

# Battle for Baghdad

## PLAY EXAMPLE

This game involved all six factions, set up in this order: Shi'ite, United States, Foreign Jihadist, Sunni, NGO, Iraqi Government.

### TURN 1

#### INITIATIVE PHASE (TURN 1)

The players were mostly adopting a “wait and see” attitude, with only the Shi'ites bidding, gaining the Initiative for but one Political Point. The Shi'ite player chose himself to be First Player. Why he chose so will be seen as the turn unfolds.

#### ARAB STREET PHASE (TURN 1)

Three cards were dealt out, leading to Political Points being placed in Azamiyah, the Green Zone, and Baghdad International Airport. The latter two were fortuitous for the US player, since these zones begin the game occupied by strong American forces.

#### ARMS BAZAAR PHASE (TURN 1)

The Shi'ite player drew six cards, one for each player. The Shi'ite player chose Surge. Each of the other players then selects one card.

#### COALITION PHASE (TURN 1)

No deals are made, reflecting the “wait and see” attitude.

#### PLAYER ROUNDS (TURN 1)

##### RECRUIT-MOVE (SHI'ITE)

The Shi'ite player buys three Security (mobile) units, spawning them in Sadr City. Then the Shi'ites use their first move to march them via Jameleshah-Old City-Baghdad East, dropping off one unit in each zone. This allows the Shi'ites to occupy three zones without having to fight for them. The Shi'ite second move grabs the University and Dora zones. While none of these zones currently have any Political Points in them, nonetheless this move puts the Shi'ites in a good position to dominate the eastern and central parts of the map, with control of ten zones.

##### RECRUIT-MOVE (US)

The US starts in a strong position, in part due to the strength of its forces, but also because the luck of the Arab Street has placed Political Points in the two American starting zones. The US takes advantage of the low cost for buying Arms Bazaar cards this turn (one Political Point each) to buy three: one Collateral Damage and two defenses. The Collateral Damage card is specially useful for the US player, given the concentration of his forces in affiliated zones: if an enemy uses a Terrorist Spectacular or Weapon of Mass Destruction, the play of Collateral Damage can reverse the losses in Political Points. Given that the US wins by racking in 50 or more Political Points, this tactic can be a game decider.

##### RECRUIT-MOVE (JIHADIS)

The Jihadis are lying low. Their intent is to build up, then exploit opportunities created by the other factions fighting among themselves. Accordingly, the Jihadist buy two units and two Arms Bazaar cards – Terrorist Attack (appropriately enough) and VIP Visit (guest appearance by Osama bin Liden).

##### RECRUIT-MOVE (SUNNI)

The Sunnis buy two infrastructure to bolster their internal defenses, and two Arms Bazaar cards – Terrorist Attack and Security. They then decide to march on the University, moving two units into that zone to take on the Shi'ites.

##### RECRUIT-MOVE (NGO)

The NGOs start with no units deployed on the map. The player buys two infrastructures and places them in the airports. Given the weak position, Peacekeeping will be the policy for the turn. This will usually prevent combat with competing factions.

##### RECRUIT-MOVE (IRAQI GOVERNMENT)

The Iraqi Government buys one card and it is, appropriately enough, Oil Ministry. The Government also buys one mobile unit and then moves into Zahranyah to fight the Shi'ites.

#### COMBAT (TURN 1)

The Shi'ites go first, and they will have two combats: one at the University against the Shi'ites, and another at Zahranyah against the Iraqi Government. They choose to attack Zahranyah first..

##### BATTLE 1 (ZAHRANYAH)

###### Shi'ite Operational Plan

Command card: Sheiks.

Units committed: One.

Arms Bazaar cards: None.

###### Iraqi Government Operational Plan

Command card: General Security Command.

Units committed: Two.

Arms Bazaar cards: Terrorist Attack (offense).

