

The NVA see that they will be first up on the next card (*Trucks*), so the decision whether to go now or to Pass (2.3.3) is at hand. The NVA decide to Pass. Shift their red token from the Eligible box to the Pass box, and then increase NVA resources by +1 to 11, moving

the NVA token up one box on the Track. When an Insurgent faction (VC or NVA) Passes, they receive +1 Resource; when a COIN faction (US or ARVN) Passes, the ARVN receive +3 resources (2.3.3).

With the NVA Passing, the ARVN are next in line to be 2nd Eligible. They indicate their intention to act by moving their yellow Eligibility token to the Execute Op & Special Activity box on the Sequence of Play chart. Factions conducting Op & a Special Activity have the option of performing a chosen Operation first or performing an accompanying Special Activity first, or even interrupting an Op at one point to conduct an allowed Special Activity (4.1). In this example, the ARVN will perform an Operation (3.1) first.



VC Event, NVA Pass, ARVN Op & Special Activity.

With Saigon now at Neutral (no Support), the ARVN don’t want any insurgent Guerrillas to Rally in and thus infest their capital. The ARVN will therefore Train (3.2.1) in Saigon, placing a white pawn in the City. This Operation will cost the ARVN 3 resources, so lower their marker on the track from 30 to 27.

The ARVN could have chosen other Cities or Provinces without NVA Control to Train in by similarly placing a white pawn in them and expending 3 resources per, but for now the ARVN are content on focusing just on Saigon and saving their resources for later.

Being a City, the ARVN can place 1-2 Rangers or 1-6 of their cubes, so a choice needs to be made: Rangers or cubes. The ARVN takes 6 of their yellow Troop cubes from Available and places them directly into Saigon. Police are also cubes and could have been selected in lieu of some (or all) of the Troop cubes, but the ARVN want to increase their military presence in the City as much as possible.



The ARVN Train up and Pacify in Saigon.

Since Saigon contains ARVN Troops and Police and is under COIN Control, the ARVN also opts to now conduct a Pacify (6.3.1) action

in 1 Train space, as specifically allowed for by this Operation. Since Saigon was the only space selected to Train this turn, Pacify will be done there. Even though permitted by a Training Op, Pacify still needs to be paid for separately (it is not “free”, 3.1.2, 5.5).

The ARVN spend 3 Resources by moving the Track token down from 27 to 24 to Pacify one level, and they place a Passive Support marker in Saigon. This returns the US Support + Available (1.9) marker on the track to 38 (+6 spaces, matching the population of Saigon).

The ARVN could have raised Support one more level to Active Support by paying 3 additional resources, further protecting their capital but also bringing the US another 6 points closer to the US victory threshold (of 50). They decide against doing so for now.

For their Special Activity (refer to the Faction foldout), the ARVN have the choice to either Govern (4.3.1) or Transport (4.3.2). As specified, Raid (4.3.3) is not permitted to accompany (4.1.1) a Train Op so it’s not an option. Govern is thus chosen because the ARVN want to restore their Aid, which the VC’s just-executed Event has reduced.

Taking two black pawns (the maximum number of spaces allowed for this Special Activity), one is placed in An Loc and one in Can Tho, both population 1 Cities that are also COIN-Controlled. Saigon can never be a locale for Govern per rule (4.3.1), and besides it was just selected to Train in so that would disqualify the space anyway. Hue (a 2 population City) cannot yet be chosen for Govern because it has no Support (currently at Neutral).

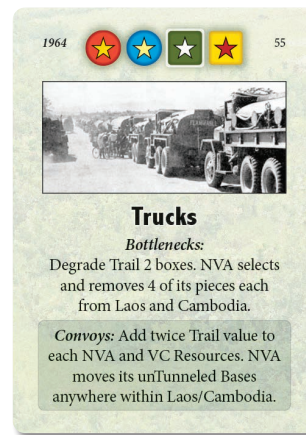
This increases Aid by +6, +3 for each City (3 x 1 population) Governed. Adjust the Aid marker on the track from 3 to 9.

ARVN having just Trained, Aid also receives a +5 bonus because of the current RVN leader (Minh), so shift the marker up again from 9 to 14.

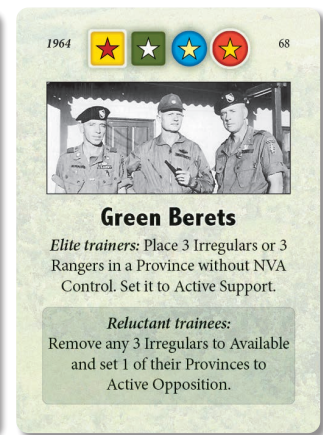
Special Activities do not cost resources (4.1), so the ARVN remain at 24. Remove the one white and two black pawns from the map as the ARVN has now completed their player-turn.

Since two Eligible factions (the VC 1st and the ARVN 2nd) have now acted, the turn is over (2.3.6). The US can do nothing (not even Pass), so their Eligibility token remains in place. Shift the VC and ARVN Eligibility tokens to the Ineligible box; they won’t be able to do anything next turn (2.3). The NVA (who Passed) Eligibility token returns to the Eligible box, joining the US token.

Make *Trucks* the current card for game turn 2 by placing it atop *Burning Bonze*. Reveal the next card (2.3.7) in the deck (*Green Berets*), which then becomes the preview card for the turn to follow.



Played card



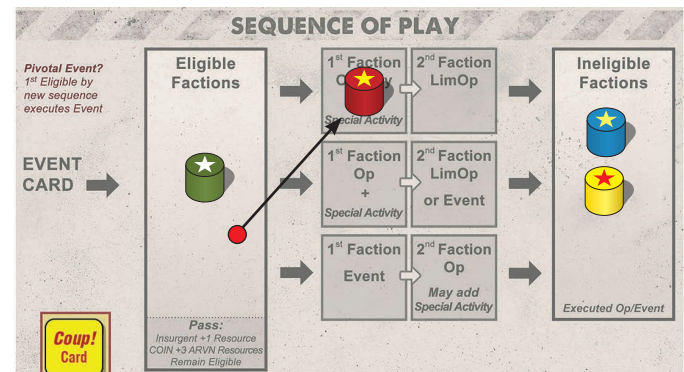
On deck

## GAME TURN 2, Trucks

Since they Passed last turn and are the first faction listed on this card, the NVA is potentially 1st Eligible. Having just witnessed the prior ARVN actions, the North Vietnamese Army is now ready to respond.

Looking at the shaded bottom Event text, the NVA believes that it would not be all that helpful to them at the moment. However, the top unshaded Event text on the card would lower the Trail value to 0. This would impact NVA March Op throughout Laos and Cambodia (The Trail, 3.3.2), affect NVA Rally (3.3.1), and also lower NVA resource earnings during a Coup Round (6.2.4). Plus, as required on the card, the NVA would have to remove 4 of their pieces from each of those two named foreign countries, for a grand total of 8 pieces.

That’s not good from an Insurgent point of view, so while the NVA do not want to execute an Event, they also do not want to give the next Eligible COIN faction—the US—the chance to do so either.



The NVA block the Event by selecting Op only.

The NVA thus decide to perform an Operation only, without any Special Activity, and so moves their red Eligibility token to the Execute Op only box on the Sequence of Play chart. This means that the 2nd Eligible faction will only be able to conduct a Limited Operation (2.3.5) or Pass. The Event option is therefore effectively blocked and will not be able to be conducted on this card.

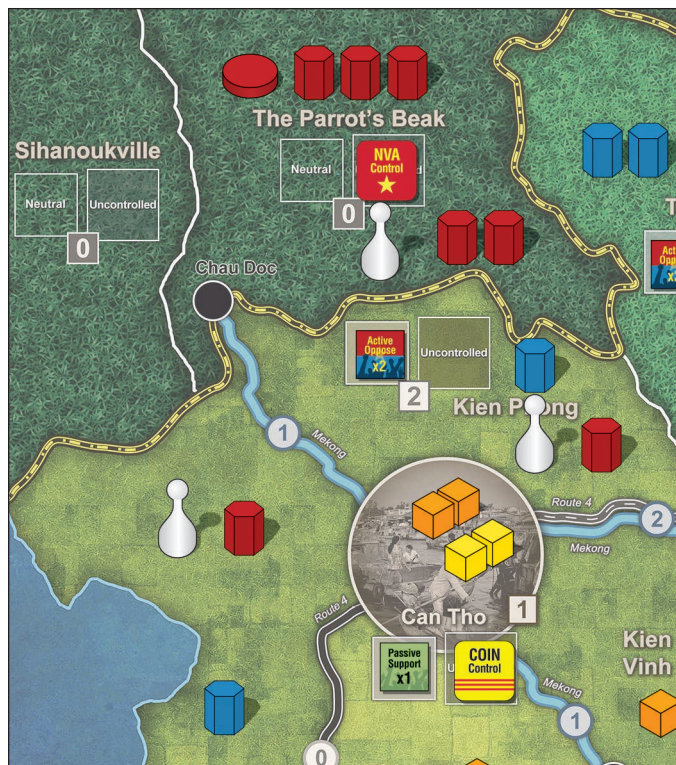
Wishing to get more strength onto the map, the NVA declares Rally (3.3.1) as their Operation. They take 4 white pawns, placing one each in North Vietnam and The Parrot’s Beak, along with the Mekong Provinces of Kien Phong and Kien Giang. At a resource cost of 1 per space, the NVA marker on the track will reduce from 11 resources to 7.

North Vietnam and The Parrot's Beak have no Support (which would prohibit NVA Rally), and the NVA do have a Base in each space. The Bases allow them to place 2 Guerrillas face-down (Guerrillas always place face-down Underground, 1.4.3) into each of these two spaces, 1 for their Base + 1 for the current Trail value.

Kien Giang and Kien Phong have Active Opposition (no Support), but there is no NVA Base present so only 1 Guerrilla can place in each of those two Provinces.

In Kien Giang and Kien Phong there are no COIN pieces present, so just 2 Insurgent pieces (1 VC and 1 NVA) occupy each space. However, the NVA does not gain Control of either Province because they must have more pieces than all the other factions combined, including VC (1.7).

No Troop movement is desired in this case since the US player already has enough units (1 Special Forces Irregular + 1 Troop) to Activate the 2 Underground VC Guerrillas in Quang Tri, a Highland Province. Turn over the two VC Guerrillas to their Active (embossed) side via the Sweep.



The NVA begin a build-up to threaten the Delta.

As part of their Rally Op, the NVA player may then expend 2 Resources to improve the Trail by one box (3.3.1). They choose to do so now, moving the Trail token from its 1 box to the 2 box, and lowering NVA resources from 7 to 5. The NVA will not execute a Special Activity, so their player-turn is now over and their white pawns are removed.

Normally the VC would be up next on the Trucks card, but since they are Ineligible they are skipped and the US faction is due next to be 2nd Eligible. Confronted with performing a Limited Op or Passing, the US feels compelled to do something, so they will choose a Limited Op (limited to 1 space with no Special Activity, 2.3.5). Move the green US Eligibility token to the Limited Op box on the map's Sequence of Play chart.

The US will perform a Sweep Operation (3.2.3) in Quang Tri, so place a white pawn in the selected Province. The Sweep costs 0 resources to perform; the US does not record its own resources and instead uses ARVN resources for Joint Operations when necessary (1.8.1), but this is not such an Operation.



US forces Sweep Quang Tri Province: Irregulars and Troops locate (Activate) 2 VC Guerrilla units.

Without any Underground units to protect it (Troops first, Bases last, 3.2.4), the VC Base in Quang Tri is now dangerously exposed. Remove the white pawn from the map, and the US's player-turn is complete.

Two Eligible factions have acted, so the game turn is over. Move the VC and ARVN tokens to Eligible, and shift both the NVA and US Eligibility tokens to Ineligible. Green Berets will be the current card after being placed atop Trucks. Reveal the next card from the deck, Gulf of Tonkin, as our preview card.

**GAME TURN 3, Green Berets**

The yellow ARVN faction is listed first on Green Berets, and since they are Eligible, they will be 1st Eligible this turn if they decide to be so. Indeed, the ARVN wants to perform the top unshaded Event on this card, so place their Eligibility token in the Execute Event box on the Sequence of Play chart.

Taking the 3 Special Forces cylinders from the US-led Irregulars box, the ARVN places them face-down (Underground) into Binh Dinh Province, which meets the card text requirement of having no NVA Control. This immediately changes the Province to COIN Control because the 5 US pieces outnumber the 3 VC pieces. Place a COIN Control maker in the previously Uncontrolled space, which is a 2 population Province. This grants 2 victory points to the ARVN, so move their COIN (Control) + Patronage marker on the track up 2 spaces from 35 to 37.

Note that the ARVN does have 2 Rangers in their Available box, but they opted to utilize the US Special Forces for this Event because they plan to bring those 2 Rangers into play later during a Train Op (3.2.1). The 3 ARVN Rangers in the Out of Play box are just that; those pieces cannot be used until a specified card Event (e.g., the

ARVN Pivotal Event card) allows them to enter the game. The US also may be able to draw pieces from Out of Play via certain Events.

Finishing the Event, it states to set the Province to Active Support. Place such a marker into Binh Dinh and shift the US victory marker 4 spaces (Active Support, 2 x 2 population = 4) from 38 to 42. This finishes the ARVN player turn.

The US is next in order on the card, but they are Ineligible, so the VC can be 2nd Eligible or they can Pass. As indicated on the Sequence of Play, the VC may now perform an Operation & a Special Activity since the 1st Eligible faction executed the Event. Place the VC Eligibility token into the Execute Op & Special Activity box on the chart to indicate this.

The VC will choose Rally (3.3.1) as their Operation and so opt to place white pawns into Pleiku, Quang Tri, and Hue City. At a cost of 1 Resource per Rally space, the VC player lowers their resource token on the Track from 5 to 2. These three spaces are capable of an Insurgent Rally Op because they have no Support.

In Pleiku, the VC places 2 of their Available Guerrillas Underground: 1 for the VC Base and 1 for the Province's population. Note that this procedure differs from an NVA Rally (3.3.1), which uses Bases plus the Trail value to determine the number of Guerrillas that can place.

In Quang Tri, the VC puts down 3 more Guerrillas, 1 for the VC Base and 2 for the Province's population. In Hue, the VC have no Base so they can place only a single Guerrilla into the City.

Checking for any changes in Control as a result of the new VC pieces placed onto the map, there are no changes so no markers on the Track need to be adjusted.

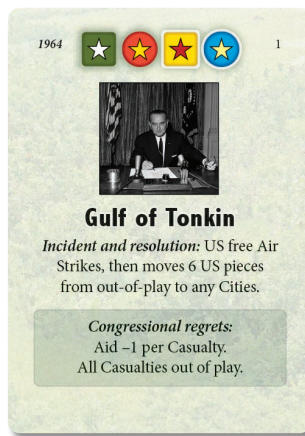
The VC player would like to use their Ambush (4.5.3) Special Activity in order to start causing US casualties, but Ambush is not allowed to accompany a VC Rally Op. With Tax or Subvert to choose from, the VC recall that they are already low on resources, so they will Tax (4.5.1) in up to 4 allowed spaces.

Place a black pawn into Quang Tin, Quang Duc, and Binh Tuy. Flip a VC Guerrilla from Underground to Active in each of these three locations as required by Tax. Double the population value combined (2 + 1 + 1 = 4) from these Provinces is 8, a sum that is then added to VC resources by moving their marker from 2 to 10 on the Track.

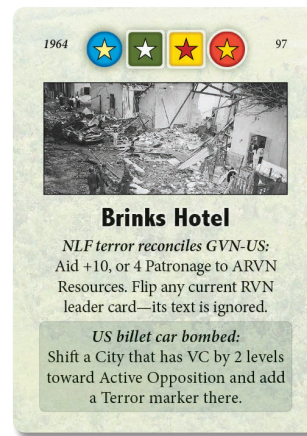
There is a price to be paid however because a part of this Special Activity is also shifting each Taxed Province or City 1 level towards Active Support. Flip over the Opposition markers in Quang Tin, Quang Duc, and Binh Tuy from their Active (2 x population) to Passive (1 x population) sides. The immediate effect is to reduce the VC victory marker on the Track by 4, from 27 to 23 as the combined population value of the three Taxed Provinces is 4.

The VC wanted to Tax in Hue City as their 4th space, but they cannot because it is under COIN Control. Kien Phong and Kien Giang are candidates, but the VC decide not to Tax a 4th space, to limit the damage to Opposition and thus to their victory score.

The turn is now over so remove pawns and then reset the Eligibility tokens (NVA and US to Eligible, ARVN and VC to Ineligible). *Gulf of Tonkin* becomes the current card for Turn 4 once it is placed upon *Green Berets*. Reveal the next preview card (which will be *Brinks Hotel*) for the turn following.



Played card



On deck

## GAME TURN 4, *Gulf of Tonkin*

The US is first up on the card and they are Eligible, so they will execute the Event. Move the US Eligibility token to the Event portion of the Sequence of Play chart.

As denoted on the card, the US first has a free Air Strike (4.2.3) which is performed according to the standard rules for that Special Activity. The only space they can select is Quang Tri, which is occupied by a US Special Forces cylinder and a Troop cube. Quang Tin, Quang Duc, and Binh Tuy each have an Active (exposed) VC Guerrilla from their just performed Tax, but these spaces cannot be targeted for an Air Strike because there are no COIN pieces present. Other spaces have Insurgents, but cannot be targeted with Air Strike because all pieces are either Underground Guerrillas or Bases protected by such Guerrillas.

An Air Strike can remove up to 1D6 enemy pieces from all target spaces combined. The US rolls the die, and gets lucky: a "5"! Spend 2 of the hits to remove the two Active VC Guerrillas in Quang Tri to their Available box, and as a consequence (4.2.3) of this Air Strike also shift the Province 1 level towards Active Opposition, from Neutral to Passive Opposition (place marker). This adjusts the VC victory marker from 23 to 25 because Passive Opposition times the location's population value equals 2 (1.6.2).

As part of a normal Air Strike, the US also can Degrade the Trail by spending 2 of the hits from the die roll. Shift the Trail marker from the 2 box to the 1 box. The final hit from the die roll is wasted, since there are no targets left to use it on.

The US by the Event text can then take 6 of their pieces from Out of Play and place them into any Cities, thus providing a range of options here. Selecting 1 Base and 5 Troop cubes, 2 Troops are placed into Saigon and 3 Troops and a Base are deployed into Hue City. This strengthens Saigon and Hue, and also gives the US an opportunity to Pacify in Hue later on when the next *Coup!* card arrives (6.3.1) because the US has their own Troops present in addition to (ARVN) Police and COIN Control.

The taking of the Troop cubes from Out of Play directly to the map did not impact the US victory marker (1.9) on the Track because those Troops did not enter (nor leave) the US's Available display (1.4.1).

The NVA are next, and they will perform an Operation & a Special Activity. Move the red Eligibility token to the appropriate box on the Sequence of Play display.

The NVA issues orders to March (3.3.2) as their Operation. Place white pawns into Quang Tri, Kien Phong, and Kien Giang to indicate the chosen locations. This costs the NVA 1 resource per destination Province, so adjust their resources on the Track from 5 to 2.

March 2 NVA Guerrillas from The Parrot's Beak into Kien Phong and also 2 more Guerrillas from The Parrot's Beak into Kien Giang. The Guerrillas all remain Underground because the conditions necessary to Activate them due to the March (3.3.2) don't exist.

This changes Control of both Provinces since there are now 3 NVA pieces present to just 1 from all other factions (in this case, the VC). Place NVA Control markers on Kien Phong and Kien Giang, and move the NVA victory marker up from 4 to 8 (the population value of each of those Provinces is 2, so  $2 + 2 = 4$ ).

Next March 2 of the NVA Guerrillas from Central Laos, and all 5 of the NVA Guerrillas from North Vietnam, into Quang Tri. Even though NVA units Marched from two different spaces, it only costs them 1 resource to move them all into the one adjacent destination, Quang Tri. The 7 Guerrillas will remain Underground because there is no Support (the space is currently at Passive Opposition) to expose them (3.3.2).

The NVA now have Control of Quang Tri, their 7 Guerrillas barely outnumbering the combined pieces from all other factions (4 for the VC, 2 for the US). Place an NVA Control marker into Quang Tri and shift the NVA victory marker from 8 to 10 to account for the Controlled Province's population value.

The lone NVA Base in North Vietnam looks isolated, but it is relatively safe for now because only NVA and VC pieces can stack in North Vietnam (1.3.5). This means that the US cannot normally Air Strike (4.2.3) in North Vietnam since no COIN pieces can legally be in that space.



I Corps sector heats up: after a VC and US buildup, the NVA March into Quang Tri and Infiltrate Laos.

The NVA still have their Special Activity to perform. They can't Bombard (4.4.2) because they don't have any of the prerequisite Troops yet on the map. Infiltrate (4.4.1) is allowed to accompany a March, so that's what the NVA will do. They place a black pawn into Southern Laos and also in Kien Giang. The NVA would also like to Infiltrate in Kien Phong, but this particular Special Activity is limited to 2 spaces maximum, so they cannot.

In Southern Laos, first place 2 NVA Troop cubes, 1 for the Trail + 1 for the Base. Then the NVA opt to exchange the 3 Guerrillas for 3 more NVA Troops, as allowed by Infiltration. Southern Laos now has a Base and 5 of their Troops, so the NVA are starting to build up their conventional forces.

Infiltration where NVA pieces outnumber VC can replace a VC piece with NVA and reduce Opposition. In Kien Giang, Infiltration shifts Opposition 1 level towards Neutral so flip the marker from Active to Passive. This knocks the VC victory marker down 2 spaces from 25 to 23 (Kien Giang has a population of 2). Also replace the VC Guerrilla there with an NVA Guerrilla, leaving the Province fully in NVA Control with 4 Guerrillas and no other faction pieces present. The NVA might have Infiltrated in Quang Tri to replace the VC Base there instead of just a Guerrilla—a more typical and more potent move—but the NVA player in this case does not want to overly antagonize the NVA's southern ally, at least not yet.

The current turn is complete. Remove pawns and then adjust Eligibility tokens (VC and ARVN Eligible, US and NVA Ineligible). *Gulf of Tonkin* is covered by *Brinks Hotel* which is now the current card. Reveal the next preview card for Turn 6, *Henry Cabot Lodge*.

### GAME TURN 5, *Brinks Hotel*

The 1st Eligible VC faction chooses to execute the shaded Event text (5.2) in Hue City, where they have a Guerrilla. Adjust the blue Eligibility token to reflect the Event play.

First Shift Hue City 2 levels, from Neutral to Active Opposition (place marker). As a result, move the VC victory token on the Track from 23 to 27 (Active Opposition is twice the space's 2 population value, so 4). Then place a Terror marker in Hue, without further effect for now (Control of the City is unaffected by the Terror).



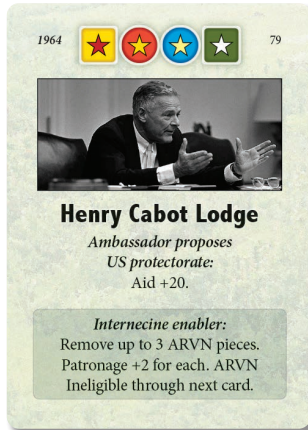
High-profile VC terror in Hue undermines confidence in the Saigon regime.

Note that the Event effects represent a dramatic VC act of terror in the City. For an Insurgent Terror Operation (3.3.4), a Guerrilla must flip from Underground to Active, but this is different. Carrying out the Event text literally, it states only that VC need to be present in the space, so the VC Guerrilla in Hue keeps its same status (i.e., it remains Underground).

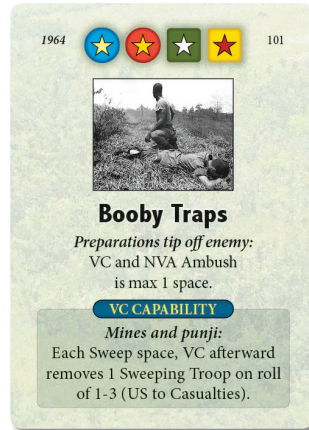
The VC player-turn is done as they have finished executing the Event.

As 2nd Eligible, the ARVN decide to Pass; place their yellow Eligibility token in the Pass box and adjust the ARVN resources marker on the track up 3 spaces (from 24 to 27).

There are no more Eligible factions to consider, so the turn is over. Reset the Eligibility tokens (3 factions will be Eligible next turn, with only the VC being Ineligible), show *Henry Cabot Lodge* as the current card by placing it atop *Brinks Hotel*, and reveal the next preview card (*Booby Traps*) for Turn 7.



Played card



On deck

## GAME TURN 6, Henry Cabot Lodge

By previously Passing and now being 1st Eligible, the ARVN are able to select any option on the Sequence of Play. They decide to conduct an Op & Special Activity. Place their yellow Eligibility token in the appropriate box on the Sequence of Play chart.

This time the ARVN will first perform their Special Activity, namely a Raid (4.3.3). A faction executing Op & Special Activity may perform the Special Activity at any one time before, during, or immediately after the Operations (4.1). Raids are allowed in up to 2 spaces, but because the ARVN only have 1 Ranger currently in play they place a black pawn in Quang Tri and forgo a second space.

The ARVN Ranger in Quang Nam moves into the adjacent destination Province of Quang Tri. The Ranger Activates (flips) to remove 2 NVA Guerrillas back to their NVA Available box. For a Raid, it doesn't matter if the enemy Guerrillas are Active or Underground (as it does for an Assault, 3.2.4, for example); they are simply removed.

Checking for a Control change, we see that the NVA now have 5 pieces (Guerrillas) in Quang Tri while all other factions have 7 (4 VC, 2 US, and 1 ARVN) combined. The NVA thus lose Control of the Province so remove their Control marker and lower the NVA victory marker on the Track from 10 to 8 (2 spaces to match Quang Tri's 2 population). No one Controls Quang Tri at the present time.

Note that the Ranger unit from Quang Nam might instead have Raided into Central Laos to eliminate the NVA Guerrilla and vulnerable NVA Base there. Such a Raid would have established COIN Control of that Laotian Province, which would threaten to reduce the efficiency level of the Ho Chi Minh Trail if held until the next Coup Round (6.2.2, 6.7). However, any ARVN or US pieces caught in neutral Laos or Cambodia in the Coup Round are removed (6.4.1), so the ARVN player opts for the more cautious Raid into Quang Tri instead.

For their Operation, the ARVN will Sweep (3.2.3), which is an accompanying Op to a Raid. White pawns are placed into the Highland Provinces of Binh Dinh and Pleiku. At a cost of 3 Resources each, lower the ARVN resources marker on the Track from 27 to 21.

During their Sweep, the ARVN are only allowed to move their own Troop cubes and not Police or Rangers, even though any Rangers or Police already present in a selected space being swept could help in Activating (exposing) Underground enemy Guerrillas (3.2.3).



The ARVN Sweep populous Binh Dinh Province.

Sweeping Troops may first move onto a LoC (Highway or Mekong) that has no VC or NVA on it before entering a destination Province or City. The 2 ARVN Troops in Qui Nhon do not need to move onto a LoC, however, because they are Sweeping directly into an adjacent space, namely Binh Dinh Province. Upon doing so, the Troop cubes Activate (flip) the 2 VC Guerrillas there on a 1-for-1 basis.

Of the 8 ARVN Troop cubes in Saigon, 6 will take a LoC out of the City and 2 will remain behind. The ARVN Troops from Saigon move to the 1-Economic value LoC which connects not only to the City of An Loc, but also all the way up to the town (large black dot) of Ban Me Thuot. Towns exist solely to provide adjacency (they are not spaces themselves but rather serve as terminals for LoCs, 1.3.6), so these 6 cubes will be able to Sweep into Pleiku (which is adjacent to the town of Ban Me Thuot). There are more than enough ARVN cubes to Activate all 4 Underground VC Guerrillas in Pleiku on a 1-for-1 basis, so flip those 4 VC pieces over.

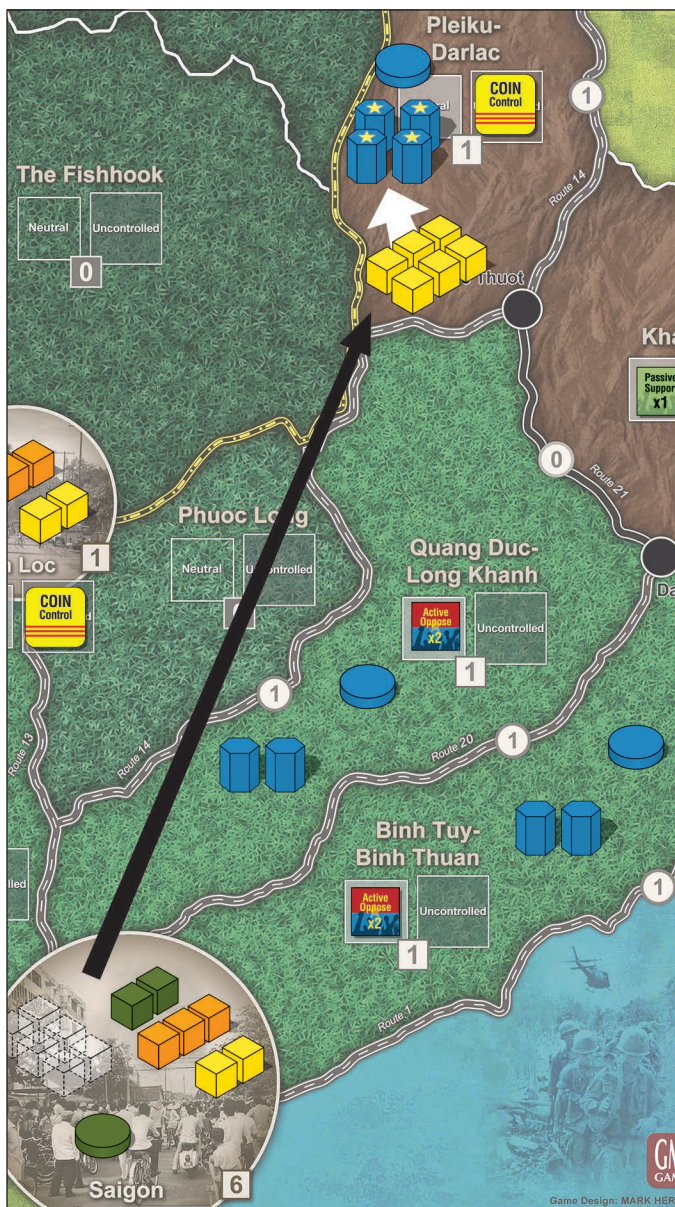
Because Pleiku now contains 9 COIN pieces (6 ARVN and 3 US) to 5 Insurgent pieces (5 VC), COIN Control is attained. Place a COIN Control marker in Pleiku and bump the ARVN victory marker 1 space on the Track from 37 to 38 for Pleiku's 1 population. (No Control changes occur in Binh Dinh Province as a result of the Sweep.)

The ARVN player-turn is over, so remove all of their pawns from the map.

The NVA, as 2nd Eligible, can now execute the Event, perform a Limited Op, or Pass. Being low on resources, the NVA opt to Pass again and collect a resource, moving their marker from 2 to 3 on the Track. Place the red Eligibility token in the Pass box on the map.

The US is now 2nd Eligible, so they will perform a Limited Op. Place the green Eligibility token in the "2nd Faction Lim Op or Event" box on the Sequence track. The US places a white pawn into Pleiku, where an Assault (3.2.4) is declared. This costs 0 resources for the US to conduct.





Fresh ARVN Troops zip up an open Route 14 to set up a hammer and anvil against VC in Pleiku-Darlar.

Normally in a Highland Province, the US removes 1 Active enemy piece per 2 US Troop cubes when Assaulting. Since the US has only 1 Troop cube in Pleiku (the US Special Forces cylinder there cannot participate in an Assault), the US Op may appear to be wasted at first glance. However, the US has a Base present which allows them to remove 2 Active enemy pieces per US Troop cube, regardless of the terrain (representing the effect of numerous US artillery fire bases). So take 2 of the Active VC Guerrillas from Pleiku and return them to their Available box.

A Special Activity cannot be performed with a Limited Op (2.3.5), but the US isn't quite done yet. Part of a US Assault Op is the option to add an ARVN Assault in 1 same selected space. Since there are 6 ARVN cubes in Pleiku, the US will spend 3 Resources (lowering the ARVN marker on the Track from 21 to 18) to Assault with the ARVN. The ARVN aren't as efficient as the US in Assaults, and a US Base being present doesn't help the ARVN in any way either. So they can only remove 1 Active enemy piece for every 3 ARVN Troop cubes

because the ARVN Assault is taking place in a Highland Province. After removing the 2 Active VC Guerrillas (for the 6 ARVN cubes), the only Insurgent piece left in the space is a VC Base. Control in Pleiku doesn't change as a result of the COIN Assault.

The turn is over, so reset Eligibility tokens and remove the pawn from the map. *Henry Cabot Lodge* is covered by *Booby Traps* which then becomes the current card. Reveal the next card from the deck as the next preview card – it is a *Coup!* (Nguyen Khan, an RVN leader).

