I found a sick use for stasis and mauler ships was to only put them in a battle force when you retreat.

The stasis ships is automatically killed, but yes it is sick.

OK, so Chris Upson pointed out what seems to me an abuse of rule 603.54. This rule states that if the Federation starts a war with the Romulans or Klingons then the Gorns do not enter the war at all. Thus for example, when the Klingons do not attack the Feds on turns 7-10 and the Feds attack the Klingons on turn 10, the Gorns never enter the war. So, if the Feds attack under these circumstances, the Roms and Klingons can assault the Federation without ever having to worry about the Gorn.

Thus, 603.54 presents the Federation with what seems a Faustian choice: Allow the Klingons and Romulans to build up strength while they crush the Hydrans and Kzinti, or attack but then face alone the combined might of the Klingons and Romulans.

In my current game with Richard Eitzen I decided to take advantage of what appears to be a new rule. I have no intention of waiting forever to attack the Feds, but I am forcing Richard to make that Faustian choice.

So, here's the abuse: Chris was thinking that maybe I might sit hard on the Hydrans and Kzinti and just dare the Feds to attack - like, the whole game. In the meantime, I build starbases - one per hex - in Hydran space especially, but also to a lesser extent in Kzinti space. When turn 34 arrives, I'll have so many starbases in enemy territory I will clearly win by victory conditions.

Yeah, that would be a munchkin tactic. It's NOT what I'm going to
do in my game - but it is an abuse.

Am I misunderstanding this rule? Am I missing something? Or, does this rule need to be revisited and revised? I think it already puts the Alliance over a barrel. Or does it?

What do you think?

By Bill Schoeller (Bigbadbill) on Saturday, March 24, 2012 - 11:08 am: Edit

Would the Feds have an option to go to limited war to protect the Kzin at any point? That would enable the majority of the Fed Fleet (all but the starting forces not in the 4th Fleet) to assist the Kzin at least. If the Feds do not have this as an enabling rule, I think it would make sense to give them this option of dealing with this situation.

The Roms could not help against the Lyran/Kzin as they would not be able to cross Tholian space without declaring war on them (as this would call in the Feds).

By Kosta Michalopoulos (Kosmic) on Saturday, March 24, 2012 - 12:00 pm: Edit

The Feds are permitted to be at Limited War (forever, I assume), but you are right that if they ever go to full war status under these circumstances, they lose the Gorns as allies forever. It does appear to be a rule that is open to abuse, and I think it needs to be revised. Maybe remove this restriction past Turn 12. The Coalition should not be permitted to benefit if they just sit on the Kzintis and Hydrans forever, but do nothing else.

By Richard B. Eitzen (Rbeitzen) on Saturday, March 24, 2012 - 12:02 pm: Edit

Are you serious? The Fed go to limited war on turn seven. I don't understand your point Bill.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) on Saturday, March 24, 2012 - 12:13 pm: Edit
Feds definitely can go to limited war on turn 7 - but the response is fairly anemic, and IMHO too late if the Coalition adopts this tactic. It also doesn't prevent the Coalition from entirely containing the Hydran and building one SB in every occupied hex to abuse the victory condition rules. I don't see Fed limited war (which already happens) as being a solution to this problem.

Even if the Feds (over time) insert enough forces into Kzinti space that the Kzinti can go totally offensive against the Klingons and/or Lyrans? I guess it depends on the shape the Kzinti are in in this game.

Nick, if the Feds pump in 30 ships a turn into Kzinti space, they will eventually liberate Kzinti space but still could never enter Klingon or Lyran space without losing the Gorns as allies, and the Kzinti could not carry a successful offensive into the well fortified Klingon or Lyran space on their own. The Hydrans would still be screwed and the cheesy tactic of filling their space with starbases would still be legal and feasible. I think the intent of the Gorn Limited War rule is poorly thought out from the very start, as it assumes the Klingons and Lyrans will eventually attack the Feds. This rule gives them a very good reason not to do so.

Instead, I think the clock should be ticking against the Coalition to declare war on the Feds, not the other way around. I think the onus should be on the Klingons to declare war on the Feds in order to get the Romulans to enter the war, and if they don't do it, the Romulans will remain neutral (disgusted by Klingon cowardice). The Feds should be free to declare full war on the Klingons and Lyrans, and the Gorns eventually should be able to go to Limited War in support of the Feds and Kzinti. As long as the Feds and Gorns maintain a certain garrison level of ships along the Romulan border, they should be able to guarantee continuing Romulan neutrality. The rules on the Lyran-Hydran Ceasefire (617.A6) from the Winds of Fire sceneario in AO provide a way to handle the garrison rule.
Would the Coalition ever want to operate under these conditions? No, but that's the point. They are the ones who have to be the aggressors. As it stands, I think a sitzkrieg strategy can work for them, which is a very bad thing for the game.

Sitzkrieg. 😊

I wrote up a basic rule that says the Klingons must both be at active war with the Federation, and also get the D7N into Romulan space, or the Romulans never go to war (with anybody).

However, I still see now that the Klingons could avoid war and win just on conquered Hydran territory, so something's gotta be fixed on the Gorn issue.

@Ted, yes, that appears to be the case, but IMHO the issue is with the Victory Point scheme for the game. If you're gunning for VP, then this is a valid munchkin tactic.

I've often thought that the VP scheme should be revisited in light of something that is calculated each turn instead of at the end of the game (with each empire or alliance having a target VP total to win).

Such a system (similar to the one used in "Empires in Arms") would not only address this situation, but would make the variants more meaningful (as a plus or minus to the target VP level for the empire/alliance).

I've pondered on this for a while but don't have enough written down to be meaningful. Hopefully, I will someday and suggest it to the Powers That Be.
Rob's Tac Note on the subject of (603.54) and Denying the Gorn was rejected mostly because it was believed by the Staff that the Federation Gorn alliance would survive the Federation declaring war on the Klingons but not the Romulans, unless the Romulans attacked the Federation first.

Keep in mind that should the Klingons by themselves be able to defeat the Federation or push the Federation to verge of defeat the Gorns would probably jump into the war because if they did not they would be facing the Romulans and Klingons by themselves which would be totally undesirable to the Gorns.

See CL#44 Supplemental for all the comments.

the alleged staff belief about the gorn is contradicted by 603.54, a new rule presumably endorsed by the same staff. it isn't exactly ambiguously worded.

the 603.54 bug exploit is obviously just about the most unbalanced *and* least interesting line in the general war scenario, but pretending the bug doesn't exist is not an answer.

it seems that 603.54 cannot possibly have been properly considered before publication. has anyone noted the interaction with the Expedition? tee hee. or the ambiguous situation of the Romulans, who have no PWC for turns 10+ but aren't under coalition control? hey, what about the fact that the feds begin turn 10 unconditionally at war with the klingons (603.2 turn 10 notes)? doesn't that make 603.54 utterly moot?

it's a big mess.
Also there is (652.22). So if the Coalition does not attack the Feds, turns 7 to 10 will see limited war Fed support for the Kzintis. Turn 11 the Feds must go to peace and leave the Kzinti to their fate, or declare war and forget about Gorn help. Goofy.

By Kosta Michalopoulos (Kosmic) on Sunday, March 25, 2012 - 01:05 am: Edit

Nick, I don't think (652.22) applies, outside of a free campaign. However, see also the last line in (654.0), where it states:

"An empire cannot remain at voluntary Limited War for more than four turns (652.22) but turns in which it is conducting campaigns in allied territory (engaging in combat with enemy forces) do not count for this limit."

Anyway, I agree the rule is a mess and needs to be rethought and rewritten to acknowledge all the various possibilities. It certainly needs addressing by a higher authority, but I don't know if the Q&A system is the way to go.

By Nick G. Blank (Nickgb) on Sunday, March 25, 2012 - 08:47 am: Edit

I believe it does apply to the historic game (652.2 first sentence), but you are right that the other rule modifies it, so fighting lets you prolong the period.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoseatsphoto) on Sunday, March 25, 2012 - 02:37 pm: Edit

Quote:

Rob's Tac Note on the subject of (603.54) and Denying the Gorn was rejected mostly because it was believed by the Staff that the Federation Gorn alliance would survive the Federation declaring war on the Klingons but not the Romulans, unless the Romulans attacked the Federation first.

Keep in mind that should the Klingons by themselves be able to defeat the Federation or push the Federation to verge of defeat the Gorns would probably jump into the war because if they did not they would be facing the Romulans and Klingons by themselves
which would be totally undesirable to the Gorns.

See CL#44 Supplemental for all the comments.

I'm with the other comment above: it doesn't matter what the Staff thinks - this is the rule. The rule *certainly* allows the Klingons to play "sitzkrieg" and put the Feds on the Faustian dilemma of losing the Gorns or never attacking.

Worse - nothing prevents the Roms from joining the war AFTER the Feds attack the Klingons (thereby losing the Gorn forever). Thus, the Feds will face both Klingons and Romulans without Gorn support. And did I mention that both the Zin and the Hydrans would have already been defeated?

In my game with Richard the Kzin are already down, and the Hydrans will be on turn 10.

Do you really want to do that?...

The Feds can support the Kzinti via limited war. The Feds are at 75% economy, have and send full production plus one SWAC & PT/turn to Kzinti space (including theater transports - think colonies), can convert ANY Fed ship, build colonies (2/turn), build and use additional Diplomats/ENGs, build and upgrade Fourth Fleet bases.

They can also: repair Kzinti ships within supply range of the the Kzinti supply grid (7-8 BATS & SB = ~48 repair); send 20 EPs per turn; can send a commercial convoy every third turn (disband, pay 5 EP and restart in Fed space); build/upgrade bases between their common neutral zone, raid Coalition space form Kzinti space; trade with the WYN Cluster (via blockade run from Kzinti capital) and transfer the proceeds (up to 9 EP/turn) to the Kzinti via (449.132); conduct and pay for Espionage & Sabotage with their PTs; deploy hospital ships to help Kzinti planets recover faster or save G, PT, ADM, and DIP units; ENGs can repair Kzinti bases or help their
planets recover faster.

They can also send one MB, convoy, and FRD to the Kzinti capital and cover ALL Kzinti space and use their diplomats to take and hold neutral zone planets 1910 and 2214.

Now the scary part, the Feds can do all of the above and NEVER hit exhaustion. Why? -- because limited war status does not add exhaustion turns; see (652.32).

They could build a citadel in 1906 with colony base plus 2xPDUs (3 with ENG) along with one or two SBs, clear Kzinti space allowing the Kzinti to recover and build, and wait until the Coalition hits 50% exhaustion. They have 165 income at 75% plus DIP income and grow two colonies a turn.

Note also that on turn #10 the Gorns can also go to limited war and build-up their fleet under (603.5).

Chuck, under the scenario proposed that's just not enough. Who cares if the 4th fleet area is a fortress if I never attack the Federation? Again, if the Feds attack me then they lose the Gorns; else I don't have to deal with them at all. If the Feds do attack, then I ignore the 4th fleet area (well, I don't attack it) and instead I go straight for Earth with Romulan support without having to worry about the Gorns.

The munckin tactic says that if the Feds don't attack, then build up your defenses, and setup one starbase in each of the hexes in Hydran space, thereby earning the victory points. Not to mention, you will have two capitals and their victory points. Of course, if the Feds attack you won't do this, but instead the Roms and the Klingons can fight the Feds without having to worry about the Gorns. If they don't attack you win by munckin via victory points. If they do attack you win because you can defeat the Federation outright without Gorn support, leading to the three capital knockout.
As for all the Fed production in Kzinti space - who cares? You go Kzinti first in the early turns of the war and you dominate 1401. You can easily hold Kzinti space against the Feds with the combined might of the Lyrans and Klingons. Also, with all that new production in Kzinti space the Federation is vulnerable to a Romulan attack - because they will be building up.