###### Outcome

The Iraqi Government Terrorist offense neutralizes the Shi'ite Sheiks, since the Shi'ites had no defense card to counter it. The Iraqi Government wins the battle since its final combat total (forces committed plus Command card) is higher than the Shi'ite total (losing the Sheiks undermined the Shi'ite combat strength). The Shi'ite unit is eliminated though it would have been eliminated anyway, since the Shi'ite player had committed “one”. The Iraqi Government eliminates two units, but keeps its Terrorist Attack since it won the battle. It also gains two Political Points, one for eliminating the Sheiks (whose value is one) and one for the Shi'ite unit eliminated. The Iraqi Government then plays an Information Warfare card, doubling the number of Political Points it receives for the battle, the final total being four.

##### BATTLE 2 (UNIVERSITY)

###### Shi'ite Operational Plan

Command card: Mahdi Army.

Units committed: Zero.

Arms Bazaar cards: None.

###### Sunni Operational Plan

Command card: Former Regime Elements.

Units committed: Two.

Arms Bazaar cards: Terrorist Attack (offense)

## Outcome

At first glance, the Shi'ite battle plan appears foolish because they are committing their strongest Command, the Mahdi Army with no card to defend it. The Sunni Terrorist attack would normally eliminate the Mahdi Army, but the Shi'ites have a plan. They pull out the Command Control card, which negates the Terrorist Attack. As a result, the tactical situation is reversed. The Sunni combat total is four (two for their units, two for the Former Regiment Elements command). The Shi'ite total is also four (for the Mahdi Army). Since the Shi'ites moved first in the turn, they win the tie. The Sunni units are both eliminated while the Shi'ites survive and retain control of the University. The Shi'ites gain two Political Points while the Sunnis, who lost the battle, have to discard their Terrorist Attack card, a definitive crimp in their future offensive plans.

## CIVIC ACTION (TURN 1)

Factions collect Political Points as follows:

Shi'ites: One for each Affiliated Zone they control, nine total.

US: The Political Points placed in the Green Zone and International Airport by the Arab Street cards, plus two more for controlling the two American Affiliated Zones.

Jihadis: Three, from outside support.

Sunni: Four for the Political Points in Azamiyah, plus four more for control of Affiliated Zones.

NGO: Two from outside support.

Iraqi Government: Six, for control of Affiliated Zones. The Iraqi Government also played the Oil Ministry card, collecting two Political Points from each other player.

## END OF TURN 1 EVALUATION

The Shi'ites appear to be in the strongest position as they ended the turn controlling nine zones. However, their strength is dispersed throughout the city and the entire Shi'ite position is vulnerable to counterattack. The Sunnis do not control as many Affiliated Zones, but their forces are better concentrated.

The NGO player figures on gaining cards that can cause Defection to grab control of sufficient infrastructures in contested zones to gain victory. The Jihadis, they are planning a high-risk strategy.

The US and Iraqi Government are both dug into their Affiliated Zones. Their defenses are good, but they have to take action to win the game. The Iraqi Government is in a real bind since the Sunni and Shi'ite zones are in contact with each other throughout the city, and the Government wins by keeping them separate. The US, meanwhile, still has a considerable way to go to collect its 50 Political Points.

## TURN 2

### INITIATIVE PHASE (TURN 2)

Bidding is low key, and the US gets the Initiative for two political Points. The US player decides to go last, mainly to see how the situation develops and then exploit it.

### ARAB STREET PHASE (TURN 2)

Political Points are placed in the Shula, Sadjah and Muradiyah zones. The latter two are Sunni strongholds.

### ARMS BAZAAR PHASE (TURN 2)

The Jihadis pick the Weapons of Mass Destruction, just the card they need! The Sunnis choose Uprising, useful for recruiting. NGOs pick Security, since they figure they will be on the defensive. The Iraqi Government gets Precision Guided Munitions, the Shi'ites

Terrorist Attack, and the US, Raid. Player hands are largely filled to their maximum Arms Bazaar size.

## COALITION PHASE (TURN 2)

As with the first turn, no one makes any trades.

