

Fire in the Lake Strategy Guide

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Change History

Version 1.0 (Published to BGG 1/19/2015)

Version 1.1 (Published to BGG 1/20/2015)

- Added "Pivotal Events" section
- Populated some "Advanced Tactics"
- Added page numbers

Version 1.2 (Published to BGG 2/4/2015)

- Added "Strategic Principles"
- Added faction commentary
- Changed document name
- Reorganized sections

Version 1.3 (Published to BGG 11/5/2015)

- Changed US Primary Objective "increase support" wording from "Requires US Troop(s) + COIN Control" to "Requires a US Piece + COIN Control"
- Corrected odd PDF page breaks

How to use this document

- Read Left-to-Right
- Column headers guide you, and are consistent across all factions
- Merged cells illustrate multiple methods to accomplish an objective (see #1), or they illustrate that a given Operation/Action might influence the board in multiple ways (see #2)
- For example, to achieve the ARVN **Basic Tactic** of “*Reposition Troops*”
 - **You may...**move troops into an adjacent space...**By carrying out...**Sweep Op
 - OR, **You May...**redistribute 6 Troops and/or Rangers...**By carrying out...**Transport Special Activity
 - OR, **You May...**redistribute your Troops and/or Police...**By carrying out...**Patrol Op

| ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) | | Victory = COIN + Patronage | |
|---|--|------------------------------|--|
| Basic Tactics | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
| 1 <i>Reposition Troops</i> | Move Troops into an adjacent space | Sweep Op | <input type="checkbox"/> May first move onto a Guerrilla-free LoC, then continue to Province or City |
| | Redistribute 6 Troops and/or Rangers from a single space into 1-6 "destination" spaces following the LoC network | Transport Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Destination(s) <u>may</u> be provinces if they are adjacent to the LoC network <input type="checkbox"/> May combine with other Ops to create opportunities that were previously impossible <input type="checkbox"/> Revealed cannot contain guerrilla units |
| | Redistribute your Troops and/or Police among Cities/LoCs | Patrol Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Pieces must end their moves on Cities/LoCs <input type="checkbox"/> Pieces must stop in spaces with Insurgent pieces |
| <i>Add forces to the board</i> | Train at COIN-controlled Cities or Bases (US or ARVN) | Train Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Not a bad idea to maximize your mobilized forces to maintain presence and COIN control <input type="checkbox"/> If available box is empty, you may reposition existing pieces currently on the map (this can be very useful) <input type="checkbox"/> Rangers repositioned as per the bullet above go <u>face down</u> for later use in a Raid. |
| 2 <i>Protect troops and bases</i> | Activate Guerrillas | Sweep Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Active Guerrillas cannot harm troops <input type="checkbox"/> Active Guerrillas are vulnerable to Assaults |
| | Protect Bases | (various movement/train ops) | <input type="checkbox"/> Never leave a base with fewer than 2 other pieces |
| | Protect against Ambushes within provinces/cities or from adjacent provinces/cities | N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure province/city has some level of support AND at least 3 cubes. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not activate Guerrillas who move into the space, and mitigates risk of your removed/replaced cubes via VC Subvert. |
| | Protect against VC Subvert | Patrol Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Patrol to Activate Guerrillas in adjacent LoCs |

As the US, you hit hardest in terms of sheer military power, but your win condition requires that you spend a significant portion of your time on rather passive operations of training and preparing for the pacification step of coup rounds to further your long-term goals. The VC's goals directly conflict with your own. ARVN ostensibly support your efforts through training operations of their own, but don't lose sight of the fact that ARVN ultimately wants to govern away the support garnered in some (or all) of these spaces. The NVA represent a threat to Saigon and/or to the COIN control you need to Pacify and win hearts & minds. You must balance your commitment of troops to this conflict with the support for the southern regime.