As for exhaustion - again who cares? The Feds won't attack. If they do, you can handle it because you don't have to fight the Gorns. Also, the Romulans can quite easily go to a peacetime economy and reduce their exhaustion, making them much more durable in case the Federation does decide to attack.

Either way, it seems like a surefire munckin victory - either by silly victory conditions or by getting to fight the Feds without Gorn support.

---

**Quote:**

They can also send one MB, convoy, and FRD to the Kzinti capital and cover ALL Kzinti space and use their diplomats to take and hold neutral zone planets 1910 and 2214.

---

Chuck, you assume the Kzinti have not fallen. In my game i deliberately went Kzinti first in order to be best prepared by the time substantial Federation reinforcements come in. At the moment, there's only one Kzin BATS (1902) and planet 1802 is trading hands.

As for the neutral planets - I have my own diplomats, so that's a wash.
By the way, the point of my whole discussion is to have this rule revisited. At a minimum, the Federation needs a way to avoid the Hobson's dilemma they face now.

Some of the possible issues might be:

1) The Gorns.
2) The Gorns apparently have limited production on turns 12+ if at peace, but the Romulan production is apparently not limited if at peace (on turns 10+). Probably this should be changed.

Probably victory conditions should be changed to limit the bonus for starbases in enemy territory. Filling the Hydran Kingdom with starbases should not be a valid tactic.

Chuck, under the scenario discussed, where the Lyrans and Klingons do not attack the Feds, the Gorns CANNOT go to limited war. Under (706.1), they will just repeat their anemic PWC from Turns 10 and 11 (i.e. 4 ships in spring turns, 3 in fall) while staying at peace. Over time, they will get weaker and weaker, relatively speaking, so they become irrelevant in the long run in any case.

One of the numerous problems caused by the ambiguity of the rules as they stand is that no one is precisely sure what the Romulans are doing all this time if they too do not go to war on Turn 10. You could argue their wartime construction schedule is released, since they are on a wartime economy from Turn 1. You could also argue they cannot build anything on Turn 10 and beyond without declaring war.

The rules in (603.0) are ambiguous on what happens in these cases. Following the letter of the rules can result in the munchkinism Ted has pointed out. It is not helpful that (604.0) assumes everyone went to war during (603.0). What if that does not happen? What if it happens, but not according to the historic
schedule?

Yes, we can all establish our own house rules to deal with the munchkinism, but I would rather have the rules fixed.

I'm inclined to discuss the following:

CURRENT RULE
(603.54) If the Federation starts a war with the Romulans or Klingons, the Gorns do not enter the war at all unless somebody attacks the Gorns (and then they join the other side).

CHANGE TO READ
(603.54) If the Federation starts a war with both the Romulans and the Klingons, the Gorns do not enter the war at all unless somebody attacks the Gorns (and then they join the other side).

THEN ADD THE FOLLOWING:

(603.123) If the Federation starts a war with the Romulans, the Gorns do not enter the war at all unless somebody attacks the Gorns (and then they join the other side). However, if the Klingons or Lyrans later attack the Federation; the Gorn may enter the war as an alliance member the turn after a Klingon or Lyran attack.

(603.124) If the Federation starts a war with the Klingons or the Lyrans, the Gorns do not enter the war at all unless somebody attacks the Gorns (and then they join the other side) or if the Romulans later attack the Federation; the Gorn may enter the war as an alliance member the turn after a Romulan attack.

A quick note:

Per 602.46, the Federation economy is limited to 75 EP while in a
limited war state supporting the Kzinti, so they won't be able to afford all the neat tricks Chuck describes.

IMO, just having the 603.124 addition above would probably be enough (If the Feds attack the Klingons or Lyrans, then the Gorn won't join the Alliance unless the Roms attack the Fed or Gorns.

(602.46) ECONOMY: The Federation economic rate is limited to 75 percent. The Federation can accumulate unspent Economic Points.

Ted:

The help from the Fed is not insignificant over a typical three turns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fed to Kzinti</th>
<th>EP Value Over 3 Turns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfers</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CommConvoy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WYN Trade Transfers</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est Repair Value</td>
<td>38+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Turn Total</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Per Turn</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to (603.2) The Gorns nominally enter the war on Turn 12 (Y174S). This is two turns after the Romulans attack the Federation in the histrorical scenario.
Therefore (603.123) and (603.124) should read as follows:

(603.123) If the Federation starts a war with the Romulans, the Gorns do not enter the war at all unless somebody attacks the Gorns (and then they join the other side). However, if the Klingons or Lyrans later attack the Federation; the Gorn may enter the war as an alliance member **two turns** after a Klingon or Lyran attack.

(603.124) If the Federation starts a war with the Klingons or the Lyrans, the Gorns do not enter the war at all unless somebody attacks the Gorns (and then they join the other side) or if the Romulans later attack the Federation; the Gorn may enter the war as an alliance member **two turns** after a Romulan attack.

**bold** used to indicate changes to Chuck's original proposal.

Chuck is correct the amount of funds the Federation receives via a 75% income is not insignificant. In addition to the 167.5 EP per turn, they control their production. While limited to the schedule in terms of hull type and number, they can build the variants they wish. Also in addition to the free swac they receive they may purchase a second swac. Use free fighter factors. Get two more ships each turn for 2 EPs, 1 CL and 1 FF.

That's 39 ships over 3 turns. Also they can build APTs at the rate of 1 per starbase. This plus any remaining Kzinti APTs and PTRss along with the at start Federation APTs and PTRs give the Federation the ability to send 20 EPs a turn without using **any** strategic movement from either empire.

Also see (654.0) An empire cannot remain at voluntary Limited War for more than four turns (652.22) but turns in which it is conducting campaigns in allied territory (engaging in combat with enemy forces) do not count for this limit.
I like Chuck's proposal.

I still think the Romulan peacetime production schedule should be adjusted if they do not attack and stay at peace.

Someone mentioned that the current rule means that if the Hydran expedition succeeds and the Federation attacks the Klingons then the Gorns never join the alliance except if attacked by the coalition. This however would also be fixed by Chuck's proposal.

By Nick G. Blank (Nickgb) on Monday, March 26, 2012 - 09:19 am: Edit

Those changes make sense to me. And good point about the Hydran expedition, I hadn't thought of that.

By Ted Fay (Catwhoeatsphoto) on Monday, March 26, 2012 - 11:28 am: Edit

@Chuck on Fed support of Zin - I don't think the Federation support of the Kzinti is **insignificant**, I just don't think it's **enough** by itself to prevent the Hobson's choice with the rule as it stands.

@Chuck on proposed rule change: This rule change seems to work. This way, the Federation still has the option of attacking the Klingons without *forever* losing the Gorns. For example, in my game, the Feds do lose the Gorns if they attack the Klingons - but - the Gorns come back if the Roms attack. Thus, the Federation will never face the Klingons and Romulans unsupported (unless they're really stupid and start a war with both).

@ Thomas' proposed change (Gorns attack two turns after). I don't like this as much. If the Federation is forced to take advantage of Chuck's rule, it's because the Coalition has delayed an attack it's to maximize the favorable conditions for the Coalition. Thus, the Federation will probably need support more quickly than under the "normal" scenario of turn 7 Fed/Klingon entry and turn 10 Romulan entry. That being said, it's still a reasonable rule.

@ Thomas and Chuck: That being said, I would also change Chuck's rule to state that the earliest the Gorns may enter the war is turn
#12. For example, if the Hydran expedition succeeds and the Feds attack the Klingons then, under the rule as written, it could be argued that Gorns could enter on turn 11 - the turn the Romulans attack. Simply stating that the earliest turn of Gorn entry is turn #12 prevents this or possibly other tomfoolery.

@Richard: Agree that Romulan peacetime production should be limited, severely.

@Richard (again): I *STRONGLY* agree that a limit should be imposed on the number of victory points a player can receive by building starbases in enemy territory. I would limit it to three - five for the Federation or Klingons.

I like Chuck's proposed rule changes, as I think that eliminates the underlying reason for the problem. I don't think building oodles of SBs in Hydran space will occur if the proposed rule changes are in effect.

I am still somewhat torn if the delay in Gorn entry should be 1 or 2 turns after the Romulans enter the war. I think I like the 1 turn delay, but not earlier than Turn 12, as a compromise.

But we still need to clarify what happens to Romulan peacetime production, if they don't go to war on Turn 10.

What about the case when using (540.42) the Klingons are able to bring the Romulans into the war early. Do the Gorns still start 1 year afterwards?

There is no provision in Advanced Diplomacy for an empire's early entry affecting the scheduled entry dates for other empires.
That rule specifies that it's crazy and will break your game. So unless it's written in the rules otherwise, the Gorns come in on 12.

Easiest way to resolve would seem to be to have the last sentence of the rule read

Quote:

the Gorn my enter the war the as an alliance member the turn after a Romulan attack or turn 12 whichever comes later.

No, not really, grammar aside.

Or you could just have the Gorn enter as a member of the alliance on turn 12 regardless of any other actions.

Seriously, under what circumstances is Gorn non-entry desirable?

DOH! That's what I get for trying to read coherently at 5 am...

Limiting the Romulan production (in response to the Gorn limit) based on the Turn #8-#9 would short the Romulan production by 2 WE and 2 SN (as they produced a CON, SUP, 2 FH, 8 SP, 6 SK and one WE/KE conversion).

Backing up to Turns #6-#7 would be CON, SUP (NH?), FH, 6 SP, 6 SK, WE/KE...
On EP transfers -

Fed to Kzinti EP Value Over 3 Turns

Transfers 60
CommConvoy 10
WYN Trade Transfers 27
Est Repair Value 38+

Three Turn Total 135

Average Per Turn 45

I thought Wyn Trade Transfers was rules as being part of the overal maximum of 20 Ep's a turn?

I think someone mentionend it - originally the Romulans only go to war if the Klingons have attacked the Federation.

Why not re-introduce this requirement - and if the Klingons don't attack - return the Roms to a peacetime economy with a similar build level to the Gorns. (So the Roms can't build a stack of ships while the Gorns just build a handful)?

i.e. Roms have upgraded there fleet to a modern standard and now can divert resources to other areas - as they are not at war.

Quote:

Richard B. Eitzen (Rbeitzen) on Monday, March 26, 2012 - 12:58 pm: Edit

No, not really, grammar aside
Well, most of the quote was a copy and paste of Chuck's post so the grammar is not mine. Having said that, why not?

By Mark Lurz (Marklurz) on Tuesday, March 27, 2012 - 07:40 pm: Edit

To go along with the Gorn discussion, if playing the general war starting with scenario 601. Does rule 603.54 apply if the Hydran expedition is successful and the Federation immediately attack the Klingons?

By Kosta Michalopoulos (Kosmic) on Tuesday, March 27, 2012 - 08:23 pm: Edit

Mark, as it stands yes, which is one of the problems with the rule, and why several of us would like it changed.

By Mark Lurz (Marklurz) on Tuesday, March 27, 2012 - 08:37 pm: Edit

Kosta, thanks, I think there should be a change in the rule myself, at least the placement of this rule in the scenario, one of the huys I'm in a game with believes that 603.5 and 603.6 are only if you are playing an independant scenario.

By James Dugan (Jdugan13) on Wednesday, March 28, 2012 - 09:53 am: Edit

Hey Mark and Kosta - here's an important point that appears to have been omitted in your discussion.

If 603.5 does in fact apply even when playing the general war (and not just for an independent scenario), then we have to use the entirety of 603.5. The first half of the very first sentence of 603.5 states "If the Romulans have not attacked the Federation or Gorns, ...

The Romulans did in fact attack and invade the Federation on turn 10 in our general war game, therefore the rest of 603.5 - which applies only in the event of no Romulan attack on either the Feds or the Gorn - is null and void, at least for our current game.
Based on that my understanding is that the Gorn are free to join the alliance and enter the GW on alliance turn 12, should the Gorn player choose to do so.