## PLAYER ROUNDS (TURN 2)

### RECRUIT-MOVE (JIHADIS)

Jihadis recruit four units. They move one into the Ministries, and one to the Presidential Palace. The objective is to employ the Weapons of Mass Destruction against the defenders of one of these areas. While one objective zone alone would suffice, the Jihadis decided to deploy into two in the event something happens in one zone to prevent this move, such as the Iraqi Government using the IED/Artillery card against one force. Alternatively, this move can be used as a means to bluff the Iraqi Government out of these zones, though the bluff would be backed up by real WMD!

### RECRUIT-MOVE (SUNNI)

Two cards are bought, Infowar and No Confidence. The latter card can be especially useful against the US to knock down its accumulated Political Points and thus prevent the US from grabbing a victory. The Sunnis also buy four infrastructure to further enhance zone defense and assist in collecting Political Points.

### RECRUIT-MOVE (NGO)

The NGO, alas, lacks the Political Points to do anything this turn.

### RECRUIT-MOVE (IRAQI GOVERNMENT)

The Iraqi Government, thanks to the Oil Ministries play of the prior turn, has the funds to buy the cards and the units to go for a win. But then there is that pesky situation with the Jihadis and their rumored Weapons of Mass Destruction or is it a Terrorist Spectacular. The Iraqi Government decides to forestall further Jihadi action by moving into Baghdad Central. One Iraqi Government unit is lost due to a Jihadi IED/Artillery. The much expected Iraqi Government offensive will have to wait another turn.

### RECRUIT-MOVE (SHI'ITE)

The Shi'ites realize that their position is overextended and so build five infrastructures in order to consolidate their defenses. Offensive action is going to have to wait, but it's pretty clear that the Iraqi Government and Jihadist are going to be fighting it out.

### RECRUIT-MOVE (US)

The US decides on an offensive strategy, deploying sufficient strength to win battles and then racking in the resulting Political Points. He plays a combination Network plus Intelligence for Espionage against the Sunnis, examining that player's hand. The US then takes a Security and a Infowar card from the Sunnis. By taking the Security card, the Sunnis will not be able to play a defense the US Raid in the coming battle in Muradiyah, and the play of the Infowar card in conjunction with the presumed US victory there will double the reward of Political Points. To further bolster his forces, the US player buys five mobile Security units, and does indeed take the offensive by moving into Muradiyah.

## COMBAT (TURN 2)

### BATTLE 1 (MINISTRIES)

#### Jihadis Operational Plan

Command card: Afghans.

Units committed: One.

Arms Bazaar cards: Weapon of Mass Destruction (offense).

### **Iraqi Government Operational Plan**

Command card: 9th Mechanized.

Units committed: One.

Arms Bazaar cards: None.

### **Outcome**

The Weapons of Mass Destruction destroys everything and everyone involved in the battle. But it's a victory for the Jihadis and, since the Iraqi Government has no way to reverse this (via Collateral Damage), so the Jihadist player gains six Political Points.

### **BATTLE 2 (BAGHDAD CENTRAL)**

#### **Jihadis Operational Plan**

Command card: Palestinians.

Units committed: One.

Arms Bazaar cards: None.

#### **Iraqi Government Operational Plan**

Command card: General Security Directorate.

Units committed: One.

Arms Bazaar cards: Terrorist Attack (offense).

### **Outcome**

The Terrorist Attack kills off the Palestinians and in the ensuing fracas, the Iraqi Government wins the battle.

### **BATTLE 3 (BAGHDAD SOUTH)**

#### **Jihadis Operational Plan**

Command card: Assorted Criminal Elements.

Units committed: One.

Arms Bazaar cards: None.

#### **Iraqi Government Operational Plan**

Command card: Special Operations Brigade.

Units committed: One.

Arms Bazaar cards: Terrorist Attack (offense).

### **Outcome**

The Terrorist Attack (again) kills off a Jihadi Command and the Iraqi Government (again) wins a battle.

### **BATTLE 4 (PRESIDENTIAL PALACE)**

#### **Jihadis Operational Plan**

Command card: Al Qaeda.