| Strategic Principles | Notes & details |
|---|---|
| <i>Bases aid in provincial defense</i> | <p>2-population spaces are high priority for all factions, and will therefore become hotly contested. Bases add flexibility to the way COIN players can respond to threats.</p> <p>Without bases, troops must sweep/patrol/transport/air lift into spaces. Secondly, police are excluded from many of these maneuvers. Bases give both COIN players the ability to train 6 ARVN cubes (including police). While the base survives, you'll be much better able to rally troops/police to resist incursion.</p> |
| <i>Avoid bases in cities</i> | <p>For the reasons above, US bases in cities seem a bit silly. The only tangible benefits are (a) makes assaults in the city more powerful for US Troops (but this requires enemies to walk into the situation in the first place), and (b) allow you to train in that city. Weigh the pros & cons before deciding to use bases in this (relatively) passive manner.</p> |
| <i>Victory requires sufficient Aid</i> | <p>Without Aid, ARVN won't have the resources you need to Train, Train, and Train again. Oh, and to pacify. And to use their troops in combined assaults. You get the point. One campaign where you're short on resources will show you just how impossible it is to get things done without sufficient Aid. I don't know that a magic number exists, but Aid < 20 will certainly begin to cramp your style. And Aid < 10 (combined with some sabotaged LoCs) will limit COIN options considerably.</p> |
| <i>Eliminate enemy troops through Assaults instead of Air Strikes</i> | <p>Since Air Strikes work against your win condition, each Air Strike in a space that results in loss of support effectively comes at an additional cost of 3 resources (and the requisite time & effort involved in Training) needed to recover that lost support, <i>and</i> it helps VC's win condition. Use this powerful tool very sparingly. A great part of Air Strike's value comes from the fact that your opponents must always consider the fact that you CAN use it, even if you rarely/never do.</p> |
| <i>Pair troops with police to aid in scoring</i> | <p>Your biggest opportunity to pacify comes during the coup round, but it requires the combination of Troops + Police. Interestingly, this sets up internal tension because you'll sometimes want your troops clumped together in larger groups for better shock attack capabilities using Air Lift + Assault. A well-timed patrol is probably the best way to efficiently place troop cubes with police in places you'll be able to pacify.</p> |
| <i>Always deploy the max Irregulars</i> | <p>Whenever possible, train Irregulars either with the intent of putting them on the board, or with the intent of flipping used ones back to inactive. Irregulars pose defensive threats that must be considered by the insurgent players. Without deploying them, you save your opponents a lot of risk and complexity.</p> |
| <i>Limit concentrations of troops to those places it's most meaningful</i> | <p>The NVA Special Action "Bombard" can target adjacent spaces that contain 3+ troop cubes (ARVN and/or US), or which contains a COIN base. While it isn't the worst thing that can happen, consider the risks vs. rewards when making a space vulnerable to bombard. Note that only troop cubes can be selected for removal by Bombard; special forces and police are immune.</p> |

| Basic Tactics | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|---|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Reposition Troops | Move Troops into an adjacent space | Sweep Op | <input type="checkbox"/> May move onto a Guerrilla-free LoC first |
| | Redistribute pieces among any 4 spaces | Air Lift Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> May combine with other Ops to create opportunities that were previously impossible <input type="checkbox"/> May redistribute any number of US Troops <input type="checkbox"/> May carry up to 4 Irregulars or ARVN Troops/Rangers |
| | Redistribute your Troops among Cities/LoCs | Patrol Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Pieces must end their moves on Cities/LoCs <input type="checkbox"/> Pieces must stop in spaces with Insurgent pieces <input type="checkbox"/> Irregulars may not Patrol |
| Increase presence/numbers without committing more Troops | Train Irregulars | Train Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Irregulars protect bases <input type="checkbox"/> Irregulars always return to the Available box during coups and do not decrease Aid |
| Protect troops and bases | Activate Guerrillas | Sweep Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Active Guerrillas can attack troops, but not without an element of risk on the part of the insurgent player (see “attack” rule 3.3.3) <input type="checkbox"/> Active Guerrillas are vulnerable to Assaults & Air Strikes |
| | Protect Bases | (various movement/train ops) | <input type="checkbox"/> Never leave a base without Troop/Irregular pieces to protect it |
| | Protect against Ambushes within provinces/cities or from adjacent provinces/cities | N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure province/city has some level of support, AND <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure province/city contains at least 3 cubes |
| | Protect against Ambushes from adjacent LoCs | Patrol Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Patrol to Activate Guerrillas in adjacent LoCs |

| Advanced Tactics | Notes & details |
|---|---|
| Assault + Air Lift + Assault to attack twice in the same turn with US Troops | If US Troops begin their turn in the same space as enemy pieces (Space A), you may Assault + Air Lift and resolve the Assault in Space A, then interrupt the Assault to Air Lift those Troops into a second location (Space B), then continue the Assault in Space B. In effect the same US Troops have struck twice in the same turn. |
| Air Lift + Train to Insert Special Forces where they'll be most annoying | Move US Troops or Irregulars to a new location using Air Lift, then train to place 1-2 Irregulars (either from Available, or from another location on the map if there are none in Available). |
| Air Strike + Train to repair damage done to support in target spaces | If you're disappointed at the idea of the damage done to support via Air Strike, Train & Pacify in the same space to undo that damage and potentially relocate some Irregulars to that space in the same move. |