"Alan, you know, that's one reason why I've always hesitated to try the expedition. I always figured that a Coalition player would concede at that point if I succeeded, so I've decided not to go there."

Pete, I understand and appreciate that position, but as it is a part of the game I believe the Coalition must set up to defend against it. Not attempting it (read not threatening it at least)/not defending against it is also a big mistake. I am not arguing with you. I would add if I ever played you or Joe (as the Alliance) you better believe I would consider attempting the Expedition long and hard - not the contrived Kzinti Space tour but the real deal, the green slime attack. A win is a win is a win, as they say.

This raises another long-discussed issue, the Fed Attack Delay (which I pretty much always did as a Coalition player). Is not attacking the Klingons with the Hydrans (A3) as game changing as the attack delay?

Moved here to avoid further after action thread hijack.

Hi Alan:

Some good points.

First, I would say that I agree that the Expedition is always something to consider. Especially now that the supply tug is in the game. Before the tug, I would say it wasn't worth it. So, yes, I always do consider it. I'm not sure that activing the Feds on turn 6 is necessarily the game ender that others think it is, but I think most people believe that to be the case.
I've often not attacked the Klingons on turn 3, and if you look at setup, there are still compelling reasons not to attack. By not attacking, you don't allow the Klingons to react, reserve the Home Fleet/Southern Reserve Fleet any closer to your territory and homeworlds. That can be a small thing, but it means that on turn 4, the Coalition penetration in Hydrax will be limited if it happens at all. It does depend, obviously, on how the Lyrans and Klingons are set up, but I do think it's a consideration. I would say attacking the Klingons makes sense if you are think you can actually destroy a BATS or something, or hit another target. I've managed to do that in some games.

By Alan De Salvio (Alandwork) on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 - 05:55 pm: Edit

Indeed, and that is the rub. The poor game is immediately knocked off the SFU timeline beginning A3 - no Hydran attack on the Klingons in support of the Kzintis. The Hydrans say, screw the Kzintis, we don't want to get kicked off the map! We aren't going to HELP the Klinks crush us - keep Klingon Home Fleet away, we say.

Then I delay the Klingon attack until C10. No says the Emperor, do not defy the Organians quite so soon, lets instead pad our SE superiority and complete our reduction of the western minors. And the Feds are gutted by a simultaneous east and west onslaught as a consequence, with a larger, better repaired, more carrier Klingon force to boot.

What do you think of a vp benefit to the Hydrans to attack the Klingons (or for discussion, tie the guild bulk EPs to such an attack), and a vp penalty to the Klingons to delay the attack (or for discussion, move an IWR squadron to the mothballs per turn of delay)? Or do you think the strategic benefits of these timeline deviations should not be balanced?

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 - 06:07 pm: Edit

See, I'm not sure that delaying the attack on the Feds hurts the Alliance. As the Feds, it means I can mobilize my fleets, get ships to
the front and send money and aid to the Kzintis. I see how well it works for the Coalition, but I think it can work for the Alliance as well.

I guess on balance I don't necessarily think these deviations need to be penalized. I've often seen an attack on the Feds on turn 7, but I've also (less often) seen a delayed attack. I've seen the Hydrans attack the Klingons but not always. I think both deviations do involve trade-offs.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 - 06:14 pm: Edit

Also, and this is just stuff I've seen, sometimes Klingon players are so eager to have their ships in range of Hydrax that they don't deploy the Western Fleet properly to stop/dissuade the expedition. Often I see players put the West Fleet on the 2 BATS in range and leave the rest relatively unguarded. Now, this does invite the expedition.

By Alan De Salvio (Alandwork) on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 - 06:44 pm: Edit

If the Klingon attack delay is counterbalanced by Alliance benefits, then good. If the same is true on A3, frex the Hydran setup flexibility versus dumb Klingon play, then good. In reality if the expedition succeeds on A3, C4 or A4 well, the game is over but not too many turns were wasted. Just set that bad boy back up and do better next time.

T11/12 end is tougher (if the Klingon attack delay results in a hopeless Alliance position), as a lot of game has been played, and the Alliance player quits without much Fed action (and essentially no Gorn action), that hurts F&E more overall.

I suggest you write up an article like "It's Turn 7 and the Federation was not attacked?!?!? Hurrah! This is what you do..." as I don't see it. It just depresses me.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 - 06:55 pm: Edit
Yeah, I actually am pretty cool with not being attacked on turn 7.

But one of the reasons why that may work for me is that I usually keep a good chunk of the Hydran Navy intact when I lose the capital. I don't sacrifice the fleet over Hydrax. This puts a lot of pressure on the Coalition, because the Hydrans can't be completely ignored.

I think probably that's the biggest mistake that I've seen Hydran players make - destroying their own fleet over the capital.

I don't see the expedition succeeding any earlier than turn 5, unless the Klingon player is very sloppy. But even so, I think it can be discouraged by a rational placement of the Western Fleet - I think that the rush to get rid of Hydrax too soon leaves the Klinks more vulnerable.

pete, by "don't sacrifice the fleet", i assume you mean self-killing or crippling so much you suffer in getting off the map? AFAIK you're preaching to the choir; i'm the outlier for being willing to cripple a bunch of DDs and FFs to hold the capital an extra turn, if possible 😊

it seems like the tricky part of playing the hydrans is managing your cruiser count before the capital assault. any battle round you have one or more cruisers on the line, it's a rare treat not to lose one of those cruisers. the non-cruiser units in the starting OOB are so bad it's hard to get a good exchange rate without putting up cruisers. if the cruiser count dips appreciably below the starting two dozen while you still have multiple hexes that you want to fight over, it only snowballs. when more and better carriers come online the situation improves, but turns 4-7 can be a real misery.

That's why you have to build that UH and CV that are on your turn 3 and 5 schedules and combine with them escorted carrier tugs:
Pal - 17 (6 fighters)(assumes admiral)
CV - 14 (10.5 fighters)
2xDE - 14 (6 fighters)
2xAH - 6
2x CVT - 21 ((15 fighters)
2x DE - 14 (6 fighters)
2x AH - 6
Scout Tug fighters: 1.5
2x Prime Team - 4

Total ComPot: 98. Total Fighter factors: 45.

Go ahead and direct.

And no, I normally won't self cripple any Hydran ships unless I have to - although I seem to recall that you may as well do do some of the DD conversions, but I don't have that rule handy right now.

If the choir is now preserving fleets, forgive me, I've been away for a while, but more often than not I saw games where the Hydrans would give it their all over Hydrax based on the premise that it would be your last hurrah with that kind of Combat Potential (Starbase).

By Chris Upson (Misanthropope) on Friday, November 30, 2012 - 01:12 pm: Edit

alan

delayed attack on the feds seems to be the better coalition option, but there's at least one opportunity it opens up for the alliance. the romulans' build schedule outstrips their finances just like the klinks. the klingons get subsidized by the lyrans, but the romulans don't have an ATM in their back yard.

just generally, even though the coalition gain a lot more ships than the feds do by delaying, depth over a starbase has a lot more marginal value than depth in the attacking force. you've got to defend the west shrewdly to scrape up the force for it, but if you
can stifle the romulans' normal big territorial gains, they can become pretty brittle pretty quickly.

Do you think colonies and survey rules offset this somewhat?

pete

yeah, once lines like that start to proliferate, that's when the coalition ulceration begins. since i favor a zin first offense, that's pretty much my personal bugbear.

but the CV is a lot of money and with either a well-executed mudslide or the normal (around here) "hydran first" gameplan you're giving up something really good to get it. a coalition carrier line does OK against that line, not equal but close enough. if the coalition either have a Mondo Lyran line or a bunch of the klingon toys in the hex a three ship carrier group isn't really safe. over a pursuit-blocker, probably so, but that line can't operate safely in open space, let alone take it to the coalition.

neurons fire chaotically: are you passing up PDUs on the capital planet to save cash to get your carriers? i could actually see the fighterless bases (name?) making sense, though i had never ever had that thought cross my mind before.

i don't know why a coalition reserve anywhere in the HTO would ever be without a mauler and either stasis or a couple D6Ds. this may be my personal eccentricity, but i think the lion's share of those lethal klingon specialty ships should always be breathing down the hydrans' necks, whether HTO is the priority theater or not. Stupid Brute Force (TM) works tolerably against the zin (and feds) but the hydrans laugh at dropped damage.
I'm not convinced that a delayed attack on the Federation is ultimately a benefit to the Coalition.

pete

the only really accurate answer i can give is "i don't know". i've only been past turn 12 in a non-solo GW game with all the rules a half dozen times (i mean, in the last decade 😊. all of these games, the coalition has made a delayed attack, and the alliance has won, crushingly.

the only thing i ever want from F&E is to win a GW as coalition, full rule-set against an opponent who isn't much less experienced than i am. on my bucket list, ya know. i spend all my F&E time looking for improvements to coalition lines, and i play a very unrefined alliance strategy ("if he doesn't overplay, sandbag him and then roll over him with the feds. when he *does* overplay grab the initiative with coordinated counterattacks on all fronts").

but in my solo games the alliance always wins, like 18 out of 18, not counting the occasional expedition silver bullet and one self-immolation against the tholians. the most (self-)competitive strategy i have ever found is zin first, mudslide the hydrans opportunistically, maximum turn 7 or 8 fed attack, with the aim of cutting the feds off from their off-map and the zin. so that's the only line i really know a lot about.

i think the colonies (which are *really* good) and survey ships (which i am less enamored of) primarily help the western coalition, who should already be sitting pretty financially due to the delayed attack. more money is always sweet, but it would be a much bigger deal if more of it showed up in romulan coffers.

Hi Chris,
Regarding the Hydran battle line, sure, you want to be careful about what you are going up against and modify accordingly, but basically using that type of line is the only protection the Hydrans have against SFGs and maulers. Also, what level of risk you are taking depends on whether or not you expect to win the hex.

In terms of construction, I find that I can usually build both the UH and CV group and still have 14-16 PDUs on Hydrax by Hydran turn 4. Whether or not more PDUs go up depends on what the Coalition does.

Since the Roms were given 2 colonies per turn, and since they have a lot of empty space, I think the colonies were intended to give them the ability to build up. Joe Stevenson's philosophy with the Roms is to concentrate heavily on building their carriers, since they have the best carrier groups in the Coalition.

You could try playing a game with him to see about losing as the Alliance. He does a good job with the Coalition.

Another really good Coalition player is Sandro Colacito, but I don't know if he plays anymore.

Great to see the strategy thread used again. Pete it seems your prior reputation (even I have heard of the mudslide and your connection to it), has reinvigorated these forums so thanks for that.

I am by no means an experienced player, but am currently on turn C32 of the general war as the Coalition. My opponent Jose Barreto has done a stellar job of preserving both the Hydran and Kzinti fleets. The Hydrans fought one hex from the off map for about 25 turns exchanging mostly CUs for DWs and CWs but have come back on map the last two turns presumably to make a play for their capital or at least blast one of my SBs in theatre. Both Jose and I are disappointed with their performance on map in the end-game so far however. In this case the Coalition has
legitimate fleets in Hydran space,--not just one good line backed by small fry. In general the Coalition has run the Hydrans out of CUs each turn in exchange for CWs and DWs, and the Hydrans build 6 more CUs for six more rounds the following turn. Sure I can barely usually hurt the Hydrans except for CUs and scouts (did direct a RGX from formation last turn), but they don't really scare me at all anymore either. Mainly I feel that the Hydrans have one battle's worth of cruisers they have been husbanding since the beginning of the game, but the threat of such is worse than the reality I think. Once they spend those cruisers they're back to the carrier lines which are good for absorbing damage but can't last forever. Now the Hydrans could have stayed offmap a few of those turns and built cruisers instead, so maybe that would change the equation somewhat but I can't fault Jose for exchanging a hundred CUs for a hundred coalition DWs and CWs over the course of the game. I would probably take that bait as well.

Hi Paul,

First, thank you so much for the kind words.

