

# TARGET: DAMASCUS

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## OPERATION SHOCKTROOP

*Target: Damascus* is an expansion scenario for the game *No Middle Ground*. It extends play to cover the Israeli five day Operation Shocktroop counteroffensive that hurled the Syrian invaders out of Israel and took the Israeli forces to the gates of Damascus.

*Target: Damascus* is composed of the following:

- This set of rules.
- Two 8.5 by 11 maps (east and west halves)
- 106 additional counters.
- Two players' aids sheets

**Note:** This is NOT a complete game. Players will need a six-sided die as well as a copy of *No Middle Ground* by the Microgame Design Group to play *Target: Damascus*. The counters must be mounted and cut out.

All rules from *No Middle Ground* are in effect except where noted in this set of rules.

**Note:** The last two turns of *Target: Damascus* represent entire days, not 8 hours. This represents the increasing fatigue and command-control breakdowns on both sides as the war lengthened.

## 1.0 SEQUENCE OF PLAY

The following rules may be added to the regular *No Middle Ground Game*, as well as in the play of *Target: Damascus*.

### 1.1 Early End Turn.

Place the End Turn marker into the opaque container along with the other formation activation chits at the beginning of the Operations Phase. When a player draws this marker play for the turn ends unless a player decides to ignore the End Turn marker. The decision to ignore or abide by the End Turn marker is first made by the player who drew the chit, then the opposing player. If the Syrian player chooses to ignore the marker, 1 victory point is awarded the Israeli player. If the Israeli player elects to ignore the marker, 1 victory point is deducted from the Israeli player's total. Turn the Victory Point marker(s) upside down on the VP track to record a negative total if needed.

**Clarification:** Either player ignoring the End Turn marker results in the Operations Phase continuing normally, with both players activating units/formations until the end of the turn.

### 1.2 Additional Activation

There are 2 markers that can be placed into the opaque container, along with the other formation activation chits, at the beginning of the Operations Phase. These markers may allow some un-disrupted units on one player's side to activate for a second time in a turn.

The additional activation chits are only used in the *Target: Damascus* game, or once Operation Shocktroop is declared by the Israeli player in the full game.

**Notes:** Only a formation marker can be chosen at the beginning of the Operations Phase when a player has won the initiative, not an additional activation marker. Independent units on either side can be included for a second activation using these additional activation markers.

**1.2.1 Operation Shocktroop Marker.** If the Israeli player draws the Operation Shocktroop marker a number of un-disrupted units from the same formation, equal to the roll of one die, may activate. This activation is in addition to that when the formation's regular activation chit is drawn.

The Operation Shocktroop marker has no effect for the turn if the Syrian player draws the marker.

**1.2.2 Insh'Allah Marker.** If the Syrian player draws the *Insh'Allah* (God wills it) marker a number of in-supply and un-disrupted units from the same formation, equal to the roll of one die, may activate. This activation is in addition to that when the formation's regular activation chit is drawn.

The *Insh'Allah* marker has no effect for the turn if the Israeli player draws the marker, or the Operation Shocktroop marker has already been drawn by the Israeli player.

The *Insh'Allah* marker may not be put into effect or put into the opaque container once the Syrian Command Post is eliminated (see rule 6.4).

**Note:** If the Syrian player has drawn the Operation Shocktroop marker the *Insh'Allah* marker can still be played.

## 2.0 MOVEMENT

The following rule can only be used in play of *Target: Damascus*, or if in the combined game, once the Israeli player declares the start of Operation Shocktroop.

### 2.1 Airmobile Movement

The Israeli player has 3 parachute units that, if in play, can use airmobile movement. The units can only be moved by airmobile movement if the following conditions are in effect:

- It is a day turn.
- There are no Syrian air units in play for the turn (either the Syrian player rolled less than 1 for air unit determination, or any received were driven off for the turn through an Israeli air superiority mission).
- The unit did not already use airmobile movement in a previous day turn of the same date.

An Israeli parachute unit that uses airmobile movement can be

placed in any non-desert terrain hex. Use the airmobile movement markers to record this unit's move. If the unit is placed next to an un-disrupted Syrian, or Arab Allied unit (Jordanian, Iraqi, Kuwaiti, Moroccan, Saudi Arabian, Druze militia) the unit must undergo an AA fire die roll. If the unit is hit by the AA fire it is disrupted.

A parachute unit may not move further after it uses airmobile movement. As long as it has the airmobile movement marker placed upon it, the parachute unit is in supply. At the beginning of the next turn remove the airmobile marker. It functions normally afterwards as long as it remains on the map.