### GAME TURN 7, Booby Traps

An Event card just prior to a *Coup!* is always a Monsoon Season (2.3.9), so place the provided Monsoon marker atop the *Booby Traps* card as a reminder. Interestingly enough, only the Insurgent factions happen to be Eligible on this card as both COIN factions are Ineligible.

*Booby Traps* is highlighted as a VC Capability; unlike a chosen Momentum (5.4) card which lasts only until the Reset Phase (6.5) of the next Coup Round, a Capability (5.3) is an Event that remains in effect the entire game when executed.

The VC want to execute the shaded bottom Event, so they bring *Booby Traps* into play by placing its associated reminder marker on the darker (shaded) side into the Capabilities box located on the game board. For the rest of the game, the VC have a 50/50 chance (die roll of 1-3) to remove a Sweeping COIN cube in each and every space that is being swept. However, there is no immediate benefit: the Capability is a long-term investment. The VC player-turn is over.

The NVA intend to perform an Op & Special Activity, but they will be restricted by the Monsoon (i.e., no Insurgent March, 2.3.9). They place a white pawn in Quang Tri to indicate their intention to Attack (3.3.3) there only, and thus reduce their resources from 3 to 2 on the Track.

The NVA have a choice for what type of Attack they will conduct. For a normal Attack, they must Activate all five of their Guerrillas in the space for a 5/6 chance (die roll 1-5) of removing any 2 of the 3 COIN pieces present. If successful, they could select any 2 of the enemy cubes and Special Forces cylinders present, but they would also lose 1 of their Guerrillas to attrition to match the US Troop cube if the US Troops are removed (no Attacking Insurgent pieces are removed to account for Special Forces or ARVN pieces, 3.3.3).

Or the NVA can Ambush (4.4.3) in lieu of normal Attack to ensure (no die roll is made in an Ambush) the removal of a COIN piece without an attrition loss of one their own. Since the lone US Troop cube is the NVA's primary target for this Attack, they will Ambush. Flip 1 of the NVA Guerrillas to Active and send the US Troop cube to the US Casualties box.



NVA Guerrillas inflict US casualties.

Control in Quang Tri doesn't change because of the NVA Attack, and their player-turn is now over.

The game turn (and the Monsoon Season) are over, so remove any pawns from the map, and set the *Booby Traps* card in front of the VC as a handy reference for its lasting effect. A Coup Round (6.0) will now interrupt the normal Sequence of Play. Before doing so, reveal the following Event card, *Sihanouk*.

**PART TWO – Coup Round**

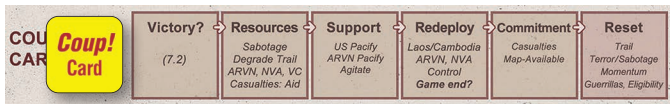


Played card



On deck

Now that a *Coup!* round is about to occur, refer to the bottom half of the Sequence of Play aid sheet that describes the Coup Card sequence in detail. It's important to carefully conduct these phases in order, step-by-step. You also can track the phases with the Coup Card marker on the game board's Sequence of Play track.



Get ready to track the first Coup Round.

We must first address the RVN leader situation. Our *Coup!* card, Nguyen Khanh, is placed in the RVN Leader box on the map (covering up Minh, who is no longer a part of play). Khanh limits the ARVN Transport (4.3.2) Special Ability to use of just 1 LoC, and no further, for the coming campaign. This has no effect at the present time, however, so we can move on.

**Victory? (6.1):** Checking rules section 7.2, we see that none of the four factions have met their victory condition thresholds, so this phase is done.

**Resources (6.2):** No Insurgents occupy any LoCs, and there is COIN Control in all Cities on the map, so there will be no Sabotage (6.2.1) this round. The Economic Value of South Vietnam remains at 15 (this is the sum total of all LoCs on the map, 1.3.4).

Next, the Trail would be degraded 1 box if there was COIN Control in any space in Laos or Cambodia (6.2.2). Since there isn't, the Trail is unaffected.

ARVN earnings will be equal to the current Aid (which is at 14) and the Economic Value of all un-sabotaged LoCs (which is 15), for a total of 29 (6.2.3). Adjust the ARVN resource marker from 18 to 47 (note the maximum resources for any faction is 75, 1.8).

Insurgent earnings (6.2.4) differ for the VC and NVA, and are calculated separately. The VC get 1 resource for each Base (including a Tunneled Base) that they have anywhere on the map, which in this case is 7. Adjust the VC resource marker from 10 to 17. The NVA will receive 3 resources for their 3 Bases in Laos/Cambodia (but not for their Base in North Vietnam), plus double the current Trail Value which is 1 (2 x 1 = 2). So move the NVA resource marker up a total of 5 spaces (3 + 2), to 7.

There is 1 US Troop cube in the Casualties box, so lower Aid by 3 (3 x 1), moving that marker from 14 to 11 (6.2.5). Leave the US Troop cube in the Casualty box for now; we will deal with it shortly.

**Support (6.3):** The US first, and then the ARVN, may now spend resources in up to 4 spaces (total between the two factions) to conduct Pacification (6.3.1) where there exists COIN Control, that faction's Troops, and also ARVN Police. If any of these three conditions are not met, then Pacification cannot occur in that space. A qualifying space may be Pacified up to 2 levels towards Active Support in this phase.

The US first considers Hue City, which meets the listed requirements to Pacify. There is a Terror marker present, so the US must first spend 3 ARVN resources to remove that marker. Adjust the ARVN resource marker from 47 to 44. The US continues by spending 6 more ARVN resources (a cost of 3 resources per level) to shift Hue by 2 levels towards Active Support (dropping ARVN resources from 44 to 38). Since Hue is currently at Active Opposition, this results in the Active Opposition marker now being removed. Lower the blue VC "Oppose+Bases" victory point token from 27 to 23 (2 shifts x 2 population) to reflect this change. The US victory point token doesn't change because there is no Support in Hue (the City is now back to Neutral).

US Pacification of 1 level in Saigon then reduces ARVN resources from 38 to 35 (adjust marker). Flip over the Passive Support marker in the space to Active Support. Since the population of Saigon is 6, and Support was just increased 1 level, the US victory point token is shifted up 6 boxes from 42 to 48. The US is just a few boxes away from its victory point goal of exceeding 50. But even if they had passed that threshold now it wouldn't matter until the next *Coup!* card was resolved, since we have already evaluated victory (6.1) for this particular Coup Round. The exception to this would be if this was the last *Coup!* card of the game (see 6.4.5).

The US has conducted Pacification in 2 spaces; they could continue on (in up to 2 more candidate spaces), but decide not to. The ARVN now have the opportunity to Pacify in 2 spaces (bringing the total to the maximum allowed of 4 spaces), but they decline to do so because they want to conserve resources and also don't want to catapult their US ally too far ahead in the game.

The VC may now perform Agitation (6.3.2) in up to 4 spaces where they have any pieces and also which do not have COIN Control, potentially shifting each up to 2 levels. While the VC do have a Guerrilla in Hue City, they cannot Agitate there because of the COIN Control. Quang Tri, Quang Tin, Quang Duc, and Binh Tuy Provinces all show Passive Opposition; by Agitating in each of these spaces, the VC can shift each 1 level up towards Active Opposition. They do so, spending 1 resource per space to Agitate, lowering their resources from 17 to 13. Flip the Passive Opposition markers in those 4 spaces to Active Opposition, and increase the VC victory points by 6 (2 + 2 + 1 + 1, the sum population total of all four spaces which received the 1 level Opposition shifts), from 23 to 29.

**Redeploy (6.4):** All US and ARVN pieces in Laos and Cambodia would now be removed, US Troop cubes (and, in a highly unlikely case, US Bases) going Out of Play and all other pieces to Available (6.4.1). Since there are no COIN pieces currently in Laos/Cambodia, we can bypass this step.

Now the ARVN (not the US) will perform Redeploy (6.4.2). All ARVN Troop cubes in Provinces without any US or ARVN Base and LoCs (not Cities) must Redeploy (and others may) to any Cities without NVA Control, any US/ARVN Base space, or to Saigon (they are returning to garrison). Checking Binh Dinh, the 2 ARVN Troop cubes there must leave: the ARVN decide to move 1 Troop cube to the City of Qui Nhon and 1 to Da Nang. The 6 ARVN Troops in Pleiku may stay due to the presence of the US Base, or they or any other ARVN Troops could choose to Redeploy. The ARVN choose to leave their remaining Troops in place.

The ARVN Ranger in Quang Tri is not a Troop cube so it is unaffected by Redeployment, and also remains in the space.

The ARVN then has the option to move its Police to any LoCs or to any COIN-Controlled spaces anywhere in South Vietnam. The ARVN decide to take 1 Police from Saigon and place it on the key 2-Econ LoC that connects westward to the City of Can Tho; place the cube in the (2) circle on the LoC. This will help guard the LoC against possible Insurgent Terror (Sabotage) on future turns.

Being content with the locations of their other Police units, the ARVN conducts no further repositioning. The US suggests Redeploying some Police to help Pacify Pleiku-Darlac, but ARVN decline.

The NVA may then Redeploy (6.4.3) their Troops (not Guerrillas) to any NVA Bases, even to spaces that show COIN Control. The NVA have 5 Troops in Southern Laos; they choose to take 4 of those cubes and shift them to North Vietnam, hoping to reinforce their invasion of South Vietnam (Quang Tri Province) on a future turn.

Up to this point we have not adjusted Control of any space because of any Redeployment, and that is intentional, but now it is time to do so (6.4.4). Examining the entire map, we see that no space Control has changed, so this step is over.

If this was the last *Coup!* card in the game, we would make a final victory determination (6.4.5). Since it is not, we will skip this step too.

**Commitment (6.5):** This applies only to the US faction. We need to ascertain if any US Casualties will go Out of Play. The US has 1 Troop cube in the US Casualties box, and when divided by 3 (rounded down) we get 0, so no US Troops will leave play this round. The Troop cube instead is returned to the map; the US player decides to place it in the City of An Loc.

Now the US can freely move up to 2 of its Bases and up to 9 of its Troops—that is, 10 minus the number of returning Troop Casualties, which was 1—amongst the US Available Forces box, any COIN-Controlled spaces, any LoCs, and/or Saigon. Removing Troops from the US Available Forces box to the map (deploying them “in country”) will decrease their victory points, while removing Troops from the map (withdrawing them “home”) to Available US Forces will increase US victory points. Of course, those victory points will come at the expense of being able to influence affairs in South Vietnam—including building Support for the Republic of Vietnam that also makes up US victory.

The US decides to keep Commitment level and just reposition a few forces. It takes its Troop cube from Binh Dinh and places it into the

City of Qui Nhon. Likewise, 1 US Troop from Saigon relocates to the City of Can Tho, while another Troop from Saigon goes over to the City of Cam Ranh. These Troop adjustments potentially will allow the US to Pacify in these Cities at a future point in the game, gaining additional victory points.

**Reset (6.6):** We’ll prepare for the next Event card (which is *Sihanouk*) by performing just a few more steps. If the Trail is at 4 or 0, it is adjusted a box, but our Trail is at 1 so there is no change. There are no Terror or Sabotage markers to remove. All factions’ Guerrillas and Special Forces on the map flip back to Underground. Any Momentum Event cards would now be discarded (their Event effects no longer would apply), but we have none in play (the VC Capability card *Booby Traps* remains in effect). All factions have their cylinders moved to the Eligible box. Finally, *Sihanouk* shifts over to be our current card for Turn 8, and *Claymores* is revealed as the preview card for Turn 9.



South Vietnam, early 1965: the eve of US escalation?


That’s it – you’ve just completed your first Vietnam campaign. The entire *FIRE IN THE LAKE* team has dedicated itself toward delivery of the best gaming experience possible, and we sincerely hope that you enjoy this product!

## GUIDE FOR COIN Series PLAYERS

### Know *Andean Abyss*, *Cuba Libre*, or *A Distant Plain*?—read this next!

This section summarizes *FIRE IN THE LAKE*'s main differences from previous volumes, with just a few thoughts on strategy.

#### United States

 COIN Series Volume IV features an expeditionary Counterinsurgent Faction: the US. Similar to the Coalition in *A Distant Plain*, the US is trying to stabilize the host country by building popular support for the regime while keeping its force commitment as low as possible. The more Troops and Bases the US has in its Available Forces box, the higher its Victory score (1.9, 7.2, 7.3).

The US adjusts its commitment in-country mainly during a Commitment Phase during each “Coup Round” (akin to the Propaganda Round of earlier games) rather than during a campaign (6.5). Also, the amount of US forces that can arrive or leave each Round is limited, albeit not too strictly—reflecting the graduated escalation of US policy in the day. So the 1960s-1970s US is not as nimble as the more modern Coalition in its propensity to surge in or withdraw rapidly from a theater of war.

The game board features an Out of Play box for US, ARVN, and (rarely) NVA pieces (1.4.1)—any pieces there are unavailable to the Factions, until they might re-enter play via Events. Unlike forces in the earlier games, US pieces especially set up and will move out of or back into play to represent the high variance in US popular and political support for the commitment to South Vietnam. A separate Casualties box holds US combat losses, a portion of which will go out of play, the remainder returning home (to Available)—similar to Coalition Casualties in *A Distant Plain* but typically greater in number.

For the first time in the Series, Counterinsurgent Factions have guerrilla-like units, called Special Forces (1.4). For the US, they are US-led Irregulars representing, among other forces, the anti-Communist Montagnard tribesmen led by US advisers.

The US has a Faction friendly to it (1.5)—the ARVN—with a relationship not unlike that between the Coalition and the Afghan Government in *A Distant Plain*. The US spends ARVN Resources—but only those provided by Aid rather than South Vietnam’s own economy (1.8.1). For many of its operations, the US in effect has unlimited Resources, because actions involving neither ARVN forces nor Pacification (the equivalent of Civic Action, 3.2.1 & 6.3.1) cost 0.

As in *A Distant Plain*, US Training can build allied forces, and can lower Patronage—the corruption that contributes to ARVN but not US victory. US Training alternatively to lowering Patronage can Pacify (in effect, conduct Civic Action) 1 area where COIN Control even if no Police (3.2.1). But each occasion of Pacification, unlike Civic Action in *Andean Abyss* or *Cuba Libre*, is limited to a maximum shift of 2 levels in Support/Opposition per Province or City (6.3.1).

Casualties for the US in *Fire in the Lake* are higher because, among other reasons, allied forces do not shield US forces from Insurgent Attack (3.3.3) to the degree that Government forces do for the Coalition in *A Distant Plain*. Also, the US Sweeps with US forces only.


The US can Air Lift limited numbers of ARVN, however, and can further leverage ARVN via a US Advise Special Activity (4.2.1). Advise actions not only provide free actions with US-led Irregulars

or ARVN forces, but also generate Aid to augment future ARVN Resources. Occasions to Advise may be restrictive however, because the action may accompany Training and Patrol Operations only, and not in areas where Training is occurring.

US Air Lift and Air Strike Special Activities (4.2.2, 4.2.3) are similar to those of the Coalition or of the Government in *Andean Abyss*—but even more potent, reflecting the relative masses of aircraft involved and the more liberal application of force. US Air Strikes represent not only large scale close air support over South Vietnam, but also strategic bombing of North Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh Trail—so the Air Strike Special Activity may Degrade an NVA track (The Trail, 6.7) that is critical to the NVA’s buildup in the South. Air Strikes against enemy forces in *Fire in the Lake* typically require spotters however—friendly forces in contact with enemy targets—and come with a price: the collateral damage done by that liberal application can cost popular support. US Assault also are more potent, doubling enemy losses where the US has Bases, representing abundant US artillery firebases, local air support, and resupply.

A recurring Monsoon Season (2.3.9) restricts US Air Lift and Air Strike and prohibits Sweep and March—similar to the final Event card restrictions of previous games, but coming on the last Event card before each Coup Round, not just at game end.

#### Republic of Vietnam

 A partner Counterinsurgent Faction to the US, the Republic of Vietnam faction (nicknamed ARVN in the game, for “Army of the Republic of Vietnam”) also benefits from Support, but less directly. The ARVN win by keeping or expanding Counterinsurgent (COIN) Control and accumulating Patronage—representing the leadership’s wherewithal to reward its friends (akin to Afghan Government victory in *A Distant Plain*).

COIN Control requires that the US and ARVN together have more pieces in a space than the enemy Insurgents combined (1.7). So US forces in country tend to benefit ARVN victory, while reducing the US score because they are not in the US Available box (7.2). Note that the enemy NVA Faction is fighting for the opposite: NVA Control.

Eventually, US forces will tend to leave, so “Vietnamizing” via the ARVN’s Pivotal Event (see below) and Training all available ARVN forces are critical to ARVN victory in the longer scenarios.

ARVN begins with Control of the Cities of South Vietnam, with most or all of them at some level of Support. Maintaining that Control, while expanding COIN Control of the countryside, are additional key avenues to ARVN victory.

ARVN amasses Patronage mainly through a Govern Special Activity (4.3.1), that can raise Aid or can skim Aid for Patronage. In either case, since it relies on having some spaces in Support, at least occasionally it will need to Pacify to generate that Support, even though that might temporarily raise the US player’s score. In the case of skimming Aid, it reduces that Support—because the local people can see that they are being denied the benefits of the aid. Governing to reduce Support is one way that ARVN can undermine the US, should that become necessary. It also pushes populations closer or completely to Neutrality, which can allow Insurgents easier access and increases the risk of VC Subversion.

The US will be spending ARVN Resources for some actions, but ARVN has its own reserve that the US cannot touch. Each Resource Phase, an Econ marker records the number of Resources that South

Vietnam's domestic economy generated for that campaign (up to 15 from the total value of the South's LoCs). Only ARVN may spend Resources below that Econ value (1.8.1).

ARVN deploy the usual Troops, Police, and Bases, but add Special Forces of their own: Rangers. Rangers via the ARVN Raid Special Activity can enter adjacent areas and eliminate even Underground Guerrillas. They therefore form the most potent ARVN strike forces, despite being small in number, and especially since ARVN Troops and Police remove enemies at less than one for one.

A 3rd ARVN Special Activity, Transport, not only moves Troops quickly to new areas, especially along enemy-free LoCs, but also flip all ARVN Rangers on the map Underground to ready them for future Raids.

The North Vietnamese enemy will be building up in neighboring Laos and Cambodia, and ARVN can and sometimes will want to invade those countries to reduce the NVA threat there. If any part of Laos or Cambodia is under COIN Control during the Coup Round, the NVA's Ho Chi Minh Trail will degrade in its effectiveness (6.2.2). The US can invade Laos and Cambodia also, but the penalty for US forces remaining too long in ostensibly neutral territory is more severe than it is for ARVN: during the Coup Round, all US Troops in those countries go out of play, while ARVN forces merely are removed to the Available box (6.4.1).

Speaking of the Coup Round, Coup Cards in *Fire in the Lake* take the place of Propaganda cards in the earlier volumes. They also add separate Event effects of their own, in the form of a new Republic of Vietnam (RVN) Leader, or a Failed Attempt to install one (2.4.1). The effects of the current or new RVN Leader last until the next Coup Round and either hinder or help certain ARVN (and in some cases US) actions. Failed Attempts result in immediate Desertion of a portion of ARVN forces, very much like the routine desertion of Afghan Government forces in *A Distant Plain*.

## North Vietnam



The North Vietnamese in *Fire in the Lake* present a Faction unique to the Series so far, an insurgency with enough material backing to attempt a transition into mobile and then positional warfare. They require an entirely new strategic style to lead them to success.

Like other insurgents, part of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) victory depends on the logistical and political infrastructure they are able to maintain – the number of their Bases. And, like the Directorio in *Cuba Libre*, they also must seek military control of as much population – in this case, South Vietnamese population – as they can defend, to ready for their final offensive to liberate the South. NVA Control requires NVA forces in an area to outnumber all other forces, including those of the allied Viet Cong of the South.

For the first time in the series, insurgents can field their own Troops to pit against those of the counterinsurgents. NVA Troops are numerous and hard hitting. They can Redeploy to any NVA Bases, even to seize Control. But with all their equipment, they are also vulnerable. Unlike Guerrillas, NVA Troops are never Underground. And enemy Assaults and Air Strikes remove them before any NVA or VC Guerrillas in the area.

Because so much of the NVA's capability to strike and to seize control of Southern population depends on massed and vulnerable NVA Troops, NVA use of sanctuaries to build up forces is critical.

North Vietnamese territory offers one such sanctuary – adjacent to

Quang Tri Province and near the key, ancient City of Hue. US and ARVN ground forces may never enter North Vietnam, the occasional air strike is almost the only threat to NVA build up there, even that severely limited in effect by the inability to spot targets via local counterinsurgents (1.3.5, 1.4.2, 4.2.3).

But to reach the bulk of Southern territory, the NVA will have to develop sanctuaries in neutral Laos and Cambodia also. These sanctuaries it may well have to defend against periodic invasions by the US or the ARVN, who may risk doing so (6.4.1).

The ability of the NVA to build up and to recover from losses depends largely on the efficiency the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos and Cambodia (and coastal sea supply) represented by the Trail track (6.7). The Trail is vulnerable to degradation by invasions of Laos/Cambodia (6.2.2) and especially by US Air Strikes. The NVA will want to garrison Laos/Cambodia to guard against the first and to maintain the Trail's efficiency by constantly repairing it via Rally Operations.

The status of the Trail will determine how quickly NVA forces will grow, how many Resources the NVA will receive for its operations in the South (also set by how many Bases the NVA have in Laos and Cambodia), and how quickly the NVA can March (3.3.2). Unless the Trail is at "0", NVA units can March repeatedly out of Laos and Cambodia spaces during a single Operation (similar to Taliban March through Pashtun areas in *A Distant Plain*). If the Trail is at its maximum "4", the NVA March in or out of Laos and Cambodia spaces for 0 Resources.

NVA Rally rates, unlike those of other Insurgents in the Series, depend not on the density of local population around Insurgent Bases, but on the value of the Trail combined with NVA Bases in the area (3.3.1). NVA Rally, like VC Rally, can place new Guerrillas wherever there is no Support for the enemy regime – even along South Vietnam's coast (representing sea supply from the North). It cannot, however, restore the Underground status of multiple Active Guerrillas the way that local VC can.

To augment the NVA's Guerrillas with Troops will require a Special Activity: Infiltrate. The first meaning of "Infiltrate" is from North to South. Depending as for Rally on the Trail value plus NVA Bases in the area, Infiltrate adds Troops, and then also equipment to upgrade lighter Guerrilla units into conventional Troops.

The second meaning of "Infiltrate" is into Southern VC units. Infiltration enables Northerners to take command of VC Guerrilla units and especially Bases—even the VC's nearly invulnerable Tunnel complexes—where local NVA forces already outnumber VC. For better or worse, the Infiltration of such Northern carpetbaggers also dampens local revolutionary zeal, that is, shifts toward Neutrality the Opposition that the VC is seeking to incite.

The NVA's 2nd Special Activity—Bombard—harnesses the heavy firepower of those NVA Troops, even while still in their sanctuaries across international borders (4.4.2). Concentrations of 3 or more NVA Troop units can Bombard their area or adjacent areas where enemy Troops are concentrated—where either 3 US plus ARVN Troop units or where any enemy Troops at a US or ARVN Base. Bombard creates enemy casualties without posing any risk or exposure for the NVA.

NVA Attack may choose to employ either the NVA Troops or the NVA Guerrillas in an area (3.3.3). Troop Attack will remove 1 enemy for every 2 NVA Troop units—as deadly as ARVN conventional forces (and even more so in Highland, where ARVN remove only

1 for 3). An NVA Attack may select its targets—US or ARVN, and Special Forces, Troops, or Police—freely, as long as Bases are removed last. One caution: US defensive firepower means that NVA attackers will suffer attrition, losing 1 NVA unit for every US Troop unit or Base removed in the Attack.

Fortunately for NVA forces, NVA Ambushes avoid such attrition, though these more cautious actions remove only 1 enemy each (4.4.3). NVA Ambush not only can replace Attack but can follow March, to allow a quick strike into a new area. And Ambush along a Highway or the Mekong can remove enemies from adjacent areas (representing Ambush along LoCs that nearby forces are using).

The combination of fast, hard-hitting forces but highly vulnerable formations mean that timing of offensives and degree of concentration to employ become acute questions for NVA strategy!

## Viet Cong



The indigenous Viet Cong (VC) insurgents of South Vietnam operate much like the revolutionary guerrilla armies of the earlier COIN Series volumes (the FARC, the Directorio and especially 26July, or the Taliban). The VC's pursuit of Opposition to the puppet Saigon regime and of development of VC infrastructure—Bases—will be familiar to players of any prior volume. But the VC do offer several twists.

The VC begin each scenario with a Tunneled Base complex and, like their NVA allies, can add more by Event (1.4.4). Tunneled Bases act the same as other Bases but are far more difficult for the enemy to eliminate, whether by Assault or Event (Tunnels are immune to Air Strikes and Raids).

VC Terror Operations can shift areas into Opposition, not just undermine Support for the regime (3.3.4). But repeated Terror (whether by VC Guerrillas or by NVA Guerrillas or Troops) places a maximum of only 1 Terror marker per area (and there are only 15 markers for both Terror and Sabotage total).

VC Agitation, like Pacification, is limited to 4 spaces each Support Phase, and shifts each space at most 2 levels, after removing any Terror (6.3.2).

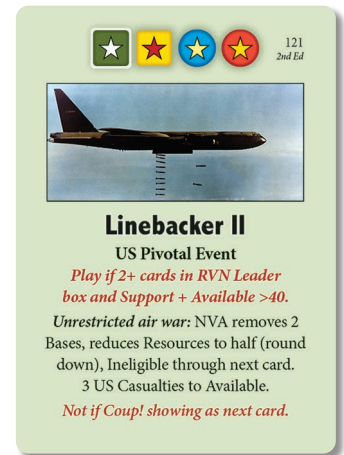
The VC can Tax as a Special Activity, to raise Resources during a Campaign, similar to the Extortion by Insurgents in earlier volumes (4.5.1). But VC Taxation is more extreme and can garner more than 1 Resource per space. VC Taxes yield a LoC's Econ value in Resources or twice the Population of a Province or City. Where the population is Taxed, there is a political cost, however: VC Taxation shifts Provinces and Cities toward support for the Saigon regime.

The VC's 2nd Special Activity – Subvert – is often its most powerful. VC Subversion removes ARVN forces from the fight, can add VC strength, and erodes the Patronage that is a measure of the Saigon regime's power (4.5.1). And it does all that without exposing the VC's Underground Guerrillas.

Finally, VC Ambush is at least equally as potent as that by the NVA (4.4.3, 4.5.3). VC Ambushes also remove only 1 enemy each and avoid attrition when causing US casualties, can be undertaken by VC Guerrillas who just Marched, and when employed by VC Guerrillas on Highways or the Mekong can remove enemies from adjacent areas.

## Pivotal Events

Entirely new to the Series, *Fire in the Lake* adds 4 Pivotal Event cards that represent major turning points in the war (2.3.8). Each Faction automatically begins the Medium and Full scenarios with their own Pivotal Event that becomes playable under certain conditions. When the Faction executes its Pivotal Event, the currently played Event card is cancelled—along with that card's Faction initiative order. Instead, the executing Faction becomes 1st Eligible and executes its (typically very advantageous) Pivotal Event. Certain Pivotal Events can trump others, delaying the preempted Pivotal Event.



## Non-Players

*Fire in the Lake* provides Non-player rules for all 4 Factions, as well as multiple modes of solitaire play. A solo player can represent any of the 4 Factions alone against the other 3, or either of the 2 allied Factions against the other 2. Reduced and increased difficulty options also are at hand.

We have provided more elaborate explanation of the Non-player actions this time. Therefore, that section of rules is longer than usual, but we hope not more complex (8.0). Refer first to the flowcharts, and only look up the corresponding rules as needed to clarify the shorthand in the charts.

There are also longer lists of Non-player Event instructions (8.4.1) than in previous volumes, located on the reverse of a Random Spaces sheet, and needed mainly to cover the larger deck of Event cards. Light-colored halos around Faction symbols on the cards cue you that a Non-player instruction applies and gray rifles that the Non-Player never opts for that Event.

The Non-players work similarly to those in the other volumes, with new mechanics to cover when the Non-players execute their Pivotal Events (8.4.6) and to represent varying US Policy toward the Vietnam conflict (8.8.1). We expect that you will find tremendous narrative variety in *Fire in the Lake's* 1-player game—good luck!

# FACTION INTERACTIONS

By Mike Owens

The interaction of Faction Operations and Special Activities in this game is different than those in other volumes, so here is a reference chart showing the ways in which specific actions directly help or hinder other Factions' victory conditions.

Note that this chart is not a comprehensive list of how factions interact. For example, the NVA can help the VC indirectly by using NVA Terror against Support to help later VC Agitation bring spaces to Opposition.

There will be many situations in which you will indirectly affect another Faction's position or plans by what Operations you conduct or what Event cards you play. Such instances will become more evident with experience playing the game, but this Interactions chart offers a useful reminder both of things you can do and things to watch out for from other players.

Many of the negative effects can be avoided if you look out for them. For example, the US can guard against ARVN Governing to remove Support by keeping enough US Troops in that Province or City.

## Affected Faction

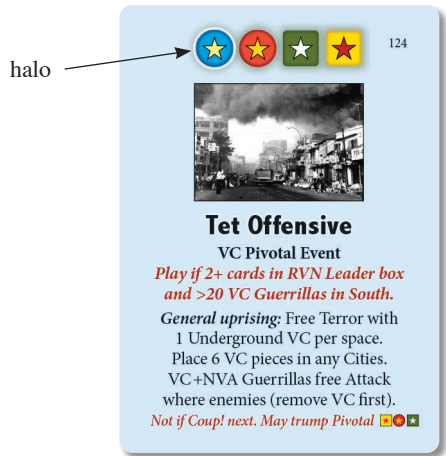
		US	NVA	VC	ARVN
Acting Faction	US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pacification to increase Support</li> <li>• Commitment to remove US pieces to Available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move COIN pieces to yield control to NVA (Patrol, Sweep, Air Lift, Commitment)</li> <li>• Assault, Air Strike, or Advise to remove NVA bases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train, Sweep, Assault, Advise, Air Lift, or Air Strike to remove NVA Control</li> <li>• Pacify to reduce Opposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train, Sweep, Assault, Advise, Air Lift, or Air Strike to gain COIN Control</li> <li>• Patrol, Sweep, Air Lift, or Commitment to remove COIN Control</li> <li>• Train to reduce Patronage</li> </ul>
	NVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No direct method</li> <li>• Terror to reduce Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rally, March, Attack, Infiltrate, Bombard, or Ambush to gain NVA Control</li> <li>• Rally to place bases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No direct method</li> <li>• Infiltrate to remove VC Bases and decrease Opposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March to yield Control to COIN</li> <li>• Rally, March, Attack, Infiltrate, Bombard, or Ambush to remove COIN Control</li> </ul>
	VC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Tax can increase Support]</li> <li>• Terror or Agitate to reduce Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rally or March to yield NVA Control</li> <li>• Attack, Subvert, or Ambush to gain NVA Control</li> <li>• Rally or March to remove NVA Control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rally to place bases</li> <li>• Terror or Agitate to increase Opposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March to yield Control to COIN</li> <li>• Rally, March, Attack, Subvert, or Ambush to remove COIN Control</li> <li>• Subvert to reduce Patronage</li> </ul>
	ARVN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pacification to increase Support</li> <li>• Govern to reduce Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patrol, Sweep, Assault, Transport, or Raid to yield control to NVA</li> <li>• Assault or Raid to remove NVA Bases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No direct method</li> <li>• Pacify to reduce Opposition</li> <li>• Assault or Raid to remove VC Bases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train, Sweep, Assault, Transport, or Raid to gain COIN Control</li> <li>• Govern to increase Patronage</li> </ul>

### Key

How the faction on the left helps the faction along the top's victory condition	How the faction on the left hinders the faction along the top's victory condition
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## NON-PLAYER EXAMPLES OF PLAY

This section provides detailed, step-by-step walk-throughs of 6 representative Non-Player actions, in order to get you rolling for solitaire play or any game in which you would like the system to sit in for a player. For instructional purposes, we have selected some particularly tricky cases. For each example, set up the board according to the Medium Scenario: 1968-1972 (no Period Event Capabilities) from the last 2 pages of the Rules of Play booklet, plus any alterations noted below. You will not need to prepare a full Deck, but keep the Event cards and player aids handy—especially the Non-Player Operations and Random Spaces foldouts. Refer to rules section 8 as helpful.



### Example 1: The VC Play Their Pivotal Event

It is a 1-player game, with the player as the US and ARVN. The 1968 scenario uses the 4 Pivotal Events (2.3.8 & 5.1.4), and it starts with the VC's Pivotal Event – card #124 “Tet Offensive” – already playable (barring a Monsoon): there are 2 or more cards in the RVN Leader box, and the VC have more than 20 Guerrillas in South Vietnam, the VC are Eligible.

A Non-player Faction with a playable Pivotal Event executes it immediately if the 1st Eligible Faction is a player (8.4.6). The Special Instructions sheet has a reminder of this rule at the entry for each Faction's Pivotal Event.