Units committed: One.

Arms Bazaar cards: Asymmetrical warfare.

#### **Iraqi Government Operational Plan**

Command card: Intervention Force.

Units committed: One.

Arms Bazaar cards: Terrorist Attack (offense).

### **Outcome**

Now the Iraqi Government is up against the Jihadi heavy hitter, Al Qaeda. The latter's Asymmetrical Warfare card negates the Terrorist Attack, and the Jihadis win the battle, giving them control of the Presidential Palace (and with it, 50% of their special victory conditions).

### **BATTLE 5 (MURADIYAH)**

#### **Sunni Operational Plan**

Command card: Former Regime Elements.

Units committed: Three.

Arms Bazaar cards: Raid (offense).

### **US Operational Plan**

Command card: 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

Units committed: Three.

Arms Bazaar cards: Raid (offense), Security (defense).

### **Outcome**

The US Raid eliminates the Sunni Former Regime Elements as they had no defense. Meanwhile, the US Security defense negates the Sunni Raid. The Sunnis are wiped out and the US gains six Political Points, doubled to twelve via the US play of an Infowar card.

## **CIVIC ACTION (TURN 2)**

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Factions collect Political Points as follows:

Jihadis: Three, from outside support.

Sunni: Three for control of Affiliated Zones.

NGO: Two from outside support.

Iraqi Government: Two.

Shi'ites: Four for Affiliated Zones.

US: Six, including those for the seizure of Muradiyah. The US lacks enough units to collect all of the Muradiyah Political Points.

## **END OF TURN 2 EVALUATION**

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The Jihadis, with their control of the Presidential Palace, are half way towards their victory conditions. The NGOs are still laying low. The Shi'ites maintain their good position, but continue to lack the strength to go on the offensive. The Sunnis have taken a setback with the loss of Muradiyah but are now in a position to move on the Ministries. The Iraqi Government has taken some serious losses this turn, in large part because it fought too many battles without sufficient offense and defense cards, thereby losing both units and commands. As for the US, it currently has 21 Political Points.

## **TURN 3**

### **INITIATIVE PHASE (TURN 3)**

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The Jihadis are halfway to their special victory conditions. They need to gain control over one more Iraqi Government (or US) zone to win, and the Ministries Zone is wide open. The Jihadi player decides to go for broke, winning the Initiative with a bid of three Political Points. They announce they will move last. And the Jihadis have one more reason to move last — they have the Bribe card. Moving last allows play of a Bribe without it coming back.

### **ARAB STREET PHASE (TURN 3)**

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Political Points appear in Baghdad Central and Baghdad West. The third card is an Election, which the US wins, gaining even more Political Points. This puts the US within reach of gaining its own Special Victory Condition, providing it wins enough battles and exploits information warfare.

### **ARMS BAZAAR PHASE (TURN 3)**

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The Sunnis get Intelligence. The NGO get Information Warfare. The Iraqi Government gets Precision Guided Munitions. The Shi'ites also get a Precision Guided Munitions, discarding a High Value Target card because they have reached their maximum hand size. The US gets a Network and the Jihadis get Raid.

### **COALITION PHASE (TURN 3)**

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No deals.

## PLAYER ROUNDS (TURN 3)

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### RECRUIT-MOVE (SUNNI)

The Sunnis buy four infrastructure. They spawn three Security units to drive into Central Baghdad and then into the Ministries to forestall a potential Jihadi power grab.

### RECRUIT-MOVE (NGO)

NGOs build a single Security unit and move into the Old City to gain a central position.

### RECRUIT-MOVE (IRAQI GOVERNMENT)

The Iraqi Government shifts some reserves from the Airport to the Presidential Palace via airmobile movement. The goal is to block that expected Jihadi power grab.

### RECRUIT-MOVE (SHI'ITE)

The Shi'ites move a single unit into the Green Zone in anticipation of playing a Terrorist Spectacular. The US counters this move by playing IED/Artillery to eliminate the unit. The Shi'ites use their second move to get another unit into the Green Zone. This time, the US has nothing to counter this.

