

Scenario 3 – Proxy War and Insurgency

Deepening economic stagnation and climate change have caused social and political upheaval in many developing countries. Governments have collapsed in several developing states, which are becoming breeding grounds for extremism and violence.

On November 1, in a hotly contested election, Red elects a new government that represents the religious majority. The outgoing government refuses to concede the election, and a civil war erupts. Most Red military leaders resign their posts and join forces with the ousted government to form an insurgent force, which fights a civil war against the remaining military forces wielded by the new government.

Yellow and Orange express public sympathy for the ousted government. Many suspect they are providing material support as well, and there are rumors that Orange training camps are used by Red insurgents. Blue openly supports the new government in Red and is providing them with military aid and advisors to counter the insurgency.

On November 4, Orange announces that one of its TV broadcasting satellites has experienced sustained, deliberate interference on a channel that is owned and operated by a Yellow company. Orange publicly blames the new government in Red and demands that the interference stop. The Red government accuses Orange of using the satellite TV channel to broadcast anti-government propaganda into Red.

On November 7, there is a major solar storm. A large coronal mass ejection strikes the Earth, causing widespread interruptions to power grids across the region. The storm causes widespread interference with satellite capabilities, resulting in failures of several commercial and civil satellites.

On November 9, during a battle between insurgents and Red government forces, a dozen Blue military advisors are killed in an airstrike. Blue claims that this was a deliberate attack on its military advisors by the insurgents and that Yellow's space-based ISR capabilities provided intelligence to support the attack.

Yellow Team - Scenario 3

OBJECTIVE

Yellow's primary objectives are to help restore the ousted government in Red to power and to protect Yellow's own space capabilities to maintain strategic deterrence against Blue.

PRIVATE INFORMATION

Yellow is covertly providing special forces, financial support, and intelligence to Red insurgents.

The Yellow special forces assisting Red insurgents are heavily dependent on satellite communications and space-based PNT to provide support to the Red insurgents. Their primary source of satellite communications is from Yellow commercial satellites, which are also being used to downlink data feeds from Yellow UAVs supporting the insurgency, in order to provide plausible deniability.

Yellow intelligence has geolocated the uplink jamming of the TV satellite as coming from territory controlled by the new Red government. Technical experts say that the jamming bears the hallmarks of a military jamming system developed by the Blue military. The jamming is directed at the transponder used to carry a TV channel sponsored by the Orange government, but is strong enough to have intermittent effects on signals carried by other satellites in the region, including the commercial satellites carrying Yellow's UAV data feeds.

The solar storm did not have any significant effects on Yellow military satellites, but did have an impact on some civil and commercial satellites.

Yellow intelligence assesses that the Red jamming likely played a role in the airstrike on the Blue advisors. Yellow special forces had direct orders to avoid contact with Blue military advisors but may have been unable to determine their presence due to the intermittent interference from the Red jamming of commercial SATCOM links, used by stealthy Yellow UAVs in the area.

In response to the incident, Blue used an airborne laser platform against two of your military ISR satellites, which ended up blinding them.

Blue Team - Scenario 3

OBJECTIVE

Blue's primary objectives are to support the new Red government and to preserve Blue's own space capabilities to maintain strategic deterrence. Blue's secondary objective is to increase its power and influence in the region.

PRIVATE INFORMATION

Blue is overtly providing military advisors, intelligence, and material aid to the new Red government. Blue's support includes covert lending of a military SATCOM jammer to the Red government, which is likely being used to jam the TV broadcast satellite. The TV channel carried by the satellite is being funded by the Orange government and is highly critical of the new Red government.

The Red government reports that a stealthy Yellow UAV was overhead when the Blue military advisors were killed in the airstrike. There is evidence that Yellow UAVs have been providing intelligence to the insurgents.

Several Blue ISR satellites experienced anomalies at the time of the solar storm and are currently offline. Blue has very limited ISR coverage over the conflict area in Red.

Political pressure is building in Blue to avenge the deaths of its military advisors.

In response to the death of the advisor, Blue used an airborne dazzler against two Yellow military ISR satellites.

Orange Team - Scenario 3

OBJECTIVE

Orange's primary objective is to return the ousted government to power in Red. A secondary objective is to undermine Blue's influence and power in the region, including ending the jamming of the commercial SATCOM TV channel.

PRIVATE INFORMATION

The Orange government is funding the TV channel being broadcast into Red via satellite. While the channel is not being run by the Orange military, it naturally has been broadcasting material critical of the new Red government.