Set out Event #20 “Laser Guided Bombs” as the first played card and #97 “Brinks Hotel” showing as next.

The US – a player Faction – is 1st Eligible, and there is no Monsoon (no “Coup!” card showing, 2.3.9). The VC therefore immediately play “Tet Offensive”, cancelling “Laser Guided Bombs”. (The Non-player NVA do not play “Easter Offensive” now because it is not yet playable – NVA Troops on the map do not outnumber US Troops – a moot question in any case, because “Tet Offensive” would delay (“trump”) any NVA “Easter Offensive” if both Non-players played their Pivotal Events.)

“Tet Offensive” shows a halo around the VC symbol, so – as with any other such Non-player Event – special instructions apply (8.4.1). Look at the VC section on the Random Spaces sheet and find “124 Tet Offensive VC:”. (You will find it at the end of the list, since the Event Instructions are arranged in card number order.) The instruction is “For General uprising, place Guerrillas then Bases in Saigon, Hue, & 4 random (possibly same) Cities.” Now let's have the VC launch the Tet Offensive!

“General uprising” in the Non-player Event instruction simply refers to the flavor text pointing to the Event text that we are about to implement. “Place Guerrillas then Bases...” changes the usual procedure, however: usually, Non-players place friendly Bases rather than other pieces if given a choice (8.1.2 & 8.4.4). This special instruction means that Non-player VC executing “Tet” will place Guerrillas if they have any Available, and only place Bases once they run out of Guerrillas. (This helps them because any VC Bases that the Event would place into Cities would not contribute to any Attacks and would be immediately vulnerable to counterinsurgent Assault.) The rest of the instruction describes how to select where the VC will place their pieces.

None of that instruction applies to the first thing that happens in the Event, however. Like all Events, “Tet Offensive” is to be implemented literally (5.1), including in the order stated on the card. The Event text begins with: “Free Terror with 1 Underground VC per space.” Usually, free Operations require consulting the Faction's Operations flowcharts' priorities to decide where and how those Operations will occur (8.4.4). But there is no choice here—for “Tet”, the VC, whether player or Non-player, must execute Terror wherever VC have an Underground Guerrilla—so no need to consult further. One Underground VC Guerrilla per space flips Active, shifts the space 1 level toward Active Opposition if any Population, and places a Terror marker (or Sabotage, on LoCs, 3.3.4). Go ahead and execute that on the game board: a wave of Terror, lots of VC Guerrillas exposed, a jump in Opposition, and a crash in Support...

The next bit of “Tet” Event text says: “Place 6 VC pieces in any Cities.” Here is the part to which the Non-Player Event instruction pertains! The VC need to pick which pieces and which Cities. Because of the 8.4.1 instruction—and because there are enough VC Guerrillas in the Available box—they will be placing 6 Guerrillas.

Where? The instruction says “... place Guerrillas then Bases in Saigon, Hue, & 4 random (possibly same) Cities”. Per the instruction, place the 1st new VC Guerrilla unit in Saigon and the 2nd one in Hue.

Now go to the Random Spaces Map on the other side of the Special Instructions sheet: we need to select “4 random (possibly same) Cities”, and the word “random” tells us to use that table (8.2). We grab 2 dice and roll them one at a time, then read the first die as “tens” and the second as “ones”. For purpose of illustration, let's say the first roll is “4” and the second “2”, or “42”. Looking at the Random Spaces map, the space marked “42” is the City of “Da Nang”. Place the 3rd new VC Guerrilla in Da Nang.

Rolling again for the 4th Guerrilla, the roll is “2, 5”: Southern Laos. That is a Province, not a City, so follow the arrows until finding a City: Hue. Place the 4th new VC Guerrilla in Hue, joining the VC Guerrilla already there. The next roll is “5, 1”: The Fish Hook, resulting in the 5th Guerrilla placing in Qui Nhon, just below on the chart. Finally, the last Random Space roll is “3,4”: Hue, adding a 3rd and final VC Guerrilla there.

“Tet Offensive” next dictates that “VC+NVA Guerrillas free Attack where enemies (remove VC first)”. Again, no choices here regarding where, just mandatory Attacks everywhere possible with both VC and NVA Guerrillas. Successes, however, may offer options for which US or ARVN pieces are removed. For that, rule 8.1.2 (also summarized in a box box just below the Random Spaces Map) governs.

Presume that, among all the VC and NVA Guerrilla Attacks, the only successes are in Hue (on a 3 or less), Tay Ninh (5 or less), and Saigon (on a “2”).



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 Support Avail 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75

**NORTH VIETNAM (NVA) AVAILABLE FORCES**  
 40x [Red Cube], 20x [Red Star]

**THE TRAIL**  
 The efficiency of land and water resupply from North to South Vietnam  
 0 1 2 3 4  
 NVA pieces March 1 space only  
 NVA March into Laos/Cambodia track 0 Resource  
 NVA Rally: If NVA Base place NVA Counters up to Trail plus NVA Bases. Improve Trail by 1 box of cost of 2 Resources  
 NVA Withdraw: If NVA Base place NVA Counter up to Trail plus NVA Bases. US set 20000. Degraded by 1 box.  
 Events: Improve or Degrade per Event text  
 Resource Phase: Upgrade by 1 box if any COIN-Controlled space outside Vietnam. NVA Income = NVA Bases in Laos and Cambodia, plus 2 News Tokens  
 Raided Phase: Improve 0 to 1; Degrade 4 to 3

**OUT OF PLAY**  
 10x [Green Cube], 10x [Yellow Cube], 5x [Yellow Cylinder]

**US CASUALTIES**  
 3x [Green Cube]

**OVERFLOW A**  
 CAPABILITIES

**UNITED STATES (US) AVAILABLE FORCES**  
 40 39 38 37 36 35  
 34 33 32 31 30  
 29 28 27 26 25  
 24 23 22 21 20  
 19 18 17 16 15  
 14 13 12 11 10  
 9 8 7 6 5  
 Low # = Available Pieces

**US-LED IRREGULARS**  
 6x [Green Cube]

**US POLICY**  
 Johnson, LBJ, Nixon  
 Non-Player US only

**VIET CONG (VC) AVAILABLE FORCES**  
 30x [Blue Cube]

**OVERFLOW B**

**REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN) AVAILABLE FORCES**  
 30x [Orange Cube], 30x [Orange Cube], 6x [Yellow Cylinder]

**LEGEND**  
 PROVINCES  
 Highland, 1+Pop  
 Highland, 0Pop  
 Jungle, 1+Pop  
 Jungle, 0Pop (Lake or Coastal)  
 Lowland, 1+Pop  
 CITY, 1+Pop

**SEQUENCE OF PLAY**  
 Pivotal Event? If Eligible by new sequence executed Event  
 EVENT CARD → Eligible Factions → 1<sup>st</sup> Faction Op only → 2<sup>nd</sup> Faction LimOp → Ineligible Factions  
 1<sup>st</sup> Faction Op + Special Activity → 2<sup>nd</sup> Faction LimOp or Event →  
 1<sup>st</sup> Faction Op → 2<sup>nd</sup> Faction Op → May add Special Activity → Executed Op/Event

**SAIGON**  
 6x [Orange Cube], 1x [Green Cube], 1x [Yellow Cylinder]

**COUP!**  
 Nguyen Cao Ky

South Vietnam just after the VC's Tet Offensive.

Let's start with Hue. A garrison of 3 cubes there—1 US Troop and 2 Police—bears the VC onslaught: the successful VC Attack will remove 2 of them. Per 8.1.2 (1st bullet), enemy Troops and Police are removed as evenly as possible, beginning with the type of which there are the least in that space, and US before ARVN when there otherwise is a choice. There are fewer Troops than Police in Hue, so the first cube removed is the US Troop (a Casualty), then a Police. One VC Guerrilla also is removed, because 1 US Troop was removed in an Attack (Attrition, 3.3.3). COIN Control of Hue is lost!

Tay Ninh will also see 2 US or ARVN pieces lost in the Attack. Per the same 8.1.2 bullet, enemy Special Forces are removed before cubes: in this case, the ARVN Ranger unit there. There are no Police, and the US Base may not yet be removed by Attack because the cubes there protect it (3.3.3). There are both US and ARVN Troops in Tay Ninh. The Attack removes a US cube, per the rule to remove US before ARVN, all above priorities being equal. Per "Tet", the VC must take the Attrition, and a VC Guerrilla is removed from Tay Ninh also. Tay Ninh as well falls from COIN Control.

Finally, the lucky Saigon Guerrillas remove another 2 US or ARVN pieces. Again, the Rangers go first, then—because there are fewer total Troops (3) than Police (4) in the City—a Troops cube, US first. One Guerrilla unit pays the price for taking on US defensive firepower and also is removed.

A successful VC offensive, as the Non-player VC's "Opposition+Bases" score has jumped from 23 to 30, while the player US and ARVN scores both dropped several points. The player will not have an option for "Laser Guided Bombs" this game. And as well, next up is the Non-player NVA's Operation and Special Activity: The NVA will be free to build up strength with Rally and Infiltration as the player responds to the VC action.

## Example 2: The VC Rally and Tax

It is again the beginning of the Medium scenario (no Period Events or Capabilities), with a player US/ARVN versus a Non-player NVA/VC. This time, alter the set up for purposes of our illustration by removing Saigon's VC Base and VC Guerrilla to Available; moving Phu Bon's 2 VC Guerrillas to Quang Nam; shifting Binh Dinh, Pleiku, and Khanh Hoa all the way from Active Support to Active Opposition, and then removing the VC Bases from those three spaces; and reducing VC Resources from 15 to 5. Set out Event #97 "Brinks Hotel" as the first card played. (The next card showing is #15 "Medevac".

This time, the 1st Eligible Faction is not a player, so the Non-player VC do not immediately execute their Pivotal Event (8.4.6). We see that the VC are 1st Eligible, so we check what they will do instead.

Referring to the "Non-Player VC" flowchart on the Non-Player Operations and Special Activities foldout—and, as needed, the corresponding rules section, 8.5—we start with the upper left diamond condition question: "VC can Terror at Support?" (The corresponding rule is at the beginning of 8.5.1.) The VC could execute Terror at Support—but only in each of the 3 central highlands Provinces where they would be using their last Underground Guerrilla protecting a Base. So the answer is "No", and we follow the arrow down to the 2nd diamond.

The 2nd diamond asks "VC Terror alone can shift 2d6+ Pop?". This means that we roll two 6-sided dice, and if VC Terror "alone"—i.e., without taking any Special Activities into account—could shift at

least that many Population points towards Active Opposition, then the VC will execute a Terror Operation. The following spaces can all be shifted by VC Terror: Quang Nam (Population 1), Binh Tuy (1), Quang Duc (1), Kien Phong (2), Kien Hoa (2) and Ba Xuyen (1). That's 6 spaces with a total of 8 Population! (Note that Phuoc Long doesn't count, since it has Population 0 and therefore cannot be shifted from Neutral.) However, the VC only has 5 Resources (unless they use Tax, and the "Terror alone" says we shouldn't count that) so they can only shift 5 of those spaces, with a maximum possible total of 7 Population. We therefore roll 2d6, and if we score a total no higher than 7 the VC will do a country-wide Terror Operation.

In this case however the dice come up "4" and "5", for a total of 9: too high! Instead we follow the "No" arrow to the "Event or Operations?" box. The first two bullets in that box ask if the next or the current cards are Capabilities, but neither of them are. The third bullet tells the VC to play the current non-Capability Event "unless Ineffective (8.1)". VC play the shaded versions of dual-use Events (5.2, 8.1). The card has no halo around the VC symbol, so there are no special Non-player instructions for the VC that, in theory, might tell it to use the unshaded text (8.4.1). With no VC in any Cities at the moment, the shaded text of "Brinks Hotel" would neither shift any Cities nor add any Terror markers—it would do nothing at all, so it meets the definition of "Ineffective". Therefore, Non-player VC continues down the flowchart to the 3rd diamond.

That diamond asks "Rally would place 2+ Bases?" Here we need to look ahead a little, to the top of the Rally box to the right, to see if the VC would or would not place 2+ Bases if they Rallied. We see from the 1st bullet that the VC will Rally to place Bases where they can do so and have at least 4 VC Guerrillas. That is true for Quang Nam (only), so the VC do not meet this condition. (Note the difference between the "would" in this diamond and "can" in the Terror diamonds we saw above: "can" only asks if it would be possible for the Non-player to do something but doesn't worry about whether that something is actually going to happen, while "would" asks what the actual results would be if the Non-player were to select the Operation in question.)

The 4th diamond asks "3d6 < VC Guerrillas Available?", and this time the dice roll low: "1", "2" and "2" add up to 5, which is less than the 8 Available VC Guerrillas! The VC will therefore Rally.

At the top of the Rally box, "In max 6 spaces" tells us that the Non-Player VC will select no more than 6 spaces when executing a Rally Operation. Per the 1st bullet, they replace 2 VC Guerrillas for a Base in Quang Nam, paying 1 Resource down to 3 and boosting their score by 1 point.

With up to 5 VC Rally spaces to go, we proceed down to the 2nd bullet in the Rally box. It tells us to place Guerrillas but has an entire list of secondary bullets specifying where those Guerrillas should go! The first of those secondary bullets instructs the VC to Rally to place Guerrillas in 2 spaces that don't have any VC pieces already, and then gives a third level of bullets with even more detailed instructions. The first of those 3rd-level bullets tells us to look for spaces with ARVN cubes, to help set up the VC for later Subversion.) Rally in Support spaces is ruled out, so the candidate spaces come down to just An Loc, which happens to be Neutral and has ARVN cubes but no VC Guerrilla. The VC place a Guerrilla there and pay the 1 Resource, down to 3. The second of the 3rd-level bullets asks for a space with no VC but a Population of 1 or higher. The only such spaces remaining on the map all have Support however, so the VC cannot Rally there. The Non-player skips over this bullet.

With 4 possible Rally spaces to go, we go on to the 2nd secondary bullet: place Guerrillas “at VC Base with <4 Underground VC”. The candidates are Tay Ninh, Phuoc Long, and Binh Tuy-Binh Thuan, so the VC place Guerrillas in each (removing COIN Control of Tay Ninh) and spend their last 3 Resources down to 0.

The VC still have their 6th Rally space to go, but are now at 0 Resources and so cannot pay for it. At the top of the Rally box, however, immediately after the “max 6 spaces” instruction, we find the instruction, “Once VC at 0 Resources, Tax before more Rally” (8.5.2, 1st bullet). Just as a VC player might, the Non-Player VC will interrupt their Rally Operation to Tax, once they are at 0 Resources while Rallying (including at the beginning or end of a Rally Operation).

So we shift further right on the flowchart to consult the “Tax” box in the rightmost (Special Activities) column (8.5.1, TAX). The VC will Tax up to the maximum 4 spaces (same as a player). Per the 1st bullet, the VC will continue straight to Subvert instead if they have 10 or more Resources, but now they have 0 Resources so they will Tax. Per the 2nd bullet, they Tax first on LoCs (where no damage will be done to Opposition); because there are no VC on LoCs yet, we skip that bullet.

The 3rd bullet says Tax at Population already at Active Support. VC presence where Active Support and no COIN Control (which would block VC Taxation, 4.5.1) is a rare circumstance. A quick scan of the map confirms that the only Active Support spaces on the map (Saigon) also has COIN Control. So we move on.

The 4th bullet of the Tax box starts with “Only if still at 0 Res”—which they are—and then lists two secondary bullets. The first one of these says “1. In Active Opposition”. There are only 2 spaces with Active Opposition where the VC could Tax: Tay Ninh and Quang Nam. So an Underground VC Guerrilla in each of those spaces goes Active, shifting each space to Passive Opposition; VC Resources jump to 6.

With 2 possible additional Tax spaces to go, we continue with the other secondary bullet: “Randomly where able”, and there is also a tiebreak listed: “@ the highest Pop”. So VC will Tax in up to 2 other spaces, chosen at random from spaces with the most Population where Taxation is possible. With so much Population under COIN Control in 1968, the remaining candidates are limited to 3 Provinces in the Delta, 2 of which have the higher Population (2): Kien Phong and Kien Hoa. Taxes there bump VC Resources up by 8 to a healthy total of 14—the VC probably will not need to Tax again for some time—at the cost of shifting the spaces from Passive Opposition to Neutral for a considerable drop in the VC score, at least for now.

VC Taxation has reached its maximum 4 spaces and so is over. Rally can resume where it left off when Resources hit 0, with the 3rd secondary bullet of the Rally box. That bullet says, “Where 1-3 VC Guerrillas”, and is intended to help the VC collect 4 Guerrillas so it will build a new Base. There are 8 spaces with 1-3 VC Guerrillas that haven’t already been selected for the Rally: the 4 Delta Provinces, Quang Duc-Long Khanh, and the 3 Central Highland Provinces. That is a bit too much, so we look at the tiebreaks to see if they can narrow the selection down for us: “@ to remove COIN Control at 1+ Pop @ if NVA is Player, to remove NVA Control at 1+ Pop”. We can ignore the last one right away since the NVA is a Non-player, not a Player. The first tiebreak however might apply; because the VC have in this case already Rallied at all Bases where they can, removing COIN Control would require a COIN Controlled space without Support, where adding 1 VC piece would remove that

Control. Unfortunately, there are no such spaces left to Rally in, so the tiebreak was no help after all!

This means that all the 8 remaining spaces with 1-3 VC Guerrillas have equal priority, and the VC can only select 1 of them. Whenever there is equal priority for a Non-player to do something among several candidate spaces, the Random Spaces routine kicks in (random.8.2 & 8.3). When there are 6 or fewer candidates the tie can be resolved with a simple equal chance die roll (8.2 PLAY NOTE), but with 8 spaces we use the full routine with the “Random Spaces” chart.

The player rolls 2 dice, one at a time. The first one determines the “tens” and rolls an “1”; and the second that determines the “ones” rolls a “2”. The space with number 12 on the Random Spaces chart is Saigon. Saigon is not a Rally candidate, so the next step is to follow the arrows on the chart The Parrot’s Beak. That space likewise is not a candidate (there are not 1 to 3 VC Guerrillas there), so we continue along the arrows to the next box: Kien Hoa. Kien Hoa-Vinh Binh Province is a candidate, so is selected for the Rally, receiving a new VC Guerrilla at the cost of 1 Resource.

The VC have Rallied in 6 spaces, the maximum for Non-player VC (8.5.2), and have already completed a Special Activity, Tax, so are finished. The player as the US now will have the choice between a Limited Operation, executing “Brinks Hotel”, or Passing.



The Non-player VC’s Rally (white pawns) and Taxation (black pawns) have built their forces near Saigon and refilled their rice bags, but cost them popular backing.

### Example 3: The NVA March then Infiltrate

This time set up the Medium scenario (no Period Capabilities), but for our example mark the US and ARVN Factions as Ineligible.

Set out Event #34 “SA-2s” as the first played card and #97 “Brinks Hotel” showing as next. The solo player again is US/ARVN versus a Non-player NVA/VC.

The first diamond on the Non-Player NVA flowchart asks if “Ambush and/or Troop Attack can remove Base or 1d6+ enemies?”. (Non-Ambush Guerrilla Attacks are left out, as they aren’t guaranteed to succeed.) Looking at the map, we quickly see that no NVA Troops are in position to Attack anything, while while Ambushes in Tay Ninh and Quang Tri could remove 2 units, so NVA will Attack on a 1d6 roll of “2” or less. We roll 1d6, but the result is a “5” – not even close!

Next we check the “Pass, Event or Operations?” box. The first bullet in the box doesn’t apply (the next card is no NVA Capability), but the second bullet does: the current card is a Capabilities Event, so the Non-player NVA will roll a die to determine what it does. If the die rolls above the number of Coup cards in the RVN Leader box, the Non-player will play the shaded Capability; otherwise it will ignore the Event. The 1968 scenario begins with 3 Coup cards already in the RVN Leader box, and the die rolls a “3”, so the NVA skips the Capability. Neither of the two last “Pass, Event or Operations?” bullets apply: bullet 3 is only concerned with non-Capability Events, while bullet 4 tells the Non-player to Pass if it has 0 Resources. With 15 Resources to spend, the NVA continues down the flowchart.

The next decision diamond asks if NVA “can Terror 1d6+ Population at Support”, so the player rolls 1d6: a “4”. Looking at the table the only place where NVA could execute Terror at Support is Quang Tri-Thua Thien, with Population 2; this is less than the 4 required by the die roll, so again we continue down the flowchart.

We now come to two diamonds checking whether or not the NVA will Rally. The first one asks “>2d6 NVA Guerrillas Available OR Rally would place Base?”. There are 4 NVA Guerrillas Available, so if the 2d6 roll below that – i.e., 3 or less – the NVA will Rally. The dice roll “4” and “6” though, so we check the other part: “Rally would place Base?”. Here we have to look at what the Non-player would actually do if it chose to Rally. Due to the threat from the COIN Factions, and in particular from the ARVN’s Rangers, the Non-player will only place Bases in spaces where it has at least 4 units total in the space. 2 of those units have to be NVA Guerrillas (since rule 3.3.1 specifies that only Guerrillas may be used to place Bases), while the other two units may be NVA Troops. In this case however the two spaces where the NVA has 4 or more units only have a single Guerrilla each, so the Rally would not place any Base.

The fourth diamond adds another couple of conditions that could make the NVA Rally: “Trail < 2 OR NVA Base with < 2 NVA Units?”. The Trail is “3” though, and all NVA Bases have at least 2 NVA units each, so again the answer to the diamond’s question is “No”. This takes us to the March box.

With any Non-player action involving movement, it can be easiest to first determine which of the Faction’s pieces will be able to move by its priorities (8.1.1 PLAY NOTE). The preliminary section of the NVA March instruction – i.e., the grey text at the top of the box – specifies that the NVA will have to leave behind enough pieces to maintain any NVA Control that it has, and also leave at least 2 NVA Guerrillas or Troops to protect any NVA Bases (8.6.5). This first priority will determine the limit on how many NVA pieces can March. It also tells us that the NVA will only use its ability to March pieces multiple times along the Trail if the March is free (3.1.2, 5.5) or the Trail is “4” (3.3.2, 6.7) – i.e., whenever the extra spaces don’t cost any extra Resources. In this example the Trail is “3”, so the NVA will not use it.

So we press ahead to the first bullet in the March box: “if NVA Base Available, get 4 NVA units incl. 2 Guerrillas in 1 Laos or Cambodia space with room for a Base.” That’s a mouthful, so let’s take it bit by

bit. First, if NVA have no more Bases in the Available box, the whole bullet fails to apply. But right now there is 1 NVA Base Available. By the rest of that bullet, NVA need to select 1 Laos or Cambodia space that has no more than 1 Base already (i.e., so there is room for at least 1 additional Base there), and then March enough units there to end up with 2 NVA Guerrillas and 2 additional NVA units that can be either Guerrillas or Troops. (Note that it is OK to end up with more than 2 NVA Troops in the space if they were already there before the March, but the Non-player stops sending units there once it has reached 2 Guerrillas + 2 more units.)

A glance at the map shows that, at this point in 1968, each space in Laos and Cambodia has room for one more Base; all of them except Central Laos has 2 Guerrillas but no other NVA units, while Central Laos has 1 Guerrilla and 9 NVA Troops. This means that there are two ways to “get 4 NVA units incl. 2 Guerrillas” in a Laos or Cambodia space: either March a single Guerrilla from somewhere into Central Laos – and that “somewhere” could be either North Vietnam or Quang Tri-Thua Thien, both of which have a Guerrilla to spare – or March two NVA units of any type into one of the other spaces in Laos or Cambodia. With the Trail at “3” the NVA will only move into adjacent spaces, which means that there are only 2 such “other spaces” to choose between: The Fishhook, where the lone NVA Guerrillas in Tay Ninh and Phuoc Long could move to join the 2 Guerrillas already there, or Southern Laos where 2 NVA Troops could move in from Central Laos would bring the total number of units up to 4. With only 3 spaces to choose between, we can roll an equal-chance d6: 1-2 Central Laos, 3-4 Southern Laos, 5-6 The Fishhook. Rolling the die we get a “2”, selecting Central Laos as the destination; a second die roll selects North Vietnam as the space where the Guerrilla is sent from. The single Guerrilla from North Vietnam moves into Central Laos for a cost of 1 Resource.

The next bullet tells us to “Get 1 non-LoC Guerrilla Underground on 1 LoC: @ Hue-Da Nang”. NVA at this point will March with just 1 Guerrilla onto just 1 LoC space that does not yet have any Underground NVA Guerrilla; it will do so with an Underground Guerrilla that isn’t already on a LoC, and only to a LoC that the Guerrilla can enter without becoming Activated. The tiebreak “@ Hue-Da Nang” means that it will do so onto the LoC between Hue and Da Nang if possible (in order to hinder ARVN reinforcement of Hue or Quang Tri-Thua Thien). Looking at the map situation, an NVA Guerrilla can March from Quang Tri to that LoC and stay Underground, without losing any NVA Control or leaving fewer than 2 pieces protecting the NVA Base at the origin, so it does that (cost 0).

We have reached the 3rd bullet in the box: “3. Add NVA Control to up to 3 highest Pop spaces (All units Marching from one space stay together)”, followed by a series of tiebreaks. The map space with the highest Population is Saigon, but with only 1 NVA Guerrilla in any adjacent space there is no way for the NVA to take Control there! In fact there are only 2 spaces where the NVA could add Control without using the Trail: Quang Tri-Thua Thien (Pop 2) and Quang Nam (Pop 1). With only two spaces to choose between we don’t really need the tiebreaks, but let’s take a quick look at them anyway:

“@ where only 1 group needed”: This means that the NVA will try to send each Marching group to a different space, and only combine 2 or more groups if there are no spaces left that a single NVA group could take Control of.

“Ⓞ where no US Base”: A US Base allows each Assaulting US Troop to remove 2 enemy pieces regardless of terrain, which makes spaces with US Bases very deadly to the NVA! However, if the choice stands between taking Control of a space with a US Base and taking Con-



The NVA invades Quang Tri and Quang Nam en masse and uses its advantage in numbers to infiltrate and take over a VC Base.

trol of a space with lower Population (or maybe not taking Control anywhere!), the NVA will go for the higher-Population space with the US Base and hope that they will get a chance to Attack before the US gets around to Assaulting them.

“© where VC but no NVA Base”: This guides the NVA towards spaces with VC pieces in the hope of finding a VC Base that can be Infiltrated and taken over by the NVA.

OK, back to the example. Quang Tri has the higher Population of the two, so it is selected first even though it has a US Base. There are 9 COIN and 3 NVA pieces in Quang Tri already, so at least 7 more NVA units are needed to add NVA Control there. North Vietnam and Central Laos both groups of NVA Troops big enough, so we roll a die between them: 1-3 North Vietnam, 4-6 Central Laos. The die rolls “3”, so 7 of the Troops from North Vietnam March into Quang Tri-Thua Thien (cost 1).

That leaves Quang Nam to the Troops in Central Laos. All 9 Troops March into Quang Nam, undoing the earlier preparations for Base-building there! (Another way to look at it is that the Guerrilla from North Vietnam moved to Central Laos to release an NVA Troop from Base guard duty.) This costs 1 Resource, leaving the NVA with 17.

The final March bullet tells us to “Get max Troops not adjacent to COIN Control to 1 space adjacent to COIN Control in South”. However, the only NVA Troops that aren’t already adjacent to a space with COIN Control are the two Base guards in North Vietnam, and they aren’t allowed to leave, so we skip this bullet and the March Operation is over.

But this NVA invasion still has objectives to achieve: the flowchart shows that Ambush, Infiltrate or Bombard will follow NVA March (8.6.5 AMBUSH). A condition for Ambush, per the 1st bullet in the Ambush box, is that an enemy Base will be removed. That condition

is rarely met, meaning (via “if none”) that NVA will almost always Infiltrate or Bombard instead after Marching.

And that is exactly what happens now. After a March, the only Guerrillas that are allowed to Ambush are those who moved, and only two Guerrillas moved this time: one into Central Laos where there are no enemies to Ambush, and one onto the Hue-Da Nang LoC which has plenty of targets (since Ambushes on LoCs may remove enemy pieces from adjacent spaces, 4.4.3) but is unable to remove the US Base in Quang Tri since there are 8 COIN units protecting it.

Instead the NVA Infiltrate. The first bullet in the Infiltrate box tells us “If Infiltrate won’t add Base or 4+Troops, Bombard now”, so we need to look ahead again. The second bullet tells us to “Replace VC Bases”, which is possible in spaces where NVA outnumber VC—such as in Quang Nam! This means that Infiltrate will add indeed a Base, so NVA sticks with this Special Activity. Quang Nam is selected as the first of the two Infiltrate spaces allowed, and the VC Base there is replaced by the last Available NVA one. The local population is upset by the northerners’ blatant take-over, so Quang Nam shifts from Active Opposition to Passive Opposition.

(Note that the NVA could have Infiltrated the VC Base even if it didn’t have any NVA Bases Available, by removing one of the Bases from North Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia per rule 1.4.1. This is the only situation in which any Non-player voluntarily removes its own units without being ordered to do so by an Event text!)

There are no other spaces where the NVA could Infiltrate another VC Base, so we continue with the third Infiltrate bullet: “Place Troops (at NVA Bases): Ⓐ where most NVA Guerrillas Ⓑ where 2 NVA Bases Ⓒ in or adjacent to City or Province without NVA Control”. The first tiebreak removes North Vietnam from consideration since it has no NVA Guerrillas at all, and Quang Nam is already out since Infiltrate may not place Troops in the same space as it replaced VC pieces. All other NVA Base spaces have 2 Guerrillas each, and none of them has 2 NVA Bases (the 2nd tiebreak). The third tiebreak looks for Cities or Provinces that either lack NVA Control themselves or are adjacent to such spaces; but that only takes Central Laos off the list. We still have Quang Tri, Northeast Cambodia, The Fishhook, The Parrot’s Beak and Sihanoukville to choose between. Rolling on the Random Spaces table gives us “1, 2”: Saigon, so we follow the arrow to the first space on our list: The Parrot’s Beak. 4 NVA Troops (1 for the Base and 3 from the Trail) are placed in The Parrot’s Beak.

The fourth Infiltrate bullet tells us to “replace Guerrillas with Troops until 2 NVA Guerrillas left per space”. This is only possible in spaces were already placed (i.e., selected for Infiltrate but no VC pieces replaced), i.e., The Parrot’s Beak; but there are only 2 Guerrillas there to begin with so none of them is upgraded to Troops.

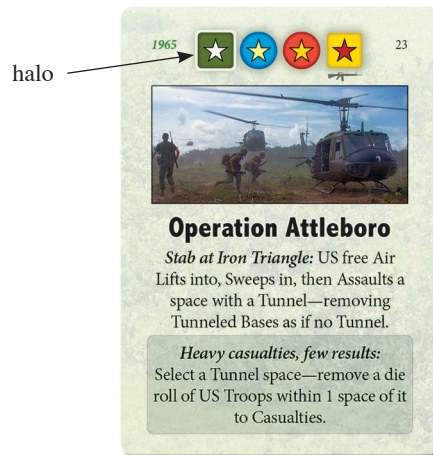
That was the end of the NVA March Operation. Having ended their invasion, and with US and ARVN Ineligible, the Non-player NVA hand off to their Non-player VC allies (or maybe we should say “allies”, considering what just happened in Quang Nam!). A player could follow the NVA’s Operation and Special Activity with either a LimOp only, the Event, or a Pass (2.3.4). But Non-players get to “cheat” in this case (8.1, 1st bullet). A Limited Operation by the Sequence of Play instead offers them a full Operation and Special Activity. Were we to continue this example, we would now consult the Non-player VC Operations flowchart to determine how the VC will follow-up the Northern invasion.

## Example 4:

### The US Sweeps with Air Lift

Next let’s get a look at a Non-player Counterinsurgent. Set up the 1968 scenario (no Period Capabilities), but alter US Policy from “LBJ” to “Nixon” (8.8.1). This change will give us a look at the somewhat trickier Air Lift procedure instead of the more straightforward Air Strike.

Set out Event #23 “Operation Attleboro” as the first played card and #97 “Brinks Hotel” showing as next. The solo player this time is NVA/VC versus a Non-player US/ARVN.



The VC player keeps the “Tet Offensive” holstered for now, so Non-player US is 1st Eligible. Immediately we notice that the “Operation Attleboro” card has a white halo around the US symbol, so we check the Non-player Event instructions on the back of the Random Spaces Map sheet (8.4.1). There we find 23 “Operation Attleboro” among a numerical listing of several Event titles with the instruction, “Same as #22”. Instruction 22 is “If ‘Nixon’, choose Op & Special Activity instead.” Under the “Nixon” US Policy of more selective US big-unit operations, the US will not commit the effort against VC tunnel complexes represented by this Event. Non-player US will ignore this Event under the “Nixon” US Policy, even if it gets far enough into the flowchart to consider it.