| Primary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Increase Support in spaces to increase overall score | Directly increase support in a City or Province | Train Op, Pacification action | <input type="checkbox"/> Requires a US Piece + COIN Control <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize Cities to prevent Insurgents <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize high-population spaces |
| | | Pacification (Coup 6.3.1) | <input type="checkbox"/> Requires US Troop(s) + Police + COIN Control <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize Cities to prevent Insurgents <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize high-population spaces |
| Maximize Available forces to increase overall score | Move pieces to the Available box (remove them from the map) | Commitment (Coup 6.5) & Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Move Troops & Bases back to Available box <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing Troops too early limits your ability to increase Support and limit enemy activity |
| Remove VC Guerrillas and Bases <i>(VC work directly against your primary objectives and are therefore your top priority opponent.)</i> | Activate & Assault VC Guerrillas and Bases using Troops | Sweep Op + Assault Op | <input type="checkbox"/> This requires 2 turns to coordinate (due to 2 separate Ops) <input type="checkbox"/> US Bases maximize US Assault power; make US Assaults 2:1 <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive Guerrillas may not be removed with assault, and bases may not be removed if Inactive Guerrillas are present |
| | | Advise Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses ARVN pieces for Sweep or Assault instead of using US Troops <input type="checkbox"/> ARVN Assault is weaker than US <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive Guerrillas may not be removed with assault, and bases may not be removed if Inactive Guerrillas are present |
| | Remove VC pieces (including inactive Guerrillas) using Special Forces | Advise Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> May use Irregulars or ARVN Rangers <input type="checkbox"/> Irregulars/Rangers may not move as part of this action <input type="checkbox"/> Only 1 Irregular/Ranger may be Activated per space |
| | Remove Activated Guerrillas & Bases using Air Strikes | Air Strike Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Removes 6 pieces from up to 6 spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Requires 1 COIN piece in each target space <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot remove Inactive Guerrillas <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive Guerrillas protect Bases <input type="checkbox"/> Reduces Support in each target space |
| | Activate & Assault Guerrillas on LoCs | Patrol Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Activates Guerrillas equal to cubes on each LoC, and free Assault on 1 LoC |

| Secondary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|--|---|--|---|
| Support ARVN Promote COIN Control | Outnumber NVA/VC units in spaces. Use movement and/or removal tactics to achieve numeric superiority. | (see tactics to remove enemy or reposition Troops) | <input type="checkbox"/> COIN control is required to Pacify (your primary objective) <input type="checkbox"/> COIN control is only essential to ARVN victory <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor ARVN total points and act accordingly |
| Establish Bases in high-activity spaces | Place US Bases in spaces as fire support for US Troops | Commitment (Coup 6.5) & Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Requires COIN Control <input type="checkbox"/> US Bases maximize US Assault power; make US Assaults 2:1 |

| Tertiary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|---|--|---|---|
| Increase Aid to ARVN | Increase the amount of resources ARVN earns next Coup round | Advise Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Advise always grants +6 Aid <input type="checkbox"/> If you execute an ARVN assault and remove a base, grants another +6 Aid |
| Ensure US Troops are paired with ARVN Police | Train ARVN Police at a US base, or bargain with ARVN player for Police redeployment | Train Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Pairing US Troops with Police allows Pacification during Coup phase 6.3.1 |
| COIN control in at least one Laos/Cambodia space | Move forces into Laos/Cambodia in order to reduce the Trail during the next Coup round | Sweep Op Air Lift Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Troops present in Laos/Cambodia during Coup will go <i>out of play</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Much better to use Irregulars--they return to Available |
| Reduce ARVN Patronage | Remove Patronage to ARVN Resources | Train Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Training in Saigon removes 3 Patronage to ARVN Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Only if no Pacification is possible during Training Op |

As the ARVN, your ability to conduct combat pales in comparison to your mobility to move among the cities & LoCs and the versatility of your Ranger Special Forces to search and destroy enemy units. The US is your COIN compatriot, but their goals simply do not align with your own, and if you spend the majority of your time assisting US with the eradication of insurgent forces through sweeps & raids, you will likely find yourself outdistanced in the end as the US pulls away through their training & pacification operations. The NVA work directly against you for control of cities & provinces, and your combat ability is roughly equal to theirs unless you conduct combat operations in Highland spaces where the defensive ground makes the fight uneven. You can train and deploy new troops to conflict areas (if they are cities) both rapidly and at very little cost compared to the NVA's level of effort to achieve the same ends, but provinces pose a much more difficult challenge since you must redeploy away from these areas during coup rounds. You require more than 50 points to win and if you manage to hold only the cities then you're 14 points closer to victory. Perhaps you can manage to leech the US of 30+ Patronage so you can get away with only becoming involved in wrestling for three or four provinces?