Orange has been cooperating with Yellow to provide support for opposition forces in Red. In particular, training camps located in Orange's territory are being used to train insurgent forces in Red.

Red Team - Scenario 3

OBJECTIVE

Red's primary objectives are to solidify its grip on the country and eliminate the ousted government as a political threat. Red also seeks to solidify its alliance with Blue.

PRIVATE INFORMATION

As part of Blue's military assistance to Red, Blue has covertly provided Red with a highly sophisticated SATCOM jammer that is designed to be effective against all commercial communication satellites. The Red government is currently using the jammer to surgically target the broadcast of an Orange-backed TV channel, which has been critical of the new Red government.

The Red government has detected stealthy Yellow UAVs operating over its territory. These flights have coincided with insurgent operations. One such Yellow UAV was detected in the area when the Blue military advisors were killed.

Scenario 3 Summary

Inbrief

The scenario focuses on the tensions created by a proxy war in Red, with Blue actively supporting the new government, and Orange and Yellow covertly supporting an insurgency consisting of remnants from the ousted government. Blue has covertly supplied Red with a military-grade commercial satellite jammer, which is being used to interfere with commercial broadcasts from an Orange satellite that are critical of the new Red government. A major solar storm damages several commercial and civil satellites, with significant impact to Blue's ISR coverage over Red. Blue military advisors are killed in a battle with insurgents, which drew upon Yellow space-based ISR and stealthy UAVs for intelligence and support. Yellow intelligence suggests that the Red SATCOM jamming played a role in the incident. In retaliation, Blue attempts to dazzle two of Yellow's imagery satellites with an airborne laser over Blue territory, which ends up blinding the satellites, but otherwise leaving them operational.

Yellow's primary objectives are to help restore the ousted government in Red to power, and to protect Yellow's own space capabilities to maintain strategic deterrence against Blue.

Blue's primary objectives are to support the new Red government and to preserve Blue's own space capabilities to maintain strategic deterrence. Blue's secondary objective is to increase its power and influence in the region.

Orange's primary objective is to return the ousted government to power in Red. A secondary objective is to undermine Blue's influence and power in the region, including ending the jamming of the commercial SATCOM TV channel.

Red's primary objective is to solidify its grip on the country and eliminate the ousted government as a political threat.

Move 1

Teams were permitted to communicate privately with one another during each move. Actions and public messages were only allowed at the end of a move.

The action in Move 1 was between two alliances. On the Orange/Yellow side, Orange's goals were to support Red insurgents in recapturing their homeland and prevent Blue from attacking Orange. Yellow's goals were also to limit Red's new government's ability to retain control of their country and support the insurgency through an elimination of the Red government's counterspace capability. Additionally, Yellow wanted to eliminate Blue's space control capabilities which attacked Yellow systems without acknowledging their attacks were successful. In general, Yellow wished to remain covert, and avoid further retaliation against its space assets.

Towards the beginning of the move, Orange messaged Yellow to request assistance in restoring stability to the region by supporting the ousted government of Red with naval, ground, and air

forces in order to establish a no fly zone, a blockade of Red's coast, and jamming communications in the Red capital. Orange offered to establish a communications hub and missile defense on and around Skull Island to protect Yellow's forces. Yellow then counter-proposed that the Orange-Yellow alliance deploy a joint naval task force off the coast of Blue to determine Blue's true intentions and objectives. Orange accepted the offer and also agreed to supply naval forces.

At the end of the move, Yellow initiated cyber attacks on power stations in Red, and the planning cell for the Blue airborne laser. Yellow also conducted a cruise missile attack against the airbase supporting the airborne laser. The cyber attack on the Red power stations was successful, and publicly blamed on the solar storm. The cyber attack on the Blue airborne laser was unsuccessful, but attributed to Yellow, while the cruise missile attack was successful. Yellow also began sponsoring a social media campaign to undermine public support for the new Red government.

Orange initiated what it called Operation Restore Freedom, which included activating its military reserves, mobilizing its ground forces to both the Orange/Blue border (to deter a Blue ground attack) and both ground and air forces to the Orange/Red border (to support the Red insurgents), and placing its forces on high alert. Orange also initiated jamming of Red SATCOM and ISR capabilities within Red territory, and attempted a cyber attack into Blue's national banks that were funding the Red government. Both the jamming and the cyber attack were successful, and not attributed to Orange. Orange also deployed naval forces to Skull Island, which defeated the Red/Blue forces simultaneously attempting to do the same, and established a blockade. Finally, Orange military forces joined with the insurgents to make a push against the Red capital.