Second, as far as I'm concerned, if you are on turn 32 of the Grand Campaign, you are already in many ways one of the most experience players out there - I congratulate you.

I've thought about your post a little bit in regard to the late war. When I get a chance (maybe this coming weekend), I'll try to delve a little bit into the backround of your particular war, so for now I'll speak in generalizations without knowing if they apply to your campaign.

While it's true that I'm all about the Hydrans preserving their navy, I've found that in my games I am able to keep them on the map for the most part. I know that doesn't always seem to be the case, but usually the pressure from the Kzintis and Feds combined with the Hydrans not losing their fleets and hiding behind their carrier lines has managed to keep me on the map. If that's doable, or if they can
only be pushed off map for a limited time, I think that they can be more of an annoyance.

I expect that the Hydran Capitol will usually fall somewhere between turns 6 to 8, so it does tend to be tough for the Coalition to put major additional resources there once the Feds kick in. But that has been in my games - I can see that in some games that doesn't seem to happen.

Really, I'd like to play a general war game again. I would like to see how play has changed since I've been around. Maybe if I could figure out vassal or cyberboard I could mix it up with some folks and see if the ideas I used to use would still work or if they need reexamination on my part.

I will say that I think the Hydrans gain very little in the late war in relative terms compared to other races. They don't get all that much oomph out of PFs as their tenders/carriers aren't ultra impressive, and they don't get drones.

By Chris Upson (Misanthropope) on Tuesday, December 11, 2012 - 01:28 pm: Edit

i think the hydrans and zin both suffer (on a relative basis) from the steep tech curve. each starts with a god-class (RN, CVS) that the coalition can't really match initially, but around 173-175 the various uber-carriers that become generally available close the gap a lot, and around the same time the lyrans usually are accumulating enough Really Big Ships to compete.

i feel like paul handled the hydrans exactly right in his game. you may not feel like you have the resources to spare to brick up the old colonies, but there's no way it takes *less* resources if you give the farties more room to work.

i expect to be howled off the forum for this 😅, but garrison duty in 0118 is far from the worst way you can deploy that first B10. the aggregate amount of force required to stuff a "total" hydran commitment to getting back on the map goes way, way down if you have that extra force multiplication. the total number of decent
carriers you have to commit to keeping attrition from being too unfavorable gets about cut in half- replaced by FCRs or even auxes- due to the B10’s otherwise inconvenient fighters. needing 32.5% instead of 37.5% to pop a hydran scout is a nice little bonus.

a B10AA right next to the zin or fed capital, moving in every turn to prevent a lot of devastated systems from *ever* recovering would be my first choice, but 0118 is not bad, and a heck of a lot easier to arrange.

By Timothy Mervyn Linden (Timlinden) on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 - 04:22 pm: Edit

RE hydran line as per above Nov. 30:

I found with those lines the coalition would start direct crippling the paladin or a CVT group. And on really good rolls destroy the CVT group. 120 compot lines (with an admiral) is easy to arrange - that gives the coalition a 50/50 chance to do either. A mauler guarantees crippling the above CVT group. A crippled paladin is an autokill in pursuit (with a mauler). The CVT group should be safe with a FCR though.

A crippled CVT group costs 4.5EP to repair (can be mitigated somewhat by the depot) compared to the 1.9/2.9 EP to replace a dead HN/AHN. Still may be in the alliance favour, but not as much. And of course paladins are very expensive to replace.

It works fine over defenses you could retreat safely from. But risking a paladin elsewhere quickly became something unaffordable in my experience. I think the alliance really needs to be careful and then convert them to CVA's asap.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 - 05:10 pm: Edit

You can always bulk up the carrier groups with extra escorts, depending on what ships the Coalition has available.

In terms of directing on the Paladins, that's part of the life of the Hydrans. If their capital is taken, it is the Coalition that may tend to
run away rather than let the Hydrans cycle through 100+ fighter factors. Besides the 2 Pals, you have the Battle Tugs, and then potentially the IC. If the Coalition does want to make a fight of it (again this is after the loss of the capital), then duke it out, self-kill the crippled PAL so that you can get salvage, and cycle through all of the fighters you have.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 - 05:13 pm: Edit

Chris,

The late war Coalition dynamic is one of the reasons that we cornered Steve way back when to add the heavy fighter rules to the game. It was obvious that the Kzintis were in serious trouble with the PF introduction dates (for some reason, the Kzintis are very late on that), and Steve didn’t want to change those dates, so our solution was the heavy fighter to toughen up Kzinti defenses. Also the +1 die roll modifier, and the free bombardment.

Unfortunately, nothing was really done for the Hydrans in this arrangement. I think people are so used to the Hydrans being fearsome in the early game that they miss the fact that they don't upgrade as well as the Klinks and Lyrans. Actually, not sure anyone upgrades as well as they do.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Thursday, December 13, 2012 - 09:54 am: Edit

All valid points, but I don't want to imply that the Hydrans need any more free ships or stuff. They already get the sweetest deal possible, with free carriers every turn, free money to rebuild the shipyard, etc.. In the game in question the Coalition has committed major fleet elements to contain the Hydrans including SCS, C8VH, DCSs, BCSs, X-ships, good scouts, etc.. Also, the Hydrans haven't yet "gone to the wire". In spite of their poor performance so far coming back on-map, they still pose a serious threat and will never eat a single point of left-over damage all game. Let's not forget that they get hundreds of fighter factors for free or cheap, and the best ships in the game overall. Also, the Coalition has been paying a wildly disproportionate price to keep
them off map all these turns. I don't want to spark a hue and cry for the Hydrans to get any more magic free stuff as they're tough enough as it is. There's no way they can prevent the Coalition from "brickling" them, if the Coalition is willing to commit the ships and that is how it should be due to their strategic isolation. In our own game I suspect part of the problem is the lack of pressure from the Kzinti and Feds, allowing the western Coalition to spare ships for the Hydran theatre.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Thursday, December 13, 2012 - 10:23 am: Edit

Hey Paul,

I don't necessarily disagree with you, and thanks for the context. If the Hydrans are really drawing that much in the way of Coalition resources, then they are doing their job.

Not to worry, I just came back and am not ready to start any campaigns (rules wise, that is).

On the other hand the the escort surcharge bugs me (especially for small ships where the cost is unjustified) and I think that drone raids should be deleted and go the way the the Kzinti CVE battlegroup rule!

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Thursday, December 13, 2012 - 04:00 pm: Edit

Understood Pete. Cheaper light escorts wouldn't be a bad thing. I would like to see drone raids fixed if possible rather than eliminated. Of course I'm weary of what form a "fix" might take.

By Stewart W Frazier (Frazikar2) on Thursday, December 13, 2012 - 08:43 pm: Edit

Those drone raid rules will be fixed, it IS in the cue...

By Gary Quick (Northquick) on Friday, December 14, 2012 - 03:28 am: Edit
Hydrans get "the best ships in the game overall"??

Which are those?

By **Thomas Mathews (Turtle)** on Friday, December 14, 2012 - 06:09 am: Edit

There heavy units with fighters. The hybrid carriers, ie. Ranger cruiser, only pay 1 per fighter factor. Those fighters are considered casual fighters and don't count against the 3 squadron attrition limit. This is how the Hydrans can generate lines of 120 - 140 in the early war. The offshoot is that the Hydran Cruiser line is vulnerable to stasis ships.

By **Pete DiMitri (Petercool)** on Friday, December 14, 2012 - 11:32 am: Edit

Stewart:

The drone raids have been broken for a very long time. I'm dubious of solutions (but willing to see if it presents itself).

But the fact that it is still in the que after all these years rather than resolved gives me pause.

I say throw it overboard!

Luckily, what I say has no impact.

By **Gary Quick (Northquick)** on Friday, December 14, 2012 - 05:52 pm: Edit

If the RN, DG, etc. ships really were the best in the game, then they would actually get built. I have never seen one built after the Hydran capital falls, and only rarely before then. So, even the Hydrans choose not to build these "best ships".

By **Pete DiMitri (Petercool)** on Friday, December 14, 2012 - 05:58 pm: Edit

Gary,

I think "best ships" is debatable for a few reasons. Yes, they are
powerful, but they are also vulnerable. But the Hydrans are able to put up significant ComPot in comparison to other races in the very early war.

But, a lot of that edge has been lost as the Coalition forces have been steadily improved and upgraded over time.

I think Hyrdans don't have a lot of cash to build some of the cruisers once that shiyard falls.

By **Paul Edwards (Pablomatic)** on Friday, December 14, 2012 - 06:25 pm: Edit

One would think I should have learned long ago not to use words like "best" on these volatile forums. If you could choose to build the cruisers of any F&E Empire, would you choose other than the Hydrans? RGRs have more compot than a DN, cost less, and absorb 4 damage for free.

By **Pete DiMitri (Petercool)** on Friday, December 14, 2012 - 10:02 pm: Edit

You talking to me?

The RGR costs only 2 EPs less than a DN, doesn't show up until 175 and is way easier to kill.

That said, yes, they have nice cruisers. Gorns do too, and their ships are a little harder to kill, but few fighters.

But I don't take issue with you saying "best", I guess I was just responding to Gary. Now, to be fair, in your original post you said "best ships overall" and that means we'd have to look at more than just their cruisers (which I think arguably are the best). They do have carrier problems, no drone bombardment, scout problems, so I'm not sure that their overall navy is the best (that distinction I think goes to the Klingons).

By **Paul Edwards (Pablomatic)** on Friday, December 14, 2012 - 10:36 pm: Edit
No Pete I wasn't talking to anyone in particular. I was trying to joke about how people on these forums, including myself, like to take sides and argue that one side or other has all the advantages.

Heh, I know... I was quoting the movie Taxi Driver, but I think it loses impact if it's not spoken in a New York Goombah way.

Anyway, I don't think one side has all the advantages. I actually think that right now the game is pretty close to balanced (with the exception of drone raid rules). But I may change that opinion once I get myself into a Grand Campaign again.

I also think that with all the expansions that F&E now has, there many different possible routes that the Coalition and Alliance can take to victory.

Interesting you'd say the Klingons have the best overall navy Pete. I'd have to go with the Feds--but maybe only because I've never seen a full-wrought Hydran fleet. I suppose I'm biased: after 4 years of playing the Coalition I have what could be called "attrition unit envy." Seems like it would be so nice to rarely if ever eat any non-directed damage. SWACS are sweet too,. That said, I've never faced SFGs, but I'm not impressed with maulers except against PDUs, and Klingon carriers are sub par for their class in most cases. I'll grant that the Klingon navy does dominate most of the game.

Actually, the later you get in the war, the less subpar the carriers get.

They also get the swarms, SFGs, maulers, penal ships, early PF introduction, B-10, excellent X-ships, excellent drone bombardment platforms, excellent EW platforms, excellent commando platforms,
I agree that the Feds also have a formidable navy. Arguably the Fed Navy is superior to the Klingons if handled right, but the Feds don't have quite as many goodies (although they have a lot).

The Roms can be a powerful navy, the only thing is that they don't have bombardment. I've gotta say that's something that's always surprised me that the non-drone races didn't come up with something to at least give parity when it comes to that extra ComPot that is only available to 3 of the races.

But check the battleforces Chuck is having us put together for Klingon Fleet over in proposals. I don't know that I could construct a Federation fleet as powerful. I don't know that anyone could construct a battleforce as powerful.

Hydran Hybrid fighters on a scout in scout position gets them extra compot.

If the Hydrans are allowed to keep their economy they pretty much have the best fleets. They lose though, because they are smaller than their enemies. There was some option in Captain's Log to have them be the Hydran Empire, with an offmap eco equal to the on map eco, and a fleet offmap equal to the size of the fleet on map. That... would be potent.

Pete, in regards to Chuck's battleforce construction, that would depend on the use of conjectural ships. For the force I put together, I didn' use any conjectural ships. Had I done so, I might have been able to come up with something more powerful for the Klingons.