During the next night game turn any un-disrupted parachute unit in play can be removed from the map at the beginning of the turn's operation phase. It may again return to the game, using airmobile movement, in a later day turn.

Parachute units may not be replaced if eliminated. Any parachute units used to seize Mount Hermon may not enter the game at all (see rule 5.3).

### 3.0 REPLACEMENTS AND REINFORCEMENTS

The following rule outlines the entry of the additional units provided in *Target: Damascus*.

#### 3.1 Israeli Reinforcements

The Israeli player has one additional formation and 3 parachute units. All become available once Operation Shocktroop is declared (in the combined game) or on turn 15 of the *Target: Damascus* game. All Israeli reinforcement units enter the game at an Israeli supply source hex in the full game, or any west map edge hex in the *Target: Damascus* game.

**3.1.1 Reserve Division.** The number of units from this formation that enter the game each turn is determined by the roll of one die. The specific units to enter are chosen by the Israeli player.

**3.1.2 Parachute Units.** Up to three parachute units may enter the game. Once Operation Shocktroop is declared the Israeli player must decide if Mount Hermon is to be taken (see rule 5.3). Any parachute units that are not committed to taking Mount Hermon can enter the game using airmobile movement (see rule 2.1). The parachute units are considered independent, and can activate with any one of the other Israeli formations, as well as with the Operation Shocktroop marker.

#### 3.2 Syrian Reinforcements

The Syrian player has units from Arab Allies, as well as some Syrian, that will enter the game.

**3.2.1 Syrian Reinforcements.** The 30<sup>th</sup> mechanized and Command Post units begin the game (combined game or *Target: Damascus*) in the towns of Bethina, Kiswe, and/or Knacker. The 30<sup>th</sup> mechanized is an independent unit and may activate with any other Arab formation (Syrian or Arab Allied). It may not activate, however, until the Israeli player declares the start of Operation Shocktroop. The command post unit has a MP allowance of zero but may activate for combat purposes with any Syrian formation.

**3.2.1 Iraqi Reinforcements.** Iraqi non-emergency units become available on turn 17. These units may enter at any south or east map edge hex. The number of units that can enter each turn is determined by rolling one die. The specific unit(s) that enter play is determined by the Syrian player. Once any of these units enter play, the Iraqi emergency reinforcement unit, if in play, must activate with the other Iraqi units.

**3.2.2 Jordanian Reinforcements.** Jordanian non-emergency units become available on turn 17. These units may enter at any south map edge hex. The number of units that can enter each turn is determined by rolling one die. The specific unit(s) that enter play is determined by the Syrian player. Once any of these units enter play, the Jordanian emergency reinforcement unit, if in play, must activate with the other Jordanian units.

**3.2.3 Arab Allied Reinforcements.** These units (Kuwaiti, Moroccan, and Saudi Arabian) become available on turn 20 at any east map edge hex other than Damascus. The number of units that can enter each turn is determined by rolling one die. The specific unit(s) that enter play is determined by the Syrian player. Once any of these units enter play, the Druze emergency reinforcement unit, if in play, must activate with the other Arab Allied units.

**3.2.4 Syrian Militia.** A number of units are made available, equal to the roll of one die, the turn after the Syrian command post unit is eliminated (see rule 5.4). The Syrian militia unit(s) enter play at Damascus. Any Syrian militia unit that is further than six MP from Damascus is marked as out of supply and suffers accordingly. Syrian militia have no ZOC, and do not cause AA fire die rolls against Israeli air or airmobile units.

Syrian militia units are considered independent, and can activate with any Syrian formation.

#### 3.3 Replacements

Both sides stop checking for replacements with the end of turn 20. Additionally, the following units may not be replaced if eliminated:

- Israeli parachute or Tiran units.
- Any white Arab Allied or Emergency reinforcement units.
- Syrian militia.
- Syrian Command Post.

All Syrian replacement units arrive in Damascus once the Israeli player declares the start of Operation Shocktroop or if playing *Target: Damascus* alone. All Israeli replacement units start at any Israeli supply source hex in the combined game, or any west map edge hex in the *Target: Damascus* game.

### 4.0 SUPPLY

Both players have modified supply rules for *Target: Damascus*, or once the Israeli player declares the start of Operation Shocktroop.