| Strategic Principles | Notes & details |
|---|---|
| <i>Increase patronage as a top priority</i> | Removing insurgents can be helpful, and when things approach a breaking point, but at each point in the game where you're put to a decision of "remove insurgents" or "increase patronage", give serious consideration to increasing patronage. You'll need upwards of 30 patronage to attain your win condition. |
| <i>Consider how much of an enemy you must make of insurgents</i> | Yes they're your rivals, but you only need to outnumber them. Carefully consider the extent to which you want to engage them, because your troops are tactically weaker than the US and much less able to inflict losses due to the severe limitations on the Transport special activity. |
| <i>Maximize Aid</i> | Aid gives you resources, and without these your campaign will likely falter. Additionally, you require Aid if you intend to Govern (since govern converts Aid to Patronage). |

| Basic Tactics | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| Reposition Troops | Move Troops into an adjacent space | Sweep Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ May first move onto a Guerrilla-free LoC, then continue into a Province or City |
| | Redistribute 6 Troops and/or Rangers from a single space into 1-6 “destination” spaces following the LoC network | Transport Special Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Destination(s) <u>may</u> be provinces if they are adjacent to the LoC network ❑ May combine with other Ops to create opportunities that were previously impossible ❑ Path traveled cannot contain guerrilla units |
| | Redistribute your Troops and/or Police among Cities/LoCs | Patrol Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Pieces must end their moves on Cities/LoCs ❑ Pieces must stop in spaces with Insurgent pieces |
| Add forces to the board | Train at COIN-controlled Cities or Bases (US or ARVN) | Train Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Not a bad idea to maximize your mobilized forces to maintain presence and COIN control ❑ If available box is empty, you may reposition existing pieces currently on the map (this can be very useful) ❑ Rangers repositioned as per the bullet above go <u>face down</u> for later use in a Raid. |
| Protect troops and bases | Activate Guerrillas | Sweep Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Active Guerrillas can attack troops, but not without an element of risk on the part of the insurgent player (see “attack” rule 3.3.3) ❑ Active Guerrillas are vulnerable to Assaults |
| | Protect Bases | (various movement/train ops) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Never leave a base with fewer than 2 other pieces |
| | Protect against Ambushes within provinces/cities or from adjacent provinces/cities | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Ensure province/city has some level of support AND at least 3 cubes. ❑ This will activate Guerrillas who move into the space, and mitigates risk of your removed/replaced cubes via VC Subvert. |
| | Protect against VC Subvert | | |
| | Protect against Ambushes from adjacent LoCs | Patrol Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Patrol to Activate Guerrillas in adjacent LoCs |

| Advanced Tactics | Notes & details |
|--|---|
| <i>Assault + Transport + Assault to attack twice in the same turn with ARVN Troops</i> | If ARVN Troops begin their turn in the same space as enemy pieces (Space A), you may Assault + Transport and resolve the Assault in Space A, then interrupt the Assault to Transport those Troops into a second location (Space B), then continue the Assault in Space B. In effect the same ARVN Troops have struck twice in the same turn. |
| <i>Train + Transport to immediately redeploy newly-placed pieces to provincial or contested areas</i> | Normally you can only place newly-trained pieces on bases or cities. This combination allows you to respond to an immediate threat in a province (or NVA-controlled space) by immediately moving your newly-placed pieces there. |

| Primary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|--|--|---|--|
| Increase Patronage to increase score | Shift spaces with support toward neutral; profit from this shift | Govern Special Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive support is required to prevent Guerrilla rallying |
| COIN Control in Cities | Outnumber NVA/VC units. Use movement and/or removal tactics to achieve numeric superiority. | (see removal tactics below and or reposition tactics above) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COIN control is part of your primary objective Prioritize higher population cities |
| Remove enemy Troops, Guerrillas, and Bases... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...in non-COIN-controlled spaces to take them over and increase your score ...in COIN-controlled spaces to subdue resistance and maintain score | Activate & Assault Guerrillas and Bases using Troops | Sweep Op + Assault Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This requires 2 turns to coordinate (due to 2 separate Ops) Inactive Guerrillas may not be removed with assault, and bases may not be removed if Inactive Guerrillas are present |
| | Remove pieces (including inactive Guerrillas) using Rangers | Raid Special Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rangers may move to an adjacent space as part of this action, but they may not utilize LoCs to increase the distance traveled. Multiple Rangers may move into the selected space, but only 1 Ranger per space may be Activated to remove enemy units. Can remove up to 2 enemy pieces; bases last. |
| | Activate & Assault Guerrillas on LoCs | Patrol Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activates Guerrillas equal to cubes on each LoC, and free Assault on 1 LoC |

| Secondary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|--|--|---|--|
| COIN Control of Provinces | Outnumber NVA/VC units. Use movement and/or removal tactics to achieve numeric superiority. | (see removal tactics below and or reposition tactics above) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COIN control is part of your primary objective Prioritize high-population Highland provinces because if they become occupied by enemy, they're much more difficult to conduct combat operation |
| Increase Support in spaces to reduce risk of Guerrilla activity | Directly increase support in a City or Province | Train Op, Pacification action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires ARVN Troop(s) + Police + COIN Control Prioritize Cities to prevent Insurgents Prioritize high-population spaces Passive Support is enough for purposes of preventing Guerrilla rallying. Active Support increases US score. |
| Increase Support in spaces to later gain Patronage | | Pacification (Coup 6.3.1) | |

| Tertiary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|---|--|--|---|
| <i>Place bases in provinces where troops are needed after coups</i> | Replace 3 cubes with a base after training in a province | <u>Train</u> Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Recommend provinces only because bases only benefit cities by increasing its total ARVN piece count |
| <i>Increase aid</i> | Use a special activity to gain support | <u>Govern</u> Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Strictly better on 2 population spaces |
| <i>COIN control in at least one Laos/Cambodia space</i> | Move forces into Laos/Cambodia in order to reduce the Trail during the next Coup round | <u>Sweep</u> Op <u>Transport</u> Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Troops present in Laos/Cambodia during Coup will return to available <input type="checkbox"/> Remember trail automatically corrects from 5 -> 4 and from 1 -> 2, so if trail is at 5 or 2, no need to pursue this objective |