On the Red/Blue side, Red's goals were to establish themselves as a legitimate government while trying to eject any Yellow and Orange insurgents, UAVs, and advisors from its territory and prevent future interventions. Blue's goals were to remain an economy of force and defense and prevent an escalated conflict in space. At the onset of Move 1, Red proposed a broad strategic alliance with Blue. In a private message, Red made it clear that it was prepared to engage in a broad range of military deployments and active measures in conjunction with Blue. Blue agreed to the mutual defense alliance, but suggested a more diplomatic approach to deterring Orange's support to the Red insurgency.

At the end of Move 1, Red called up its military reserves and deployed air and land forces to the Orange border with the intent of interdicting the flow of supplies to the Red insurgency. Red maintained its jamming of the Orange TV station, and initiated jamming of all PNT within Red territory in an attempt to thwart Yellow/Orange precision attacks. Both were adjudicated as successful. Red also launched joint air attacks with Blue to destroy Yellow UAVs within Red airspace, which were successful. Red launched cyber attacks against the ISR data dissemination systems in Yellow and Orange, which was successful and not attributed. Red tasked its commercial ISR satellites to try and find the insurgent training camps in Orange. Publicly, Red leaked a media report that Yellow was attempting to use the solar storm as cover for hostile activities in space, and announced that Red and Blue entered into a broad strategic alliance.

Blue bolstered the protection of its space control infrastructure, and deployed artillery and tanks to the Red-Orange border. Blue and Orange also attempted to move naval forces into the island chain near Skull Island, but were defeated by Orange forces. They also privately demanded an apology from Yellow for the death of the Blue advisors, and Yellow's aggressive actions against Blue space assets.

Move 2

At the start of Move 2, Yellow sent a private message to Blue clarifying its actions against Blue's airborne laser system. Yellow insisted that their attack was justified and proportional to Blue's prior actions, and proposed to keep this conflict defined to terrestrial domains from then on.

In this move, Red's goals were to push Orange and insurgent forces out of its territory, and use the threat of escalation in space to try and force Orange to back down. Blue's goals were to sustain the new Red government, and avoid horizontal escalation.

Red privately messaged Blue to discuss two possible military operations - one to remove the Orange presence from the Islands using naval forces, SOF, or a cyber attack, and the other to deploy a joint Red-Blue punitive ground mission to remove the terrorist camps in Orange. Blue agreed to the naval action, and offered its full support. However, Red then sent a private message to all the other teams, without Blue's consent, that threatened to use Red's direct ascent ASAT capabilities to "render LEO inoperable" unless Orange and Yellow ended their support for the insurgency.

At the end of Move 2, Red deployed its reserve forces to try and stop the insurgent push on the capital, mobilized its ASAT capabilities, and moved troops to defend the ASAT sites. Red launched successful air strikes against insurgent camps in Orange territory, and launched a special forces raid against the main Orange ISR ground station, which was unsuccessful. Red and Blue also launched a joint attack on the Orange and Yellow naval forces near Skull Island, and managed to gain control, with heavy losses. Red also privately warned Orange to back down, while making a public call for the Red public to help resist the insurgents.

Blue moved its military forces into Red to defend the capital against the insurgent and Orange attack, and launched air strikes, which halted the offensive. Blue also attempted to jam Yellow commercial SATCOM downlinks, military and civil PNT, and ISR satellites over Red territory. The SATCOM jamming was successful, but the PNT jamming and ISR dazzling was unsuccessful. Blue also sent a private message to Yellow, offering to cease its reversible jamming and dazzling attacks if Yellow stays out of the region. Publicly, Blue condemned Yellow's cruise missile attack against its airbase, and warned that continued attacks risked grave escalation between two nuclear powers.

For the Orange-Yellow alliance, Orange's goals were to remove Red Team leadership and restore the previous government, with a close eye on a possible Blue ground invasion. Yellow's goals were to de-escalate in space, support the ousted Red government, and reassure support to Orange in support of the old Red government.

Yellow sent a private message to Orange to consider a joint electronic warfare and cyber attack against the Red government leadership to isolate them. They also recommended both of the alliance's commercial SATCOM companies to not support Red government leadership after these successful attacks. Orange accepted, and requested that Yellow nuclear forces be placed on Stage 1 Alert while also sending a private message to Blue reiterating Yellow's commitment to defending Orange by any means necessary. Yellow reassured Orange of the strength of their alliance.