Non-player US start by checking if the current or next card are Capabilities Events, but they aren’t. Next the US look for Bases they could remove through Assault alone (i.e., without having to use any Air Lift or Air Strike, so we don’t have to check ahead what those parts of the flowchart would do before answering the question), but all Insurgent Bases in spaces with US Troops are protected by Underground Guerrillas and can’t be Assaulted just yet. Then the US check if there are any NVA Troops in spaces with US Troops and/or US Bases. If NVA Troops are given the chance to Attack they can inflict very heavy US casualties, and that could have serious repercussions both in Vietnam (i.e., in game terms affecting NVA and ARVN victory points) and in US domestic politics (represented in the game by sending US pieces Out of Play). Guerrillas are ignored at this point – they are annoying, but their Attacks and Ambushes are more like needle pricks than crushing hammer blows! However, the only NVA pieces currently located in the same space as US forces are Underground Guerrillas and a Base, so the US will not Assault.

The 3rd diamond asks us whether there are any “Underground Guerrillas where Support?”, and the answer to that is a resounding yes! There are Underground Guerrillas in Quang Tri-Thua Thien,

Binh Dinh, Pleiku-Darlac, Phu Bon-Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa and Saigon, all of which are at either Active or Passive Support. (Note that the question does not ask if the Non-player could successfully Activate any of those Guerrillas.) It's not Monsoon Season (2.3.9), so US Sweep it is!

The Non-player US Sweep box begins with a couple of cautioning notes: "If shaded Booby Traps, max 2 spaces. Out of South with Nixon only." Shaded Booby Traps is a VC Capability that can cause Sweeping Troops to become Casualties, so when that Capability is in effect Non-player US will be a lot more careful about where it Sweeps. Fortunately it isn't in effect now! The other notes tells us that the US will only Sweep out of South Vietnam if the US Policy is Nixon... which it is now, so we'll have to keep Laos and Cambodia in mind when we determine what the US will do.

The first Sweep bullet tells us to "Select spaces where Underground Guerrillas 1. Where US 2. Up to 2 spaces with no US". The first secondary bullet selects Quang Tri, Binh Dinh, Pleiku, Phu Bon, Khanh Hoa, Binh Tuy, Tay Ninh and Saigon; there's no need to prioritize between them yet. Note that there's no hard requirement that the spaces have Support here, so Binh Tuy-Binh Thuan is selected just because it has US Troops in it! The other secondary bullet asks us to select up to 2 spaces with Underground Guerrillas but no US pieces, and since there are more than 2 such spaces on the map we need to look at the tiebreaks:

"@ Support ⑥ Base(s) © highest Pop"

All spaces with Support and Underground Guerrillas already had US pieces in them, so tiebreak @ doesn't apply. Tiebreak ⑥ asks us to look for spaces with Underground Guerrillas and Bases – any Bases, not just NVA or VC ones! – and there are many of those left: in South Vietnam we have Quang Nam and Phuoc Long (with VC Bases) and Kien Giang-An Xuyen (with an ARVN Base), and on the other side of the border all the spaces in Laos and Cambodia have NVA Bases. That's still more than 2, so we look at tiebreak © too before resorting to random selection: highest Population. Of the spaces just listed Kien Giang has Pop 2 while Quang Nam has Pop 1; all the others have Pop 0. That makes the choice easy: we're looking for two spaces, so tiebreak © selects Kien Giang and Quang Nam, without having to resort to a random roll after all (and not moving into Laos or Cambodia either).

Sweep bullet ② asks us to move to reinforce those spaces selected in bullet 1 that have no more than 2 NVA Troops. Why would the Non-player US select Sweep spaces with more than 2 NVA Troops in them at all if it won't send forces there anyway? Well, remember how the US would Assault if there were any NVA Troops with US Bases or Troops? Because of that, if there are any spaces with both NVA Troops and US pieces and we still come to the Sweep box, it means either that the US has tried to Assault but was unable to do so (e.g., because a lone US Troop was caught in a Mountain Province and there wasn't enough Air Lift to either reinforce it or pull it to safety), or else the US pieces in that space are Irregulars that the US consider more or less expendable. Either way, the Non-player will try to get one last Operation out of those endangered units before the NVA destroys them – but it won't send any additional forces into those spaces.

Of course, in our example this isn't a problem since there are no NVA Troops in any of the selected spaces! Before we continue, let's take a look at all the selected spaces to see which ones need reinforcements:

- Quang Tri-Thua Thien: 3 Underground Guerrillas, 4 US Troops + 1 Irregular and a number of ARVN units. This means that Quang Tri could, if necessary, send up to 2 US Troops elsewhere and still both Activate all the Guerrillas present and retain COIN Control.
- Quang Nam: 2 Underground Guerrillas, no US units; so in order to Activate both Guerrillas we'll need to move 2 US units here.
- Binh Dinh, Pleiku-Darlac and Khanh Hoa: 2 Underground Guerrillas, 2 US Troops + 1 Irregular + 1 Police. Each of these spaces has a US Troop that isn't needed for the Sweep, but is needed to retain COIN Control of the space and therefore can't move.
- Phu Bon-Phu Yen: 2 Underground Guerrillas, 3 US Troops. Here we have 1 spare US Troop that isn't needed for either the Sweep or for COIN Control.
- Binh Tuy-Binh Thuan: 2 Underground Guerrillas, 2 US Troops; but since Binh Tuy is a Jungle space we need 4 US units to Activate both of the Guerrillas.
- Tay Ninh: 4 Underground Guerrillas (3 VC + 1 NVA), 3 US Troops. This too is a Jungle space, so in order to Activate all 4 Guerrillas the US need to bring in 5 more units for the Sweep.
- Saigon: 1 Underground Guerrilla, 2 US Troops and a lot of ARVN units; so 1 US Troop is able to leave.
- Kien Giang: 1 Underground Guerrilla, no US units; here we need 1 US unit.

To summarize, Quang Nam, Binh Tuy, Tay Ninh and Kien Giang need reinforcements; all other selected spaces already have sufficient US units present and several of them are able to send off one or more US Troops without endangering either the Sweep Operation or COIN Control.

Now let's return to the flowchart bullet. In addition to the "with max 2 NVA Troops" caution, the preliminary instructions in bullet 2 also say that Non-player US may not change any Control in the origin – i.e., neither lose COIN Control nor move so many units away from a space that the NVA will gain Control there in case it was Uncontrolled – and that it must keep the last 3 COIN units in any Support space. This last bit means that the single US Troops in Hue, Da Nang, Kontum, Qui Nhon and Cam Ranh are forced to stay there, bolstering the local ARVN paramilitary units in their local anti-VC patrols. Finally, the preliminary instruction also has a tiebreak: "@ from Laos/Cambodia": whenever possible, the US will send Troops to a Sweep destination that needs reinforcements from Laos and/or Cambodia before sending them from anywhere in South Vietnam. While Nixon is willing to risk international bad will by sending US forces into the neighboring countries, his generals will nevertheless try to keep those cross-border forays as short as possible!

So what Troops will move, and where? Bullet ② has a pair of secondary bullets and a whole array of tiebreaks – in fact two arrays, one that only applies to secondary bullet ①, plus the one that we already used when we selected the Sweep spaces! The first secondary bullet (including its tiebreaks says): "With enough to allow Activation of Underground Guerrillas: ③ all in space ⑥ >1/2 in space". If it turns out to be impossible to Activate more than half the Underground Guerrillas in a space, the Non-player won't even try to reinforce it. Note that ">1/2 in space" and "all in space" become the same thing for spaces with just 1 or 2 Underground Guerrillas, since the nearest integer value that is "more than half of 1" is 1, and the nearest integer that is more than half of 2 is 2. In our example, the only space where ">1/2 in space" can apply is Tay Ninh, where there are 4 Underground Guerrillas so ">1/2 in space" would be 3 of them.

OK, so first we move US Troops – the only kind of units that a US Sweep Operation may move – to those selected Sweep spaces where the reinforcements would help Activating *all* Underground Guerrillas, leaving none able to commit Terror or hit the US with Ambushes. To help us prioritize, we have the other set of tiebreaks:

“Ⓐ Support Ⓑ Base(s) Ⓒ highest Pop”

Once again tiebreak Ⓐ doesn't help us, since all the selected Support spaces already have enough US units to Activate all Guerrillas, and Ⓑ doesn't help either since the only selected space without any Base is Phu Bon that, again, has enough US Troops already! That leaves us with tiebreak Ⓒ: highest Pop, which means that the first two spaces we'll try to reinforce are Pop 2 Kien Giang and Tay Ninh. Since there are no US Troops that could reach both of those spaces even via LoCs it doesn't matter which of them we resolve first, so we'll start with the easiest one: Kien Giang.

Kien Giang needs 1 US Troop, and the only adjacent space with US Troops is Can Tho where there are more than sufficient COIN units to satisfy the “last 3 COIN” requirement and still send a Troop off into the countryside. One US Troop moves from Can Tho into Kien Giang. (Here we can make another observation: even though Kien Giang was one of the last spaces to be selected for the Sweep since it had no US pieces in it, it is one of the first to receive reinforcements. This is perfectly normal and nothing to be worried about! In fact it is possible for the Non-player to select Sweep spaces with insufficient US units and then not move any reinforcements there at all, and even to select Sweep spaces where the US forces are badly outnumbered and then Air Lift all US forces away from those spaces before Activating any Guerrillas there....)

Then we look at Tay Ninh. In order to Activate all 4 Underground Guerrillas there, we need to move in 5 more US Troops. Unfortunately there are only 3 US Troops that are able to reach Tay Ninh using Sweep movement and that aren't already busy Sweeping Guerrillas in their current spaces: one in adjacent Saigon, plus one each from Pleiku and Khanh Hoa that can get to Tay Ninh via the forked Route 13/14 LoC. That's not enough to satisfy the current bullet, so we skip Tay Ninh for now.

Moving on to the Pop 1 spaces that need reinforcements, Binh Tuy-Binh Thuan and Quang Nam. Again it doesn't matter which one we resolve first – the only Troops that could reach both spaces are the ones in Pleiku-Darlac, but they can't leave without losing COIN Control there – so we check Binh Tuy first. Here we need 2 more units, but the only Troop able to get here is the spare one in Saigon, and that isn't enough. We'll wait with Binh Tuy too, then!

That leaves Quang Nam. This space needs 2 US Troops to Activate all Guerrillas, and the Provinces on either side – Quang Tri and Quang Tin - each has 2 unemployed US Troops to send. A random roll between them picks Quang Tri, so two of the US Troops there moves south to Quang Nam.

Now that we have reinforced all Sweep spaces where we can Activate all Underground Guerrillas, the tiebreaks in the secondary bullet sends us back to Tay Ninh to see if we can at least Activate more than half the Guerrillas there (i.e., 3). Unfortunately that still needs three more US Troops, and we still only have the one spare Troop in Saigon to send! The situation is even worse in Binh Tuy, since there the “>1/2 in space” is effectively the same as “all in space”. We skip over both those spaces again, and move on to the second



US heliborne sweep pressures the VC infrastructure.



secondary bullet: “To add COIN Control” (in the Sweep spaces that have already been selected, that is).

The only selected Sweep space that doesn’t already have COIN Control is Quang Nam, where we need another 2 COIN units. As we just saw there are 2 US Troops that are free to move just to the south, in Quang Tin, so they join their brothers-in-arms from Quang Tri in the Quang Nam mountains.

This finishes the Sweep movement bullet. The next bullet also concerns movement, but of another kind: “if JFK/Nixon, Air Lift now”. The US Policy is “Nixon”, so Air Lift is what we’ll do!

The first couple of bullets in the Air Lift box tell us what spaces the US will choose to Air Lift from:

“❶ Where no COIN Control, Support nor US Base, ...” – this bullet tells the Non-player to evacuate spaces where it has nothing to lose by leaving. However, in our example all spaces with US units have at least one of COIN Control, Support or a US Base, so it selects no Air Lift origin spaces.

“❷ Where US then ARVN Troops not needed for Control nor current Op in origin; if Support, leave 3 COIN units” – in other words, where there is an excess of COIN Troops that can be moved without hurting any of the US objectives. The bullet also tells us to Air Lift first from the space that can give up the largest number of Troops. Looking at the map, we find four such spaces: the City of Can Tho (2 US and 1 ARVN Troop are movable), Saigon and Phu Bon (both with 1 US and 1 ARVN Troop that are movable), and Quang Tri (2 movable ARVN Troops). Of these four Can Tho has the highest priority, while the other three are technically tied – except that ARVN Troops can’t Activate Guerrillas during a US Sweep, so if the purpose of the move is to Activate more Guerrillas then Quang Tri isn’t a candidate. (If on the other hand the purpose of the move is to add COIN Control, it would be since ARVN Troops are just as good as US Troops for taking COIN Control!) We won’t need all four origin spaces, but it is good to know which candidates we have.

Then we check where to move to. Air Lift bullet ❸ only applies to Assaults, but bullet ❹ says “If Sweep, per Sweep ❷” – i.e., the same set of instructions we just went through for the Sweep movement, but this time using Air Lift movement instead. Diving straight into the first secondary bullet and its tiebreaks, we look for spaces where adding Troops would allow the US to Activate all the Underground Guerrillas there. With only 4 Troops that can be Air Lifted we don’t have enough to Activate all 4 Guerrillas in Tay Ninh, but 2 Troops are sufficient in Binh Tuy so that is the first Air Lift destination selected. Since Can Tho had the most Troops able to move, its two US Troops are lifted to Binh Tuy and black pawns are placed in both Can Tho and Binh Tuy.

Continuing with the same Sweep movement secondary bullet, we return once again to Tay Ninh. We don’t have the 5 movable US Troops needed to Activate all 4 Guerrillas there; in fact we don’t even have the 3 units needed to Activate more than half of them – so Tay Ninh gets skipped again!

Next we come to the other secondary Sweep movement bullet, telling us to add COIN Control in selected Sweep spaces, but—since all the Sweep spaces have COIN Control now—that’s nowhere. Instead we continue with the Air Lift instructions: bullet ❺ says “To get US Troop and COIN Control where Police but no Active Support”. Since we have already used 2 of the 4 Air Lift spaces allowed, and the largest number of movable US Troops in any of our remaining origin spaces is 1, we need to look for a space with Police but no Active

Support where adding just 1 US Troop will establish COIN Control. This space does not need to be one of the selected Sweep spaces, and if it isn’t it won’t be selected as a Sweep space either even if it happens to have Underground Guerrillas in it. (A US player would have selected it in that situation, but including such an instruction into the Sweep box without coming into conflict with the caution about shaded Booby Traps would have made the instructions too long to fit on a single flowchart page, so the Non-player has to live with this inefficiency.)

Studying the map, we find three spaces that fit the bill, all in the Delta: Ba Xuyen, Kien Hoa and Kien Phong. Our Air Lift capacity only allows us to select one of them, and there are no tiebreaks to help us choose, so we make a random roll. For the sake of the example, let’s say that it selects Ba Xuyen. It can receive a US Troop from either Saigon or Phu Bon; another random roll selects Phu Bon. These last two Air Lift spaces are marked with black pawns, and one of the US Troops in Phu Bon moves to Ba Xuyen.

The final Air Lift bullet – “1 SF to 1 empty Laos/Cambodia space” – is ignored. Even if we had had more Air Lift spaces to use, none of the Laos/Cambodia spaces are empty!

With the Air Lift finished, we return to the Sweep Operation where bullet ❶ instructs us to “Activate Guerrillas in all selected spaces: @ VC”. The tiebreak only applies in Tay Ninh, where the 3 US Troops present Activate 1 VC Guerrilla; in all of the other Sweep spaces, the US forces Activate every Underground Guerrilla present.

The US Air Lift and Sweep are over, leaving the VC player to respond with a LimOp, the Event, or Pass

### Example 5: The ARVN Execute “ROKs”

For this example, again set up the 1968 scenario (no Period Capabilities). Set out Event #70 “ROKs” as the first played card and #130 “Coup! – Failed Attempt” showing as next. The solo player again is NVA/VC versus a Non-player US/ARVN.

It is Monsoon Season, and the Non-Player ARVN is 1st Eligible. The first thing on the Non-player ARVN flowchart is the “Pass, Event or Operation?” box; and since the Event will have an effect (and then some!) and there is no rifle symbol or special Event instruction halo affecting ARVN use of this Event, ARVN executes “ROKs” by whatever routines and priorities generally apply (8.1, 8.4.1).



Non-player ARVN executes the unshaded text of a Dual-use Event (5.2, 8.4.2). Per the text, either US or ARVN are to execute certain

free Operations. When there is a choice of who gets Event benefits such as free Operations, an executing Non-player Faction selects itself to receive them, if possible (8.4.4, 1st bullet). So Non-player ARVN, rather than the US, will be executing the free Operations and making any choices available with regard to the details of that execution.

Non-player ARVN first is to free Sweep “Phu Bon and adjacent spaces as if US and as if all ARVN cubes are US Troops.”

For any choices as part of free Operations granted to a Non-player by Event, use that Non-player Faction’s priorities (8.4.4, 2nd bullet). On this Event, Non-player ARVN are to free Sweep and then free Assault, so ARVN Sweep and Assault priorities will apply (8.7.4 & 8.7.5). While the Event text also says that US or ARVN Sweep and Assault “as if US”, the phrase refers to the effects of these Operations (such as how many enemy pieces get removed) whether by player or Non-player, not the choices available. One idea behind the Non-player priorities is to make choices most beneficial to that Faction, as if that player Faction were making the decisions. So we will use Non-player ARVN rather than US Sweep and Assault boxes, despite the special nature of this Event that enables ARVN units to fight with the effectiveness of US units.

Also, for selection of spaces when more than one free Operation is called for—in this case, Sweep then Assault—Non-players use their priorities for the 1st type of Operation, where it makes any difference (8.4.4, 2nd bullet). That way, we can proceed through the Event text step by step, as we refer to Non-player ARVN priorities first for Sweep, then for Assault only as further needed.

The top of the ARVN Sweep box says “not in Monsoon”. However, the “ROKs” Event text saying that “US or ARVN free Sweep” takes precedence over the Monsoon rule (5.1.1), so we ignore that.

The Sweep box then says Sweep in “up to 3 spaces”. But we won’t need to worry about that maximum here. Why not? Because the total of spaces to be Swept is not a choice to be made—which would kick in priorities (8.4.4, 2nd bullet). Rather, the spaces to be targeted are specified in Event text – “Phu Bon and adjacent spaces” – and that text takes precedence over the usual rules (5.1.1), including the rule about Non-player ARVN selecting “max 3” spaces to Sweep (8.7.5).

The preliminary instructions at the top of the ARVN Sweep box also tell us which Troops may move into other spaces during the Sweep: “Keep all COIN Control and last 3 COIN units in any spaces”. This instruction is not countermanded by the Event text, so we will need to keep it in mind in case any ARVN or US cubes need to move during the Sweep.

The 1st bullet in the Sweep box says “Conduct a Raid if possible.” However, the “ROKs” Event text says US or ARVN “free Sweep ... then free Assault” – nothing about any Special Activity. So neither Raid nor Transport is a possibility for ARVN here, and we thus ignore that part of the box.

So we reach the 2nd bullet of the ARVN Sweep box, which begins to tell us in what order Non-player ARVN will free Sweep the spaces specified in the Event: “Select spaces with ARVN units and Underground Guerrillas ...” (8.7.5, 1st bullet). Looking at the map, there are no NVA in the area, but there are Underground VC in the following spaces targeted by the Event text: Phu Bon, Binh Dinh, Pleiku, and Khanh Hoa; and all those spaces also have ARVN units in them, so they are immediately selected. You can mark those 4 Provinces with white pawns as reminders that Sweeps will occur there.

All 4 of those spaces also have enough US or ARVN cubes to Activate all Guerrillas there, because the Event allows that the ARVN will Sweep “as if US and as if all ARVN cubes are US Troops.” All those cubes will have effect for the Sweep as if it were a US Sweep with all those cubes as US Troops! The fact that Non-player ARVN is executing the Event and making Sweep decisions is irrelevant.

All 4 spaces also have COIN Control, and so does the City of Kontum (which is also adjacent to Phu Bon but wasn’t selected for the Sweep since it has no Underground Guerrillas). This means that the 3rd and 4th Sweep bullets are ignored: those bullets instruct ARVN first to move to the selected spaces to Activate as many Guerrillas as possible and then to move into additional spaces to add COIN Control (and also to select them too for the Sweep; unlike the Non-player US discussed in example 4 above, ARVN will sometimes add Sweep destinations of opportunity).

Bullet 5 is also ignored, since the Event doesn’t allow the use of a Transport Special Activity. All that remains of the free Sweep is to Activate all the VC Guerrillas in Phu Bon, Binh Dinh, Pleiku, and Khanh Hoa to Active. Next up, by Event text, is the free Assault, again using all US and ARVN cubes as if US Troops are Assaulting!

So we check the ARVN Assault box, but it does not really affect anything. The Event text forces Assaults in Phu Bon and all adjacent spaces that have US or ARVN cubes and any Active enemies to be removed. So the Non-player ARVN’s free Assault removes both VC Guerrillas from Phu Bon-Phu Yen and 1 VC Guerrilla from each of the 3 selected Highland Provinces.

ARVN’s action is over, and the Non-player US would now follow up with its (Monsoon-restricted) Operation and Special Activity.



Korean forces add to II Corps’ VC body count.

**Example 6:****The ARVN Execute “MACV”**

It is again a 1-player game with the player as the NVA and VC. Set up 1968 (no Period Capabilities), but alter US Policy from “LBJ” to “Nixon” (8.8.1), as in Example 4, so as to let us discuss a slightly trickier case. Set out #69 “MACV” as the 1st played card and #97 “Brinks Hotel” as the next card.

The player on behalf of the VC again elects not to execute the “Tet Offensive” at this time, leaving Non-Player ARVN 1st Eligible. ARVN have no special instruction for “MACV” (8.4.1), and the Event will have an effect, so ARVN executes the Event (8.1).

The Event text begins with “either US then ARVN or NVA then VC each executes any 1 free Special Activity.” Non-players always take Event benefits for themselves when they can (8.4.4, 1st bullet), and, unless otherwise specified, use their own priorities to determine which Operations or Special Activities to execute and how to do so (8.4.4, 2nd bullet). Therefore, Non-player ARVN selects “US then ARVN” rather than “NVA then VC” to execute 1 free Special Activity each. Non-player US is first.

Whenever Non-players are to execute free Operations or Events because of Event text, they follow their own priorities, except as might be otherwise specified (8.4.4, 2nd bullet). That is, they use their Ops flowcharts as if executing normal Ops & Special Activity. In this case, Non-player US is to execute “any 1 free Special Activity” without any Operation. So we will consult the Non-player US flowchart, including the decision diamonds, and will simply skip over the Operations boxes to reach the appropriate Special Activity box (8.4.4, 2nd bullet, NOTE).

Looking at the situation on the map, by the same reasoning as for the Non-player US Op & Special Activity in Example 4 above, we see that the answer to the 1st and 2nd diamonds about Assault is “No”, and that the answer to the 3rd diamond about Sweep is “Yes”. Continuing to follow the arrows, under “Nixon”, the accompanying Special Activity would be Air Lift.

So the Non-player US flowchart priorities have brought us to the Special Activity of Air Lift. But is any possible or helpful to further meet a Sweep priority? Here’s the tricky part, and why we chose this example: in the special case of the “MACV” event text, the US will not be Sweeping, only executing a Special Activity. The 3rd Air Lift bullet instructs the US to move “If Sweep, per Sweep ☉”, but that Sweep bullet tells them to “Move to selected spaces” – that is, to spaces selected by the Sweep Operation... and without any Sweep Operation, there are no selected Sweep spaces to move into!

Fortunately this is not the only instruction bullets in the Air Lift box! The 4th bullet only applies to Assaults, but the 5th bullet is independent of any Operations: “To get US Troop and COIN Control where Police but no Active Support.”, so this is what the US will do instead. There are plenty of spaces with Police that has no Active Support, and that also lack US Troops (An Loc) and/or COIN Control (Kien Phong, Kien Hoa and Ba Xuyen all lack both); so under this bullet Non-player US will try to bring as many of these spaces as possible to COIN Control with US Troops. In all four cases, this can be done by moving in a single US Troop.

Let’s back up a couple of steps though, because in our haste to find out what Special Activity the US would choose we skipped over the first two Air Lift bullets – the ones that choose the Air Lift origin spaces! The 1st bullet doesn’t pick any spaces at all, since every space with US units has at least one of Support, COIN Control or a US Base. The 2nd bullet, “Where US then ARVN Troops not needed for Control nor Current Op in origin, ...”, finds several: Quang Tri, Phu Bon, Binh Tuy and Can Tho all have 4 Troops that may move (albeit with different mixes of US and ARVN Troops in most of them). Rolling on the Random Spaces table gives us “4, 2”: Da Nang, which leads to Phu Bon which has 3 US and 1 ARVN Troop that may move.

Returning to our candidate destination spaces, Air Lift may only move forces to 3 of them. There are no tiebreaks to help the US choose between them – the Air Lift tiebreaks only indicate what units to move first, not where! – so we make another Random Spaces roll to select the space that gets left out: “5, 4” leading to An Loc. That means that the Air Lift moves 1 US Troop to each of Kien Phong, Kien Hoa and Ba Xuyen, all from Phu Bon. The movable ARVN Troop in Phu Bon is left where it is, since it isn’t needed to add Control anywhere (and obviously won’t help getting US Troops to the destination!).

As in example 4 the final Air Lift bullet (“1 SF to 1 empty Laos/Cambodia space”) is ignored, both because all 4 Air Lift spaces have already been used and because there are no empty spaces in either Laos or Cambodia. The US Air Lift is therefore finished.

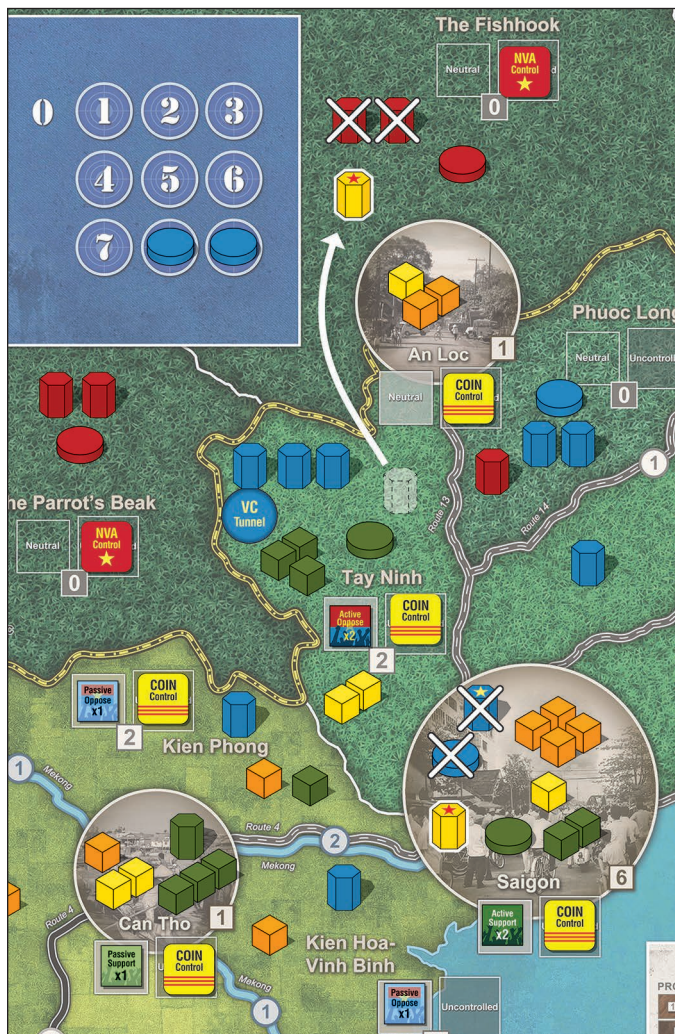
With the US free Special Activity complete, Non-player ARVN by card text now also executes 1 free Special Activity. We use the Non-player ARVN flowchart this time to determine which Special Activity to execute (8.4.4, 2nd bullet, NOTE). Tracking down the decision diamonds, we find that none of the conditions about Available ARVN pieces, NVA/VC on LoCs, or Assault is met, leading us to Sweep with Raid (8.7.2-.5). So the ARVN will Raid as their 1 free Special Activity.

The 1st instructions of the Raid box limits how many and which Rangers might move on a Raid. A quick check shows that each of the 3 Rangers on the map could move if priorities so dictate, because no COIN Control would be lost (8.7.4, RAID 1st bullet).

The 2nd bullet in the Raid box tells us that Non-player ARVN Raid first in order to remove enemy Bases, if possible (8.7.4, RAID 3rd bullet). That is possible against the VC in Saigon (only), so Saigon will be the 1st of 2 Raid spaces, employing the Ranger there.

The 3rd bullet in the Raid box tells us that the next priority is to change the most Control—add COIN Control, remove NVA Control, or both, from as much Population as possible (8.7.4, RAID 3rd bullet). The ARVN are trying to boost their own victory score, after all!

The 2 still uncommitted Rangers on the map, in Kien Giang and Tay Ninh, are in spaces that are already at COIN Control. However, either could move into an adjacent space in Cambodia and remove enemies there to remove NVA Control. Sihanoukville, The Parrot’s Beak and The Fishhook are all within reach. In the Parrot’s Beak, the Rangers could even add COIN Control if both of them moved there, though since all Cambodian spaces have Population 0 they have equal priority anyway. An equal-chance roll selects The Fishhook, so the Ranger from Tay Ninh moves there and then Activates to remove the 2 NVA Guerrillas.



Under MACV's influence, ARVN Rangers raid Communist targets in Cambodia and the capital region.

Finally, Non-player ARVN per the Event text stays Eligible, as would an ARVN player. The action then would continue with a Non-player US Op & Special Activity....

The above half-dozen examples are not comprehensive—there are many, many possibilities for what Non-players might do. But we hope that they have provided a helpful start on how to implement the Non-players' routines, including some of the more challenging circumstances to implement. Good luck taking the Non-players on!

## EVENT TEXT, TIPS, AND BACKGROUND

This section reproduces the full text of each Event card, some tips on how to implement them, and historical background and commentary. NOTE: Boxed Faction initiative letters denote that these Events do not get played by that Non-player, Underlined that they have special instructions for that Non-player Faction's execution (8.4.1). Cards marked "2nd Ed" have text that is updated for this Second Edition of *Fire in the Lake*.

### 1. Gulf of Tonkin UNAV 1964

*Incident and resolution:* US free Air Strikes, then moves 6 US pieces from out-of-play to any Cities.

*Congressional regrets:* Aid -1 per Casualty. All Casualties out of play.

**Tips.** The free Air Strike otherwise follows the usual rule (4.2.3), so it can be in any spaces with US/ARVN pieces, it shifts Support/Opposition, and it can Degrade the Trail. "Pieces" include Bases (1.4).

**Background.** On August 2, 1964 the USS Maddox was engaged by elements of North Vietnam's 135th Torpedo squadron. Two days later a second incident was reported, but based on declassified reports there was likely no actual engagement. These two reported encounters between North Vietnam and the USN were the basis for the Gulf of Tonkin resolution that gave the Johnson administration legal justification for military operations in Vietnam.

### 2. Kissinger UNAV 1968

*Operation Menu:* Remove a die roll of Insurgent pieces total from Cambodia and Laos.

*"Secret bombing" revealed:* NVA places 2 pieces in Cambodia. US moves any 2 US Troops to out of play. Aid -6.

**Tip.** "Pieces" include unTunneled Bases (1.4, 5.1.1). "Any Troops" here can include Casualties, Available, or from the map.

**Background.** Henry Kissinger was National Security Advisor throughout the Nixon administration. He was and remains a brilliant strategist who helped create the conditions that allowed the US to withdraw from Vietnam. The Nixon administration's expansion of the war into Cambodia and Laos to cut the Trail included controversial incursions against and bombing of NVA redoubts in Cambodia. They also led to the disastrous Lam Son 719 offensive (Event 74).

### 3. Peace Talks UNAV 1968

*Haiphong mined:* NVA Resources -9. Linebacker II allowed when Support+Available >25 (mark).

*Bombing halt:* NVA Resources +9. If Trail 0-2, Improve to 3.

**Tip.** For the unshaded effect, place the "Peace Talks" marker on the "Linebacker II" US Pivotal Event card as a reminder of its loosened precondition.

**Background.** The Nixon administration used a series of carrots (bombing halts) and sticks (mining/bombing) to bring Hanoi to the negotiating table. It would appear that the mining of Haiphong – a component of the Linebacker II bombing campaign (Pivotal Event 121) – accelerated the peace talks.

### 4. Top Gun UNAV 1968 2nd Ed

US CAPABILITY

*Air combat maneuver:* Cancel shaded MiGs. Air Strikes Degrade

Trail 2 boxes.

*Mediocre tactics:* Air Strike Degrades Trail after applying 2 hits only on die roll of 4-6.

**Tips.** The unshaded “Top Gun” Capability can either block shaded “MiGs” from being executed or remove it once it has been executed. The shaded means that US each Air Strike first announces whether attempting Degrade of Trail, then rolls a die to determine effect.

**Background.** Analysis of air combat over Vietnam proved that the US had lost its tactical edge to the enemy’s MiGs (Event 33). This was due to a misguided overreliance on radar air-to-air missile technology. The US Navy’s Top Gun program began the process of developing and retraining US airmen in dogfighting tactics that turned the situation around.