As the VC, you represent a highly resilient and adaptable force who can achieve major goals without needing large numbers of massed personnel. On average, COIN requires a two-step approach to remove your pieces (Sweep + Assault), and in the event COIN forces manage to eliminate you from a space, you are still able to Rally there as long as the space is not in support. It only takes a single guerrilla to make major leaps toward victory through a Terror op, and (potentially) again later during the Agitation phase of the next coup round if COIN doesn't gain control of that space. The US competes with you directly since they seek to garner support, and their air strikes--while powerful--work against them unless the space is already in full opposition. The NVA takes a sometimes ambivalent, sometimes aggressive stance toward you. They're able to steal your base and undermine opposition using their powerful infiltrate special action. The ARVN potentially have the least to gain by opposing you since they only seek to keep some spaces in support in order to leech Patronage from the US.

| Strategic Principles | Notes & details |
|---|---|
| <i>Maximize your presence on the board by continually rallying, protecting bases, and subverting vulnerable ARVN cubes</i> | Top priority to the VC is the ability to influence opposition & bases, and the key to that is producing guerrillas. Don't let your numbers dwindle, and buffer spaces that contain bases with a few extra guerrillas. Subverting will either remove 2 ARVN cubes, or remove 1 cube + place a face down guerrilla; you almost cannot go wrong with this--unless it makes more sense to do some ambushing.. |
| <i>Ambush</i> | This is one of your most potent weapons against the US. Since the US can only add 10 more troops to the board during the commitment phase of a coup (and only if they do not reposition any troops already on the ground), 3 troops removed represent a permanent decrease in US forces even though they don't necessarily make it to the "out of play" box. Additionally, each ambushed piece means -3 Aid during the upcoming Coup round, which will limit COIN operations during the following campaign. |
| <i>Terrorize high population spaces</i> | Jungles and Highlands represent places where you can dig in versus ground forces due to increased difficulty to expose & engage with troops. But as long as a space is not in support, you can rally in very flexible ways to begin operations on new fronts at any time. |
| <i>Small numbers can have large impact</i> | It only takes a single guerrilla to commence Terror ops and push Agitation during a coup round. Even if you take heavy losses, don't become demoralized or discount your chances. COIN will find it very difficult to move around and train/pacify while they're scrambling to eliminate your men using Air Strikes, and they're required to use 2-step elimination process (Sweep + Assault). |

| Basic Tactics | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Reposition Troops | Move Troops into adjacent spaces | March Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Marching into spaces with support may activate guerrillas (see 3.3.2) <input type="checkbox"/> Marching into spaces with support will deter US Air Strikes <input type="checkbox"/> LoCs are free |
| Add forces to the board | Add Guerrillas and/or Bases to spaces without any level of support | Rally Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bases greatly improve guerrilla unit creation and are part of your win condition <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize Highland spaces because they are much more difficult for COIN to remove your units <input type="checkbox"/> Consider rallying in cities when possible. Non-COIN controlled cities automatically sabotage all adjacent LoCs during Coup rounds. |
| | Replace ARVN pieces with your own pieces | Subvert Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Also reduces ARVN patronage |
| Protect troops and bases | Inactivate Guerrillas to protect themselves and nearby bases | Rally Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive Guerrillas can only be removed by Special Forces (Rangers/Irregulars) <input type="checkbox"/> Active Guerrillas are vulnerable to Assaults |
| | Protect Bases | (movement/rally/subvert to add Guerrillas) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Never leave a base with fewer than 2 other pieces to protect from Special Forces <input type="checkbox"/> Consider protecting important bases (Highland bases?) with 6 Guerrillas to protect against Air Strikes |
| Generate income | Temporarily sacrifice points & expose a guerrilla to generate income | Tax Special Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Taxing LoCs remove the “con” of promoting support <input type="checkbox"/> Consider combining with Terror to reduce support wherever you increased it |
| Remove enemy Troops | Activate a Guerrilla to remove one enemy piece | Ambush Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Guerrillas on LoCs can target adjacent spaces |
| | Activate all Guerrillas to potentially remove two enemy pieces | Attack Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ill-advised (exposes all Guerrillas and may not succeed) <input type="checkbox"/> Suffers from attrition if you remove US pieces |
| | Replace ARVN pieces with your own pieces | Subvert Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Also reduces ARVN patronage |