I think I can get close in terms of compot for the Feds, but not in the way of EW. That's the big advantage the Klingons have with the
D5DX. Making the D5DX arguably the most valuable X-ship in the game.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Saturday, December 15, 2012 - 08:46 am: Edit

Turtle, agreed that conjectural would make things even more impressive. I haven't actually looked myself to see if the Feds could pull it off - my inclination is no, but I didn't really put a lot of research time into it.

I can see some EW possibilities, but that D5DX is really a crazy unit.

By Chris Upson (Misanthropope) on Saturday, December 15, 2012 - 02:08 pm: Edit

D5DX is freaking awesome, it earns the coalition essentially a lock on "compot + EW". but once lines get this out of control, it's really the EW that counts, and *that* the feds can beat.

CVA/ GVX/ IFF(10)/ HDWEx2/ DWEx2 + 2 CX and fill out the line with SCX. drones, megas, prime teams, SWAC squadron, etc

you're way behind on compot, sure- not *even* 170. but +3 on the stasis along with having an irreplaceable unit right smack on the line makes the matchup not nearly as favorable for the coalition as the headline numbers might suggest.

By Gary Quick (Northquick) on Sunday, December 16, 2012 - 12:28 am: Edit

re: Hydrans.

Yes, the Hydran cruisers are 10.5 compot for 10.5/9.5 EP. But, they are also very fragile, as they only take 24 points to DD. So, I think they are overrated, merely because they happen to bring attrition factors. yes, that helps, but 24 points is pretty easy to get, even for an 80 point Coalition line w/o a mauler.

I think the 10-pt maulers are better, the 10/5 BC/BCH's, and a number of scouts in about the same price range. And, really, the CC's of most races aren't that much worse, and are cheaper.
I just think that "best ships" should mean that the ships actually get built. Even when the Hydrans have 30ish income, they generally don't bother to build the 10 point cruisers due to cost vs. fragility. And so I don't think they actually are best within the overall game environment.

Gary,

I agree wholeheartedly with what you say, because having the highest ComPot lines in the early war doesn't tell the whole story.

For the category of "best ships" I would take it to mean best assortment of capabilities in terms of putting together a battle force, but also strategic options the navy as well (like cheap field repair for the Gorns). We can even ignore whether or not a given race has the money to build the battleforces in question. So my thinking for what would be taken into account for a "best" analysis:

1 - Overall ComPot potential
2 - Protection of key units
3 - Attrition capability (fighters/PFs)
4 - EW capability
5 - "Special" capabilities(cloak, SFG, SWAC, etc.)
6 - "Special" Units

In the case of the Hydrans, they clearly are in good shape for categories 1 and 3, but are lacking in categories 2,4, 5 and 6.

The Klinks have all 6 covered, with them having the largest assortment of category 5 in the game, which is why I pointed to them. But in fairness, the Feds also have all 6 categories and are arguably supreme in category 3 when you get to the third way. Roms are light on #5, have some amazing stuff in #6.
RNs are unsustainably expensive for the hydrans, but it isn't because the RNs aren't excellent, it's because the hydrans are so badly constrained economically. Replace the 6 heavy cruisers in each klingon fleet with 5 RNs and I think you've got a happy klink. The klingon is expecting protracted heavy combat; for him, 8.5 EPs per turn in losses (net of salvage) and zero cripples would be a godsend, especially as it comes with ridonkulous compot.

Would the klingons rather be able to produce PALs? Just maybe. MKEs? Oh my goodness, yes please. The RN just happens to be perfectly suited to a navy in an aggressive posture, which is the polar opposite of the hydran situation in the general war.

But flip it around. Which klingon unit does the hydran player covet? A single D6M might be better than a single RN, but a fleet full of them leaves something to be desired, and you have the same burn rate issues. Drone bombardment (aside from drone raids...) seems out of the question for the hydrans, as are stasis and/or penal units. Hydrans might lust for klingon EW capability, but again they could never afford to habitually put D5S on the line the way the klingons can.

If the klingons had seen the writing on the wall after the 4PW, and allied with the forties on the basis of conquering the lyrans ("breaking wind"?), the hybrid schtick would probably look pretty darn good

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 05:33 am: Edit

It would be glorious.

I played in an SFB campaign years ago, and you could pretty much build the ships you wanted and it was all assumed to be in the advanced late war era - everyone had PFs, fast drones, booster packs, etc. (The guy running the campaign specifically disallowed Federation SWACs, but that's another story).

Anyway, the Hydran player didn't even bother with PFs, or true carriers. He just had a bunch of hybrid ships with speed 30 fighters.
It was terrifying for a few races (the Gorns), who really didn't have systems to cope with the Hydans (plasmas pretty useless against that many phaser Gs).

But the Hydran weakness in that game (as in F&E) was their EW capability. Fast ECM drones were a big headache (think about it, that's 3 points of power for every ship in your fleet!).

It was fun playing those campaigns because, like F&E, you really could put together the battle force you wanted and the various races had roughly equal economies, more or less.

I will say that the general consensus back then was that the Feds, Klingons and Kzintis (yep the 3 drone races) were probably the best overall fleets to engage just about everyone.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 01:55 pm: Edit

"In a pleasant, voice with no criticism or insult implied."

Chris Upson--I agree wholeheartedly, and thanks for chiming in. Good way to look at it: "Would the Hydrans prefer to build Klingon cruisers?" Sure the Kzinti would like Lyran CAs to convert to DNṣ, but the Klingons would also like Gorn CAs to convert to DNṣ. Similarly, would any Alliance race want to switch carriers with the Klingons? Maybe the Gorns, but certainly no-one else. How about switch to Romulan carriers with their 8 fighters you pay for but can only use 6 in most cases? Granted Romulans having single-ship carriers is nice. Kzinti have a single-ship carrier already built at game start (though just the one). No, Alliance carriers are generally better class for class. For example, Alliance scout carriers go down to 3 or 6 compot when dialed. Coalition scout carriers universally go down to 2 compot if they dial EW including the REDhawk which loses 10 compot to dial. Would the Coalition want Alliance carriers? Yes, in almost every category Alliance carriers are better. Hydrans have the best escorts in the game. Seriously someone argues that Coalition has better escorts? Where did this supposed Coalition Advantage come from? Gorn escorts are as good as Lyran, better than the Romulan. Feds all get free FCR fighters if not
superior compot, etc. Alliance out-classes the Coalition in escorts. Sure the Kzinti have to suffer with escorts similar to the Klingons. In my experience this is what Alliance players mean when they complain about worse escorts. Why is this a disadvantage for the "Alliance" but not for the Klingons? Alliance has better escorts overall--except the Kzinti are equal to the Klingon escorts only. Oh well, Kzinti carriers are superior to Klingon counterparts at least--that should comfort the poor Kzinti player with his free drone bombardment, +1 to BIR, and massive carrier advantage from game start. Early game for the initial SB assualts including Hydrax, the Coalition won't even use their carriers on the line because they lower compot so much and have only E4A escorts--sending a squadron of 6 forward is less hard on compot than putting a carrier on the line! Do the Kzinti do that? No. And all this during SB assaults! Yea, the Alliance has it rough hiding behind free damage absorption all game while the Coalition eats damage.

As I've said many times, maulers are way over-rated. In fact they're more useful against the Coalition than against the Alliance since the Alliance shows you frigates on the line and 40 fighters there's nothing to mail and the damage left over after mauling damage falls on fighters. It has been my experience that except against PDUs, maulers are mostly irrelevant. Sure occasionally they might allow you to direct a ship on the line you couldn't otherwise get--but how many times do you have to use one (and self-cripple it if it isn't killed outright) for that situation to eventually come up? Same with the potential for allowing to cripple a carrier group: How many maulers do you lose while hoping one will make a difference and allow something you couldn't otherwise have done (and killing more fighters after doing it? Whooppee!)? All while spending much money just for the privilege of maybe being an advantage on occasion. Sure the B-10 is nice, but hideously expensive. Federation SCS has much more compot plus zillions more attrition factors and costs a fraction of a B-10.

You also alluded to the fact that the Hydrans (for example) couldn't effectively employ SFGs or Penals either--because these are expensive units you sacrifice when you use--and the Hydrans couldn't afford to keep replacing them but the Coalition counts losing expensive, rare ships automatically for almost free in addition to other ships directed--as an "advantage" (and granted it is but an
expensive one to take 'advantage' of). Klingons actually lose EPs if they don't produce/have enough Penals, and if an SFG is captured (as happened in my game) that costs the Klingons a bunch of EPs and an Admiral (best one is with the SFGs isn't he?).

Regarding EW, the so-called Coalition "advantage" is simply that they have more money early game. Kzinti has a 4-pt X-drone/scout too. Feds have a 4-pt X-scout as well I believe. Feds have cheapest 4-pt regular scouts in the game, Gorns have the best. If they don't spend money to put 3-pointers on the line, that's their fault--not a Coalition "advantage." Hydrans do have worst EW situation, but of course they get PGS scouts for free which although only 2EW, do provide extra hybrid fighters/compot to the battle force.

Alliance has X-carriers and fast carriers. Coalition has none. Speaking of X-ships, the Feds have the best. DDX replaces a DW slot, not a CW slot (freeing those up for other things), and has same compot as Klingon D5X, but can fill all six slots in a BG giving more Compot than Klingon BG and risking only smaller ships that give the same salvage as larger ones (but also cost the same). Hydran X-ships have fighters--potentially allowing them to more easily take advantage of intercepting reserves (by not eating every point scored in return by that reserve). This is also a huge safety feature for raids for them.

I've said a dozen times on these forums that Coalition special abilities all come with risk:
--SFGs and Penals directed at 1-1. SFGs unpredictable and may fail. Both expensive and risky to use.
--Maulers self-cripple and repair poorly. SFGs and maulers require picking high intensity. Expensive ships to lose every turn.
--Romulan cloak can fail and backfire--giving your enemy higher BIR. If used to avoid combat, Romulan player must risk leaving more ships than usual if he wants to try to benefit from escaping with all of them. Risk associated with possible advantage.
--Cloaked decoys can fail (and encourage use of expensive ships protected by them)--in which case you lose decoy and ship. Plus, even if they work they only eat 8 points directed damage and so the Romulan eats any left-over. Very limited ships they can be used on anyway--and usually not the ones the Alliance wants to direct. Contrast this with Alliance special tricks:
--Gorn special G attack. Un-defendable. Requires no risk of ships or
BIR. Simply an automatic nice bonus available all the time for free.
--Gorn special field repair. Always useful and welcome. No downside.
--Federation SWACS. Always useful, always a threat. Absorb an entire directed damage attack all by themselves if Coalition wants to kill them.
--Kzinti +1 to BIR. Always useful, no risk. Available instantly for free.
--Hydran free PGS ships. No downside I can see. They even get these if they never lose their shipyard. Available instantly for free. Can even take a free PGV carrier with a free fighter squadron each turn.

Now I'm not saying I want all this to change, simply that it is what it is. The Coalition advantage consists primarily in larger starting economies, and a plethora of small, weak pincount ships, but is described as ship quality superiority instead. Anyway, it's fun to argue the relative merits of different fleets. My money is still on the Feds. Their fleet is the best. Now I understand that Alliance players fear Coalition special abilities because the Coalition has some to potentially try. Fearing those advantages does not in and of itself make them superior advantages. I'd trade maulers for SWACs, and SFGs plus Penals for the third way or even the Gorn special G attack (not to mention cheap field repair) in a heartbeat. If the Feds had SFGs and Penals, but the Klingons got SWACs and the third way, the Feds would die quickly and painlessly for the Coalition. That sums up the whole story right there doesn't it? Let's phrase the question for proponents of Coalition qualitative superiority this way:
"Which Alliance advantages would you trade for which Coalition advantages if you could?" None, I suspect.
Unless the rule has changed, I think the Fed DDX can not be used in all 6 slots of the battlegroup. I seem to recall that it counted as a CW for purposes of the rule.