## 5. Wild Weasels UNVA 1965 2nd Ed

*Air defense suppression:* Remove shaded SA-2s or, if no shaded SA-2s, Degrade Trail 2 boxes and NVA Resources –9.

*Complex strike packages:* Until Coup, Air Strike either Degrades Trail or may remove just 1 piece (not 1-6).

MOMENTUM

**Tips.** Unshaded “Wild Weasels” can remove shaded “SA-2s” only at the moment that “Wild Weasels” is executed. Shaded effect means that US has to choose with each Air Strike Special Activity whether to remove enemy pieces or Degrade the Trail, not both.

**Background.** Wild Weasels were the nickname given to any aircraft assigned to the electronic countermeasures (ECM) mission. ECM missions targeted enemy radars and surface-to-air missile installations.

## 6. Aces UNVA 1965 2nd Ed

*Robin Olds ambushes MiGs:* Free Air Strike any 1 space outside the South with 6 hits and Degrade Trail 2 boxes.

*MiG ace “Colonel Tomb”:* 2 Available US Troops to Casualties. Improve Trail by 2 boxes.

**Tips.** “Any 1 space outside the South” means any 1 North Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia Province, even if no US or ARVN piece there. Degrade of the Trail is 2 boxes total, instead of the usual.

**Background.** This card pays homage to the many airmen who fought in the skies over Vietnam. Robin Olds is an iconic American fighter ace who fought in WWII and Vietnam. Colonel Tombs on the other hand is probably not a real person, but a propaganda icon. He is representative of North Vietnam’s better-trained pilots who in many cases were foreign “volunteers”.

## 7. ADSID UNVA 1965

*Air-delivered seismic intrusion detector:* Through Coup, –6 NVA Resources at any Trail# change.

MOMENTUM

*Dubious technology:* Improve Trail by 1 box and to a minimum of 2. ARVN Resources –9.

**Tip.** The unshaded text drops NVA Resources upon both Improving and Degrading the Trail via any means (player action, Event, or Coup Round Sequence).

**Background.** ADSIDs represent the beginning of the electronic sensor revolution that was in its infancy during the conflict. The idea was to create an electronic grid that would queue US airpower to attack convoys as they moved along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. While this strategy had some successes this technology suffered from low

reliability and spoofing by the NVA.

## 8. Arc Light UNVA 1965

US CAPABILITY

*Guided B-52 tactical bombing:* 1 space each Air Strike may be a Province without COIN pieces.

*Moonscape:* Air Strike spaces removing >1 piece shift 2 levels toward Active Opposition.

**Tip.** “Provinces” include spaces in North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia (1.3.5). A Base is a “piece” (1.4).

**Background.** Arc Light was the term for the use of US strategic bombers (B-52s) in an interdiction and ground support role. Arc Lights were much feared by the NVA and VC, as the strike would often occur without any warning due to the high altitude of the bomb release. Even today when you look at topographic maps of Vietnam the distinct pattern of these strikes can sometimes still be discerned.

## 9. Psychedelic Cookie UNVA 1968

*9th Division:* US moves up to 3 US Troops from out of play to Available or South Vietnam, or from the map to Available.

*Worn out formation:* US takes 3 of its Troops from the map out of play.

**Tip.** Adjust “Support+Available” score marker when US Troops or Bases move in or out of Available (7.2).

**Background.** The 9th Infantry Division’s Vietnam-era nickname was the “Psychedelic Cookie” for its colorful blue-and-red circular patch – a far cry from its WWII name of the “Old Reliables”. It operated in the Mekong Delta in close coordination with Task Force 116 (Event 25) and the ARVN 7th Division.

## 10. Rolling Thunder UNVA 1965

*Sustained bombing:* Degrade Trail 2 boxes. –9 NVA Resources. NVA Ineligible through next card.

*Assets to restricted strategic air campaign:* –5 ARVN Resources. No Air Strike until Coup.

MOMENTUM

**Tip.** The drop in ARVN Resources is instant and once; the ban on Air Strikes lasts until the next Coup Round (5.4).

**Background.** This was the code name for the US bombing campaign against North Vietnam’s infrastructure and supply routes. The purpose of the campaign was to convince the North to negotiate. Its premise was that the bombing missions would escalate with periodic pauses based on the perception of Hanoi’s responses. It began in March of 1965 and ran until November of 1968, having failed not only to force negotiations but to reverse the growing Northern infiltration of the South.

## 11. Abrams UNVA 1968

US CAPABILITY

*Counter-logistics:* 1 US Assault space may remove 1 enemy non-Tunnel Base first not last.

*No more big-unit war:* US may select max 2 spaces per Assault.

**Tip.** The unshaded text changes US Assault only by removing the “Bases last” restriction for 1 Base in 1 space – the total number of pieces to be removed and other restrictions (3.2.4) remain the same.

**Background.** Creighton Abrams was the third commander of MACV. He was known for his innovative tactics and charted a very different course for the US Army in Vietnam. Abrams was the

commander over the last portion of the period covered in the game. he was instrumental in implementing Nixon's Vietnamization program (Pivotal Event 123) and pursued a counter-logistical strategy credited with choking off indigenously-based VC strength by the time of US military withdrawal.

## 12. Capt Buck Adams UANV 1968

*Strategic reconnaissance:* Outside the South, flip all Insurgents Active and remove 1 NVA Base.

*SR-71 pilot must outrun SA-2s:* Place 1 NVA Base at NVA Control outside the South and flip any 3 NVA Guerrillas Underground.

**Tip.** "At NVA Control outside the South" means place 1 available NVA Base into any North Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia Province that already has NVA Control and where there are not already 2 Bases (1.3.5, 1.4.2, 5.1.1).

**Background.** The SR-71 Blackbird was a revolutionary aircraft design on the bleeding edge of technology. Blackbirds supplied strategic reconnaissance of North Vietnam during the last third of the war. While the Blackbird is renowned for its ability to fly above and outrun any enemy defenses, on occasion SR-71s were engaged by the North's high-altitude SA-2s (Event 34). On one such occasion, USAF Captain Buck Adams (now General, retired) had finished his first pass over the country and on his second pass was engaged by two SA-2 missiles that he successfully outran.

## 13. Cobras UANV 1968

US CAPABILITY

*Gunships:* 2 US/ARVN Sweep spaces each remove 1 Active unTunneled enemy (Troops first, Bases last).

*Close air support losses:* Each US Assault space, 1 US Troop to Casualties on a die roll of 1-3.

**Tip.** An added ARVN Assault in a US Assault space would have no added effect on US Casualties.

**Background.** The AH-1 Cobra was based on close air support requirements for a helicopter gunship to replace the modified UH-1 Huey's serving in that role. It featured a tandem pilot-gunner arrangement to give it a narrow silhouette and was armed with a cannon, rockets, and later in the war TOW anti-tank missiles.

## 14. M-48 Patton UANV 1965 2nd Ed

US CAPABILITY

*Armored Punch:* 2 non-Lowland US Assault spaces each remove 2 extra enemy pieces.

*RPGs:* After US/ARVN Patrol, NVA removes up to 2 cubes that moved (US to Casualties).

**Tip.** The unshaded text changes US Assault only by adding to the number of pieces to be removed from some spaces – restrictions on which pieces may be removed (3.2.4) remain the same. "US to Casualties" means that any US pieces removed go to the Casualties box, while ARVN pieces removed go to ARVN Available Forces as usual (1.4.1).

**Background.** In the early 1960s, the M-48 Patton was the US Army's Main Battle Tank, followed in the early '70s by the M-60. Armor operations in Vietnam were always terrain challenged, but in the right tactical environment were very effective.

## 15. Medevac UANV 1964

*Dustoff:* This Commitment, all Troop Casualties Available (mark).

MOMENTUM

*Hueys diverted:* Executing Faction remains Eligible. Until Coup, no Air Lift (mark).

MOMENTUM

**Tip.** Place the "Medevac" marker on the corresponding side onto the set-aside Momentum card as a reminder of which text was executed. For unshaded, upon the coming Commitment Phase, immediately move all US Troops that are in the Casualties box to Available; no Troops go out of play; Base Casualties still do. The Casualties will already have reduced Aid in the preceding Resources Phase (6.2.5, 6.5). If unshaded Event 73 "Great Society" occurs while unshaded "Medevac" is in effect, "Medevac" affects the immediate Commitment Phase and then stays in effect to affect the coming Coup Round's Commitment Phase as well. Note also that unshaded "Medevac" played during the final campaign would have no effect unless unshaded "Great Society" subsequently occurs, because there otherwise will be no further Commitment Phase (6.4.5, 6.5).

**Background.** With its origins during the Burma campaign in WWII, the US Medevac capability enabled the timely evacuation of casualties from combat directly to modern medical treatment.

## 16. Blowtorch Komer UAVN 1968

*Pacification czar:* Aid +10. This Support phase, Pacify costs 1 Resource per step or Terror.

MOMENTUM

*Brusque manager:* Aid -10. Shift a space with Troops and Police 1 level toward Active Opposition.

**Tip.** Addition of Aid is instant; the reduced cost to Pacify applies in the next Coup Round only (5.4).

**Background.** Robert Komer had a direct management style that endeared him to LBJ but led to his nickname of Blowtorch Bob. He was the head of the CORDS component of MACV (Event 19) and its controversial Phoenix program (Event 27).

## 17. Claymores UAVN 1964

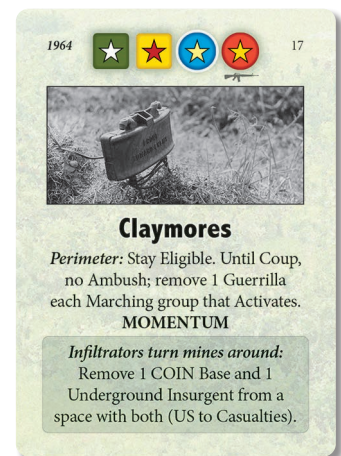
*Perimeter:* Stay Eligible. Until Coup, no Ambush; remove 1 Guerrilla each Marching group that Activates.

MOMENTUM

*Infiltrators turn mines around:* Remove 1 COIN Base and 1 Underground Insurgent from a space with both (US to Casualties).

**Tip.** Eligibility for the executing Faction applies instantly and once; the effects on Ambush and March last until the next Coup Round (5.4).

**Background.** The U.S. M18 Claymore directional mine was an iconic and effective anti-personnel device used during most of the Vietnam war. The Claymore throws steel balls out to about 100 meters intended to disable or kill enemy infantry. The movie Platoon has a night engagement scene that shows the employment and use of this weapon.



## 18. Combined Action Platoons UAVN 1965

### US CAPABILITY

*Hamlet defense:* US Training places or relocates an added Police into any 1 space with US Troops.

*Passive posture:* US may select max 2 spaces per Sweep.

**Tip.** For the unshaded Capability, just 1 Police places or relocates per Training Operation, regardless of how many spaces the US Trains in. It does not cost any added Resources for just the 1 Police.

**Background.** The CAP program was a Marine Corps initiative that married up a Marine rifle squad with a local defense unit to protect hamlets from VC infiltration and coercion. They were viewed as one of the best counterinsurgency responses developed by the US during the war.

## 19. CORDS UAVN 1968

### US CAPABILITY

*Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support:* US Training may Pacify in 2 selected spaces.

*Civilian programs subordinated to military:* US Training may Pacify only to Passive Support.

**Tip.** Pacification costs per Terror marker or level remain the same.

**Background.** Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support was a civilian-run component under MACV, formed in 1967 and run by Bob Komer (Event 16) then Bill Colby. It consolidated an array of programs to meet rural economic and security needs of the peasants, squeeze the VC infrastructure, dry up VC recruiting, and thereby pacify the countryside. The controversial Phoenix program (Event 27) was among its many elements.

## 20. Laser Guided Bombs UAVN 1968 2nd Ed

### US CAPABILITY

*Dawn of precision strike:* Air Strike does not shift Support/Opposition in spaces where only 1 piece removed.

*Camouflage:* Air Strike removes no more than 2 pieces.

**Tip.** A Base is a “piece” (1.4).

**Background.** The skies over Vietnam saw the dawn of precision guided warfare. The destruction of the famous and hard-to-hit Thanh Hoa Bridge (Event 35) was the first prominently noted success for this new ordnance.

## 21. Americal UVNA 1968

*23rd Division:* US moves up to 2 US Troops each from the map and out of play to any 1 space or Available.

*US divisions “clean out” NLF:* In 1 or 2 Provinces with US Troops, remove 1 VC piece to set to Active Opposition.

**Tips.** For the shaded Event, the VC “piece” could be a Guerrilla or an unTunneled Base (1.4, 5.1.1). If there are Provinces that have US Troops, VC, and could be set (changed) to Active Opposition, such Provinces would have to be chosen first. Note that COIN Factions might advantageously use the shaded text (5.2)!

**Background.** The Americal Division was created in 1942 in New Caledonia in order to amalgamate several regiments shed by reserve divisions in a reorganization. In Vietnam, the Americal (23rd Infantry Division) was reactivated by joining a brigade of the 25th and 101st Divisions plus the independent 196th Brigade. Americal in 1969 participated with several other divisions in General Abrams’

counter-logistical sweeps (Event 11) as part of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (Event 96) that up-ended NLF control of several regions but also defoliated and destroyed crops, forcing the peasants there to leave the land.

## 22. Da Nang UVNA 1965

*US Marines arrive:* US places up to 6 Troops in Da Nang, up to 3 from out of play.

*VC fire closes air base:* Remove all Support within 1 space of Da Nang. No Air Strike until Coup.

### MOMENTUM

**Tip.** Removal of Support is instant and once; the ban on Air Strikes lasts until the next Coup Round (5.4).

**Background.** Da Nang was used as a US support base starting in 1957 and eventually grew to rival Tan San Nhut airbase in importance. Its position within 85 miles of the DMZ made it an ideal location from which to launch strikes into I Corps and into the North. The US Marine Corps landed in Da Nang in 1965 initially to guard the airbase, but it later became one of the US major combat operations hubs.

## 23. Operation Attleboro UVNA 1965

*Stab at Iron Triangle:* US free Air Lifts into, Sweeps in, then Assaults a space with a Tunnel—removing Tunneled Bases as if no Tunnel.

*Heavy casualties, few results:* Select a Tunnel space—remove a die roll of US Troops within 1 space of it to Casualties.

**Tip.** This is one of just a few Events that can force removal of Tunneled Bases (5.1.1). The Sweep could occur even during Monsoon. Free US Assault can add an ARVN Assault at cost 0 (3.2.4).

**Background.** Operation Attleboro was a Search and Destroy operation that ran from September through November of 1966. The first phase saw the 196th Brigade with elements of the 1st Infantry Division engage the 9th VC Division in a major battle in the Iron Triangle. Eventually the operation overran a VC base camp with the capture and destruction of a large cache of supplies, but the province remained under VC control.

## 24. Operation Starlite UVNA 1965

*VC caught off guard:* Remove all VC from a coastal Province with or adjacent to US Troops.

*Slipped away:* In up to 3 Provinces, flip all VC Guerrillas Underground. Stay Eligible.

**Tip.** “Coastal” Provinces are those touching or across a Highway from ocean (1.3.7). For the shaded text, the Faction executing the Event stays Eligible.

**Background.** Operation Starlite (August 18, 1965) was the first USMC combat operation of the Vietnam War. The Marines engaged the 1st VC Regiment in the ARVN I Corps area in a tactical victory, but an operational defeat, as the VC unit successfully disengaged.

## 25. TF-116 Riverines UVNA 1965

*Delta boats:* Remove all NVA/VC from Mekong LoCs. US or ARVN free Sweep into/in then free Assault each Lowland touching Mekong.

*VC river fortifications:* Place 2 VC Guerrillas per Mekong LoC space, then Sabotage each that has more VC than COIN.

**Tips.** Whichever Faction executed the unshaded text would choose either US or ARVN to Sweep and Assault, and that Sweeping/Assaulting Faction would choose how (5.1). The Sweep could occur

even during Monsoon. Free US Assault can add an ARVN Assault at cost 0 (3.2.4). “Mekong” means any of the 3 river LoC spaces touching Can Tho. “COIN” means either US or ARVN pieces.

**Background.** The US Navy operated a large group of riverine craft in the Mekong Delta under the command of Task Force 116. The concept was to join an Infantry Brigade (2nd Brigade of the 9th Division) with “brown water” naval craft to interdict and engage enemy forces in the waterways of the Delta. One of its more famous operations was Game Warden in December of 1965.

## 26. LRRP UVAN 1964 2nd Ed

*Long Range Recon Patrol:* US places 3 Irregulars outside the South then free Air Strikes.

*Patrols ambushed:* 3 Irregulars map to Casualties. Shift each space they were in 1 level toward Active Opposition.

**Tips.** “Irregulars” are US Special Forces pieces, not ARVN Rangers. “Outside the South” means any Laos or Cambodia Provinces. The free Air Strike otherwise follows the usual rule (4.2.3) so can be in any spaces with US/ARVN pieces (not only in those that just received Irregulars or outside the South), shifts Support/Opposition, and can Degrade the Trail.

**Background.** Veteran or specially trained forces often augmented with Vietnamese irregulars usually carried out Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols into enemy territory. The Studies and Observation Group or SOG was the ground element of the US air war against the Ho Chi Minh Trail as illustrated by Project Tiger that spotted for and marked enemy trail activity for prosecution by US air assets.

## 27. Phoenix Program UVAN 1968

*Cadres assassinated:* Remove any 3 VC pieces total from any COIN Control spaces.

*Misdirected:* Add a Terror marker to any 2 spaces outside Saigon with COIN Control and VC. Set them to Active Opposition.

**Tip.** “Pieces” include unTunneled Bases (1.4, 5.1.1).

**Background.** The Phoenix Program used targeted assassination of VC leadership and support in the rural countryside. The Communists credited Phoenix with substantial destruction of their infrastructure. One of the weaknesses of the program from the counterinsurgent perspective, however, was that local vendettas often resulted in innocent civilians being identified as insurgents. CORDS Director Colby estimated that it accounted for over 20,000 casualties, some of ambiguous guilt.

## 28. Search and Destroy UVAN 1965

US CAPABILITY

*Mobile counter-guerrilla ops:* Each US Assault space may remove 1 Underground Guerrilla.

*Villagers in the crossfire:* Each US and ARVN Assault Province shifts by 1 level toward Active Opposition.

**Tips.** The unshaded effect changes US Assault only by allowing inclusion of 1 Underground Guerrilla per space among the pieces to be removed (3.2.4) – it therefore adds to the total removed only if that number would otherwise be 0. The shaded effect applies to Provinces only, not Cities, and to US-only, ARVN-only, and US plus ARVN Assaults.

**Background.** This term characterized a class of counterinsurgency operations. The concept was to have a series of small forces find and fix enemy guerrilla forces then use reinforcements, artillery, and air

strikes to eliminate the enemy formation. The impact of this doctrine was mixed as it often created more guerrillas than it eliminated.

## 29. Tribesmen UVAN 1964

*Minority fighters:* Remove any 4 Insurgent pieces total from spaces with Irregulars.

*Tribal secession:* Replace all Irregulars with VC Guerrillas. 1 Neutral Highland to Active Opposition. -3 Patronage.

**Tips.** “Pieces” include unTunneled Bases (1.4, 5.1.1). “Insurgent” means NVA or VC. “Irregulars” are US Special Forces pieces, not ARVN Rangers. Replace Irregulars that are on the map (only), with Guerrillas 1 for 1 in place (Irregulars to Available). “1 Highland” means 1 Highland space.

**Background.** Vietnam is a polyglot of minorities to include several such as the Montagnards who still operated an ancient hunter-gatherer economy. These tribesmen were often at odds with their urban countrymen but fought as irregulars for both sides.

## 30. USS New Jersey UVAN 1968 2nd Ed

*Fire support:* US or ARVN free Air Strikes any 1-3 coastal spaces, removing up to 2 pieces per space (no die roll and no effect on Trail).

*Frightening free fire:* Shift 2 coastal Provinces with US Troops each 2 levels toward Active Opposition.

**Tips.** “Coastal” means Provinces, Cities, and LoCs touching ocean, including North Vietnam, as well as Provinces across a Highway from ocean (1.3.7). For the unshaded text, “any 1-3 spaces” means that the spaces do not need to have US or ARVN pieces in them. The executing Faction chooses US or ARVN to strike, and that Faction decides the details; it must strike at least 1 space. The Air Strikes have all other usual restrictions and effects in the spaces, including removing Active pieces only and Bases last, and shifting Support/Opposition (4.2.3).

**Background.** Motivated by high aircraft losses, Secretary McNamara authorized the re-commissioning of BB-62, the USS New Jersey, to augment the air war along the extensive Vietnam coastline. Destroyers first bombarded VC targets in central South Vietnam in May 1965, and New Jersey later joined them as part of Task Group 70.8, climaxing with some 22 ships on the gun line during the 1968 Tet Offensive (Pivotal Event 124).

## 31. AAA NUAV 1964

NVA CAPABILITY

*Assets to protection from close air attack:* Rally that Improves Trail may select 1 space only.

*Point air defense of logistic hubs:* Air Strike does not Degrade Trail below 2.

**Tip.** For the unshaded Capability, the NVA may still Rally in more than 1 space, but, if they do so, then that Rally Operation may not also Improve the Trail.

**Background.** The Gulf of Tonkin incident (Event 1) spurred Chinese and Soviet aid to North Vietnam with various forms of military hardware. One of the key AAA (anti-aircraft artillery) assets was the 57mm AZP S-60 with a range of 1,500 meters. While highly inaccurate, when fired in volume against fighter aircraft making low-level bombing runs or against low-flying helicopters, its heavy caliber round was very lethal.



**32. Long Range Guns NUA 1968**

## NVA CAPABILITY

*US M-107 175mm counterbattery:* NVA Bombard max 1 space.

*Soviet M-46 130mm artillery:* NVA Bombard max 3 spaces.

**Tip.** Other restrictions on Bombard apply normally (4.4.2).

**Background.** As the war progressed, the NVA regulars were supplied with an array of state-of-the-art artillery by their allies (Event 49). The Soviet M-46 was originally designed as a rifled naval gun and could out-range any US artillery then in theater. In response, the US deployed the M-175 to regain artillery range parity.

**33. MiGs NUA 1968**

## NVA CAPABILITY

*Expensive interceptors:* NVA Resources –6 each Reset.

*High US loss ratio:* Unless unshaded Top Gun, whenever Air Strike Degrades Trail, US removes 1 Available Troop to Casualties.

**Tip.** The unshaded “Top Gun” Capability can either block shaded “MiGs” from being executed or remove it once it has been executed.

**Background.** China and the USSR supplied North Vietnam with limited numbers of jet aircraft such as the MiG-15, MiG-17, MiG-19, and MiG-21, sufficiently advanced to challenge US jets in dogfights over the North. It is currently believed that “foreign volunteers” flew some of these MiGs.

**34. SA-2s NUA 1965**

## NVA CAPABILITY

*Fiddly Soviet gear:* When Air Strike Degrades Trail, US removes 1 NVA piece outside the South.

*SAMs guard infrastructure:* NVA Rally Improves Trail 2 boxes not 1 (unshaded Wild Weasels remove).

**Tips.** “Piece” may include an unTunneled Base (1.4, 5.1.1). “Outside the South” includes North Vietnam (1.3.5). Unshaded “Wild Weasels” (Event card #5) can remove shaded “SA-2s” only at the moment that “Wild Weasels” is executed.

**Background.** The Soviet S-75 Dvina (NATO codename SA-2 Guideline) is a high-altitude surface-to-air missile that burst onto the world stage when it successfully shot down a U-2 reconnaissance plane piloted by Gary Powers. During the Vietnam War, the SA-2 was deployed mostly to defend the key Hanoi-Haiphong region.

**35. Thanh Hoa NUA 1968 2nd Ed**

*Bridge busters:* Degrade the Trail by 3 boxes.

*Stubborn targets:* Improve Trail by 1 box. Then add three times Trail value to NVA Resources.

**Tip.** As an example of Degrading the Trail by 3 boxes, Trail at “4” would go to “1”.

**Background.** The Thanh Hoa Bridge spanned the Song Ma river and was the northern gateway to the Ho Chi Minh trail. As a consequence, it was always a high priority US target. It received 873 air sorties and had extensive air defenses that accounted for the loss of 104 aircraft shot down in its vicinity. It was finally destroyed beyond repair in 1972 with early-generation laser-guided bombs (Event 20) and taken off the target list.

**36. Hamburger Hill NUVA 1968**

*A Shau Valley campaign:* Move 4 US Troops from any spaces to a Highland. Remove 1 NVA or VC Base there, even if Tunneled.

*Prepared defenses:* Place a Tunnel on an NVA or VC Highland Base. 3 US Troops there to Casualties.

**Tips.** “A Highland” means 1 Highland space. “Highland Base” means a Base in a Highland space. This is one of just a few Events that can force removal of Tunneled Bases (5.1.1).

**Background.** Hill 937 (Ap Bia Mountain) on the Laotian border was taken in a bloody assault by the 101st Infantry division in May 1969. The high casualties incurred for a piece of terrain that was soon abandoned and thus appeared of little value caused a public backlash.

**37. Khe Sanh NUVA 1968**

*Northern casualties:* Select a US Base with US Troops. Remove 10 NVA Troops within 1 space of it.

*US Marines pinned:* Up to 3 US Troops in 1 space with NVA to Casualties. US Ineligible through next card.

**Tip.** The 10 total NVA Troops removed may come from more than 1 adjacent space, including the same space as the US pieces.

**Background.** The US base at Khe Sanh near the DMZ sat astride Route 9, the northern most egress route of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. From January 21st to early March 1968, the base was repeatedly assaulted by NVA regulars, including one of the first uses of armor by the North (see Event 45). LBJ fixated upon the siege, seeing it as a potential Dien Bien Phu. More recent analysis views the attack as a diversion in support of the Tet Offensive assaults on South Vietnam’s urban centers.

**38. McNamara Line NUVA 1965**

*Fortification mentality:* Redeploy all COIN forces outside Vietnam to COIN-Controlled Cities. ARVN Resources –12. No Infiltrate or Trail Improvement by Rally until Coup.

## MOMENTUM

**Tips.** “Outside Vietnam” means Laos and Cambodia Provinces. The executing Faction gets to choose which redeploying pieces go to which COIN-Controlled Cities (5.1). Redeploy and Resource drop occur instantly and once; the effects on Infiltrate and Rally last until the next Coup Round (5.4).

**Background.** This was a term associated with the US strategy to deploy an electronic sensor fence supported by air power to isolate the South from Northern infiltration. While it had some periodic successes, overall the historical view is that it failed to accomplish its major goal of interdicting the Trail.

**39. Oriskany NUVA 1965**

*“Alpha” strikes on North Vietnam:* Remove any 4 pieces from North Vietnam or, once none, Laos. Degrade Trail 2 boxes.

*Explosion on CV-34:* 1 Available US Troop out of play. Through next Coup, no Degrade of Trail.

## MOMENTUM

**Tips.** “Pieces” include unTunneled Bases as well as Troops and Guerrillas (1.4, 5.1.1). The US Troop goes out of play immediately; the ban on Degrade of Trail lasts through the end of the next Coup Round (so blocks effects of COIN Control in Laos/Cambodia and would leave “4” at “4”, 6.2.2 & 6.6).

**Background.** The US Navy continually operated Carrier Task Forces from Yankee Station whose mission was to provide air support to

MACV and Rolling Thunder. Although the North did not have a blue water navy to contest these operations, they were not without incident. On October 26, 1966, a fire erupted on the USS Oriskany that took the lives of 44 seamen and pilots.

#### 40. PoWs **NUVA** 1968

*Release negotiations keep US at war:* Free Air Strike. 2 US Troops from Casualties to Available.

*Air campaign creates hostages:* 3 US Troops from Available to Casualties.

**Tip.** Whichever Faction executes the unshaded Event decides the specifics of the Air Strike Special Activity (spaces targeted, whether the Trail is Degraded, etc.).

**Background.** US pilots shot down over North Vietnam comprised the majority of the US prisoners of war held by the North, although all services had personnel held there. Pawns in the negotiations, it took the signing of the Paris Peace Accords to release them from captivity. To this day, not all missing US servicemen have been accounted for.

#### 41. Bombing Pause **NAUV** 1968

*Tet holiday gesture:* Set any 2 spaces to Passive Support. Patronage +2. No Air Strike until Coup.

MOMENTUM

**Tip.** The Support and Patronage take effect at once; the ban on Air Strikes lasts until the next Coup Round.

**Background.** Over the course of Rolling Thunder and Linebacker I and II, the US employed a carrot and stick strategy. While the intent of bombing pauses was to give the North the opportunity to alter their aggression, they only served to allow the North to rebuild.

#### 42. Chou En Lai **NAUV** 1968

*Chinese opening to US:* NVA Resources –10. NVA must remove a die roll in Troops.

*Chinese boost aid to North:* NVA add +10 Resources. VC add Trail value in Resources.

**Tip.** For the unshaded Event, the NVA get to choose which of their Troops are removed from the map.

**Background.** Chou En Lai (or Zhou Enlai) was China's able statesmen and geopolitical strategist who oversaw most of China's participation in the Vietnam War. China supplied significant air defense forces and supplies to Hanoi over the course of the war. It was the specter of Chinese overt intervention in the war that prevented the US from seriously considering an invasion of North Vietnam. He also helped orchestrate Richard Nixon's 1972 visit to China.

#### 43. Economic Aid **NAUV** 1964

*Free World aids Saigon:* 2 ARVN or 2 US Bases out-of-play to Available. Then ARVN Resources +6 or Aid +12.

*Moscow aids Hanoi:* Improve the Trail 1 box. Then either Improve it 1 more box or add +10 NVA Resources.

**Tip.** Choose either 2 ARVN or 2 US Bases, not 1 ARVN Base and 1 US Base.

**Background.** The Vietnam War was a Civil War that occurred within the context of the Cold War. The Vietnam antagonists were fueled and supported by economic assistance from the various international actors in the war, primarily the US, China, and the Soviet Union.

#### 44. Ia Drang **NAUV** 1965

*Silver Bayonet:* US free Air Lifts into 1 space with any NVA piece, then free Sweeps and Assaults there.

*Dong Xuan campaign—hot LZs:* Select a Province with NVA Troops—remove a die roll of US Troops within 1 space of it to Casualties.

**Tips.** For the unshaded Event, the US decides the details of the free actions but must Air Lift, Sweep, and Assault with something. The Sweep could occur even during Monsoon. The free US Assault can add an ARVN Assault at cost 0 (3.2.4). For shaded, the US Troops can be any either in the same space as or adjacent to the Province with NVA Troops.

**Background.** In mid-November 1965, a 7th Cavalry operation became the first major test of the new US helicopter doctrine. The battle saw the 1st Cavalry Division engage several formations of NVA regulars in the Central Highlands. This battle was immortalized in the book and the film "We Were Soldiers Once... and Young".

#### 45. PT-76 **NAUV** 1968

NVA CAPABILITY

*Light armor target:* Each NVA Attack space, first remove 1 NVA Troop cube.

*Communist armored assault:* NVA Attack in 1 space removes 1 enemy per Troop.

**Tips.** The Capability will have no effect on NVA Attacks with Guerrillas where no NVA Troops. The unshaded version will remove an NVA Troop even when NVA Guerrillas Attack or Ambush in a space with an NVA Troop.

**Background.** The Soviet PT-76 is an amphibious-capable light tank supplied to North Vietnam during the war. One of its first combat uses was against Khe Sanh in 1968 (Event 45).

#### 46. 559th Transport Grp **NAVU** 1965

*Tough terrain:* Degrade the Trail by 2 boxes. Until Coup, Infiltrate is max 1 space.

MOMENTUM

*The way through:* NVA free Infiltrate. Then NVA add 3 times and VC 2 times Trail value in Resources.

**Tip.** The Trail Degrades at once; the limit on Infiltrate lasts until the next Coup Round

**Background.** The 559th Transport Group was a combined transportation and security organization that reported directly to the Central Committee in Hanoi. The Group's main function was to operate, expand, and secure the infiltration routes that became known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. It divided its area of operations (Laos and NE Cambodia) into subordinate units called binh trams. Each of these consisted of way stations responsible for the care and feeding of troops, road expansion and repair, plus local security. In 1967, the 559th Group commanded 11 binh trams employing 7,000 porters. In the mid-1960s, a sister organization, the 470th Transport Group, took over responsibility for Cambodia.

**47. Chu Luc NAVU 1965**

*Southerners resist invasion:* Add ARVN Troops to double the ARVN pieces in a space with NVA. All ARVN free Assault NVA.

*NVA professional soldiers:* Place up to 10 NVA Troops anywhere within 1 space of North Vietnam.

**Tips.** For the unshaded Event, in the selected space, count the number of ARVN pieces (including Bases) and place that number of ARVN Troops there from Available. Then ARVN Troops and Police Assault to remove NVA (only) in each map space with both ARVN and Active NVA. For the shaded Event, place the Troops anywhere among North Vietnam, Central Laos, Quang Tri, and the LoC from Khe Sanh to Hue (Highway 9)—even where Support or COIN Control.