| Advanced Tactics | Notes & details |
|--|---|
| <i>Ambush + March from an LoC to avoid activation upon entering a space</i> | By executing an Ambush from an LoC, you can decrease the COIN piece count enough that your subsequent March Operation does not activate any of the moving Guerrillas. |
| <i>Terror + Tax to remove the support caused by taxation</i> | By executing this combination, you remove the support that taxation generates while pocketing a potentially large net profit. |

| Primary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Increase opposition | Activate inactive Guerrillas to shift spaces toward opposition | Terror Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contributes to your win condition <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on high-population areas due to greater score <input type="checkbox"/> Terror tokens make Pacification more expensive |
| Increase your presence on the board by adding Guerrillas and Bases | Add Guerrillas and/or Bases to spaces without any level of support | Rally Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bases greatly improve guerrilla unit creation and are part of your win condition <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize Highland spaces because they are much more difficult for COIN to remove your units <input type="checkbox"/> Consider rallying in cities when possible. Non-COIN controlled cities automatically sabotage all adjacent LoCs during Coup rounds. |
| | Replace ARVN pieces with your own pieces | Subvert Special Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Also reduces ARVN patronage |

| Secondary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Occupy LoCs to undermine the ARVN economy & disrupt COIN unit mobility | Move your Guerrillas to LoC spaces | March Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Guerrillas present during a coup will automatically sabotage LoCs and reduce ARVN income <input type="checkbox"/> US/ARVN cannot patrol through your Guerrilla units...consider blocking access to key Cities, or blocking their ability to move from North to South by occupying two parallel LoCs <input type="checkbox"/> Guerrillas on LoCs can Ambush adjacent spaces |
| Remove enemy pieces | Move to LoCs or spaces with COIN pieces, then strike | (see removal tactics above) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reduces Aid (during coup round) <input type="checkbox"/> Reduces US presence & their ability to pacify <input type="checkbox"/> Reduces risk to your own pieces (air strike spotters) <input type="checkbox"/> Removes COIN control (helps <i>Agitate</i> during coup) |
| Increase funds | Temporarily sacrifice points & expose a guerrilla to generate income | Tax Special Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Taxing LoCs remove the “con” of promoting support <input type="checkbox"/> Consider combining with Terror to reduce support wherever you increased it |
| Position guerrillas to Agitate during the next coup round | Place at least one guerrilla in locations <i>without COIN control</i> where you'll benefit from a shift toward opposition | March Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Only one guerrilla is required to agitate during the coup. <input type="checkbox"/> Guerrillas do not need to be inactive to agitate. <input type="checkbox"/> Your <i>opponent</i> might perceive one guerrilla as “not worth it to sweep & eliminate”, which only helps you |
| | | Rally Op | |
| | | Subvert Special Activity | |

| Tertiary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Reduce ARVN Patronage | Reduce ARVN patronage by replacing ARVN pieces with your own pieces | Subvert Special Activity | |

As the NVA, your primary mission is control of South Vietnam’s population through superior military strength. Your conventional combat ability combined with your numbers make you capable of going toe-to-toe with COIN, and terrain has no impact to your combat capability (COIN doesn’t have this luxury). You also have capable guerrilla units at your disposal for other operations such as establishing bases and ambushing COIN. The ARVN directly oppose you in the south, and Saigon itself is a tempting gem that alone represents 1/3 of your victory condition. Cultivate the Ho Chi Minh trail to maximize your campaign options. Target high-population provinces to maximize your efforts toward your goal. The VC work with you to disrupt and threaten COIN, but the fact is *you’re a major threat to the VC!* The moment you decide VC has become a threat, you can replace their bases with your own. Saves you a lot of work...

| Strategic Principles | Notes & details |
|---|--|
| <i>Utilize the Laos/Cambodia “highway”</i> | As long as troops/guerrillas ended their previous March move in Laos or Cambodia, then the Marching troops/guerrillas may continue to March into subsequent destination(s) (see 3.3.2 for details) paying full price--1 resource--per province on the travel path. |
| <i>Use the trail to fuel your war machine</i> | See above about using Laos/Cambodia as a highway. If The Trail is at 4 , however, ALL March maneuvers where the current OR previous March space lies within Laos/Cambodia are FREE! Take full advantage of how cheap & powerful this heavy discount can be toward your aims of invading the south. This means every March invasion into any South Vietnam spaces comes at 0 cost. |
| <i>Threat of invasion may be just as useful as an actual invasion</i> | If you position a large number of troops in Kien Phong (a 2-pop in the southern delta) you’re within reach of <u>three</u> more 2-pop spaces, a 1-pop city, and Saigon. Perhaps you’ll never invade Saigon, but if COIN drops its guard then you can capitalize.. |

