

We Must Tell the President!

A Wargame of the Coming War in the Pacific by Evan D'Alessandro

Setup

At the start pull out the *NUKE!* card and *US Submarines* card from the deck, both these cards start in play and can be used immediately. Shuffle the rest of the deck. Put 4 cubes in the USMC and 7th Fleet box, 3 cubes in the Rally Round the Flag box, and 2 cubes in the Strategic Reserve box. Place markers on the first space of each of the four tracks as far away from the White House space as possible. The markers may never be moved further back than the first space or beyond the White House space.

Key Terms

- There are four Tracks. The Pacific track represents naval combat in the Pacific, the Taiwan track represents the battle for Taiwan in the strait and on land, the Will to Fight track represents the Homefront in the United States, and the Munitions and Materials track represents logistics.
- “Advance” means to move the marker along the track towards the White House.
- “Push Back” means to move the marker along the track away from the White House.

Turns

1. First, before the card for the turn is drawn, cubes may be removed in any number from any box(es) in any order to move tracks or to have other effects.
2. Second, draw a card and resolve in order of 1,2,3. As you play, lay the cards down in order so you can see the narrative of what has happened thus far.

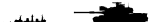
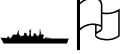
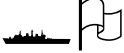
DF-26 Attack on Guam	Card Name
	1) Tracks that Advance
If the munitions track is 3 or less from the White House decrease political will by 1.	2) Card Effects
1 Action.	3) Number of Actions that you can take this turn

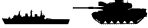
Actions are described on the board, under the USMC + 7th Fleet and Rally Round the Flag boxes. Removing cubes is *not* an action.

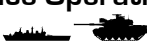
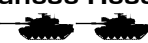
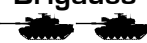
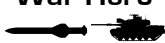
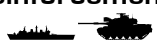
Ending the Game

If at the end of any turn there are no more cards to draw, the war has been drawn out sufficiently that it will be measured in years, not months or weeks, and its fate (and responsibility) is no longer in your hands. You win (and get to “write” a best-selling memoir in 20 years)!

If at the end of any turn, any marker is on the White House, you **Must Tell the President** that the war is lost, and you lose. *Compose your resignation letter appropriately.*

Subs in the Strait  Push back the Taiwan Invasion track by 1. No Actions	Chinese Hydrophone Arrays Remove the US Submarines Card. If the card is already out of play advance the Pacific track by 1. 1 Action	US Submarines Once per turn while you hold this card when you push back the Taiwan track, you may push it back by an additional one.	NUKE! Roll a d6: on an even number you win the game. On an odd number you lose.
Northern Theater Navy Reinforcements  1 Action	Southern Theater Navy Reinforcements  1 Action	Long Range Precision Artillery Strikes on Taiwan  1 Action	DF-26 Attack on Guam  If the munitions track is 3 or less from the White House advance the Will to Fight track by 1. 1 Action
DF-26 Strike on Wake  1 Action	Strikes on Okinawa  1 Action	EABO  Until the end of the game USMC+7th Fleet cubes can be used to push back the Taiwan track. 1 Action	Defense Production Act  Push back the Munitions and Materials track by 1. 1 Action
Guam Based Bombers  <i>Ignore this card if DF-26 Attack on Guam has been played.</i> Push back the Pacific track by one. If it is 3 or more away from the White House, push back Will to Fight track by 1 as well. 1 Action	PLAAF Localized Air Superiority Over Taiwan  1 Action	Dispersed Basing  Hold on to this card. As an action: Use this card to cancel any card that would advance the Pacific track, then discard this card.	PACFLEET From Pearl  Push back either the Pacific or Taiwan track by 1. 2 Actions
West Coast PACFLEET  Push back both the Pacific and Taiwan tracks by 1, or add 1d2 cubes to the USMC box. 2 Actions	PLAAF Airborne Corps  1 Action	Chinese Commercial Sealift  1 Action	USAF Air Combat Command  2 Actions