**Background.** From the time of the Viet Minh fighting the French, Chu Luc was the Vietnamese term for the full-time, professional soldiers of the National Liberation Front (NVA and VC).

**48. Nam Dong NAVU 1964**

*CIDG camp holds out:* Remove up to 3 Guerrillas from a Province with a COIN Base. Set the space to Active Support.

*Camp overrun:* Remove a COIN Base from a Province with 0-2 COIN cubes (US to Casualties) and set it to Active Opposition.

**Tip.** “COIN” means US or ARVN. “US to Casualties” means that any US pieces removed go to the Casualties box, while ARVN piece removed go to ARVN Available Forces as usual (1.4.1).

**Background.** On July 5, 1964 the Nam Dong CIDG camp was attacked by NVA and VC forces. The base is 32 miles west of Da Nang. The 5 hour battle resulted in the camp holding and Captain R. C. Donlon receiving the first Medal of Honor awarded during the war.

**49. Russian Arms NAVU 1968**

*Soviet escalation matched:* Place any 6 ARVN pieces anywhere in South Vietnam.

*Heavy divisions, big guns:* NVA in any 3 spaces places enough Troops to double their number. It then free Bombards.

**Tips.** “Pieces” include Bases. For the unshaded Event, the executing Faction would decide the pieces and locations. For the shaded, NVA decides; in each selected space, place the same number of NVA Troops as are already there, then execute a Bombard Special Activity. The Bombard need not involve any of the Troops just placed.

**Background.** Depending on the political environment, Moscow supplied Hanoi with substantial shipments of armaments via China or Haiphong. The US mining of Haiphong in 1972 (Event 3) short-circuited this support.

**50. Uncle Ho NAVU 1964**

*Known communist:* 4 out-of-play US Troops to South Vietnam, or ARVN Resources +9. ARVN executes any 2 free Limited Operations.

*Revolutionary unifier:* VC then NVA each execute any 3 free Limited Operations.

**Tips.** The Faction executing the unshaded Event decides where the US Troops go. The Limited Operations can be the same or different, in any including the same spaces, and may be selected as they occur, so that results of previous choices may be taken into account.

**Background.** Born May 19, 1890 as Nguyen Sinh Con, he died in 1969 as Ho Chi Minh, North Vietnam’s President. He led a lifetime of resistance to foreign rule of Vietnam first as Nguyen That Tran and later by the name he immortalized. He was ever the soul of

Vietnamese resistance, and it was his vision that eventually prevailed in the conflict.

**51. 301st Supply Bn NVUA 1964**

*Combat units diverted to logistics:* Remove 6 non-Base Insurgent pieces from outside South Vietnam.

*Trail construction unit:* Improve Trail by 2 boxes and add a die roll of NVA Resources.

**Tip.** “Non-Base Insurgent pieces” include NVA Troops and NVA and VC Guerrillas.

**Background.** The 301st Supply battalion was the first unit commissioned to infiltrate supplies into South Vietnam. The organization eventually grew to become the 559th Transportation Group.

**52. RAND NVUA 1968**

*Whiz-kid corporation:* Flip 1 shaded US Capability to unshaded.

*Systems analysis in ignorance of local conditions:* Flip 1 unshaded US Capability to shaded.

**Tip.** A player may execute either version (5.2), so ARVN may flip a US unshaded Capability to shaded.

**Background.** The RAND Corporation is a federally funded research and development organization that had helped develop and articulate US nuclear doctrine. During the Vietnam War, RAND applied its analytic methods to understanding and recommending new strategies for winning the war. Daniel Ellsberg, a former RAND employee, leaked the “Pentagon Papers” to the press in 1971.

**53. Sappers NVUA 1965**

*Ineffective tactics:* Remove 2 NVA Troops each from up to 3 spaces in South Vietnam. Remain Eligible.

*Facilities damaged:* Remove up to 1 US and 2 ARVN Bases from any Provinces (US to Casualties).

**Tip.** Removal of pieces may change Control (1.7). The Bases may not be removed from Cities. “US to Casualties” means that any US Base removed goes to the Casualties box, while ARVN Bases removed go to ARVN Available Forces as usual (1.4.1).

**Background.** Sappers were highly trained and motivated assault troops used to infiltrate and penetrate Counterinsurgent positions.

**54. Son Tay NVUA 1968**

*Daring rescue:* 2 Troop Casualties to Available. NVA Ineligible through next card. US Eligible.

*No prisoners there:* Any 2 Casualties out of play. US Ineligible through next card

**Tip.** For the unshaded text, place the US Eligibility Cylinder from wherever it is into the “Eligible Factions” box. If US executed the Event and ARVN 2nd Eligible, ARVN may execute Ops & Special Activity as usual.

**Background.** The famous “Hanoi Hilton” was one of several locations in North Vietnam where US PoWs were held captive. On the night of November 21, 1970, US Special Forces launched a helicopter assault on the PoW camp at Son Tay, just west of Hanoi. The raid successfully took the camp, but unfortunately the approximately 61 prisoners there had been recently moved to another location.

## 55. Trucks **NVA** 1964

*Bottlenecks:* Degrade Trail 2 boxes. NVA selects and removes 4 of its pieces each from Laos and Cambodia.

*Convoys:* Add twice Trail value to each NVA and VC Resources. NVA moves its unTunneled Bases anywhere within Laos/Cambodia.

**Tips.** For the unshaded Event, NVA may have to remove as many as 8 pieces total—4 in Laos and 4 in Cambodia; “pieces” include Bases. For shaded, NVA may pick up all its unTunneled Bases from Laos and Cambodia spaces, then replace them into any Laos and Cambodia spaces desired, within stacking (1.4.2).

**Background.** While much of the effort on the Ho Chi Minh trail was conducted with human muscle and animal power, it was the introduction of trucks that dramatically increased the trails throughput by reducing military casualties due to fatigue and disease.

## 56. Vo Nguyen Giap **NVA** 1965

*Premature conventional buildup:* In each of any 3 spaces, replace any 2 Guerrillas with 1 NVA Troop.

*Military strategist:* NVA free Marches into up to 3 spaces then executes any 1 free Op or Special Activity within each, if desired.

**Tip.** The 3 spaces must be 3 different spaces, not the same space more than once. The NVA would March even during Monsoon.

**Background.** Vo Nguyen Giap was the military genius and architect of the Viet Minh victory at Dien Bien Phu. He went on to lead the Peoples Army of Vietnam (NVA and VC) to victory. He was responsible for organizing and leading most of the major Communist offensives conducted during the war. Giap was born in 1911 and died in 2013 at the age of 102.

## 57. International Unrest **NVA** 1968

*Protests ignored:* Any 2 US Casualties to Available.

*US accused of neocolonialist war:* 2 Available US Troops out of play. NVA add a die roll of Resources.

**Tip.** “US Casualties” may include Troops, Bases, and Irregulars.

**Background.** The Vietnam conflict took place within the context of the Cold War. As the US commitment in Vietnam dragged on and its purpose became more ambiguous, protests against the conflict grew, not only in the United States but internationally.

## 58. Pathet Lao **NVA** 1968

*Drive on Vientiane:* NVA removes 6 of its pieces total from North Vietnam and Laos.

*Trail security:* If no COIN cubes in Laos, Improve Trail 2 boxes. If there are, US and ARVN Redeploy them to Vietnam.

**Tips.** “Pieces” can include Bases. “COIN” means US or ARVN. ARVN Redeploys ARVN Troops to Cities without NVA Control, any US or ARVN Bases in South Vietnam, or Saigon, and Police to LoCs or COIN Control in South Vietnam (6.4.2). US Redeploys US Troops to anywhere in South Vietnam (including LoCs, if desired).

**Background.** The Pathet Lao were a communist movement that ultimately prevailed during the Laotian Civil War—making Laos one of the dominos that seemed to validate the Domino Theory. The existence of the Pathet Lao provided the NVA some military and political cover for occupation of parts of Laos necessary for the maintenance and defense of the Ho Chi Minh Trail from North to South Vietnam.

## 59. Plei Mei **NVA** 1965

*CIDG interdict NVA:* Remove any 3 NVA pieces from a space with or adjacent to a COIN Base.

*Tay Nguyen offensive:* NVA free March from any spaces outside South Vietnam, then free Attack or Ambush any 1 space.

**Tips.** “COIN” means US or ARVN. For the unshaded text, “a space” means the pieces must be removed from 1 single space. “Pieces” can include Bases. For shaded, the NVA can March repeatedly from Laos/Cambodia spaces—at cost 0—If the Trail is at 1 or more and would March even during Monsoon. Any Ambushes must occur in where there is at least one NVA Guerrilla to Activate (4.4.3), but need not be in March destinations nor involve Guerrillas that Marched and could occur even if all NVA Guerrillas there were already Active.

**Background.** The Plei Mei Special Forces base in the Central Highlands was the objective of an NVA offensive in July 1965. This was the precursor to the fighting that led to the 1st Cavalry Silver Bayonet offensive in November 1965 (Event 44, “Ia Drang”).

## 60. War Photographer **NVA** 1968

*Pulitzer photo inspires:* 3 out-of-play US pieces to Available.

*Photos galvanize home front:* NVA place 6 Troops outside South Vietnam, add +6 Resources, and, if executing, stay Eligible.

**Tip.** For the unshaded Event, Troops and Bases in US Available both affect the US Support + Available score (7.2). If NVA is the Faction executing the shaded Event, it stays Eligible.

**Background.** Combat photojournalists have been romanticized for their pursuit of truth in the crucible of war. Both sides lost numerous such photojournalists during combat in Vietnam. For an amazing look at the experience and product of North Vietnamese war photographers, see National Geographic’s 2001 documentary, “Vietnam’s Unseen War”.

## 61. Armored Cavalry **ARVN** 1968

ARVN CAPABILITY

*Shock force:* ARVN in 1 Transport destination after Ops may free Assault.

*Sedentary sinecures:* Transport Rangers only.

**Tips.** The unshaded “after Ops” means that the ARVN Assault occurs once all Transport and accompanying Operations are completed. Shaded effect means that no ARVN Troops—only Rangers—can move by Transport Special Activity the rest of the game.

**Background.** The US supplied the ARVN with an array of light armored vehicles, giving them an enhanced offensive capability when supported by US advisors and air power, especially when under aggressive ARVN command.

## 62. Cambodian Civil War **ARVN** 1968

*Lon Nol deposes Sihanouk:* US free Air Lifts into and US or ARVN free Sweeps within Cambodia. Remove 2 NVA/VC Bases from Cambodia.

*NVA invades Cambodia:* NVA places a total of 12 NVA Troops and Guerrillas in Cambodia.

**Tips.** For the unshaded effect, US would decide the details of the Air Lift and whichever Faction was Sweeping would decide the Sweep’s details, including whether to move among Cambodia spaces. The Sweep could occur even during Monsoon. Tunneled Bases could not be removed (1.4.4, 5.1.1).

**Background.** A pro-US military coup against Cambodian Prince Sihanouk, who had been tolerating NVA supply activities in the country (Event 75), in March 1970 installed general and politician Lon Nol as President. The NVA countered with an offensive against Cambodian forces, at times drawing in US and ARVN forces from South Vietnam. Fueled by the Vietnam War and NVA supplies, the Cambodian Communist Khmer Rouge eventually overthrew the Phnom Penh government on April 17, 1975.

### 63. Fact Finding **AUNV** 1964

*US sends study teams:* 2 US pieces from out-of-play to South Vietnam, or transfer a die roll from Patronage to ARVN Resources. Aid +6.

*Duped:* Remove Support from a COIN-Controlled City outside Saigon. Patronage +4 or VC Resources +4.

**Tip.** “Remove Support” means set either Active or Passive Support to Neutral (1.6.2). Note that either unshaded or shaded versions of the Event may be useful to the ARVN Faction.

**Background.** Over the course of the Vietnam War, the US government sent a series of senior military and government officials to give the White House and Congress first-hand accounts on the progress of the conflict.

### 64. Honolulu Conference **AUNV** 1965

*Uneasy allies:* Aid +10 or -10. Patronage +3 or -5. If US or ARVN executing, that Faction Pacifies as if Support Phase. If Insurgent executing, that Faction remains Eligible.

**Tip.** Either the US or the ARVN only—whichever is executing the Event—Pacifies, not one after the other as during the Support Phase (6.3.1).

**Background.** Over the course of the Vietnam War, there were a series of conferences held between senior US government and Republic of Vietnam and ARVN leadership regarding military and political strategy plus the resources (US aid) to support the decisions. Honolulu, Hawaii served as a convenient geographic half-way meeting point. Meanwhile, across town, Volko attended kindergarten.

### 65. International Forces **AUNV** 1968

*Free World allies:* Place 4 out-of-play US pieces onto the map.

*Withdrawal:* US must remove a die roll in pieces from the map to out of play.

**Tip.** “Pieces” can include Bases. For the shaded text, the US decides which US pieces to remove.

**Background.** The Vietnam conflict became a cockpit of the Cold War, with East and West blocs supplying forces and supplies. US “Free World Allies” serving in Vietnam included Australian (Event 98), New Zealand, Philippine, South Korean (Event 70), Thai, and other forces.

### 66. Ambassador Taylor **AUNV** 1964

*Interventionist:* Aid and ARVN Resources each +9. Up to 2 US pieces from out-of-play to South Vietnam or, if desired, Patronage -3.

*Saigon seen as US puppet:* Remove Support from 3 spaces outside Saigon. Patronage -3.

**Tips.** The unshaded “if desired” means that the executing Faction may decline both the US pieces and the drop in Patronage. “Pieces” includes Bases. The shaded “remove Support” means remove any Active or Passive Support marker from the space, leaving it Neutral (1.6.2).

**Background.** General Maxwell Taylor was a decorated veteran who commanded the US 101st Airborne division during WWII. He was General Ridgeway’s Chief of Staff during the Korean War and President Kennedy appointed him the fifth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1962. After his second retirement from active military service in 1964, Taylor became the US Ambassador to South Vietnam through 1965.

### 67. Amphib Landing **AUNV** 1965

*Sea power:* US or ARVN relocates any of its Troops among coastal spaces, then free Sweeps and Assaults in 1 coastal space.

*Enemy vanished:* VC relocate up to 3 pieces from any coastal space. US and ARVN Ineligible through next card.

**Tips.** “Coastal” spaces are those touching or across a Highway from ocean (1.3.7). The Sweep could occur even during Monsoon. The named Faction decides where to relocate its pieces (VC to any map spaces). “Pieces” includes Bases.

**Background.** Vietnam’s long coastline enabled numerous US Marine Corps and ARVN amphibious operations to support combat operations.

### 68. Green Berets **AUNV** 1964

*Elite trainers:* Place 3 Irregulars or 3 Rangers in a Province without NVA Control. Set it to Active Support.

*Reluctant trainees:* Remove any 3 Irregulars to Available and set 1 of their Provinces to Active Opposition.

**Tip.** A Province with 0 Population cannot be set to Support or Opposition (1.6).

**Background.** The Green Berets, as romanticized by the John Wayne film of the same title, were the US ground element that operated at the center of US unconventional warfare operations. Deployed as A and B teams in a series of Special Forces bases, the Green Berets organized and led local defense operations in the Vietnamese countryside.

### 69. MACV **AUNV** 1965

*Military Assistance Command, Vietnam spurs coordination:* Either US then ARVN or NVA then VC each executes any 1 free Special Activity. Faction executing Event stays Eligible.

**Tips.** Each Faction involved decides the details of its own Special Activity. “1 free Special Activity” means within the usual maximum number of spaces for that type of Special Activity.

**Background.** The Military Assistance Command, Vietnam was established in February 1962. It was the senior US command in theater commanded by in succession General Harkins (‘62), Westmoreland (‘64), Abrams (‘68), and Weyand (‘72). It was located in Saigon and coordinated most US efforts during the conflict.

### 70. ROKs **AUNV** 1965

*Tough Koreans:* US or ARVN free Sweep into/in then free Assault Phu Bon and adjacent spaces as if US and as if all ARVN cubes are US Troops.

*UN troops abuse locals:* Shift Qui Nhon, Phu Bon, and Khanh Hoa each 1 level toward Active Opposition.

**Tips.** For the unshaded text, the executing Faction picks US or ARVN and that faction decides the details of its Sweep and Assault. The Sweep could occur even during Monsoon. “Phu Bon and adjacent spaces” include Phu Bon, Qui Nhon, Binh Dinh, Kontum, Pleiku, Khanh Hoa, and—for Assault—the 3 LoCs touching Phu

Bon. “As if US and as if all ARVN cubes are US Troops” means that whichever selected Faction—US or ARVN—would move and fight with all US Troops, ARVN Troops, and Police as if all those cubes were US Troops, including double enemy losses for any US Base in a space, the effects of the “Abrams” Capability if in effect, and so on. Non-player ARVN will still use Non-player ARVN priorities (8.4.4).

**Background.** The Republic of Korea supported the US with the deployment of several divisions that operated in the vicinity of Qui Nhon. They earned a reputation as aggressive fighters, but also were accused of massacres.

### 71. An Loc ANUV 1968

*ARVN stand firm:* In a space in the South with ARVN, remove all NVA Troops and place 3 ARVN Troops.

*Conventional thrust:* NVA free Marches Troops into a City and free Attacks there twice.

**Tips.** “The South” means any South Vietnam spaces, including all LoCs. The NVA March could occur even during Monsoon and costs 0 but otherwise follows all March rules, including repeated moves through Laos/Cambodia if the Trail is at greater than 0 and including possibly Activating moving Guerrillas (3.3.3). The Attacks also follow the usual rule, including either using NVA Troops or Activating Attacking Guerrillas.

**Background.** During the 1972 “Nguyen Hue” offensive, also known as the “Easter Offensive” (Pivotal Event 122), the city of An Loc suffered a 66-day siege, in which the ARVN stopped the NVA’s advance on Saigon.

### 72. Body Count ANUV 1965

*Crossover point:* Until Coup, Assault and Patrol add +3 Aid per Guerrilla removed and cost 0.

#### MOMENTUM

*“If it’s dead, it’s VC”:* Place 1 VC Guerrilla in each Active Opposition space, 2 NVA Troops in each Laos/Cambodia space.

**Tip.** “Cost 0” means ARVN will pay 0 Resources for these Operations, and US pays 0 even if an ARVN Assault is added as part of US Assault (3.2.4).

**Background.** One of the ill-advised combat metrics adopted by the US Army to show military progress was enemy soldiers killed in action, known as “body count”. Under the old operations research adage that you are what you measure, this metric drove many combat behaviors that were at odds with winning a hearts and minds campaign, including—some suspected—erring on the side of declaring any bodies found to be enemy.

### 73. Great Society ANUV 1965

*LBJ advances social agenda:* Conduct a Commitment Phase.

*War wrecks economy:* US moves 3 pieces from Available to out of play.

**Tips.** For the unshaded text, the US as usual decides the details of the Commitment Phase. If unshaded “Great Society” occurs while unshaded Event 15 “Medevac” is in effect, “Medevac” affects the immediate Commitment Phase and then stays in effect to affect the coming Coup Round’s Commitment Phase as well. For shaded “Great Society”, the US decides which pieces; “pieces” can include Bases.

**Background.** LBJ’s Great Society was his umbrella title for his domestic agenda. It was a bold initiative to reduce poverty and raise the US standard of living. Unfortunately, the Vietnam War’s

call on resources and political attention derailed its most significant portions, and it ultimately was viewed as a failure.

### 74. Lam Son 719 ANUV 1968

*Sudden incursion:* Place up to 6 ARVN Troops in a Laos space. ARVN executes a free LimOp there. Degrade Trail 2 boxes.

*Southern escalation:* NVA Resources +6 and +1 more for each ARVN piece in Laos.

**Tip.** ARVN decides the details of the LimOp.

**Background.** In February to March 1971, ARVN forces attacked into Laos to raid the Ho Chi Minh Trail’s infrastructure. The incursion was envisioned as a way to bolster ARVN morale and give proof that Vietnamization (Pivotal Event 123) was working. After the initial advance slowed, NVA security forces on the Trail vigorously counterattacked and routed the ARVN forces.

### 75. Sihanouk ANUV 1964

*Pursuit operations:* US or ARVN free Sweep into or in any Cambodia spaces, then free Assaults in one.

*Sea supply and sanctuary:* VC free Rally in any Cambodia spaces then free March from any Rally spaces. Then NVA do the same.

**Tips.** Whomever the executing Faction chose to Sweep would decide the details of the Sweep and Assault. Free US Assault can add an ARVN Assault at cost 0 (3.2.4). The Sweep or March could occur even during Monsoon. The NVA March could include repeated moves from Cambodia spaces if each such space just hosted NVA Rally and if the Trail is at greater than 0 (3.3.3).

**Background.** The Sihanouk trail was the portion of the Ho Chi Minh trail that operated inside of Cambodia and supplied operations in the Mekong Delta region of South Vietnam. The Sihanouk trail received supplies from the north via Laos and the coast. Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia sought a balanced policy between East and West blocs that led him to tolerate NVA presence on Cambodian territory and North Vietnam’s use of Sihanoukville port and a “Sihanouk Trail” from there into South Vietnam.

### 76. Annam ANUV 1965

*North-South rivalry lingers:* NVA and VC –1 Resource each per space with both. Patronage +2.

*Saigon regime seen as colonial retreat:* Remove Support from Hue, Da Nang, and an adjacent Province.

**Tips.** “Space with both” means a space with both NVA and VC pieces. “Remove Support” means set either Active or Passive Support to Neutral (1.6.2).

**Background.** Vietnam is composed of several distinct ethnic groups. Annam in Central Vietnam was a French Protectorate distinct from Cochin China to the south and Tonkin to the north. Annam’s regional capital of Hue played a prominent role during the war and was a bastion of the Buddhist opposition against Catholic rule from Saigon.

### 77. Détente ANUV 1968

*Communist Bloc eases off of war:* Cut NVA and VC Resources each to half their total (round down). 5 Available NVA Troops out of play.

*Nixon disappointed:* NVA add +9 Resources or free Infiltrate. Then VC free Rally in up to 6 spaces.

**Tips.** This unshaded event is the only way that pieces other than US or ARVN—NVA—will occupy the Out of Play box (1.4.1). For the shaded effect, the named Faction in each case decides its details.

**Background.** Under President Nixon, part of US strategy in Vietnam and the Cold War in general was to effect a rapprochement with China to further isolate the Soviet Union. An ancillary objective was to weaken Chinese support for Hanoi (Events 42, 43, 49, and others). Nixon achieved the rapprochement just as Mark Herman became eligible for the draft. But Nixon expressed frustration that China did not yet turn its back on North Vietnam.

### 78. General Lansdale **ANVU** 1965

*Unconventional counterinsurgent:* Set a space outside Saigon with US or ARVN to Active Support. Add a Terror marker there. Patronage +1.

*Bureaucratic infighter:* Patronage +3. No US Assault until Coup. MOMENTUM

**Tips.** A Province with 0 Population cannot be set to Support (1.6). The Terror marker would be added even if one is already in the space.

**Background.** General Edward Lansdale retired from the US Air Force in 1963 and worked out of the US Embassy in Saigon from 1965 to 1968. He served as a counterinsurgency expert who advocated for unconventional tactics that often put him at odds with the US military.

### 79. Henry Cabot Lodge **ANVU** 1964

*Ambassador proposes US protectorate:* Aid +20.

*Interneccine enabler:* Remove up to 3 ARVN pieces. Patronage +2 for each. ARVN Ineligible through next card.

**Tip.** “Pieces” can include Bases.

**Background.** Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge was the US Ambassador to Vietnam and both preceded and succeeded Maxwell Taylor in that position (1963-1964, 1965-1967). He advocated for the removal of Ngo Dinh Diem that led to a disastrous series of coups and government instability that ultimately led to Northern victory.

### 80. Light at the End of the Tunnel **ANVU** 1968

*Wind down seen:* Remove 1-4 US pieces from map to Available. For each piece, Patronage +2, shift a space 1 level toward Active Opposition, and place 4 NVA Troops outside the South. Stay Eligible.

**Tips.** The Faction executing the Event decides the details. “Pieces” can include Bases. A Province with 0 Population cannot shift (1.6). “Outside the South” means any North Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia Provinces. The Faction executing the Event stays Eligible for the next card.

**Background.** In late 1967, LBJ made a speech at the National Press Club in which he talked about the war, “where the end comes into view.” The Tet Offensive the following January (Pivotal Event 124) soon dashed the public’s raised expectations. The administration’s fueling of such expectations appear to have been a critical error, as some view the Tet Offensive to have been a US/ARVN defensive victory but a strategic loss due to the collapse of American home-front morale.

### 81. CIDG **AVUN** 1965

*Civilian Irregular Defense Groups:* Replace a die roll of VC Guerrillas in South Vietnam with Rangers, Irregulars, or Police.

*Desertions and defections:* Replace all Rangers, Police, and Irregulars in a Highland space with 2 VC Guerrillas total.

**Tip.** For the shaded text, the Irregulars (like the Rangers and Police) go to their Available box, not to Casualties (1.4.1).

**Background.** The Civilian Irregular Defense Groups were a CIA program that had some successes at improving defenses along the border by training and equipping locals. The US military took over the program when the 5th Special Forces Group entered the theater in strength and changed the program’s focus to more conventional warfare tactics. The remnants of these groups were turned into ARVN Rangers in 1970.

### 82. Domino Theory **AVUN** 1965

*US justifies its war:* Up to 3 US or 6 ARVN out-of-play pieces to Available. Or ARVN Resources and Aid each +9.

*US public doubts war’s purpose:* 3 Available US Troops out of play. Aid –9.

**Tip.** “Pieces” can include Bases.

**Background.** President Eisenhower used the image of dominos to describe the danger of letting countries fall under Communist rule. The theory opined that once one country in a region fell it would create a cascading situation of aggression akin to one domino striking another. This concept helped drive many senior-level decisions in the 1960s—including a far more massive commitment to South Vietnam than Eisenhower would likely have intended. The fall of Laos and Cambodia to Communist forces in the wake of that commitment left the theory’s historical veracity far from clear. Did Hanoi cause the dominos to fall, or did the US presence itself enable the theory?

### 83. Election **AVUN** 1965

*Clean vote:* 3 Passive Support spaces to Active Support. Aid +10.

*Ballot stuffing defeats opposition candidate Druong Dinh Dzu:* Shift 2 Cities each 1 level toward Active Opposition. Aid –15.

**Tip.** The spaces affected may include Saigon.

**Background.** In 1967, Nguyen Van Thieu (card 128) won a Presidential election whose outcome was marred by numerous examples of ballot manipulation. He won the election against an array of opposition candidates, with Druong Dinh Dzu obtaining 17% of the votes to come in second.

### 84. To Quoc **AVUN** 1968

*Fear of Northern reprisal:* Place 1 ARVN Troop and 1 Police in each South Vietnam space with NVA.

*Thoroughly penetrated:* ARVN remove 1 in 3 cubes (round down) each space. Place a VC Guerrilla in 3 spaces where ARVN removed.

**Tip.** For the shaded version, ARVN selects and must remove 1 in 3 of their own cubes (ARVN Troops or Police), not US or NVA. The executing Faction chooses which candidate spaces to place the VC Guerrillas.

**Background.** To Quoc (Fatherland) formed part of the mottos of both the Army and National Police of the Republic of Vietnam. The ARVN by the 1972 Easter Offensive (Pivotal Event 122) demonstrated steadfastness in defense of Southern territory, such as at An Loc (Event 71). National Police forces were critical to the general security in the country. But the VC were successful in penetrating police organization at all levels of command—a key source of the insurgents’ intelligence advantage over the US.

**85. USAID AVUN 1965**

*Increased help to civilians:* Shift 3 COIN-Controlled spaces each 1 level toward Active Support.

*More aid, more corruption:* Increase or decrease any or all of ARVN Resources, Aid, and Patronage by 2 each.

**Tips.** A Province with 0 Population cannot shift (1.6). The shaded effect may increase some and decrease other totals and may thus be useful for any Faction.

**Background.** The US supplied most of the funds that fueled the war. MACV, DoD, CIA, and the State Department coordinated most of these efforts. State Department civilians of the US Agency for International Development deployed to Vietnam to support economic activity there and thereby improve the lot of the populace.

**86. Mandate of Heaven AVNU 1965**

ARVN CAPABILITY

*Anger at regime suppressed:* 1 Govern space may transfer Aid to Patronage without shifting Support.

*Communism seen in harmony with Confucius:* ARVN Govern and Pacify maximum 1 space.

**Tips.** With the unshaded Capability, ARVN gets to decide each Govern space transferring to Patronage whether or not to shift. With shaded, Govern Special Activity will be “max 1” rather than “max 2” (4.3.1) and ARVN will only be able to Pacify in at most 1 of the possible US plus ARVN maximum of 4 spaces each Support Phase (6.3.1).

**Background.** There is a Confucian concept, important in Vietnamese tradition, that a government that does not have the Mandate of Heaven is illegitimate and may be opposed, with the obverse conferring legitimacy and calling for obedience.

**87. Nguyen Chanh Thi AVNU 1965**

*I Corps Commander:* Place 3 ARVN pieces within 3 spaces of Hue. Shift receiving spaces each 1 level toward Active Support.

*Popular general relieved:* Replace any 2 ARVN with any 2 VC pieces within 2 spaces of Hue. Patronage +4 or -4.

**Tip.** A LoC or Province with 0 Population cannot shift (1.6).

**Background.** Thi was the very influential and effective ARVN I Corps Commander. He was known for running his own command in a manner not always aligned with Saigon’s strategy. Due to persistent rumors that Thi was going to depose Ky, the two generals understandably had a rocky relationship. Eventually, Thi’s insubordination was the grounds upon which Ky relieved him of command (cards 126 & 127).

**88. Phan Quang Dan AVNU 1968**

*Dissident becomes RVN minister:* Shift Saigon 1 level toward Active Support. Patronage +5.

*Oppositionist Assemblyman:* Shift Saigon 1 level toward Neutral. Patronage -5. ARVN Ineligible through next card.

**Tip.** Adjust the US victory marker (Support + Available) when changing Support and the ARVN victory marker (COIN Control + Patronage) when increasing or decreasing Patronage.

**Background.** Phan Quang Dan was a Republic of Vietnam opposition leader who was imprisoned by Diem when he won a National Assembly seat. After Diem was assassinated in late 1963, Phan Quang Dan was released from prison and later served as RVN Deputy Prime Minister.

**89. Tam Chau AVNU 1965**

*Catholic backlash:* Shift Saigon 1 level toward Passive Support. Patronage +6.

*Saigon Buddhists find leader:* Place a VC piece in and shift Saigon 1 level toward Passive Opposition. Patronage -6.

**Tip.** A Base is a “piece”.

**Background.** Thich Tam Chau was one of the leaders of the Buddhist riots in 1966. He headed up an organization in Saigon called the Institute for the Propagation of the Buddhist Faith. He clashed with another Buddhist leader, Hue-based Thich Tri Quang (Event 114) on tactics.

**90. Walt Rostow AVNU 1965**

*COIN portfolio:* Place any 2 ARVN pieces from anywhere (even out of play) into any COIN Control spaces.

*The enemy owns the night:* Place any 1 Guerrilla in each Province with ARVN. ARVN Troops Redeploy as if no Bases.

**Tips.** “Pieces” include Bases. For the shaded effect, the Redeploy is once and immediate—ARVN Troops depart all Provinces and LoCs for Cities with no NVA Control or Saigon (6.4.2).

**Background.** Rostow was LBJ’s National Security Advisor from 1966 until Johnson left office. Prior to that, Rostow served in the Kennedy administration in the National Security Council organization. He was a major advocate for intervention and escalation of the war. He remains a very controversial figure who leveraged his relationship with the President to have a significant impact on US strategy during his tenure.

**91. Bob Hope VUNA 1968**

*USO:* Move any US Troops from a Province to a COIN Control City. For each 2 moved (round down), 1 Casualty piece to Available.

*Show lowers op tempo:* NVA or VC move up to 3 US Troops from any Provinces to Cities, placing a Guerrilla where each Troop was.

**Tip.** “Pieces” include Bases.

**Background.** Bob Hope was a legendary US comedian who devoted himself to the USO (United Service Organizations Inc.). As the Vietnam conflict developed, he continued his history of entertaining the troops at the battlefield. In 1997, the US Congress awarded him the status of “honorary veteran”, which he viewed as the greatest honor that he had ever received.

**92. SEALORDS VUNA 1968**

*Delta strategy:* ARVN then US free Sweep in place or Assault in each space adjacent to Can Tho.

*Sampans:* NVA or VC moves any of its pieces (including unTunneled Bases) from Cambodia/Tay Ninh to spaces adjacent to Can Tho.

**Tips.** ARVN and US each decide the details of their respective Sweeps or Assaults. “Spaces adjacent to Can Tho” include the 3 Mekong river LoC spaces.

**Background.** Operation Southeast Asia Lake, Ocean, River, and Delta Strategy (SEALORDS) was led by Admiral Zumwalt (COM-NAVFORV; Commander Naval Forces Vietnam). The objective was to disrupt NVA lines of communication in and around the Mekong Delta. The operation came to a close in 1971.