| Basic Tactics | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Reposition Troops | Move Troops into adjacent spaces | March Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Marching into spaces with support may activate guerrillas (see 3.3.2) <input type="checkbox"/> Marching into spaces with support will deter US Air Strikes <input type="checkbox"/> LoCs are free |
| Add forces to the board | Add Guerrillas and/or Bases to spaces without any level of support | Rally Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bases enable troop deployment and are part of your win condition <input type="checkbox"/> Bases in Laos/Cambodia are less appealing for COIN to move against due to risk of removal during Coup <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive Guerrillas defend bases, and may be replaced by Troops during Infiltrate <input type="checkbox"/> Highland spaces are much more difficult for COIN to remove your units |
| | Add troops to spaces <i>and/or</i> replace your guerrillas with troops | Infiltrate Special Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Requires a Base <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Trail value improves Troop placement |
| | Replace VC pieces with your pieces (including Bases) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shifts any degree of <i>opposition</i> toward Neutral (does not affect support) <input type="checkbox"/> May replace Tunneled bases |
| Protect troops and bases | Add Guerrillas to protect bases | Rally Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive Guerrillas must be removed before bases <input type="checkbox"/> Keep inactive Guerrillas with bases whenever possible |
| | Move into unfavorable terrain | March Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Highland spaces are much more difficult for COIN to remove your units <input type="checkbox"/> Spaces with support are unfavorable Air Strike targets |
| Remove enemy Troops | Activate a Guerrilla to remove one enemy piece | Ambush Special Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Guerrillas on LoCs can target adjacent spaces |
| | Activate all Guerrillas to potentially remove two enemy pieces | Attack Op | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ill-advised to attack with Guerrillas <input type="checkbox"/> Your Troops do not suffer from terrain disadvantage; you always remove 1 enemy per 2 Troops <input type="checkbox"/> Suffers from attrition if you remove US pieces |
| | Remove enemy troops in adjacent spaces | Bombard Special Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Must target a space with a Base adjacent to 3+ NVA troops which also contains <i>either</i> 3+ enemy Troops <i>or</i> an enemy base <input type="checkbox"/> Only removes Troops. Cannot remove Bases, Police, or Special Forces (Rangers/Irregulars) |

| Advanced Tactics | Notes & details |
|--|--|
| <i>March + Infiltrate to replace VC bases with your own</i> | By executing a March + Infiltrate , you can move troops/guerrillas into a VC space to outnumber them, and then replace their base with your own. |
| <i>Replace VC base with yours</i> | This is mentioned above in the tactics, but worth mentioning again. VC bases can be replaced with your own via infiltrate no matter how many VC guerrillas may appear on that space as long as you have more pieces than VC has. |

| Primary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|--|--|--|--|
| <i>NVA Control in populated areas</i> | Move pieces into spaces to achieve numeric superiority | (see removal and reposition tactics above) | <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize high-population areas <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize Highland spaces, they are much more difficult for COIN to remove your units <input type="checkbox"/> Important Note: VC pieces work against your total here. You must outnumber all non-NVA pieces. |
| | Remove enemy pieces to achieve numeric superiority | | |
| <i>Increase your presence on the board by adding Troops, Guerrillas, and Bases</i> | Build bases and add Troops & Guerrillas | Rally Op + Infiltrate Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Without numbers you will not succeed at NVA control |

| Secondary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Achieve numerical superiority over the US Troops to enable your Pivotal Event and reduce risk of Troop loss</i> | Carry out long-term strategy of reducing US Troop count through various means whenever possible | (see removal tactics above) | <input type="checkbox"/> US Troops are a very potent anti-NVA factor <input type="checkbox"/> US Troops can Air Lift and Air Strike to work against your expensive and time-consuming Rally + Infiltrate operations, and their Assaults often inflict 1-for-1 removal of your pieces <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize removing US pieces whenever possible |
| <i>Occupy LoCs to undermine the ARVN economy & disrupt COIN unit mobility</i> | Move your Guerrillas to LoC spaces | March Op | <input type="checkbox"/> Guerrillas present during a coup will automatically sabotage LoCs and reduce ARVN income <input type="checkbox"/> US/ARVN cannot patrol through your Guerrilla units...consider blocking access to key Cities, or blocking their ability to move from North to South by occupying two parallel LoCs <input type="checkbox"/> Guerrillas on LoCs can Ambush adjacent spaces |
| <i>Improve Trail</i> | Spend resources to improve the Trail's value | Rally Op | <input type="checkbox"/> High Trail value provides benefits to Rally, Income, and Movement |
| <i>Monitor VC's win condition; take their bases for yourself to reduce their score and increase your own</i> | Outnumber VC in a space with one of their bases and you can infiltrate it to replace it with your own (even a tunneled base) | Infiltrate Special Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Shifts any degree of opposition toward Neutral (does not affect support) <input type="checkbox"/> May replace Tunneled bases |

| Tertiary Objectives | You may... | By carrying out... | Notes & details |
|---|--|--|--|
| <i>Protect Laos/Cambodia spaces to avoid Trail degradation</i> | Avoid allowing COIN control in any Laos/Cambodia spaces | (see reposition and removal tactics above) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ During the Coup, a COIN-controlled space will cause the Trail to degrade by 1, reducing your long-term mobility and income |
| <i>Push support toward "Neutral" to open the door for subsequent Guerrilla rallies</i> | Activate inactive Guerrillas to shift spaces toward opposition | <u>Terror Op</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ You prefer to keep spaces at "Neutral" to prevent helping US or VC win conditions ❑ Only pushes <u>Support</u> toward Neutral. Has no effect on spaces that are already Neutral, or are already in some level of opposition |