Or has that been altered while I've been away?

Paul:

Paragraphs!

Paul,

You've got me confused. Who do you think has the best ships in the game, the Hydrans or the Feds?

Pete, no only 3 DDX's are allowed in a Fed X-battlegroup.

Paul, you've got bombardment!

Rather than respond to your whole post all at once, I'll pick a point at at a time.

Carriers - There is no question that the Alliance is better with carriers than the Coalition. No argument there. That's the underlying dynamic built into the game - the Alliance basically survives because the carriers, and the Coalition never really catches up. But that is the way it is supposed to be.

The Coalition does have the Lyran-Klingon transfers, which is nice.
But the best Coalition carriers are in the Roms. Take a look a the possible combinations and you'll see that Romulan carrier groups are extremely powerful.

X-Ships.

On this one, I'm surprised at the debate.

The Klingon DX is 13, the Federation CX is 12.

The Klingons can put together an X-Battgroup that looks like this:

3xD5DX
3xFX

That has 57 combat factors as 12 EW factors.

The Fed BG would be:

3xDDX
3xFFX

for 51 combat factors and no EW. Feds can put EW in at the cost of more ComPot.

Yes, the Feds have one GVX, but that certainly doesn't overcome the clear superiority that the Klinks have in X-ships.

--Romulan cloak can fail and backfire--giving your enemy higher BIR. If used to avoid combat, Romulan player must risk leaving more ships than usual if he wants to try to benefit from escaping with all of them. Risk associated with possible advantage.

In this case, let's look at the probabilities:
There is a 27.77% probability that using the cloak offensively results in a positive die roll modifier.

There is a 8.33% probability that it results in a negative die roll modifier.

In this case, it's clear that offensive use of the cloak is a no-brainer. On balance, it will have a positive impact more than 3 times as often as it has a negative impact. So, I would say that this not a risk at all in the context of the war, but pretty much something to automatically do.

The other features, such as using the cloak during OP move or avoiding approach really have no risk and can be quite useful.

I don't see how the cloak is anything but a positive in F&E. How strong a positive is certainly worthy of debate and discussion, but I think it is a positive.

---Cloaked decoys can fail (and encourage use of expensive ships protected by them)—in which case you lose decoy and ship. Plus, even if they work they only eat 8 points directed damage and so the Romulan eats any left-over. Very limited ships they can be used on anyway—and usually not the ones the Alliance wants to direct. Contrast this with Alliance special tricks:

I think the cloaked decoys are pretty close to useless personally.

Sorry about the paragraphs.

I'd have to go with the Feds for the best fleet because of SWACS, the Third-Way, plus CVAs and SCSs.

Didn't know DDXs were counted as class size 3 ships—-we've been
playing it wrong I think. In that case, yes the Fed X BG is worse than the Klingons. The CCX v DX is pretty minor at 1 compot difference--sure the DX is a tiny bit superior. So the Fed X BG has less compot--which is made up for by the free third-way stuff--so they should still come out on top compot-wise if they wish.

Regarding offensive use of cloak, yes the odds are in Romulan player's favor, but there is nevertheless risk of helping your opponent. It's not like the Kzinti +1, or the Gorn special G attack, etc. which carry absolutely no risk. I was pointing out simply that there is a risk--unlike Alliance special advantages. There is no Alliance "extra risk," but the Coalition must constantly take extra risks to use their advantages.

I thought cloaked decoys were useless too--until I started fielding Romulan X-BGs. In those, the two allowed on the line go on SPXs. That way if the Alliance chooses to direct an SPX they have to consider the decoys. This may cause the Alliance to direct SKXs instead, so they have some value. SPXs are expensive, and the Romulans are of course very short on cash so they can't afford to lose SPXs willy-nilly.

I do always overlook the Klingon/Lyran fighter exchange--which is very useful, and free too! No risk either! That one is an anomaly in the "risk v. no risk dichotomy" which I am pointing out.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 04:03 pm: Edit

Paul:

Come on - the X-Battlegroup thing is awesome.

In terms of the risk-free advantages, you point to the Gorns and the Kzintis.

I was part of the discussions that brought these things into the game, and it wasn't to give a major bonus to those races, it was to help make them viable. It was a patch.
The Gorn cheap field repair came about because the Gorns were basically hopeless. They had virtually no fighters and no capacity to build many carriers. Unlike the Lyrans, they couldn't use the fighters/carriers of their allies and PF introduction for the Gorns comes waaayyyy later than it does for the Lyrans. I don't see the G thing as being all that impressive. It's cute, but not a game changer, but it was put in there to at least give the Gorns something special.

The Kzintis bonus - there were a few games that got to the late war, and the Kzintis were being plastered by the late-war Coalition battle lines. The Kzintis don't have the 3rd way, and their PF introduction date came much later than the Lyran/Klingon. This at a time when the Kzintis were (historically) supposed to be recapturing their territory. So, in a conversation with Steve, he indicated that the PF introduction dates were not subject to change so we came up with the heavy fighters to give them some survivability. For the fast drone bonus, I did an analysis that showed the in SFB, the Kzintis got a bigger BPV increase then any other race due to the fast drones, so it was something that could justified.

Go ahead and try to put together an optimum Kzinti fleet vs. the Coalition in 180 or 181. You'll see what I mean. They couldn't begin to compete with the Coalition battle lines.

So, again, these things were put there to address shortcomings.

Sure the B-10 is nice, but hideously expensive. Federation SCS has much more compot plus zillions more attrition factors and costs a fraction of a B-10.
You also alluded to the fact that the Hydrans (for example) couldn't effectively employ SFGs or Penals either--because these are expensive units you sacrifice when you use--and the Hydrans couldn't afford to keep replacing them but the Coalition counts losing expensive, rare ships automatically for almost free in addition to other ships directed--as an "advantage" (and granted it is but an expensive one to take 'advantage' of). Klingons actually lose EPs if
they don't produce/have enough Penals, and if an SFG is captured (as happened in my game) that costs the Klingons a bunch of EPs and an Admiral (best one is with the SFGs isn't he?).

You are comparing the B-10 to the Federation SCS, but let's again put some more context to this.

With average die rolls, the first B-10 will take 12 turns or so to build, so it will be ready by turn 15. The B-10 is basically a floating permanent command point. The SCS doesn't come into the war until much later, and the Third way doesn't come until turn 26. That's a huge amount of time where the B-10 basically reigns supreme and there really is no counter to it. The sucker is worth it.

you put the SFGs on it and you can freeze up to 6 targets, or you could put the SFGs on a starbase, and that makes them the most difficult SBs in the game to take out.

Re: Hydrans/rangers

I was thinking after my game that perhaps the Hydrans should routinely field a fleet of CVA/MKE/MKE/DWE+8 RN or equivalents. They should be able to replace 4 RN+MHK each year in losses. And replacing a RN is cheap - 6EP plus 2.25 FFF - of which essentially each is 2EP cheaper from the RN you are replacing (salvage). Sounds like a good deal to me for getting to field a 130ish compot line. I mainly just wonder if that 5 rounds of combat each year would do enough damage to make this worth doing (along with whatever carrier fleets get to attrit).

I've also generally been willing to hammer the Hydrans if they stay on map after losing the capital. The damage taken to do so has been worth it overall IMO. Of course, I generally manage to leave the retreating fleet from 617 out of supply so little/no replacement fighters that turn - which often convinces the Hydrans getting to the offmap is the better option.
Carriers - The problems I see is that rather early the Alliance (mainly Kzinti) ones are better, but the bulk of the midgame coalition carriers are as good if not better than alliance ones. Late game the Feds are outright best, but that is turn 26 - you have to get that far first, and then be in a position to effectively translate that superiority into territory regained/taken.

Xships have the same problems - they show up really late, and the coalition has good ones too. (Not really sure why the DX is 13 - I always thought they were the ones who least benefitted from Xtech SFB wise)

Fed Fleet - I always wonder at the occasional extollation of the fed fleet. I've generally found they have the worst fleet overall of all the empires. Getting toys and top notch stuff after the game is (or is essentially) over doesn't cut it, especially when all the other empires have most/all of their toys too (even if not quite as nice). The federation really just has lots of regular ships from their EP/build rate. And enough 4ew scouts. Loses out to the more coalition ships (who also have enough 4ew scouts which are harder to kill)

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 05:13 pm: Edit

It's the SWACS.

People really hate the SWACS.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 05:44 pm: Edit

Just to clarify, I'm not arguing for any changes, nor trying to fight, just conversing.

Gorn special G attack is no big deal for most of the Alliance game, but that power in the hands of the Coalition would be worth it's weight in gold. Assuming the Alliance goes on the offensive eventually--they never need nerf their own compot and worry about high BIR or VBIR at alll. Nor are they vulnerable to the old "direct the G ship so he can't score any extra SIDS trick"--they can simply
take a shot at scoring a SIDS or taking out a PDU every round—no risk. Don't have to build special ships or do anything at all. Coalition would love to have this ability and would definitely trade SFGs (oooh boy, I get to kill 4-7 extra frigates this round in exchange for my C9A, DWJ, and another ship of mine assuming I don't lose the B10AA itself! I feel lucky!). In many ways, the best possible use for SFGs (beyond the threat, which is useful) is to put on SB to protect cripples from special raids. This is powerful. But SFGs on SB are useless for anything else. When would the SFG ever be used against a competent opponent? No fool would pick BIR 4 just for that reason. Yea it sucks they can only pick BIR 3 instead of 4, but wait, maybe it's perfect since Alliance has the Gorn special G attack though, leave the G ships at home and pick BIR 1: all you need is 18 damage without a mauler, plus you'll have free chance to score an extra SIDS with the special G attack. Coalition would love to go to a SB at BIR 1 and still score extra SIDS. But no, we have to go in at BIR 4 to use Gs.

Apparently the Gorn cheap field repair is needed for balance. Hey, I suspect that much or even most of the game we see now has evolved based on rulings and concerns for balance. These lead to even crazier situations, and so even crazier rulings are required to patch things together. Twenty years of this and viola! F&E2K. So I don't advocate any changes. I'm just commenting.

B-10 over 12 turns costs on average 60EP before fighters (which only detract from it's value so should be avoided IMO). Forget the SCS, the Fed CVA has more compot than a B10 and absorbs tons of free damage—at a fraction of the cost. CVAs are available from the start, and the Coalition never come up with anything that comes close to equalling them all game. CVAs give that free command point/Admiral each turn just like B-10s, only there are more of them and they are less vulnerable and they are cheaper. All this before the third way.

Whoever said the Romulans have the best carriers must be high? I'm not buying it—in general they don't fit together in any sensible way and generally require leaving some fighters in the hangars. Oh, you mean they have some who's compot per class equals what the
Alliance has. OK, point conceded, some Romulan carriers have compot as high as non-special Alliance carriers. That doesn't make them good, only good by comparison to Lyrans and Klingons. And would the Kzinti really risk a single ship carrier in formation even if they had one?

By **Pete DiMitri (Petercool)** on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 05:57 pm: Edit

B-10 has a Density of 24 and can be in formation - there is little chance for the alliance to kill it.

CVA, let's see.

CVA -25  
3xDE - 15  
Total ComPot: 40  
Density: 10

The CVA is a great unit - the best that the Feds have for a while, but it is not at all comparable in terms of its ComPot effects on the battle line.