#### 4.1 Israeli Supply

The Israeli player traces supply to any west map edge hex on the western-most map of *Target: Damascus*, or any supply hex on the *No Middle Ground* map if playing the combined game. The Israeli player may only trace supply two hexes off of a road

to a supply source on the *Target: Damascus* maps. Additionally, for a supply line to be traced through a Syrian town hex, the town must be occupied by an Israeli unit. Further, an Israeli supply line may not be traced through a minefield unless it has been cleared.

**4.1.1 Clearing Minefields.** To clear a Syrian minefield that is printed on the map, the Israeli player must have an un-disrupted and in-supply unit remain in the hex for an entire turn outside of an enemy ZOC. Place an upside-down "Minefield cleared" marker to indicate this status. If at the beginning of the next turn the unit is still un-disrupted, in-supply and out of an enemy ZOC the minefield is considered cleared (turn the marker right side up).

To clear the minefields adjacent to a Syrian strong-point (see rule 5.2) the strong-point must be eliminated.

Any anti-tank ditch hex sides along a cleared minefield hex are considered filled in. Cleared minefields are considered to be road hexes for supply purposes only, connecting with any roads in adjacent hexes. They are treated as clear terrain for movement costs/combat effects.

Syrian units treat their minefields as other/clear terrain (i.e., they have effect).

#### 4.2 Syrian/Arab Supply

The supply sources for *Target: Damascus*, or in the combined game, are changed from that in *No Middle Ground*.

Syrian units trace supply to any east map edge hex on the eastern-most map of *Target: Damascus*. All Arab Allied units trace supply as with the Syrian units, or any south map edge map hex of the eastern-most map of *Target: Damascus*.

Syrian militia units, if in play, are automatically in supply as long as they are within six MP of Damascus. Any that are beyond six MP from Damascus are out of supply.

The Syrian Command Post unit is eliminated if it is ever judged out of supply (see rule 4.2).

## 5.0 SPECIAL RULES

The following rules are unique to *Target: Damascus* and take effect in the full game once the Israeli player declares the start of Operation Shocktroop.

### 5.1 Victory Conditions

Victory in *Target: Damascus* or once Operation Shocktroop is declared is determined by victory points (VP). VP are awarded only to the Israeli player for the following:

- +1 VP per village/town hex occupied by an Israeli unit at the end of the game.
- +2 VP for each in-supply and un-disrupted Israeli artillery unit that occupies the bombardment range hexes (shaded) of Damascus.
- +3 VP if Mount Hermon was seized by the Israeli player (see rule 5.3).
- -1 VP for each eliminated or out-of-supply Israeli unit at the end of the game.
- +/- ? VP for ignoring End Turn marker draws.

- - ? VP for air support DRM (Israeli player only, see rule 5.5).

**5.1.1 Scale of Victory.** The total of Israeli VP determines the scale of victory.

- 0 or negative VP total. Syrian decisive victory.
- 1-5 VP total. Syrian minor victory.
- 6-10 VP total. Draw.
- 11-15 VP total. Israeli minor victory.
- 16 or more VP total. Israeli decisive victory.

### 5.2 Syrian Strong-points

The Syrian player begins the game with 10 Strong-point markers. Once these are deployed at the start of the game the Syrian player may not construct any others. The Syrian strong-point markers can not be replaced if destroyed.

Syrian strong-points have different capabilities of Israeli strong-points. The Syrian strong-points have the following effects:

- The six hexes adjacent to the strong-point are considered mined. It costs the Israeli player 1 additional MP to enter a strong-point or its six mined hexes. The Israeli player may not trace a supply line through these hexes, even if occupied by an Israeli unit. The strong-point minefields are only cleared if the strong-point is destroyed.
- A +1 DRM is applied to any bombardment or fire attacks against Syrian/Arab units in a strong-point.
- Un-disrupted defending units are not required to retreat from a strong-point as a result of Assault Combat. Those that were disrupted before the resolution of Assault Combat must still retreat, however.
- Israeli ZOC do not extend into a Syrian strong-point.

Syrian strong-points are destroyed if all of the defending units are destroyed or retreated out of the hex by the Israeli player, or the Israeli player enters an un-occupied strong-point hex. The Syrian player may voluntarily leave a strong-point. Such a move would leave it vulnerable to Israeli occupation, but not cause its outright elimination.

The Israeli player never benefits from Syrian strong-points. Syrian minefields have no effect on Syrian units.

### 5.3 Mount Hermon

The Israeli player may attempt to seize the strategic height of Mount Hermon before the start of *Target: Damascus*, or once Operation Shocktroop is declared in the combined game.

The seizure of Mount Hermon is determined by the Israeli player allocating 1-3 of the parachute units and then rolling a die.