### RECRUIT-MOVE (US)

The Shi'ite move into the Green Zone could be a bluff, but the US does not want to take a chance. It evacuates its Security units, transferring them to the Baghdad West and Sadr City, leaving the immobile Infrastructures to deal with the intruders. If the Shi'ites try to take out the Green Zone, then the US player plans to balance this by grabbing their stronghold in Sadr City via an airmobile assault. One US unit is lost to an IED/Artillery as it moves in, but the others get their boots on the ground.

### RECRUIT-MOVE (JIHADIS)

This could be the game-winning move, so the Jihadis expend all their Political Points on recruiting. They build up their Infrastructure in the Presidential Palace to defend it against the Iraqi Government's counteroffensive. The Jihadist also buy an Arms Bazaar card (Collateral Damage). The Jihadis then play their Bribery card against the three Sunni units in the Ministries zone. The Sunni units see the light and are converted to Jihadis. Now all the Jihadis have to do is win the battle in the Presidential Palace to win the game.

## COMBAT (TURN 3)

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### BATTLE 1 (BAGHDAD WEST)

#### US Operational Plan

Command card: 1st Marine Expeditionary Force  
Units committed: Two (doubled to four).  
Arms Bazaar cards: Raid (offense), Security (defense).

#### Sunni Operational Plan:

Command card: Militia.  
Units committed: One.  
Arms Bazaar cards: Terrorist Attack (offense)

#### Outcome

The US Raid neutralizes the Sunni Command. The Sunni Terrorist Attack is foiled by the US play of Security. The US wins the battle.

### BATTLE 2 (PRESIDENTIAL PALACE)

#### Jihadi Operational Plan

Command card: Al Qods.  
Units committed: Two.  
Arms Bazaar cards: None.

#### Iraqi Government Operational Plan

Command card: Intervention Force  
Units committed: One.  
Arms Bazaar cards: None.

#### Outcome

The Jihadis win the battle. Unless something crazy happens, this will also give them the game.

### Battle 3 (Green Zone)

#### Shi'ite Operational Plan

Command card: Badr Organization.  
Units committed: One.  
Arms Bazaar cards: Terrorist Spectacular.

#### US Operational Plan

Command card: Network  
Units committed: Three.  
Arms Bazaar cards: None.

#### Outcome

The US played the Network card instead of a Command in the event that this attack turned out to be a Terrorist Spectacular to protect his Command cards. The US plays a Collateral Damage card, thereby gaining the Political Points for the losses. Eliminated US units count double and via play of Collateral Damage, so the US converted a military disaster into a political victory.

### BATTLE 4 (SADR CITY)

#### Shi'ite Operational Plan

Command card: Mahdi army.  
Units committed: Two.  
Arms Bazaar cards: Precision Guided Munitions.

#### US Operational Plan

Command card: CIA  
Units committed: Two (doubled to four).  
Arms Bazaar cards: Raid (offense), Security (defense).

#### Outcome

Both Commands are neutralized, and the US wins the battle, seizing Sadr City. This fight brings the US Political Point total to 42 -- close to victory. Alas, at this point in the game there is nothing any player can do to stop the Jihadist from claiming victory at the end of the turn.

## END OF GAME EVALUATION

While the Jihadis appeared to be militarily weak, their victory conditions proved obtainable via exploiting the vulnerabilities of the Iraqi Government. Probably a more viable counterstrategy for the other players would have been to have the Iraqi Government pull out of its Affiliated Zones and let the US clean out the Jihadis. As for the Sunnis and Shi'ites, they started off maneuvering into viable positions, but could not exploit them to get anywhere in the game. The Shi'ites never took the opportunity to play Surge as they were waiting for a decisive moment which never occurred. The Sunnis had the No Confidence card, which they could have used on the next turn to force the US to return half of its Political Points to the bank, forestalling a US victory. The NGOs never really took off. Perhaps in a longer game they could have taken advantage of the situation, but the Jihadis never gave them that chance.