By **Pete DiMitri (Petercool)** on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 06:02 pm: Edit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CVA w/ADM</th>
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<th>B-10 w/ADM</th>
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<td></td>
<td>DB</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>135</td>
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</tbody>
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By **Paul Edwards (Pablomatic)** on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 06:06 pm: Edit

And Timothy I didn't respond to you.
I've heard you say that about the fed fleet before. I disagree of course. CVA is best carrier in the game until the SCS (also Fed) comes out and is there from the beginning. Feds have SC, which are cheaper 4 pt. scouts that don't take up a CA slot. CVLs are the best scout carriers in the game and they are from the start. Feds don't need or want specialty heavy hulls to give the Coalition something worthwhile to shoot at. Instead, the Fed compot is protected in carrier groups and they show vanilla ships for the enemy to shoot at. Coalition can't rely on their carriers to actually improve compot, carriers are a compot-nerfing necessity for the Coalition, not the centerpiece of their navy as with the Alliance.

I've never played with X-ships in SFB, but I suspect the Klingons have more to gain than most races. Photon torpedoes are vastly superior to disruptors except within a narrow window that the Klingon struggles to create. Just allowing batteries to overload disruptors like regular fed photons can would be a huge improvement. Surely Klingon X-ships upgrade from the "PH III by any other name" PH IIs as well which would change everything for the Klingon player. I don't have experience with them though, so maybe you are right.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 06:15 pm: Edit

Pete,

So in your line the Alliance can shoot a Coalition D7C from the line each round, losing an NCL in return each round. Plus the Fed could easily put a CVL in place of the CVB, upping compot (?) and EW, or easily another carrier with higher compot and more attrition. Coalition can't do that as they have no better carriers nor places to put them on the line without precluding the BG. I'll trade a few extra fighters each round from the extra 15 compot. I'll keep trading D7Cs for NCLs all day in that configuration. I build 100 NCLs/turn for 5 ep each, you build probably 3-4 D7Cs per year for 9ep each.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 06:16 pm: Edit

SUP 14 (Formation)
Pete,

Ah, the MGH-E. I thought about that, but the Alliance can direct the escorts to drive that DN off the line. Also, building that lets the Gorns build a CVA—is an uber-heavy escort worth that? Plus the MGH-E costs 21 eps if memory serves. Plus I'd probably rather have the PF version (and do in my game—BTW, Romulan modular dreadnoughts have 1 EW, not 4—you can turn it into a modular frigate with 2 AF to get 4 EW if you want). I did think about doing the OMH-E but seems a waste just to give the wealthy Gorns another CVA build if they want it. OMH-E has advantage of actually gaining compot over its defense in escort mode iirc.

In this case, the Alliance should try to shoot the SUP from formation each round (maybe after driving off the MGH-E). Sure it has a cloaked decoy, but a chance to kill a carrier is a chance to kill a carrier. Coalition never gets such a good chance as this so the Alliance should take that chance. On average, shooting SUPs with decoys will still destroy way more carriers and free-fighters than the Coalition can hope to compete with by killing entire groups once or
twice a game. Put up a Gorn line then, and let's see how the compots compare.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 06:31 pm: Edit

Paul,

I deliberately didn't try too hard to optimize the Klingon line and still you pounced!

You are now bring directed damage into this, then fine... let's go there.

The Klingons direct on the esoorts of the CVA, forcing it off the line.

How do you force the B-10 off the line?

And this is every round, ceaselessly. There is no comparison between the B-10 and the CVA. If you want to make that comparison though...

Romulan CNV has 13 ComPot and 12 fighters. That's 25, same as the Fed CVA. By your logic, the CNV is just as good as the CVA, and the Roms have it.

Of course that comparison doesn't work, because all CVAs are in same range, more or less. The issue with the B-10 is that it doesn't need to be escorted.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 06:43 pm: Edit

Paul,

You are a stubborn fellow!

I would think that as the Roms if the Feds are actually willing to spend 30 points of damage to cripple a SUP, I'd be delighted. I could change that line around in many ways if necessary, but he point is made - The Roms can put together VERY formidable carrier
lines. This is only 1 possible setup.

You want to see a Gorn line?

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<table>
<thead>
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<td>DN w/ADM</td>
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As you can see, the Gorns, due to lack of heavy carriers can basically choose between a defensive line or a high ComPot line.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 06:44 pm: Edit

Not trying to pounce Pete.

CVA has more attrition than the CNV--which is what you want. Granted, all CVAs are comparable, but Feds are slightly better with more damage absorption. Sure you can direct DEs in exchange for D7Cs, then I'll leave if I don't have a replacement carrier. Win for the Feds. If I have to win the hex I have more than one CVA present.

I may not drive the B-10 off the line, but after directing the D7C (or in leu of), let's see how your 16 attrition units protect you from left over damage compared to my 21 or more.

Also, direct-crippling the B-10 for 60 pts is a possibility (unlikely
with these lines it's true). It requires a SB to repair, and is vulnerable in the meantime to special raids and such. It repairs "badly" for 5eps.

Also, Feds will have a CVA in every battle mostly. Klingons will have how many B-10s? Now take away that B-10, break the BG to field another carrier (or send 8 fighters forward), and the Feds have compot advantage, plus attrition advantage, plus nothing to shoot at--every time without any special units. That's the real story, not that the Coalition has 15 more compot wherever they put their rare 60EP cost ships.

Because I'm in a gentle mood, I'll give another Romulan line - with 24 fighter factors.

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<td>CNV</td>
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<td>MGH-E</td>
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<td>2xPT</td>
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And you are trying to say the Rom carriers are inferior?

I am stubborn according to my wife. I don't see it. Mostly I'm just correct. (Kidding, this is a subjective judgement we're arguing here).
45 pts to kill an SUP from formation. Not that rare and very worth it when it happens.

Gorns can do way better than that. Even if not, their line is better than a comparable Lyran line because they can use cheap field repair. Also, if the Romulans get the MGH-E, don't the Gorn get their CVA then? Likely the Gorns will use a Fed CVA CVBG with their own ships filling out the line though. Theoretically the Lyrans could fill out the Romulan line--but that carries major supply risks in most cases.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 07:15 pm: Edit

You are assuming that the Feds get 45 points. And it doesn't have to be a Superhawk, as I've already demonstrated.

And no, the Gorns cannot do way better than that. Their line is not better than the comparable Lyran because they don't have drone bombardment and fighter support.

How about you put up this way better battle line?

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 07:28 pm: Edit

Paul,

I made a mistake with my spreadsheet and got the Federation ComPot wrong. So, here it is correct. I'll put the original line for the Klinks and the B10V so that you can get the safe line since you seem to be concerned about directing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CVA w/ADM</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>B-10V w/ADM</th>
<th>32</th>
<th>B-10 w/ADM</th>
<th>24</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>AD5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>C8V</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>CVB</td>
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<td>D6U</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>F5E</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>AD5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3xD5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DE 5  F5E 4  F5Q 16
3xNCL 22  3xD5 22  D6M 10
3xDW 19  F5Q 16  D7C 9
2xPT 4  2xPT 4  2xPT 4
DB 12  DB 12  DB 12
  122  127  135

So, actually the ComPot differential using the standard B-10 is much greater.

By Richard B. Eitzen (Rbeitzen) on Monday, December 17, 2012 - 07:49 pm: Edit

The Hydrans have some pretty awesome X-ships.

RNX out compots any Klingon X-ship. Hydrans can field BGs of 6LNX or 3LNX+3SCX if you want EW for some high compot.

And of course that comes with fighters as usual.

Pity about the low economy for the Hydrans.

By Thomas Mathews (Turtle) on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 - 06:40 am: Edit

Pete, I like the SWACS. They are annoying as the coalition player because you have to use your directed damage attack to kill one. Even though it's 4 points for a E2, 6 for a E3.

They can disrupt drone bombardment or go wild at the risk of losing the SWAC. In some cases the risk is well worth the reward because they amount of reduction in compot can mean the difference between winning or losing the battle round and quite possibly the hex.

The also have ability to some extra fighter factors to a battleforce. This is extremly important because given the right CVBG and SWAC combination you can get 5 full fighter squadrons in the battle without using an extra command slot.
So far the most common mission I've used them for is to add extra EW points. This has changed a shift from -2 to -1 or -1 to 0.

By Chris Upson (Misanthropope) on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 - 01:02 pm: Edit

pete

i recognize the klingon fleet isn't "ruthlessly optimized", but the federation fleet is substantially out-costed and out-hulled. take the CVB off the line, have it feed forward an IFF(8)*. put a CC on the line, and a DNG (or EW platform) in form. voila, one (of several) fed CVA with a solid but still unremarkable support team squares off against a ("the"?) B10/ C8V line at parity.

*i heart CVB/ FF/ FF groups. until you pay 3-1 to whack a stupid frigate im gonna sit here and transubstantiate every fighter in the hex into an F15. neener, neener, neener.

the "whose X line is hugest" argument doesn't make too much sense to me. you rub two late war lines together and an X ship is gonna die on each side- the mauler effect basically guarantees it. there's enough attrition to soak up the excess damage, almost inevitably. cost containment is a really important issue- IMO the X frigates are the most important X ships; the FFX is the more cost effective but the YIS of the F5X is huge compensation.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 - 01:19 pm: Edit

Doesn't look like parity to me. Okay, if we are going to go forward and cherry pick the DNG, let's bring the F5W while we are at it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DNG</th>
<th>12 (Formation)</th>
<th>B-10 w/ADM</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CVA w/ADM</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>C8V</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>AD5</td>
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<td>DE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>AD5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F5WE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVB fighters</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3xD5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is not parity by any means. basically an extra DN for the Klinks, and that is ultimately what the B-10 is - a double DN.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 - 01:20 pm: Edit

Turtle,

I do like the SWACs, but Paul has given me the impression he does not.

I get the sense that Coalition players don't like them.... big surprise.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 - 01:36 pm: Edit

*i heart CVB/ FF/ FF groups. until you pay 3-1 to whack a stupid frigate im gonna sit here and transubstantiate every fighter in the hex into an F15. neener, neener, neener.

I'm not sure that it really matters either way, but of course when you put up the CC you expose it to being directed on. Now, personally I don't think that's big deal, but that seems to be major thing for Paul. But I provided another line - of course, we could construct lines all day, to each personal philosophy.

the "whose X line is hugest" argument doesn't make too much sense to me. you rub two late war lines together and an X ship is gonna die on each side- the mauler effect basically guarantees it. there's enough attrition to soak up the excess damage, almost inevitably. cost containment is a really important issue- IMO the X frigates are the most important X ships; the FFX is the more cost
effective but the YIS of the F5X is huge compensation.

I think you need to understand the context of this discussion. One of Paul's points was the the Feds have X-ship superiority over the Klingons. The only point of the discussion from my end is to demonstrate that that wasn't the case.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 - 06:44 pm: [Edit]

I don't want SWACS removed from the game at all. I just bitch about them since I've been a Coalition player for 4 years. Great tool for the Feds.

Losing a CC or D7C or whatever doesn't worry me, it's just that I was making a point. The Alliance can have high compot and high EW and show only frigates to shoot at--as Chris pointed out. The Coalition can't do that effectively. Yes, in general I strive to kill a bigger ship than I lose (or cause more damage) if all other factors are equal. Yes, it may be a small thing, but adding up all these small things is why I feel the Alliance has the better ships, better doctrine, and better performance in the war.

Contrary to Chris Upson's statement about (paraphrase) "...in x-ship battles, everyone loses an X-ship and the rest goes on attrition units..." my experience is this is true for the Alliance because of more fighters. Meanwhile, the Coalition far too often must cripple an additional X-ship or escort after eating every possible fighter. This makes a difference round after round and turn after turn. There is a similar problem all throughout the game, and this is the primary basis for my argument that the Alliance fleets are typically "better" in actual combat overall. Also note that the Alliance does nothing and risks nothing to acheive this. The Coalition spends and spends on "kamikazi" style units which allow him to temporarily overcome this discrepancy in some places at great cost. That's my general feeling about the "balance" overall. Not saying I want to change anything, or that others are wrong if they don't agree, that's just the lense I view all this through.