**93. Senator Fulbright VUNA 1964**

*Hearings stoke debate:* US moves 4 US pieces from map to Available.

*War skeptic:* 1 Available US Base out of play. Aid -9.

**Tip.** A Base is a “piece”.

**Background.** Senator Fulbright represented Arkansas from 1945-1975. The Senator was one of the sponsors of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution but later became a major critic of the US war effort.

**94. Tunnel Rats VUNA 1968**

*Subterranean specialists:* Place a Tunnel marker on an Insurgent Base in each of 2 Provinces, or remove 1 Tunneler Base from a space with US Troops.

**Tip.** This is one of just a few Events that can force removal of Tunneler Bases (5.1.1).

**Background.** “Tunnel Rats” was the nickname for lightly armed US soldiers who penetrated into insurgent tunnel complexes and engaged the enemy at arms’ length in the dark.

**95. Westmoreland VUNA 1965**

*Root ‘em out:* US free Air Lifts, then Sweeps (no moves) or Assaults (no ARVN) in 2 spaces, then Air Strikes.

*Big-unit war bypasses population:* Shift 3 Provinces with no Police each 2 levels toward Active Opposition.

**Tips.** For the unshaded effect, US decides the details of the unshaded actions, which follow the usual restrictions, except that the Sweep Op could occur even during Monsoon, Sweep is in place only because of “no moves”, and the US Assault may not add and ARVN Assault (because of “no ARVN”). Air Strike can include Degrading the Trail as usual (4.2.3). For shaded, 0 Population Provinces cannot shift from Neutral.

**Background.** General Westmoreland in 1964 became the second commander of MACV (Event 69). He believed in a strategy of large conventional battle. He advocated and sought to bring NVA regulars into set-piece engagements in which overwhelming US superiority in firepower and technology would break the back of the enemy military. Westmoreland’s strategy during the critical ‘64-‘67 period is sometimes cited as one of the reasons for US defeat in the war.

**96. APC VUAN 1968**

*Accelerated Pacification Campaign:* US and ARVN immediately Pacify as if Support Phase, but cost is 0. Shift at most 1 level per space.

*False progress:* If Tet Offensive played, return it to VC. If not, VC execute “General uprising” as on the card (without using it).

**Tips.** For the unshaded text, the Pacification also removes Terror markers for cost 0. For the shaded text, if Event #124 “Tet Offensive” has not been executed (including because it is not used in this scenario), execute the “Tet Offensive” Event text that follows the flavor text “General uprising”. The disposition of the “Tet Offensive” card is not affected.

**Background.** The APC or “Accelerated Pacification Campaign” was a US post-Tet campaign based on a clear and hold strategy (rather than search and destroy, Event 28). Basically, regular forces cleared an area of enemy insurgents then trained and armed the populace for local defense. The program yielded mixed success. The Communists soon had recovered sufficient strength from the 1968 Tet defeat (Pivotal Event 124) to launch a second, albeit more

limited, Tet Offensive, this time focused on causing US casualties rather than seizing cities. The APC was discontinued in the early 1970s as the US began its withdrawal from Vietnam.

**97. Brinks Hotel VUAN 1964**

*NLF terror reconciles GVN-US:* Aid +10, or 4 Patronage to ARVN Resources. Flip any current RVN leader card—its text is ignored.

*US billet car bombed:* Shift a City that has VC by 2 levels toward Active Opposition and add a Terror marker there.

**Tips.** Unshaded text has no effect on “Duong Van Minh” or “Failed Attempt”; a flipped RVN leader card still counts as a card in the RVN leader box, such as for Pivotal Event pre-conditions. For shaded, any VC piece in the City—Guerrilla or Base—makes the space a candidate; the Terror marker would be added even if one is already there.

**Background.** On Christmas Eve 1964, the VC deployed a car bomb that killed 2 and injured 60 at the Brinks Hotel. The attack demonstrated that VC terror could reach into the capital when desired.

**98. Long Tan VUAN 1965**

*Royal Australians:* Place 2 out of play US Troops into a Province or remove all Guerrillas from all Jungle with US Troops.

*VC strike newly arrived troops:* 1 US Base and 1 US Troop in a Jungle with 2+ VC Guerrillas to Casualties.

**Tip.** For the unshaded effect, the Troops could go into any 1 Province except North Vietnam, not necessarily into Jungle.

**Background.** The Battle of Long Tan took place on August 18, 1966 between Australian and NLF (NVA and VC) forces on a large rubber plantation. In a confused, fragmented, monsoon-soaked engagement, the 6th Royal Australian Regiment prevailed against a far larger enemy force.

**99. Masher/White Wing VUAN 1965**

*Sweep flushes enemy into kill zone:* US or ARVN free Sweeps 1 non-Jungle space with US and ARVN Troops. They free Assault as US.

*Poor OPSEC:* VC or NVA free March Guerrillas to any 3 spaces then free Ambush in each (even if Active).

**Tips.** The Sweep or Marches could occur even during Monsoon. For the unshaded text, the executing Faction picks US or ARVN and that Faction decides the details of its Sweep and Assault. US and ARVN Troops both can move and Activate Guerrillas. ARVN Troops would contribute as if US Troops, including double enemy losses for any US Base in a space, and so on. For shaded, the executing Faction picks VC or NVA and that Faction decides the details of the March and Ambush. NVA March could include multiple moves from Laos/Cambodia spaces if the Trail is at greater than 0. The Ambushes must occur in March destinations, but need not involve Guerrillas that Marched and could occur even if all that Faction’s Guerrillas there were already Active.

**Background.** Masher/White Wing was a combined US, ROK, and ARVN Search and Destroy operation in Bin Dinh province during early 1966. This offensive saw the 1st Cavalry Division with Allied support take on the NVA 3rd Division in a 42-day series of engagements. US casualties were 288 killed and over 900 wounded, against the declared destruction of the NVA forces that later turned out to be incorrect.

**100. Rach Ba Rai VUAN 1965**

*Riverines hunt Charlie:* Remove all VC or all non-Troop NVA from a Lowland with US Troops.

*VC river ambush:* In a Lowland with any VC, remove a die roll of US/ARVN cubes (US to Casualties). Place 1 VC piece.

**Tip.** “A Lowland” means 1 Lowland Province. A “piece” can include a Base. “US to Casualties” means that any US pieces removed go to the Casualties box, while ARVN pieces removed go to ARVN Available Forces as usual (1.4.1).

**Background.** Known to counterinsurgent forces as Coronado V, the engagements at Rach Ba Rai occurred in September-October 1966 in the Mekong Delta. The fighting featured a series of sweeps and engagements with the VC 263rd Main Force Battalion (the type of unit represented by Event 104).

**101. Booby Traps VNUA 1964**

VC CAPABILITY

*Preparations tip off enemy:* VC and NVA Ambush is max 1 space.

*Mines and punji:* Each Sweep space, VC afterward removes 1 Sweeping Troop on roll of 1-3 (US to Casualties).

**Tip.** “US to Casualties” means that any US pieces removed go to the Casualties box, while ARVN pieces removed go to ARVN Available Forces as usual (1.4.1).

**Background.** The VC were primarily a light-armed force that deployed an array of ancient and modern anti-personnel devices to harass and kill COIN forces during the conflict. The VC were ingenious in their use of discarded US war material and unexploded ordnance to build these devices, but many other devices were ancient traps constructed from sharpened sticks, employing pits or plant tension to ensnare their target.

**102. Cu Chi VNUA 1965**

*Clear and secure:* Remove all Guerrillas from 1 space with a Tunnel and COIN Control.

*Iron Triangle:* Place Tunnel markers on each Insurgent Base in 1 Province. Place 1 NVA and 1 VC Guerrilla there.

**Tip.** “A Tunnel” means a Tunneled Base.

**Background.** Located in Binh Duong province (between Tay Ninh and Phuoc Long), the tunnel complexes near Cu Chi extended for several hundred miles and remained under VC control during the entire war. The US and ARVN forces conducted several famous offensives to reclaim the region such as Operations Attleboro (Event 23), Cedar Falls, and Junction City.

**103. Kent State VNUA 1968**

*National Guard imposes order:* Any 2 US Casualties to Available. 1 free US LimOp. US Eligible.

*National Guard overreacts:* Up to 3 US Troop Casualties out of play. Aid -6. US Ineligible through next card.

**Tip.** For the unshaded text, place the US Eligibility Cylinder from wherever it is into the “Eligible Factions” box. If US executed the Event and ARVN 2nd Eligible, ARVN may execute Ops & Special Activity as usual.

**Background.** In response to the US invasion of Cambodia (Event 62), there was a surge of anti-war protests across US college campuses. On May 4, 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen fired on Kent State student protesters, killing four and wounding nine. The public

backlash to the shooting and fears of further government reprisal closed colleges across the country.

**104. Main Force Bns VNUA 1965**

VC CAPABILITY

*Larger footprints:* March into Support/LoC Activates if moving plus non-Base COIN >1 (vice >3).

*Hard-hitting guerrillas:* 1 VC Ambush space may remove 2 enemy pieces.

**Tip.** The shaded Capability will enable each VC Ambush Special Activity to remove up to a total of 3 enemy pieces between its maximum 2 spaces.

**Background.** Due to initial US successes with their sweeps, the VC worked to upgrade the weaponry and tactics of their Main Force Battalions. A good example is the effectiveness of the 261st Main Force Battalion in Ap Bac against an ARVN 7th Division assault in the Mekong Delta region.

**105. Rural Pressure VNUA 1965**

*Onerous VC Taxation:* Shift 4 Provinces with any VC each by 1 level toward Active Support.

*Local government corruption:* Shift 3 Provinces with Police each by 1 level toward Active Opposition. Patronage +6 or -6.

**Tip.** A Province with 0 Population cannot be shifted from Neutral (1.6).

**Background.** This event acknowledges the intense conflict that occurred for the hearts and minds of the rural hamlet culture of Vietnam. The same villagers who traditionally had seen little government presence of any use to them later came to resent the squeeze of VC who needed ever increasing support to fight the invader.

**106. Binh Duong VNAU 1965**

*Revolutionary land reform seeks traction in prosperous districts:* In each of 2 Provinces adjacent to Saigon, shift Support/Opposition 1 level either direction and place a VC Guerrilla or Police.

**Tip.** Shifting toward Opposition and placing Police would be a legal (if unusual) move.

**Background.** Both sides preached land reform in an attempt to redistribute land from wealthy landowners to a broader class of farmers. Binh Duong Province near the capital region was the relatively prosperous locale of one such initiative. While powerful landowners neutered ARVN efforts at land reform, VC efforts of indoctrination, intimidation, and execution were more effective.

**107. Burning Bonze VNAU 1964**

*Gruesome protests close elite ranks:* Patronage +3 or, if Saigon at Active Support, +6.

*Anti-regime self-immolation:* Shift Saigon 1 level toward Active Opposition. Aid -12.

**Tip.** Adjust the ARVN victory marker (COIN Control + Patronage) when increasing or decreasing Patronage, the US victory marker (Support + Available) if changing Support, and the VC victory marker (Opposition + Bases) if adding Opposition.

**Background.** Diem and the governments that followed him in Saigon had a strong core of Catholics who stood in opposition to the Buddhist leadership centered in the ancient capital at Hue. One of the iconic images of Vietnam was the self-immolation performed by five Buddhist monks to protest Saigon’s Catholic policies.

**108. Draft Dodgers** **VNAU 1965**

*Public furor sparks enlistment:* If fewer than 3 Casualty pieces, 3 US Troops from out of play to Available.

*Recruiting sags:* Move 1 US Troop per Casualty piece, to a maximum of 3, from Available to out of play.

**Tip.** “Pieces” include Bases.

**Background.** As the Vietnam War’s unpopularity in the United States grew, some men called up for service left the country to avoid military induction. President Carter pardoned all draft dodgers soon after taking office.

**109. Nguyen Huu Tho** **VNAU 1965**

*Party control of NLF draws anti-communist reaction:* Shift each City with VC 1 level toward Active Support.

*National Liberation Front leader:* Place a VC Base and a VC Guerrilla in Saigon. Stay Eligible.

**Tip.** The VC Base cannot be placed if there are already 2 of any Factions’ Bases in Saigon (1.4.2, 5.1.1).

**Background.** Tho was a VC leader stationed Saigon who successfully organized revolutionary cells. Tho laid the groundwork for the infrastructure that supported the Tet offensive attacks in Saigon in 1968. Some have described him as a mere figurehead, masking Northern control of the NLF with the appearance of indigenous Southern leadership.

**110. No Contact** **VNAU 1964**

*Respite:* Place 2 Casualties onto the map. All Rangers and Irregulars Underground.

*Charlie bugs out:* Flip all VC and NVA Guerrillas Underground.

**Tip.** The unshaded text allows selection of any 2 pieces from the Casualties box—Troops, Irregulars, or Bases—and their placement into any map spaces where they may stack (1.4.2).

**Background.** A key military tactic is to find and fix the enemy to eliminate him. In general, the VC and NVA had superior tactical intelligence on the location of COIN forces and, when faced with superior numbers, would often avoid contact.

**111. Agent Orange** **VAUN 1968**

*Counter-sanctuary chemical:* All Insurgents in Jungle go Active. US free Air Strikes among up to any 2 Jungle spaces (no effect on Trail).

*Industrial defoliation:* Shift each Jungle and Highland with Insurgents 1 level toward Active Opposition.

**Tips.** For the unshaded text, the US decides the details of the Air Strike but may not Degrade the Trail. For shaded, a Province with 0 Population cannot be shifted from Neutral (1.6).

**Background.** Agent Orange was a defoliant chemical named for the orange striped canisters it was delivered in from Monsanto and Dow Chemicals. The chemical was employed in Operation Ranch Hand, whose goal was to deny the insurgents cover and conceal-

ment. While technically not a form of chemical warfare, soldiers and civilians exposed to strong concentrations of Agent Orange have been documented to suffer from significant long-term health effects.

**112. Colonel Chau** **VAUN 1964**

*Census-grievance teams:* Place 1 Police into each of 6 Provinces.

*Local Viet Minh tradition:* Shift 3 Provinces with ARVN each 1 level toward Active Opposition. Place a VC Guerrilla in each.

**Tip.** A Province with 0 Population cannot be shifted from Neutral (1.6).

**Background.** Tran Ngoc Chau was a former member of the Viet Minh who due to his Buddhist views changed sides and distinguished himself as an innovative administrator and counterinsurgency tactician. He devised “census-grievance teams” to establish the first benign government presence in villages contested by the VC, and thereby gain information on VC infrastructure—often in the face of local Viet Minh resistance tradition and therefore pro-VC sentiment.

**113. Ruff Puff** **VAUN 1968**

*RF/PF—Regional and Popular Forces:* Place up to 8 Police in the South.

*Ill-trained, thoroughly subverted:* Replace 5 Police outside Cities with 1 VC piece each—1 of the VC pieces may be a Base.

**Tip.** In the unshaded text, “in the South” means into any spaces in South Vietnam, including any LoCs. For shaded, only 1 VC piece placed may be a Base, the others must be Guerrillas.

**Background.** The US response to VC insurgency at the hamlet level was channeled through the host of local security elements known as Ruff Puffs. The performance of these units ran the full gamut from high quality to inept. While a significant component of the CORDS program (Event 19), the RF/PF proved incapable of overcoming the instability radiating from Saigon.

**114. Tri Quang** **VAUN 1965**

*Buddhists counter Communists:* Set up to 3 Neutral or Opposition Cities to Passive Support.

*People’s Revolutionary Committee:* Shift Hue, Da Nang, and Saigon 1 level toward Active Opposition. Place a VC piece in Saigon.

**Tip.** A “piece” may be a Base.

**Background.** Tri Quang was a non-communist leader of the Buddhist opposition in Hue. He led the Buddhist revolt that saw 5 Bonzes immolate themselves in protest against Diem’s policies. After Diem, he remained a potent political force, eventually arrested under Ky.

**115. Typhoon Kate** **VAUN 1968**

*Year of storms:* Until Coup, no Air Lift, Transport, or Bombard, and all other Special Activities are maximum 1 space. Executing Faction stays Eligible.

**MOMENTUM**

**Tip.** Air Strike can still Degrade the Trail in addition to affecting 1 space. When “Typhoon Kate” is in effect during Monsoon, no Air Lift is allowed, and Air Strike is limited to 1 space not 2 (5.1.1).

**Background.** There have been a number of Typhoons named Kate over the decades. In 1970, a super Typhoon Kate devastated the Philippines and Vietnam. This event represents extreme weather beyond the annual Monsoon that is built into the game system.



**116. Cadres VANU 1964**

## VC CAPABILITY

*Manpower to political sections:* VC to Terror or Agitate must remove 2 VC Guerrillas per space.

*NLF village committees:* VC Rally in 1 space where VC already had a Base may Agitate as if Support Phase even if COIN Control.

**Tip.** For the unshaded effect, if VC have fewer than 2 Guerrillas in a space, they may not execute Terror or Agitate there, until they do have 2 Guerrillas there to remove.

**Background.** As famously described in Frances FitzGerald's book, VC tactics emphasized the insertion of politicized cadres into the countryside villages, where they worked to first ingratiate themselves to the local population and later mobilize them for the conflict. The core of the US hearts and minds campaign revolved around neutralizing this potent guerrilla infrastructure.

**117. Corps Commanders VANU 1968**

*ARVN general takes initiative:* ARVN places 3 of its Troops from out of play or Available into 1 or 2 adjacent spaces then free Sweeps each.

*Corps CO ignores Saigon:* Remove a die roll of ARVN pieces from 1 or 2 adjacent spaces. ARVN Ineligible through next card.

**Tip.** For the unshaded text, the ARVN Faction decides from and to where to place the Troops.

**Background.** Due to instability at the core of the RVN government, the ARVN Corps Commanders tended to have a degree of autonomy from Saigon. This event characterizes these powerful and potentially volatile general officers' impact on operations.

**118. Korean War Arms VANU 1964**

*Obsolete:* VC must remove 1 VC Guerrilla from each space with at least 2 and no NVA Base.

*NLF gets US arms captured in Korea:* Place any 1 VC piece in each of 3 spaces.

**Tips.** For the unshaded text, because VC are deciding on removal, they may remove Active rather than Underground VC Guerrillas. For shaded, a "piece" may be a Base.

**Background.** Early in the conflict all forms of older weapons from WWII and the Korean War were supplied to the NVA and in turn to the VC. These weapons varied in quality depending on how they were stored and maintained.

**119. My Lai VANU 1968**

*US LT convicted:* 2 Available US Troops out of play. Patronage +2.

*Massacre:* Set a Province with US Troops to Active Opposition. VC place a Base and Guerrilla there. Aid -6.

**Tip.** Provinces with 0 Population do not shift from Neutral.

**Background.** On March 16, 1968, a platoon of the 23rd Infantry Division under the command of 2nd Lt. William Calley Jr. massacred 22 villagers during a combat mission—a part of the larger My Lai Massacre. Initially, the incident was covered up, but it eventually came to light in November of 1969. The revelation and subsequent trial of Calley drew major protests worldwide and contributed to the weakening of US public support for the war.

**120. US Press Corps VANU 1968**

*Initial support:* Move US pieces from out of play to map—4 if 0-2 cards in RVN Leader box, 2 if 3-5.

*Building skepticism:* US Troop Casualties up to cards in RVN Leader box plus all US Base Casualties go out of play.

**Tips.** "Pieces" can include Bases. For the shaded text, count the number of Coup cards (including any "Failed Attempt" cards) in the RVN Leader box: the executing Faction selects that number of non-Base pieces in the Casualties box—in addition to all Bases there—to move to the Out of Play box.

**Background.** The Vietnam War became known as the first TV war, when, every evening, correspondents such as Walter Cronkite brought the war into America's living rooms. Whether reflecting or contributing to public sentiment, US war journalism became progressively less supportive of US engagement over the course of the conflict.

**121. Linebacker II UAVN 2nd Ed**

**US Pivotal Event**—Play if 2+ cards in RVN Leader box and Support+Available >40.

*Unrestricted air war:* NVA removes 2 Bases, reduces Resources to half (round down), Ineligible through next card. 3 US Casualties to Available.

Not if *Coup!* showing as next card.

**Tips.** Do not count Duong Van Minh—an RVN leader but not a card—for the precondition (2.4.1). The NVA Faction decides which 2 of its Bases to remove, then loses Resources and is marked Ineligible. The US decides which Casualties (including Bases) then move to Available.

**Background.** After years of graduated, limited, and paused US bombing of North Vietnam, President Nixon on December 18, 1972 unleashed the full conventional power of the US Air Force in an 11-day bombing campaign to bring Hanoi back to the negotiating table in Paris and finally bring US PoWs (Event 40) home.

**122. Easter Offensive NVAU**

**NVA Pivotal Event**—Play if 2+ cards in RVN Leader box and more NVA Troops than US Troops on map.

*Invasion:* NVA free Marches. Then NVA Troops on LoCs with no US/ARVN may move 1 space. Then all NVA Troops free Attack.

Not if *Coup!* next. May trump Pivotal **U**.

**Tips.** Do not count Minh as a card for the precondition. "On map" means in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia combined. NVA March may include the usual multiple moves in or out of Laos/Cambodia spaces (unless the Trail is at "0", 3.3.2). NVA Troops must Attack wherever there are enemies; NVA Guerrillas may March but do not Attack.

**Background.** The "Nguyen Hue" campaign of 1972 was an all-out Northern offensive that severely tested the strength of the ARVN in the void of the US withdrawal. The NVA onslaught illustrated their emerging mechanized capability. The flipside of mechanization was that US airpower was designed to defeat such a force. Although some Southern territory was lost, airpower turned the tide and neutralized the NVA drive on Saigon.

### 123. Vietnamization **AUNV**

**ARVN Pivotal Event**—Play if 2+ cards in RVN Leader box and <20 US Troops on map.

*Mechanization:* +12 ARVN Resources. +12 Aid. All out-of-play ARVN Available. Place 4 ARVN cubes anywhere.

Not if *Coup!* next. May trump Pivotal **NU**.

**Tips.** Do not count Minh as a card for the precondition. “On map” means in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia combined.

**Background.** Vietnamization was the Nixon administration’s term for turning the war over to the ARVN and beginning the US withdrawal. While this strategy had been pursued in some fashion since the beginning of the war, it was Nixon’s determination to alter the US relationship with the ARVN that made its implementation a necessity. Materially, it meant mechanizing the ARVN and providing it with far more up-to-date weaponry than the US had granted it heretofore. The Lam Son 719 debacle (Event 74) showed that its success would take time, but the 1972 stand against the Easter Offensive (Event 71 and Pivotal Event 122) appeared to vindicate the approach.

### 124. Tet Offensive **VNUA**

**VC Pivotal Event**—Play if 2+ cards in RVN Leader box and >20 VC Guerrillas in South.

*General uprising:* Free Terror with 1 Underground VC per space. Place 6 VC pieces in any Cities. VC+NVA Guerrillas free Attack where enemies (remove VC first).

Not if *Coup!* next. May trump Pivotal **ANU**.

**Tips.** Do not count Minh as a card for the precondition. “In South” means among all South Vietnam spaces, including all LoCs. Carry out the steps in order. Terror is mandatory wherever Underground VC Guerrillas—even if no shift will benefit the VC—Activating 1 Underground VC Guerrilla each such space. If Terror markers will run out, it is up to the VC (random if Non-player) to decide the order of Terror spaces. Attacks are mandatory where VC or NVA Guerrillas are located with any enemies, Activating all those Guerrillas, and include VC who just executed Terror. If both VC and NVA Guerrillas occupy such a space, add their numbers together to determine the die roll needed for success, removing VC before NVA if possible when US Troop or Base losses result in Attrition (3.3.3). See also Non-player Example 1, earlier in this Playbook.

**Background.** In 1968, the NLF (VC and NVA) launched a massive offensive timed to a cultural holiday season. The objective was to capture major urban centers and raise the populace in revolt against the RVN government. The resulting counteroffensive decimated the ranks of the VC, enabling Hanoi to take greater control over the war effort. Counteroffensive operations by ARVN in particular also created tremendous damage to civilian infrastructure, while US casualties and the shock to the US public began an unrecoverable downward spiral in backing for the war.

### 125. Coup! Nguyen Khanh

*Corps commanders ascendant:* Transport uses max 1 LoC space.

Conduct Coup Round: Victory? to Reset

Monsoon: If this card next, no Sweep or March, Air Lift & Air Strike max 2.

**Tip.** “Nguyen Khanh” restricts Transport throughout the coming campaign, until Khanh is replaced by a Coup card other than “Failed Attempt” (2.4.1). Usually, Transport can move ARVN Troops and Rangers through a string of LoCs (and Cities), but “Khanh” limits

such strings may include only 1 LoC space (plus any Cities) each Transport Special Activity (4.3.2).

**Background.** See “Duong Van Minh” below.

### 126. Coup! Young Turks

*Thi, Ky, & Thieu wag the US dog:* Each ARVN Govern Special Activity adds +2 Patronage.

Conduct Coup Round: Victory? to Reset

Monsoon: If this card next, no Sweep or March, Air Lift & Air Strike max 2.

**Tip.** The bonus Patronage is +2 per each occasion of a Govern Special Activity, not per space.

**Background.** See “Duong Van Minh” below.

### 127. Coup! Nguyen Cao Ky

*Brash brass Ky:* Pacification costs 4 Resources per Terror or level.

Conduct Coup Round: Victory? to Reset

Monsoon: If this card next, no Sweep or March, Air Lift & Air Strike max 2.

**Tip.** The 4-Resource Pacification cost replaces the usual 3-Resource cost, for both US and ARVN, in the following Support Phase and during the coming campaign.

**Background.** See “Duong Van Minh” below.

### 128. Coup! Nguyen Van Thieu

*Stabilizer:* No effect.

Conduct Coup Round: Victory? to Reset

Monsoon: If this card next, no Sweep or March, Air Lift & Air Strike max 2.

**Tip.** “Nguyen Van Thieu” cancels the effect of the previous leader.

**Background.** See “Duong Van Minh” below.

### 129. & 130. Coup! Failed Attempt

*Desertion:* ARVN removes 1 in 3 of its cubes per space (round down). Place below any RVN Leader card.

Conduct Coup Round: Victory? to Reset

Monsoon: If this card next, no Sweep or March, Air Lift & Air Strike max 2.

**Tips.** In contrast to the other Coup cards, “Failed Attempt” has an immediate not lasting effect. The ARVN Faction removes its cubes—adjusting Control accordingly (1.7)—before the Coup Round commences with the Victory Phase. After carrying out that effect, place the “Failed Attempt” card underneath the top card in the RVN Leader box, or just in the box if no card is yet there. “Failed Attempt” cancels only “Duong Van Minh” (resulting in no lingering effect at all). It leaves any other RVN Leader still in effect. Each played “Failed Attempt” nevertheless counts as a card in the RVN Leader box (such as for Pivotal Event preconditions, 2.3.8).

**Background.** See “Duong Van Minh” below.

## RVN Leader box: Duong Van Minh

*General pledges democracy.* Each ARVN Train Operation adds +5 bonus Aid.

**Tip.** The bonus Aid is +5 per each occasion of an ARVN Training Operation, not per space.

**Background.** On November 1, 1963, a confused set of moves by the South Vietnamese military resulted in the overthrow and assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem, the President of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) since 1953. The Kennedy administration tacitly supported the coup, but not Diem's execution. President Kennedy's tragic assassination three weeks later left LBJ to pick up the pieces.

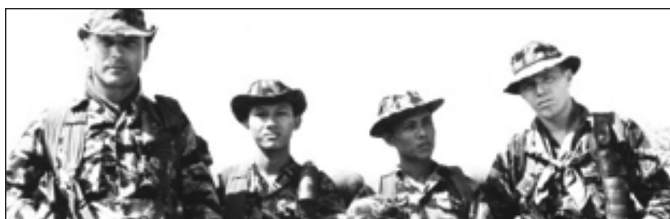
The leader of the coup was Duong Van Minh, known to the US by his nickname "Big Minh". Big Minh led a military junta with a cast of generals and admirals who would play a game of musical chairs that saw various members of this original group vying for power. Minh was not a dynamic leader, and he was deposed after only 3 months by another leader of the Diem coup, Nguyen Khanh (card 125), in January 1964.

Khanh was a former member of the Vietminh who, early in his career in the ARVN, aided Diem in thwarting an previous attempt to overthrow him, enabling Khanh's quick rise. As the leader of a new, post-Minh junta, Khanh was mentored by US Ambassador Lodge (Event 79). Khanh attempted to create a more inclusive government, but found navigating between the Catholics and the Buddhists led by Thich Tri Quang (Event 114) a tough road to navigate.

During Khanh's tenure, there were several failed coups (cards 129 & 130), most notably by Generals Phat and Duc. As infighting among junta members and ARVN corps commanders continued, relations between Khanh and the US deteriorated, increasing his domestic popularity. In August 1964, Khanh cleaned house, leveraging a group of an inner circle known as the "Young Turks", originally composed of General Nguyen Van Thieu, Air Marshall Nguyen Cao Ky, I Corps General Nguyen Chanh Thi, and Admiral Chung Tan Cang of the Navy. Under this junta alignment, a state of emergency was declared with many repressive measures.

The repression brought on large Buddhist demonstrations (Events 89 and 114) and increased domestic instability. Khanh blinked and removed many of his more repressive measures, but this only weakened him politically. In December 1964, the Young Turks turned Khanh out of office (card 126). By 1965, the vastly unpopular Nguyen Cao Ky as Prime Minister (card 127), along with Nguyen Van Thieu as ceremonial Head of State, dominated the group. The coups and counter-coups had thwarted US Ambassador Taylor's efforts to work with the RVN leadership to establish a popular and legitimate civilian government (Event 66), vividly demonstrating the limits of US influence over its Saigon clients.

The US political effort in Saigon continued, however, even as its military counterinsurgency ramped up. In 1967, an election (Event 83) finally made Thieu civilian President of the Republic, with Ky as his Vice President, stabilizing the RVN leadership for the remainder of the war (card 128).



## DESIGN NOTES

### Volko Ruhnke:

I have already discussed various aspects of *Fire in the Lake's* design, in C3i Nr27 and elsewhere. But I would like to add just a little more here.

The origin of this design was a phone call from GMT's Gene Billingsley to suggest that I work with Mark Herman to design a card-driven game about Vietnam (that's Opportunity with a capital O!). As is broadly known, Mark had been contemplating such a design using his system from *We the People* for some years but never gotten to it. Mark and I soon met in the "bat cave" of his Maryland home, where he explained his vision. As I understood it, the game would cast 2 players as Communist and anti-Communist Vietnamese, with external forces entering over time and, in effect, hijacking the conflict from the players. Unlike other Vietnam games, this design might not always feature the US as the star of the show: delivering a deeper insight into the conflict would require that the players focus far more on the civil conflict among the Vietnamese themselves. Mark also wanted to show the political activity of VC cadres in the villages, as well as the advantages of mobile counterinsurgent forces along highways compared to out in the bush.

That meeting had pre-dated the publication *Andean Abyss*. Once later COIN Series volumes with multiple designers became a reality, I quickly came to the conclusion that my COIN System could express all the dynamics that Mark had envisioned—with 4 players each vying for distinct measures of success, perhaps even more so! Mark and I met again at the epic and jungly 2012 World Boardgaming Championships and agreed on that way ahead. After an initial brainstorm there with experienced COIN-Series hand Jordan Kehrer, who suggested the addition of guerrilla-like units for the counterinsurgent factions, we were off!

It's always exciting to see how a different designer in the mix can take a game system in new directions on a new topic. Now the father of all card-driven wargames was taking on the mother of all US counterinsurgencies, together with me, in my game series. Life does not get better. How far could we together push the system and ourselves to add more variety to the events, more ways to solitaire, and more design twists?

Mark immediately came up with the key innovations to the system of RVN Leaders to replace the previously generic Propaganda cards, and Pivotal Events to allow players to preempt initiative. The latter innovation, especially, not only adds a layer of strategy and drama unique within the Series but also helps us identify and portray key turning-point decisions in the conflict.

Meanwhile, Gene—an expert Vietnam game designer in his own right—provided ideas to take us further up the river, with aspects such as Monsoons, attrition from US defensive firepower, the use of City terrain to represent long-term US logistical centers, named highways, an expanded event card deck, and more. COIN Series developer Mike Bertucelli assembled and managed an even more impressive array of testers than for previous volumes. And Örfan Ar-

iander—as for *Cuba Libre*—again saved us by taking on the bulk of the heinously complex endeavor of solitaire algorithm development.

While I was confident in a general sense that the COIN Series could deliver the story of insurgency in Vietnam, I did not know ahead of time how we would handle certain challenges specific to the topic. Could a system designed as a simple representation of guerrilla and counter-guerrilla operations adapt to model at least roughly the conventional force-on-force campaigns also going on in the Vietnam War? Could we integrate the importance of bombing over the North, the state of NVA supply routes to the South, the “sorta sanctuary” of Laos and Cambodia, and the waves of NVA invasions with the steady insurgency within South Vietnam? Could we sufficiently amp up the effects of accumulating US casualties and swings in home-front support for and opposition to the war? In sum, could we deliver a convincing Vietnam simulation through the still generally unfamiliar mechanics of the COIN Series, to players who already have deep and dedicated views about the conflict?