At the end of Move 2, Yellow attempted to maneuver its two blinded ISR satellites so as to intentionally collide with two Blue ISR satellites at a point where they were out of sight of Blue ground-based SSA sensors. Both attempts succeeded, and the collisions created several thousand pieces of orbital debris. Yellow also attempted to jam Red SATCOM command and control nodes, which was unsuccessful and not attributed to Yellow. Yellow joined Orange in deploying propaganda against the Red government, and publicly called out Red for irresponsibly threatening to inflict harm on everyone's astronauts, including Blue's, with their ASATs.

Orange launched special forces and cruise missile attacks against Red ASAT launch pads and facilities, which were successful. Orange also attempted to use special forces in a decapitation attack against the Red government, which was unsuccessful. Orange leaked to the media that it enjoyed a nuclear guarantee from Yellow as part of their collective security alliance.

Move 3

Red's goals in Move 3 were to stabilize the new Red government and regain internal control, while also further degrading Yellow's space capabilities. Blue's goals were to consolidate the gains they had made earlier in the scenario and assert long-term influence in the region.

Through private communications, Red suggested negotiating a cease-fire with Yellow and Orange, but the round was too short for Red and Blue to agree on the details, and thus it was never formally proposed to Yellow and Orange.

At the end of Move 3, Red worked with Blue to move through Red territory and mop up remaining insurgent forces, while deploying missile defense batteries around the capital. Red launched a cyber attack against a few Yellow military protected communications satellites with the intent of pushing them into super-sync orbit, which was not successful. Red also sent a public message lambasting Yellow for their reckless actions in creating the satellite collisions. Blue increased its airborne ISR patrols over Red to compensate for its lost satellite ISR, and continued its attempts to jam and dazzle Yellow SATCOM, PNT, and ISR over Red territory. Blue privately warned Yellow to stay out of the conflict, while publicly condemning Yellow for degrading the LEO environment and calling for negotiations for an international agreement on norms in space.

Meanwhile, Orange's goal in Move 3 was to avoid further escalation, and prevent a Blue attack into its territory. Yellow's goals were to call peace talks to de-escalate tensions across the region,

blunt Blue aggression indirectly through supporting Orange actions, and free up Orange ground and air forces by providing Yellow air forces in order to allow Orange to apply their forces to support the Red insurgency.

Orange and Yellow experienced several miscommunications during their private messaging, which hampered coordination.

At the end of the move, Yellow took no action, but did release a public message that blamed the satellite collisions on Red, and called for a ceasefire and negotiations between all parties. Orange moved all Orange forces back to its territory to defend against a possible Blue incursion. Orange also issued a public message that condemned Red for the attacks on the insurgent training camps in Orange.

Conclusion

In the post scenario discussion, the Red Team explained that after the Orange push on the capital, Red made the ASAT threat in an attempt to escalate to de-escalate without using nuclear weapons. They also recognize that it backfired, and likely provided a political opening for Yellow to launch the kinetic attacks against Blue satellites. The Yellow Team confirmed that once Red made a public threat about using ASATs, Yellow thought it was a chance to use dead assets to attack Blue in a way that might not have been attributable. Yellow also noted that they felt the long-term increased risk of space debris was seen as a useful trade for taking out valuable Blue ISR assets, although admitted they did not have a full appreciation or discussion of the possible long-term impacts. Blue believed that Yellow's kinetic attack gave Blue the diplomatic high ground, and was ultimately detrimental to Yellow's ability to achieve its objectives.

The Yellow Team also explained that they went after Blue ground stations instead of satellites because they didn't want to let Blue know the laser strikes were effective. Yellow also felt that if the Red cyber attack on Yellow military protected SATCOM was successful, they would have considered it a threat to its strategic deterrent and placed its nuclear weapons on high alert. Yellow stated they probably would have done the same thing if the attack had been on non-protected SATCOM because the same capability could have threatened the protected SATCOM.

The Blue Team recognized that its attacks on Yellow were aggressive, but insisted that they were *reversible* and therefore perceived by the team to be less escalatory. The Blue jamming and dazzling attacks were designed to try to coerce Yellow, and by extension, Orange, although it didn't work. The Blue Team also stated that they didn't respond to the kinetic attacks on its dazzler airbase because it felt the conflict in Red was resolving in its favor, and it didn't want to escalate again. They also focused their attacks in Red to avoid risking bringing Yellow into the conflict directly.

The Red Team stated that they found offensive cyber capabilities to be consistently more useful than space control capabilities, which other teams largely agreed with. This was because the cyber capabilities were perceived as usable, while the space control capabilities largely were not.

The Orange Team noted that the only thing they could do, given limited space capability, was to attack Red ASAT ground stations. Orange originally misread Blue's intentions, and felt that Blue was preparing for a major invasion of Orange.