Pivotal Events

All of these general suggestions for timing the play of these Pivotal Events are, of course, subject to the circumstances when they are playable. Often the one playing the Pivotal Event would prefer (not always) to have their nominal "ally" Eligible to follow up with an Op + SA (especially true if a 2-player game). Sometimes you have to play the Pivotal Event under less than ideal circumstances because the 1st Eligible can play a "killer" Event that you need to bury with that Pivotal Event Card. And as noted, whatever Capabilities are in play can affect what the "optimum" moment is and even whether it's advisable to play the Pivotal Event at all.

Linebacker II (US Pivotal Event): The US usually waits for the NVA Faction to play Easter Offensive (EO), and then drops Linebacker II on them when the "steam" starts to go out of EO, as well as when the NVA has at least 10 Resources. In other words, the US play Linebacker II to essentially cripple the NVA Faction once and for all. As the US can't "trump" any other Pivotal Event, it's rare that Linebacker II will be played first and is often played last.

The Tet Offensive (VC Pivotal Event): Play of The Tet Offensive (TTO), by far the most "chaotic" of the Pivotal Events, should be timed by the VC player for when VC Underground Guerrillas are in good position to make the initial Terror phase effective by increasing Opposition or more likely putting a huge dent in US Support. In terms of placement of the 6 VC pieces (preferably VC Guerrillas) in Cities, I usually put them all in 1 City to assure an "automatic" win in the Attack, and preferably in a City which has Support which will leave the US unable to later conduct Air Strikes without suffering Support losses. Also, if the VC can get to play shaded APC, they can conduct, in essence, 2 TTOs. But the VC player must also be prepared for "retaliation" by the COIN forces to take out all those now Activated VC Guerrillas. It gets even worse if unshaded Cadres is in play which may cause a VC player to hesitate playing TTO at all.

The Easter Offensive (NVA Pivotal Event): The NVA will want to time play of the Easter Offensive (EO) with as many NVA Troops on the map as possible to take full advantage of the free March/free Attacks. Also, if the Route 13/14 LoC connecting An LoC to Saigon isn't blocked by COIN forces, that is an opportune time to play EO to conduct a "blitz" into Saigon (a subtle aspect of EO of NVA Troops on vacant LoCs allows this gambit) and also via the Route 1/9 LoC into Hue. If providently timed just before a Coup Card shows up, the 8 VPs gained by NVA player for Control of Saigon and Hue may lead to a NVA win in the Victory Phase of the Coup Round (and the jaws of the US and ARVN player in particular to drop). As Oerjan Arlander (the Bot Master) has suggested, the ARVN would do well to put 3 Police (and/or ARVN Troops if Police are scarce) on each of these "EO highways" into Saigon and Hue until the threat of EO is over. For the COIN forces, preventing the EO "blitz" gambit should be a high priority. If the COIN do block the EO "blitz" gambit, the NVA player should then look for 2-Pop provinces to invade, preferably targeting Tay Ninh (Jungle, and if the VC still have a Tunneled Base, a potential Infiltrate target), and Binh Dinh and Quang Tri (Highland, provided the US has no Bases there to create a US firebase negating the advantage for Insurgents against COIN Assaults). When Marching NVA Troops, consider also spaces with Support (the Volko "hostage" strategy) that may cause the US player to pause in conducting retaliatory Air Strikes, especially if shaded Arc Light is in play. When Marching NVA Guerrillas, and unless you can get them Underground into a Support space, you're usually better going into spaces which are Neutral (best choice) or at Opposition (next best choice). Having shaded PT-76 in play can also make a difference as to how many NVA Troops need to be in each March group for maximum "kill" power.

Vietnamization (ARVN Pivotal Event): The ARVN should usually play Vietnamization as soon as it's playable because it's like a "goodie bag": the ARVN get Resources (+12); Aid (+12); all ARVN pieces (usually 3 Rangers, 10 Troops, and 2 Bases) go from Out of Play into the Available box; and finally 4 ARVN cubes may be placed anywhere on the map, potentially for a quick COIN Control pick up. Unlike other Pivotal Events, Vietnamization is the one that usually needs to be played as early as possible to gain maximum benefit. The other three Pivotal Events are much more subject to "optimum moments" for play and not necessarily when playable.