We think we have succeeded. Now it will be your turn to judge that.

Here, even more than in other COIN Series volumes, I drew heavily from my formative experience playing Nick Karp’s *Vietnam 1965-1975*—produced, not coincidentally, under Mark Herman’s tutelage at Victory Games in the 1980s. That is the game that originally got my interest going in gaming guerrilla warfare in the jungle, an interest that ultimately developed into the COIN Series itself. Nick’s design set my core understanding of what a game about the Vietnam War at the national level must include. Players familiar with that design should spot the homage throughout *Fire in the Lake*.

I drew heavily also from lessons learned in work the previous year on *A Distant Plain*, my co-design with experienced internal wars game designer Brian Train, about modern Afghanistan. Players of *A Distant Plain* will readily recognize the mechanical similarities in *Fire in the Lake*: available forces as a part of foreign counterinsurgent victory, military control as victory for the host government, casualties and out-of-play forces, patronage, governing, multiple and sometimes cost-free marches through sanctuary, and so on. As Mark and I looked for how we needed the system to work to represent the Vietnam conflict, the solutions that had worked in *A Distant Plain* often offered clear fits. That should not be surprising, perhaps, as the two situations were both expeditionary counterinsurgency efforts led by the United States.

A key difference in the two designs, however, accounts for the US gradualism in fashion during the Vietnam era: unlike the sudden “Surge” in or out available to the Coalition in the Afghanistan game, the US generally can adjust its “Commitment” to the war only at the outset of each 1-2 year campaign, heightening the dilemmas.

Probably the most controversial design aspect to come up during development of *Fire in the Lake* is one that Mark and I have discussed already on line and in the pages of C3i. It is the premise of the game that there is a split between the NVA and VC factions, that only one of them can win a 4-player game. As I noted above, the incorporation of regional, religious, and ethnic intra-Vietnamese tensions beyond those addressed by other Vietnam wargames were a starting point for the design. But a prevalent view seems to be that the VC were an extension of the Hanoi regime, and so anything less than fully shared NVA and VC interests and outcomes would be historically off.

There seems to be historical agreement that the Hanoi leaders created the National Liberation Front (the Viet Cong) in the South. And it is clear that the Tonkinese, Annamite, and Cochinese Communists were

close fellow travelers in their fight for Vietnamese unification. But it also appears clear that tensions and regionalism bubbled up among them, that it was not the NLF’s people’s war among the peasantry but rather the NVA’s conventional invasion that unified Vietnam, and that there were consequent post-war winners and losers among the liberation forces.

As a prominent southern Communist explained to a visiting US journalist in 1981, following Viet Cong losses in the Tet Offensive and the Phoenix Program:

Growing numbers of North Vietnamese agents were sent south to fill the vacuum. They rebuilt the southern Communist apparatus, and they remained after the war to manage it—often antagonizing their southern comrades, who, despite an abstract commitment to national cohesion, clung to their regional identity. Many southerners viewed them as rigid, doctrinaire, alien, and even corrupt carpetbaggers. . . . “They behave as if they had conquered us.” (Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam – A History*, Penguin Books, 1984, page 534.)

Less controversial in *Fire in the Lake*’s playtest was the idea that the US and South Vietnam were “uneasy allies”, as Michael MacLear put it in *The Ten Thousand Day War* (St. Martin’s Press, 1981). Testimony of US frustration with Republic of Vietnam actions and vice versa abounds. CIA operations officer Thomas Ahern’s excellent *Vietnam Declassified* (The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), for example, is replete with accounts of a US mission ever at odds with the host government over what was to be done, with what priority—particularly with regard to pacification and the relationship between the military (i.e., ARVN) regime in Saigon and the people of the countryside. As with the stresses among the Communists, the rub was which Vietnamese would be on top, so that the ARVN leaders displayed far less interest in fulfilling the desires of the peasantry, of Buddhist activists, or of ethnic minority tribesmen than did the United States. A full game model of the Vietnam conflict at the national level must somehow illustrate this divergence of interest and approach.

The good news for players concerned about any misrepresentation in the game of such issues is that ample permutations to implement the player’s own view come right in the box. Either the two communists, or the two counterinsurgents, or both can be represented in tight alliance under the control of a single player (or team of players). Doubt the divisions between Northern and Southern communists but not those between Washington and Saigon? Play a 3-player game. Want to try a 4-way contest but have only 2 or 3 players available? Assign remaining Factions to the Non-player “bots”. And so on.

Game play and game design, when successful, are always journeys for me. They either transport me to a different time and place, or they fail. *Fire in the Lake* has been an engrossing journey for me, perhaps the most absorbing one that I will take for some time. I’m so grateful to my fellow travelers—Mark, Gene, developers Mike and Örjan, the artists and other pros at GMT, playtest and proof volunteers, and all the supportive and helpful players at cons, demos, and on line. As for my own role in this design, I dedicate that to the Vietnam Veterans of America, particularly Chapter 227 of Northern Virginia: for your continued service to the generations that followed you, including my own, thank you.

Volko F. Ruhnke  
Vienna, Virginia, March, 2014

## Mark Herman:

Forty-two years ago I received my draft card and a likely ticket to Southeast Asia cancelled by peace. The war is now far enough into my rear view mirror that some amount of historical perspective is possible. These notes should be viewed in the context of the *Fire in the Lake* C3i Nr27 interview and Volko's notes that cover the major issues around the design's journey and some of the major issues considered and resolved. With all that as preamble I will focus on the context of the conflict and how the events attempt to capture its rhythm.

All games have a beginning and an end. *Fire in the Lake* (FITL) covers the period of the US intervention from 1964-1972, but this was just one more chapter in a much longer saga. The Chinese empire to the north dominated Southeast Asia for centuries. This left a philosophical (Confucian) and religious (Buddhist) foundation that lies at the core of the regions identity. The other significant tradition was a society continually fighting for its identity from first China, internecine ethnic conflict, colonialism and finally the chaos of World War II's aftermath.

The preamble to FITL witnessed the final death throes of the French Empire. The collapse of empires has traditionally stirred the political landscape in a violent manner. France's struggle to reassert its control over its former colonies in Africa, the Middle East, and Cochin China demonstrated that the world had changed. The year I was born (1954) saw the French face the twin disasters of Algeria and Dien Bien Phu creating power vacuums during the second winter of the Cold War. The result was the creation of a "temporary" north-south divide that mirrored the broader Free World - Communist divide.

I view the Vietnam conflict through the lens of several dialectic debates. Whether the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) was or was not a legitimate government is still debated today, but it should be remembered that it existed for a decade under the strongman leadership of Ngo Dinh Diem who struggled to maintain a French-trained Roman Catholic oligarchy on the back of a Buddhist culture (Mandate of Heaven [86]). Then there was the struggle of the Viet Cong (VC) against the RVN. The sticking points here are to what degree were the VC just an extension of Hanoi or were they an independent actor. For me the answer depends on when you ask the question. At the beginning of the FITL (1964), the VC while supported by the North were culturally different and physically isolated except by the rudimentary line of communication that would become popularly known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. It is my view that from 1954 until the Tet Offensive (1968) the VC had created a political agenda that, while fundamentally aligned with Hanoi on the elimination of the RVN, differed in how the

post-conflict situation should evolve. This is a minority view, and if you disagree then play FITL as a 2- or 3-player game, but please indulge me for a moment.

One of the historical contradictions that I cannot square is that Hanoi's hidden agenda during Tet was to decimate the ranks of the VC in a stand up urban fight. While the efficacy of this can be debated *ad nauseum*, the reality is where there is smoke there is usually fire. In fact the origin of the pivotal event mechanic was the Tet Offensive and how the character of the war did pivot in its aftermath. This was the basis for my view that the 1954 to 1964 period had all the trappings of a Civil War that carried forward, until Tet's military failure neutered the VC agenda.

The last axis of conflict was the Cold War itself. Whether you see the situation in 1964 as the RVN versus a unified liberation movement (NLF) or a three-sided battle between the ARVN, VC, and NVA, the Diem coup is where Volko and I enter the story. In November of 1963 Presidents Diem (RVN) and Kennedy (US) were assassinated. Kennedy's Vietnam legacy was primarily a COIN advisor and training policy to support a free world government against a communist bloc-led insurgency. The new LBJ administration was soon confronted with a Gulf of Tonkin incident that unleashed a hawk versus dove debate that continued through the Paris Peace accords until the fall of South Vietnam in 1975.

One option is to play FITL by randomly shuffling all of the events together and letting the chips fall where they will. You should know that the event architecture was constructed around three different US policies as reflected in the design of the US bot (solitaire non-player chart). The 1964 set of events depicts the US transition from an advisor to a direct participant in the war. The 1965 cards cover the period of US buildup and large-scale operations. The final set (1968) cover the Nixon administration's policies for ending US involvement in the war.

The 1964 cards can broadly be divided into three categories. The first is the US debate on how to respond to the Gulf of Tonkin incident (1) and convince Hanoi to cease and desist as illustrated by Taylor (66), *Fulbright* (93), *Lodge* (79), and *Fact Finding* (63). Next is the logistic war that captures the evolution of the Trail (*301st Supply Bn* [51], *Trucks* [55], *AAA* [31], *Korean War Arms* [118]) and US support (*Economic Aid* [43]). Lastly there is the character of the early conflict illustrated by a blend of tactics and technology (*Green Berets* [68], *Cadres* [116], *Uncle Ho* [50], *Claymores* [17], *Tribesmen* [29], and *Booby Traps* [101]). When you play the Campaign scenario your first 12 cards comes from this group of 24 events.

The 48 1965 events focus on the same three dimensions of the conflict plus the big US military operations (*Starlite* [24], *Attleboro* [23], *Giap* [56], *Ia Drang* [44]). Added to the US debate (*Domino Theory* [82], *Rostow* [90], *Westmoreland* [95], *Great Society* [73]) is the rising resistance to those policies (*Draft Dodger* [108], *Lansdale* [78], *Tri Quang* [114], *Tam Chau* [89]). The tactics shift hard toward the COIN conflict in the countryside (*Rural Pressure* [105], *Search and Destroy* [28], *Body Count* [72], *Main Force Bns* [104]), while massive US air operations fight a strategic war for the Trail (*Rolling Thunder* [10], *Arc Light* [8], *SA-2s* [34], *Wild Weasels* [5], and *559th Transport Grp* [46]).

The last phase (1968) begins with *Tet* [124] and finishes with *Linebacker II* [121]. This period follows the same event construct as 1965, characterizing the Nixon administration's exit strategy of escalation (*Kissinger* [2], *Cambodian Civil War* [62], *Lam Son 719* [74]), withdrawal (*Vietnamization* [123]), and isolation (*Détente*





[77], *Chou En Lai* [42]) to bring Hanoi to the negotiating table (Peace Talks [3]). These policies are executed against a rising tide of US disillusionment with this chapter of American history (*Kent State* [103], *My Lai* [119]). By playing the Campaign scenario using this time segmentation architecture, you should feel the flow of the war's narrative as you try to achieve gamer glory.

I will bring this to a close with a few final thoughts. It is now the 50th anniversary of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, yet this conflict still brings a visceral response from many. It is my hope that this effort by Volko (who it has been a pleasure to collaborate with) and me will raise the quality of the debate by letting you play out history in a way that is both an enjoyable gaming experience and provides endless narratives for the war. It has been my privilege to work with many veterans of the war such as *General 'Buck' Adams* (12), LTC Bob Statz (*LRRP* [26]), and Col. Bob Seitz (*Hamburger Hill* [36]). I dedicate my role in this design to them and the other Vietnam veterans of Booz, Allen & Hamilton.

Mark Herman  
NYC, 2014

## NON-PLAYER DESIGN

By Örjan Ariander

### Background

Hi, my name is Örjan and I'm a COINoholic.

In the autumn of 2012 I saw a new game, advertised by the store salesmen as a kind of Card Driven Game (CDG) with a comprehensive solitaire system. Since I was interested mostly in 19th Century and earlier warfare, the subject of this new game – the Colombian civil war of the 1990s – wasn't quite my cup of tea. On the other hand, CDGs had been my favorite type of board games ever since I bought a copy of Avalon Hill's *Hannibal* back in 1996, I recognized the name of the designer of this new game from a couple of the CDGs on my shelf, and I was between jobs so I had a lot of time to kill while my friends and acquaintances were at work, making the solitaire aspect look very attractive. (Hm. That was three "other hands", wasn't it?) After some deliberation, I bought the game.

And was hooked. The "CDG" description wasn't very accurate, but that didn't matter; this new "COIN" system was even more fun! I played over 50 games of solitaire *Andean Abyss* that autumn, until I got bored with always playing the Government and started writing a Non-Player 'bot (i.e., a flowchart) for that faction too. Before I had finished that, however, I learned that the designer was looking for playtesters for a couple of new games using the same basic engine, so I joined in. Volko and the others turned out to be really fun people to work with, and I think the end results were pretty good too (of course I might be a bit biased there!). Then, a few months after *Cuba Libre* and *A Distant Plain* were sent to the printers, I heard that Volko was working on a new COIN game, this time together with Mark Herman, who started the CDG game genre all those years ago... my, my, how could I resist it?

When I joined the playtesting of *Fire in the Lake* Volko and Mark hadn't started on the Non-Player rules yet, so, once the main game rules began to settle down, I offered to draw up initial sketches for the 'bots. One thing led to another, and suddenly I found myself appointed "Non-Player Systems Developer"?! While the 'bots have all gone through many, many iterations since those initial drafts, their core structures have survived mostly intact.

### General Notes

It was clear from the start that the *Fire in the Lake* 'bots would have to be more complex than those in the previous COIN games due to the very flexible Special Activities and Capabilities available to the various factions, the much larger number of Events, Pivotal Events that break the normal COIN eligibility, and a mix of Troops and Guerrillas in three of the factions. (Side note: The Special Forces of the COIN factions were originally called "Guerrillas" too, before we renamed them to avoid having to specify "Insurgent Guerrillas" or "COIN Guerrillas" everywhere in the Non-Player flowcharts.)

It was very tempting to use all of that flexibility to the max in the 'bots, especially the US Air Lift ability, but that would have made the 'bots effectively unplayable. Volko's insistence that each 'bot flowchart must fit on a single page in the foldout served as a very useful check! As a result, the 'bots don't necessarily make the best moves possible, but their ability to do full Ops and Special Activities instead of LimOps makes up for it in the long run.

My overarching objective was to make the 'bots work for any combination of players and Non-Players. *Andean Abyss* doesn't have any Government 'bot at all, which was always my biggest gripe with it. *Cuba Libre* has 'bots for all four factions, but they were designed on the assumption that the first two players would choose the Castro and Government factions (i.e., the historical winner and biggest loser respectively), which leads to poor 'bot behaviors when players choose other factions to play instead. This happened in an early demonstration game... With this in mind, the *Fire in the Lake* 'bots are all designed to fight alone if they have to.

A major part of meeting this objective was to make each 'bot provide as much of a challenge for allied players as it does for enemy ones. Providing a challenge just for the enemies simply requires the 'bot to fight as well as it can, but this often allows its ally to ride to victory "on the 'bot's shoulders", so to speak. Providing a challenge for the ally only is easy too: just make the 'bot an uncooperative asshole so it wrecks its ally's plans and prospects and smoothes the path for the enemy factions. We needed to balance these two extremes somewhere in between, so the 'bots are designed to fight to keep their enemies down but also to backstab a player ally that gets too successful! Getting the level of internecine backstabbing just right took a lot of trial and error, particularly for the COIN factions. (The 'bots won't deliberately backstab 'bot allies 'though, since this would make the game too easy for an enemy player.)

With the Pivotal Events, we first tried to make the 'bots use them at an optimal time either to trump some really nasty Event or when the 'bot would get the biggest advantage out of it. Unfortunately these "optimal times" turned out to be so rare (or so easy to miss) that the 'bots rarely used their Pivotal Events at all! Instead Volko came up with the idea to make the 'bots play their Pivotal the first time they could do so while trumping a player. This might not be optimal from the 'bot's own perspective, but it is better than not playing the Events at all – and it can be extremely annoying for the player who gets trumped.

### VC

VCbot was in many respects the easiest one to design. VC has the lowest number of both units and unit types in the game, and its Victory Conditions and abilities are similar to those of the main insurgent factions in the previous COIN games (FARC, M26, and Taliban, respectively). This made the core logic of this 'bot straightforward: use Terror immediately when given the chance to do so in Support spaces (e.g., at the start of the Short and Medium scenarios),

to open those spaces up to VC Rallies before the terrorist cells can be Swept by the COIN factions; then build up both strength and infrastructure to allow Agitation, March into new spaces to spread the word further, and Attack only as a last resort.

The devil is in the details, though. VC's ability to Ambush from LoCs or straight off the March has no equivalent at all in the previous COIN games, and the Tax ability is much more powerful (and two-edged!) than the various other money-grabbing Special Activities in those games. Taxing means that VCbot rarely has to worry about its finances, but getting the 'bot to use it without ruining its own Opposition VPs or blocking itself from Rallying by shifting spaces to Support took a while. The VC's adversaries in *Fire in the Lake* are very different too, requiring other VCbot priorities to best exploit any opportunities given. The Subvert Special Activity is important, since VC is the only Insurgent faction capable of reducing ARVN Patronage. But, in order to let the 'bot Tax when it needs to and Ambush when can, we nevertheless placed the Subvert box last in the flowchart.

## NVA

While the VC feels familiar to veteran COIN gamers, the NVA is something completely new: an "Insurgent" faction with Troops. Playtests of the 4-player game showed that NVA is very vulnerable to US Assaults and Air Strikes, making careful timing of infrastructure build-up, invasions (Marches), and Attacks critical.

The inability to move and Attack in the same Operation (other than to make minor Ambushes) makes it extremely dangerous for the NVA to invade US Base spaces (except for a few special Events like "Vo Nguyen Giap" or "Easter Offensive"). But those Bases tend to be located in the juiciest, high-Population areas, so they can't be avoided forever.

Inflicting US casualties is important, both to send US pieces out of play and to lower the Aid level; but the safest methods for doing that – Ambush and Bombard – both cut into the NVA's ability to build up its infrastructure (Bases) and Troop strength, because each Ambush or Bombard Special Activity denies an NVA opportunity to Infiltrate instead.

Building new Bases is important for gaining more Resources, raising new forces, and Redeploying Troops, but at the same time it uses up Guerrillas that are also needed both as cadres for the new Troops and to protect the existing Bases from Ranger Raids. Terror doesn't really help the NVA reach its goals at all, but since the VC usually take a long while to move Underground Guerrillas into newly-liberated high-Support areas, the NVA often has to use its Troops to suppress pro-RVN sentiments in order to prevent a US victory. (It would be silly if the US's Support VPs were safer in spaces Controlled by the NVAbot than they would be with ARVN in Control, wouldn't it?)

To balance all these conflicting requirements, NVAbot Attacks whenever it can inflict significant casualties before a counter attack or Air Strike destroys its invasion force, or to remove the last COIN piece from a space to reduce the threat of Air Strikes. It then checks if it needs to do Terror, not because it really wants to but because it probably won't get another chance if it delays for too long. The conditions for doing Terror are quite narrow however, to keep NVAbot from doing too much of it. Tearing down Support really is the VC's job, after all!

If no Terror is needed, NVAbot goes into the construction and transport business (i.e., it Rallies and Marches). Here the difficulty was to get the 'bot to March anywhere in the face of persistent US Air Strikes that reduce the Troop strength and Trail level. In some of the early 'bot playtests, NVAbot did nothing but Rally and play Events the whole game through!

That has been solved, not least by letting the 'bot Infiltrate after Marches unless it has a really juicy Ambush target available, but it is still sensitive to poor timing. I've often seen NVAbot reach its Victory conditions half-way through campaigns only to be beaten down just before the Coup. Of course, throwing back the NVA invasion draws the COIN factions' attention away from the VC... and a COIN player who allows NVAbot a chance to move into Saigon is in serious trouble!

## ARVN

The COIN factions in *Fire in the Lake* have a peculiar problem: the VPs of either COIN faction are very tightly tied into what the other COIN faction needs to do to build up or protect its own VPs. The US needs COIN Control to increase Support, and often has to choose between, on one hand, Pacifying to increase its own VPs and, on the other, reducing ARVN Patronage to stay ahead of its ally.

The ARVN on its part needs Support in the spaces it Controls, both to be able to Govern and to keep the VC out. If it gets too greedy and Governs a space all the way down to Neutral, VC Rally & Subvert often removes more ARVN VPs than were gained by that greedy Governing in the first place! At the same time, leaving too many spaces in Support can leave US uncomfortably close to victory, especially if most of the US forces have been withdrawn to Available. So if player US is at Victory, ARVNbot will risk Governing spaces down to Neutral in a somewhat suicidal attempt to keep its ally from winning.

Aside from that tight-rope walk between US Victory and VC Subversion, ARVNbot's core logic was more easy to determine. It aims to keep its forces and Bases on the map by Training a lot, Pacifying as needed to keep its spaces in Support for protection but (hopefully) not so much as to catapult the US into victory. It then Patrols to keep LoCs to all Cities open, taking care not to scatter too many Police or Troops in locations where they could be easily Ambushed or Subverted (thus the requirement to put exactly 3 cubes on each protected LoC, to make it harder for the Insurgents to sneak in Underground Guerrillas there).

Preventing the Insurgents from entering the LoCs for Tax or Sabotage is a low priority for ARVNbot though, since Aid normally provides more income anyway! Beginning the flowchart with these two Op types – Train and Patrol – also allows the 'bot to Govern a lot to push the Aid level up, to build up its Patronage networks and, dare it be said, take a too-successful US player down a notch or two. If the 'bot can't Govern for Patronage anywhere, and if Aid is above zero, it Transports forces either to set up a new Base or to take Control of a space for future Pacification or combat and to add to its Victory via COIN-Controlled Population.

ARVN Troops aren't very good at Assaulting, but exposed Insurgent Bases nevertheless need to be eliminated before the Insurgents can hide them again, and NVA invasions must be fought before the NVA can destroy the defending ARVN Troops. Therefore these two conditions trigger ARVN Assault Ops. If ARVNbot Assaults, it also takes the opportunity to clean up minor pockets of resistance left after previous battles.

If no important Assault targets present themselves, ARVNbot instead Sweeps, first to protect itself against VC Subversion (it really is quite paranoid about that!) and then to move its Troops to expand the area it Controls. But, if it can't do any of that, it drops back to Assault for further clean-up operations.

Executing a Special Activity before the Sweep or Assault instead of afterwards allows Ranger Raids to remove Underground Guerrillas to reduce Sweep requirements or expose a Base before an Assault, or to Transport reinforcements to augment the Operation.

## US

USbot was the one that changed most from my initial concept to the final product. The core structure starting with Assaults followed by Sweeps and ending with Training is still there, but the order of the Special Activities and the various Ops conditions and priorities changed a lot. I've lost track of the number of times I tossed in an idea only to throw it back out again after a quick playtest proved it unworkable!

The original draft had no provision for USbot Patrol Ops since I didn't want the 'bot to scatter its precious Troops in easily Ambushable LoCations, but Volko worked it back in (though with such severe restrictions it very rarely happens).

Mark added the biggest change, the concept of a semi-random US Policy, which makes the 'bot change its pattern of behavior occasionally.

As a side note, the development of the US Policy rule is a good example of how we worked together. The original system for determining the US Policy was rather complex, with several consecutive die rolls and tables of Die Roll Modifiers that depended both on the scenario being played and the number of Coups left in the deck. In spite of this great complexity, its main effect was to determine when in the game USbot would change to a Nixon policy after which it would stick with Nixon for the rest of the game! I came up with a very simple counter proposal comparing a single die roll to the number of Coup/RVN Leader Cards played, which made USbot change policy far more often – far too often, in fact, since the 'bot became outright wishy-washy instead! After some discussions, where I was what Volko euphemistically calls “very persuasive”, but I feel is more appropriately described as “bloody stubborn”, Volko presented the final compromise that ties the Policy checks into both USbot success or failure (VPs) and the time period (the number of RVN Leaders played), yet is both simple and effective.

Designing a single flowchart that would work for all three US Policies was hard. It was even harder to come up with Assault and Sweep conditions that allowed USbot to fight effectively, without either getting stuck in “Heliborne Assault” mode the entire game or sitting as a rabbit caught in the headlights of a truck when the NVA invaded.

For a long while we tried to take Air Lift into account when determining whether or not USbot should Assault or Sweep. But that proved to be a nightmare, since the player(s) had to work out what the 'bot would do, in order to determine whether or not it would do it!

In the end we settled on the current structure, where USbot only chooses to Assault or Sweep if there are suitable Insurgent targets in US-occupied spaces, very rarely Patrols, but mostly wants to Train to Pacify spaces (or cut down Patronage if player ARVN is getting uppity). Training also allows the 'bot to give a lot of Advise to the ARVN, using ARVN pieces to fight and increasing the Aid level.

USbot only goes looking for fresh trouble in the form of Assaultable Insurgents outside US-held spaces if it can also Assault or Sweep in place, or if it can't profitably Train anywhere.

## Final Words

Developing *Fire in the Lake* has been a lot of fun, and I hope you will find the 'bots as challenging to fight (both with as an ally or against!) as I have. Big thanks to Volko and Mark for letting me play around with their game! I also want to thank the other playtesters, especially Eric Gutttag and Kevin Labeeuw, whose many rules questions and suggestions were very valuable, and whose forbearance when we changed the rules on them mid-game was nothing short of angelic.

Now where did I put my old notes about that *Andean Abyss* GovBot? It is time to finish that one now, before the next COIN game goes into playtest...

## CREDITS

### Game Design

Mark Herman and Volko Ruhnke

### Series Development

Mike Bertucelli

### Solitaire Systems

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### Vassal Module

Joel Toppen and Art Bennett

### Playtest

Paul Aceto, Joe Aguayo, Wendell Albright, Jeremy Antley, Jeff Baker, William Scott Bauer, Jack Bennett, Art Bennett, Bruce Callen, Steve Carey, Greg Denysenko, Paul Dobbins, Eric Gutttag, John Gitzen and the Syracuse TNG, Jeff Grossman, Jonathan Haber, Grant Herman, Chris Janiec, Jordan Kehrer, Antero Kuusi, Magnus Kvevlander, Kevin Labeeuw, Zach Lawrence, John Leggat, Mike Owens, Mike Panikowski, Peter Perla, Rich Phares, Peter Regrut, Stéphane Renard, J. Patrick Riley, Andrew Ruhnke, Daniel Ruhnke, Dan Schreiberstein, Joel Tamburo, Roger Taylor, Ken Tee, Jay Volk, Tom Volpe, John Potts, and Marc Guénette, Stéphane Brochu, Benoit Larose, and Matthew Pinchuk with the Stack Académie Montréal.

### Art Director and Package Design

Rodger B. MacGowan

### Map Art

Chechu Nieto

### Card and Counter Art

Mark Simonitch

### Charts

Charlie Kibler

### Producers

Tony Curtis, Rodger MacGowan, Andy Lewis, Gene Billingsley, and Mark Simonitch

### Production Coordinator

Tony Curtis

## CARD LIST

NOTE: Boxed Faction letters mean Non-players do not play these events, underlined that Non-players use special instructions (8.4.1).

1. Gulf of Tonkin **UNAV** 1964
2. Kissinger **UNAV** 1968
3. Peace Talks **UNAV** 1968
4. Top Gun **UNAV** 1968 *2nd Ed*
5. Wild Weasels **UNAV** 1965 *2nd Ed*
6. Aces **UNVA** 1965 *2nd Ed*
7. ADSID **UNVA** 1965
8. Arc Light **UNVA** 1965
9. Psychedelic Cookie **UNVA** 1968
10. Rolling Thunder **UNVA** 1965
11. Abrams **UANV** 1968
12. Capt Buck Adams **UANV** 1968
13. Cobras **UANV** 1968
14. M-48 Patton **UANV** 1965 *2nd Ed*
15. Medevac **UANV** 1964
16. Blowtorch Komer **UAVN** 1968
17. Claymores **UAVN** 1964
18. Combined Action Platoons **UAVN** 1965
19. CORDS **UAVN** 1968
20. Laser Guided Bombs **UAVN** 1968 *2nd Ed*
21. Americal **UVNA** 1968
22. Da Nang **UVNA** 1965
23. Operation Attleboro **UVNA** 1965
24. Operation Starlite **UVNA** 1965
25. TF-116 Riverines **UVNA** 1965
26. LRRP **UVAN** 1964 *2nd Ed*
27. Phoenix Program **UVAN** 1968
28. Search and Destroy **UVAN** 1965
29. Tribesmen **UVAN** 1964
30. USS New Jersey **UVAN** 1968 *2nd Ed*
31. AAA **NUAV** 1964
32. Long Range Guns **NUAV** 1968
33. MiGs **NUAV** 1968
34. SA-2s **NUAV** 1965
35. Thanh Hoa **NUAV** 1968 *2nd Ed*
36. Hamburger Hill **NUVA** 1968
37. Khe Sanh **NUVA** 1968
38. McNamara Line **NUVA** 1965
39. Oriskany **NUVA** 1965
40. PoWs **NUVA** 1968
41. Bombing Pause **NAUV** 1968
42. Chou En Lai **NAUV** 1968
43. Economic Aid **NAUV** 1964
44. Ia Drang **NAUV** 1965
45. PT-76 **NAUV** 1968
46. 559th Transport Grp **NAVU** 1965
47. Chu Luc **NAVU** 1965
48. Nam Dong **NAVU** 1964
49. Russian Arms **NAVU** 1968
50. Uncle Ho **NAVU** 1964
51. 301st Supply Bn **NVUA** 1964
52. RAND **NVUA** 1968
53. Sappers **NVUA** 1965
54. Son Tay **NVUA** 1968
55. Trucks **NVUA** 1964
56. Vo Nguyen Giap **NVAU** 1965
57. International Unrest **NVAU** 1968
58. Pathet Lao **NVAU** 1968
59. Plei Mei **NVAU** 1965
60. War Photographer **NVAU** 1968
61. Armored Cavalry **AUNV** 1968
62. Cambodian Civil War **AUNV** 1968
63. Fact Finding **AUNV** 1964
64. Honolulu Conference **AUNV** 1965
65. International Forces **AUNV** 1968
66. Ambassador Taylor **AUVN** 1964
67. Amphib Landing **AUVN** 1965
68. Green Berets **AUVN** 1964
69. MACV **AUVN** 1965
70. ROKs **AUVN** 1965
71. An Loc **ANUV** 1968
72. Body Count **ANUV** 1965
73. Great Society **ANUV** 1965
74. Lam Son 719 **ANUV** 1968
75. Sihanouk **ANUV** 1964
76. Annam **ANVU** 1965
77. Détente **ANVU** 1968
78. General Lansdale **ANVU** 1965
79. Henry Cabot Lodge **ANVU** 1964
80. Light at the End of the Tunnel **ANVU** 1968
81. CIDG **AVUN** 1965
82. Domino Theory **AVUN** 1965
83. Election **AVUN** 1965
84. To Quoc **AVUN** 1968
85. USAID **AVUN** 1965
86. Mandate of Heaven **AVNU** 1965
87. Nguyen Chanh Thi **AVNU** 1965
88. Phan Quang Dan **AVNU** 1968
89. Tam Chau **AVNU** 1965
90. Walt Rostow **AVNU** 1965
91. Bob Hope **VUNA** 1968
92. SEALORDS **VUNA** 1968
93. Senator Fulbright **VUNA** 1964
94. Tunnel Rats **VUNA** 1968
95. Westmoreland **VUNA** 1965
96. APC **VUAN** 1968
97. Brinks Hotel **VUAN** 1964
98. Long Tan **VUAN** 1965
99. Masher/White Wing **VUAN** 1965
100. Rach Ba Rai **VUAN** 1965
101. Booby Traps **VNUA** 1964
102. Cu Chi **VNUA** 1965
103. Kent State **VNUA** 1968
104. Main Force Bns **VNUA** 1965
105. Rural Pressure **VNUA** 1965
106. Binh Duong **VNAU** 1965
107. Burning Bonze **VNAU** 1964
108. Draft Dodgers **VNAU** 1965
109. Nguyen Huu Tho **VNAU** 1965
110. No Contact **VNAU** 1964
111. Agent Orange **VAUN** 1968
112. Colonel Chau **VAUN** 1964
113. Ruff Puff **VAUN** 1968
114. Tri Quang **VAUN** 1965
115. Typhoon Kate **VAUN** 1968
116. Cadres **VANU** 1964
117. Corps Commanders **VANU** 1968
118. Korean War Arms **VANU** 1964
119. My Lai **VANU** 1968
120. US Press Corps **VANU** 1968
121. Linebacker II **UAVN** *2nd Ed*
122. Easter Offensive **NVAU**
123. Vietnamization **AUNV**
124. Tet Offensive **VNUA**
125. Coup! Nguyen Khanh
126. Coup! Young Turks
127. Coup! Nguyen Cao Ky
128. Coup! Nguyen Van Thieu
129. Coup! Failed Attempt
130. Coup! Failed Attempt



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