- One parachute unit allocated, DR = 1 results in Mount Hermon taken.
- Two parachute units allocated, DR = 1 to 3 results in Mount Hermon taken.
- Three parachute units allocated, DR = 1-5 results in Mount Hermon taken.

If Mount Hermon is taken, the Israeli player is awarded 3 VP. Any parachute units that are allocated to taking Mount Hermon may not enter the game. If the Israeli player decides not to attempt to take Mount Hermon, or the attempt incurs a failing die

roll, there is no VP penalty. Any parachute unit(s) that are not allocated to seizing Mount Hermon may enter the game per rule 3.1.2.

#### 5.4 Syrian Command Post

The Syrian Command Post represents the Syrian Army command and communications center. The loss of this complex seriously undermined the Syrian military's ability to fight the war.

The Syrian command post has a movement allowance of zero and can not be moved once placed during the game set up. It is considered an independent unit and can activate with any unit/formation for combat purposes.

The Syrian Command post is eliminated if it is forced to retreat or put out of supply. It can not be replaced. If the Syrian command post is eliminated the following are immediately put into effect:

- The Syrian player must subtract one from his/her initiative die rolls for the rest of the game.
- The Syrian player may not ignore the End Turn marker when it is drawn. If the Israeli player chooses to ignore the End Turn marker the Syrian player can continue to activate units normally, however.
- When a formation's activation marker is drawn roll a die for each unit to be activated is made. If the DR = 5 or 6 the unit may not activate (there has been a C3i breakdown).
- A number of Syrian militia units equal to the roll of one die are received as reinforcements on the turn following the Syrian command post's elimination (see rule 3.2.4).
- The Insh'Allah marker (see rule 1.2.2) can not put into effect.

**Note:** The Syrian CP does count towards stacking limits.

#### 5.5 Israeli Air Support

The Israeli player can elect to continue the +1 DRM air support die roll on October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> day turns (18, 19, 21 and 22) by paying a 1 VP per use penalty. The +1 air support DRM is not available from October 14<sup>th</sup> to the end of the game.

### 6.0 COMBINED GAME

*Target: Damascus* can be linked to *No Middle Ground* to simulate the entire war between Israel and Syria in October 1973. Use all of the maps, charts, and units from both game packages.

#### 6.1 Set Up

The Syrian player sets up normally. Until the Israeli player declares the start of Operation Shocktroop any reinforcement or replacement units due the Syrian player can be set up on or adjacent to Maatz or El Mal. Once Operation Shocktroop is declared any Syrian reinforcement or replacement units will abide by rules 3.2 and 3.3.

The Syrian strong-points, command post, and 30<sup>th</sup> mechanized brigade set per rule 7.1.

**6.1.1 Operation Shocktroop.** The Israeli player may declare the start of the Operation Shocktroop counteroffensive when

both of the following apply:

- All Israeli supply source hexes are under Israeli control.
- At least one hex east of the "Purple line" (Syrian border mined hex) is occupied by an Israeli unit or stack.

Once Operation Shocktroop is declared both players receive the reinforcement units per rule 3.0, and the victory conditions of rule 5.1 are in effect. The Israeli player must also immediately decide whether to take Mount Hermon (rule 5.3), allocating parachute unit and resolving its seizure. This decision must be made at the beginning of the turn Operation Shocktroop is declared. Mount Hermon can not be taken at later turn/date. Finally, the additional activation markers (see rule 1.2) are added to the opaque container at the beginning of each turn's Operation Phase.

The Israeli player automatically has the initiative on the turn Operation Shocktroop is declared.

### 7.0 TARGET: DAMASCUS SCENARIO

*Target: Damascus* can be played independently by using the units from *No Middle Ground*. Use the maps and turn record chart from *Target: Damascus* to play this scenario.

#### 7.1 Syrian Set Up

For each of the units from the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> mechanized infantry divisions roll a die. If the DR = 5, the unit is considered eliminated but eligible for replacement. If the DR = 6 the unit is permanently eliminated from the game.

For each of the units from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tank divisions, as well as the Guards armoured brigade and all 3 of the Emergency Reinforcement units, roll a die. If the DR = 4 or 5, the unit is considered eliminated but eligible for replacement. If the DR = 6 the unit is permanently eliminated from the game.

**Note:** None of the Emergency Reinforcement units can be replaced, so they will be permanently eliminated with a set up DR of 4-6.