Overstretched Merchant Marine  Miss your next action.	Propaganda Campaign  1 Action	US Hydrophone Arrays 1 Action	Taiwanese Collaborators  1 Action
Wartime Production  Push back the Munitions and Materials track by 1. 1 Action	Japan Joins! Add 2 cubes to USMC+7th Fleet. Push back the Pacific and Will to Fight tracks by 1. 2 Actions	Philippines Basing Push back the Pacific or Taiwan track by 1. 2 Actions	PLAGF Amphibious Combined Arms Brigades  1 Action
PLANMC Brigades  1 Action	Dragons at 6 O'clock: J-20's Everywhere!  1 Action	Civilian Casualties  Push back the Will to Fight track by 1. 1 Action	Flattop Burning (CVN-71)  1 Action
The President Addresses the Nation Roll a d6: on a 1 or 2, advance the Will to Fight track. On a 3, 4, 5, or 6 push it back one. 1 Action	The Aussies Arrive! Add 1 cube to USMC+7th Fleet. Push back the Pacific or Will to Fight track by 1. 1 Action	High Expenditure  1 Action	Allied Material Assistance  Push back the Munitions and Materials track by 1. 1 Action
Chinese SOF  1 Action	Industrial Cyberattack  1 Action	C2 Cyberattack  1 Action	Economic Downturn  1 Action

Stock Market Crash  1 Action	A Nuclear Carve Out over Taiwan: Does No First Use Apply?  1 Action	Chinese Submarines and ASW Remove the US Submarines Card. If the card is already out of play advance the Pacific track by 1. 1 Action	Space Operations  1 Action
Commercial Space Launch Capabilities  Push back the Munitions and Materials track by 1 1 Action	Poor Quality Taiwanese Reserves  1 Action	Lack of PLA Jointness  Push back the Taiwan track by 1. 1 Action	PLAGF Airmobile Brigades  1 Action
US Critical Infrastructure Cyberattack  1 Action	Undermanned Taiwanese Units  1 Action	Flattop Burning (CVN-76)  1 Action	H-6's with DF-21's  1 Action
USAF Maritime Strike Bombers  Push back the Pacific track by one. 1 Action	War Hero  Push back the Will to Fight track by 1. 1 Action	Minefields  Push back the Taiwan track by 1. 2 Actions	Prepared Beachheads, Rice Fields, Flooded Terrain, Mountains, and Urban Environments  Hold on to this card. Use it to cancel any card that would advance the Taiwan track, then discard this card. 1 Action
PLAAF Reinforcements  1 Action	The Tyranny of Distance  1 Action	DF-17 Hypersonics  1 Action	North Korea Saber Rattling  Remove 1 cube from USMC+7 th Fleet. 1 Action

Designer's Notes

We Must Tell the President! was designed for players to:

1. Play through an entire US-China war in the Pacific quickly (in under 10 minutes!)
2. Identify, examine, and educate about some of the important factors in such a war
3. Shatter the idea which some people hold that the next war in the Pacific will be a one-sided cake walk for the U.S.

There are two major learning points I want players to get from this game: to identify the important factors in such a war, and to shatter the illusion of inevitable victory for the U.S.

As starters for discussion and research the cards highlight key factors to players. The game can be played and the most impactful cards in the game pulled out afterwards and discussed by the group or with subject matter experts. The cards are the headlines of some of the major factors an informed person should know if they want to understand how such a war might progress, and what the effects of those factors would have upon the conflict. Agreeing or disagreeing with which tracks are moved, how much they move, and the cards' effects (or even if there are cards missing) is a good way to dissect what the cards represent and gain a better idea of the overall system and elements of such a war. Each card with its event, weapon system, or units is a sort of flashcard, something that an interested person can further investigate to gain a deeper understanding of this potential conflict.

Note that the cards in this game are representative. Events can happen in sequences that might not make sense at first glance, and may might not make sense at all; these events are to be interpreted and not taken as a static, linear chain of events. The cards create a narrative, a possible "what if" that can be explored, discussed, dismissed, or internalized as players see fit.

This game is also intentionally provocative in making a U.S. loss not only a possibility but a certainty. It is statistically impossible for a person to roll the dice well enough to win the game as an almost endless stream of 5's or 6's would be needed. This game makes the worst possible assumptions about what could happen and makes everything that could go wrong, go wrong. Is this accurate? No, not in the least. But it is designed to create a narrative forcing the player to consider how the U.S. and its allies might lose this most important war.

Understand there is not a lot you can do in the game overall, for you go to war with the fleet you have, not the one you want. All you can do is try to make the best decisions you can, buying time to stave off defeat. This is a no-win scenario, a Kobayashi Maru, designed to make you think about how and what might happen if it all goes wrong. So, if you have stopped to muse by the end of the game, I have succeeded in my purpose.

- Evan D'Alessandro