Once the status of all of the at start units is determined they are set up as follows:

- 5<sup>th</sup> mechanized infantry units set up within 4 hexes of Jubath.
- 7<sup>th</sup> mechanized infantry units set up within 3 hexes of Khan Arnaba, all east of the Purple Line.
- 9<sup>th</sup> mechanized infantry unit set up within 3 hexes of Um Butre or Kudre, all east of the Purple Line.

**Note:** In the above cases, at least one of the hexes east of the Purple Line must be left vacant for the Israeli player's set up.

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tank units and the Guards armoured and any emergency reinforcement units (if in play) set up within 2 hexes of El Mal, Maatz, or Knacker. Only the "emergency units" can be stacked with any of the unit of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> mechanized divisions, all others must be set up separately at the start of the game.
- The Syrian CP and 30<sup>th</sup> mechanized brigade set up in Bethina, Kiswe or Knacker.
- Six Syrian strong-points can be set up in any non-

desert hex on the west map. Four Syrian strong-points can be set up in any non-desert or non-Damascus hex on the east map. All must be east of the AT ditch/minefields..

## 7.2 Israeli Set Up

For each Israeli unit from the *No Middle Ground* game roll a die. If the DR = 4 or 5, the unit is considered eliminated but eligible for replacement. If the DR = 6 the unit is permanently eliminated from the game.

**Note:** This may result in the Israeli player having a negative VP total for the first turns of the game. Turn the VP markers upside down on the VP track to record a negative number total.

Once the status of all of the at start units is determined they are set up as follows:

- All non-Reserve Division units set up west of the Purple line. One stack of units, however, can begin in one hex immediately to the east of the Purple line. Any units can begin set up adjacent to a Syrian unit. In the remote chance there are too many Israeli divisions to allow all to set up at the game start, the excess units may enter the game in later turns as space permits.
- The Reserve Division and parachute units (if any of the latter are in play) will enter as reinforcements per rule 3.1.

## 7.3 Game Start

Begin the *Target: Damascus* game on turn 15. The Israeli player begins the first turn of the scenario (15) with the initiative. All units begin the game in normal status in full supply. Play until the end of turn 28 and then determine victory.

## 8.0 OPERATION BADR: STORM OVER THE GOLAN

This bonus scenario covers the initial two days of the Syrian offensive, Operation Badr. Use only the components and rules from *No Middle Ground*.

### 8.1 Scenario Rules

Play only the first five game turns. There are no replacements available to either side.

### 8.2 Syrian Victory

The Syrians win a decisive victory if the Syrian player occupies any one Israeli supply hex. The Syrian player wins a minor victory if ten or more Israeli units are eliminated.

### 8.3 Israeli Victory

The Israeli player win a decisive victory if the nearest Syrian unit is four or more hexes away from an Israeli supply source hex (count only traversable terrain). The Israeli player wins a minor victory if all of the Israeli supply source hexes are still under Israeli control, and three or more Syrian units are permanently eliminated.

**Note:** It is possible for both sides to achieve a minor victory, in which case the game is considered a draw. It is also possible that neither side can achieve any sort of victory, in which case both players lose. This is war, deal with it!

## 8.4 Go For Broke Victory

Either player can elect to extend the scenario for an additional turn to garner an additional level of victory (i.e., from a draw to a minor victory, or to turn a minor into a decisive victory). Failure to gain the stated goal at the end of turn 6 results in the player's (or players') automatic loss.

## 9.0 DESIGNER'S NOTES

I initially did not consider doing a game covering the Israeli Operation Shocktroop counteroffensive as part of *No Middle Ground*. First, I very much admire and enjoy playing the game of the same title by Perry Moore that was featured in a past issue of *Strategy and Tactics*. It is one of my favorite issue games to have appeared in that magazine (and I have subscribed since 1969!). My decision to develop *Target: Damascus* can be viewed as imitation being the best form of flattery of Perry Moore's game.

Also, the extra counters and maps for the entire campaign was outside of the *Microgame Design Group* format. However, several e-mails from gamers and Kerry Anderson's generous support and ability to be flexible allowed the development of *Target: Damascus* to proceed. To all who play *No Middle Ground* and *Target: Damascus*, enjoy and learn!

## 10.0 CREDITS

**Game Design:** Paul Rohrbaugh  
**Graphics:** Kerry Anderson  
**Playtesting:** Paul Rohrbaugh,  
Brian Brennan,  
Stefan Anton Federsel.  
**Production:** Microgame Design Group  
[www.microgramdesigngroup.ca](http://www.microgramdesigngroup.ca)

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