To use a real world metaphor, compare the M-1 Abrams to the German Leopard MKII. Sure the Abrams has fancier armor and is
slightly superior "compot-wise." But it also requires jet fuel, has a huge heat signature for heat-seekers, costs twice as much or more, requires much more maintenance at more expense, etc. It may be "better" on paper, but in a prolonged conflict like WWII (for which these were designed), I would side with reliability and economy over flash and dazzle.
Rant complete.

My problem with what you are saying is that you are making sweeping generalizations. Some of them are true - some of them aren't.

Sweeping generalization #1 - The Alliance has the advantage in carrier groups. This is true. This is the way it is supposed to be. It's what basically keeps them alive.

Sweeping Generalization #2 - The Alliance have High ComPot vs. the Coalition with only frigates to shoot at. This is not true. Hydran Carrier groups are very low in Combat potential. The Gorns do not have many carrier groups and will never have a CVA. In any case, maybe you haven't played the game much if you think that all battles only involve non-vulnerable units. Sure, ideally, I'd like it to be that way - but the carrier strength is not infinite. If you play a few times, you'll see that the Coalition battle lines are pretty significant in ComPot.

Your basic point seems to be that you can't stand the fact that the Alliance has good carriers and you don't believe that any of the many Coalition advantages - however many they are and however effective they are - don't matter.

IF that's the crux of your position, I would think that there's no point in playing the game at all.

On the other hand, maybe playing a game as the Alliance against a good Coalition player would change your perspective... or maybe it wouldn't. I don't know.
I could certainly try taking you on - but I am probably not a good Coalition player. Maybe you should hook up with Joe. Walking in the shoes of the other side does bring perspective.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 - 11:34 pm: Edit

Pete,

Just for the sake of clarity, I don't think *all* battles involve non-vulnerable units. Also I *can* and do stand the fact that the Alliance has good carriers. I do understand the game is designed that way and ••••• sure don't want the two sides more similar to each other. My posts are comments and observations, not condemnations or personal attacks. I understand where you're coming from; it is frustrating to me that you and others (perhaps through my own fault) insist on mischaracterizing my own perspective as absolute and nihilist--although there are some personality types who feel the need to do this (not saying you). I don't assume you think the Coalition has *all* the advantages (although a lawyer could infuse your words with that assumption)--please don't infer the converse because I point out the disadvantages of the Coalition special tricks. I suppose I hear too much about the Coalition's insuperable advantages on these forums--yet I never see this played out in the actual course of the game. Quite the opposite, mostly the game reports tell a tale of ruin for the Coalition--even discernible during the first 12 turns of Coalition irresistible strategic initiative to which most reports are limited.

I may or may not play the game again, but if I don't, it won't be because I can't stand some nitpicky thing or groups of things. I'm fine with the way it works out, I'm just pointing out how I see it work out. I have my preferred tweaks like everyone does. I do believe the Coalition advantages "matter:" I am merely describing them. For me, the game "in general" (more below) boils down to solid Alliance doctrine (standard lines) v. Coalition un-sustainable tricks and their approximations of Alliance standard lines. This is a fair asymmetrical balance, and all my bitching aside, I'm fine with it in general whether I play the game or not. It is what it is. The game
challenges both sides; I happen to have experience only with the Coalition side, and what I describe is typically generalizations about my experience. From my experience, it would be extremely difficult for the Coalition to threaten a three capital win. Not saying anything else because it looks like the Coalition can win on points. Yes, I'm making sweeping generalizations. I understand there are plenty of exceptions to my generalizations, and that individual situations vary. There are indeed cases where the general principles are essentially reversed. Those cases are exceptions, not the rule. Yes, in certain cases the Coalition can out gun the Alliance without risking expensive ships. Comparing individual lines may be an interesting exercise, but does not describe what mainly happens in the game. If you could describe the dynamic between the two sides, what generalizations would you make? May be that's the question we should compare answers on? My one sentence answer would be something like "Coalition tries to use their initial numerical and economic advantage to overcome the superior Alliance "attrition" doctrine through the use of expensive tricks before the Alliance can recover and bring their intrinsic superiority to bear." What say you to that?

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Wednesday, December 19, 2012 - 06:30 am: Edit

Paul,

Well I'd say a few things!

First, please again, I ask, use paragraphs! Seriously, it's tough to read the thoughts without paragraphs.

Now, to your last point:

"Coalition tries to use their initial numerical and economic advantage to overcome the superior Alliance "attrition" doctrine through the use of expensive tricks before the Alliance can recover and bring their intrinsic superiority to bear." What say you to that?

I may have to take it in a few posts, but me see what I can do about responding.
Yes, we agree that the Coalition starts the war with attrition inferiority, but in the years since the game first game out, each new edition or expansion has eroded the balance in the regard. Consider the following:

1 - CEDS has been removed from the game. This was a major tool for the Kzintis. And escorts (for some reason) have not had their prices lowered even though they are nowhere near as powerful as they were in the now Post-CEDS world. I am not arguing that CEDS shouldn't have been removed (I didn't see the need to remove it, but it was going to happen), but clearly it did reduce the capability of a race that pretty much exclusively relies on carrier groups (like the Kzintis).

2 - The Alliance superiority in attrition has been eroded by new products and updates. The Klingons got an E4R available on turn 1 (which I think is absurd considering that doctrinally it's clear that the Klinks had not yet embraced carriers at this early point). All D6Vs can now become D6Us on turn 10. Conversely, the Kzintis lost the MECs that were once their starting order of battle and had it replaced with weaker CLEs.

3 - Romulan carrier groups (as I've already demonstrated) are (or can be depending on whether the Roms are utilizing the capability) the most powerful in the game in terms of ComPot and density. In addition, the addition of Interdiction ships means that the Roms and Klingons can field battle lines with 24 fighter factors, whereas they used to be limited to 18. How many factors can the Feds use in a battle once interdiction carriers get put into the game? 27 - that's a 3 factor difference. The main "advantage" that the Feds have is that they can feed their fighters forward.

4 - The attrition war turns ugly for the Alliance once you get to PFs. The Alliance is way behind on this unit, in terms of introduction dates and viable/powerful delivery units. The Kzintis and Hydrans don't benefit from PFs to the same extent as the Lyrans and Klingons. In fact, nowhere near to the extent. The main Alliance answer to that is the Feds with the 3rd way, and this comes in at
turn 26. It certainly helps the Feds but does little to help the Kzintis and Hydrans (at least directly).

I don't see that the Alliance has "intrinsic superiority" as you state in the course of the war. They have a particular advantage, which has been eroded but is still in place to a lesser degree. The Coalition in the early war has different advantages (which are many), but can actually fight back and counter the Alliance advantages to some extent.

Now if the game is producing results that the Coalition can never "win" and the Alliance always "wins" then there is a problem. But so far that's not what I've seen.

If your point is that it's difficult to win with the Coalition, then I would simply respond that it's difficult to "win" as the Alliance. Surviving is not the same as winning.

The General War is supposed to end in basically a stalemate. The Hydrans are supposed to regain their capital. In a lot of the games I've seen posted, the Hydrans never regain their Capital.

I think we mostly agree Pete.

I understand your and others' reactions better now since you explain how the Alliance attrition advantage has been eroded by new products over the years. Then here I come along highlighting the remaining advantage, but you and others know it to be less than it used to be. Fair enough. Again, I don't want to change any of that.

1. I briefly played solo with CEDS in '91, but never touched the game again until the 2010 rules. Personally I think I prefer the "realism" of no CEDS, but the world wouldn't end if it was still around. It's not of course so no point worrying (not saying you are). This explains a lot actually, so thank you for pointing that out.
2. Agreed that E4R comes too early--although I never had this thought on my own. It would suck for the Klingons, but I recognize your reasoning. Haven't the Klingons been ignoring fighters for long enough by then though? The Kzinti already have great CVs with full squadrons and FCRs for every fleet. How long would it take Klingon field commanders to see the need for more/better carriers and FCRs though?

2. and 3. Those Coalition patrol carriers with oversized squadrons have 2-4 compot though, so they don't have quite the effect you describe I think. Coalition can potentially put up 28 fighters, but it won't help the low compot the Coalition must have to use fighters early. True the Kzinti and Gorn have the same issue but they can stick with their excellent standard carriers to at least out-compot a Coalition player fielding patrol carriers. The Feds can feed squadrons with more compot forward if necessary to free up slots for a BG as you say. Obviously, the Feds and Hydrans can both put up way more than 27 fighter factors either at once or eventually. Fed SCS has like 24 factors all by itself. In practice, patrol carriers get used early when they are new and potent, but they become relegated to expensive FCRs for the most part once scout carriers come out. Again, I have no problem with any of this. Maybe this is a bigger problem for the Alliance compared to "before" than I realize, and of course I have never played the Alliance.

4. I'm not as negative about PFs as I started out, but I'm not as impressed by them as you are. Yes, the Coalition has the advantage in PFs. The Hydrans and Kzinti shouldn't have too many bases to put them on however, and so develop a good pool of PFs. The Hydrans seem to love PFs. They get a scout carrier on the line, more compot, and don't worry about having to self-kill PFs. Sure the Hydrans don't have money for too many PFTs, but they sure use what they can get and will never pay to replace a PF unless the Coalition directs them. Turn 31 in my game the Klingons spent 20eps replacing PFs (iirc). Kzinti love PFs on their remaining bases, and aren't the Gorns (eventually) second only to the Lyrans with PFs? In my one game at least, PFs were a godsend to arrest the Coalition's slide into inferiority for a few turns. By no means do I agree that the attrition war turns ugly for the Alliance with the
introduction of PFs. PFs are not good attrition units. It's tough to have enough in reserve to keep re-stocking, and they of course cost money when the Coalition is really suffering under 50% exhaustion. My opponent and I have not found them to be the "compot crack" for us at least-I only burn them reluctantly at great need. They are nice, but not required and don't dominate our game except for fixed defenses.

I'm sure everyone's play style is different, so my comments aren't absolute. They do describe my own experience so far though.

Good point about it being tough to win on both sides. If that's the case that's great. I have no problem even if the Coalition has it tougher than the Alliance. I don't care about perfect balance myself-and generally prefer an underdog. I have no experience with the Alliance. From my perspective the Alliance should have it somewhat easier than the Coalition, but I won't swear to that and obviously others disagree vehemently.

It does kinda depend what kind of expectations a Coalition player puts on himself.

I think that the standard has been a belief that certain things have to be accomplished by a certain point. Over the years, I've had many Coalition players concede because they hadn't conquered the Alpha Octant by turn 8. This can be frustrating.

I take it as a given that an Alliance Capital SHOULD Fall. There is endless debate about which one (I'm firmly in the Hydran camp) but it should happen.

The attack against the Feds is sometimes not what a Coalition player would like it to be, and this is really (again) the way the game is supposed to work. It's a surprise attack, but it's coming from an Empire that still has business on other fronts. I think that sometimes Coalition players get dishearted at how tough it can really be to take out the Feds. Put another way, the Klingons
NEEDED the Roms to enter the war.

Probably the biggest dynamic with PFs is how difficult they make it to take out bases and PDUs - and The Coalition has a lot more of those, but they also have units like the DNP and ROC that are awesome. What PFs really do, I think, is blunt the counteroffensive that the Alliance would like to go on.

Maybe you should check out playing the Alliance. I've played the Coalition a few times, and it's very helpful to see what it feels like on the other side. You rally start seeing the weaknesses and strengths differently.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Wednesday, December 19, 2012 - 02:52 pm: Edit

My own expectations as the Coalition were to at least threaten an automatic win, but my high-water mark was well short of that. I have played very conservatively though, and am in good shape to win on points depending on when the game ends.

If I commit to another game I will play the Alliance for exactly the reasons you mentioned. It is easier to screw-up someone else's offensive than it is to undertake one in my opinion. I may like the Alliance better, although I usually prefer the underdog, and it will certainly make me a better F&E player and provide insight for my Coalition play..

Agreed that the main value of PFs is on PDUs and to a lesser extent SB. However, with the third-way the Coalition *needs* that edge. And, for instance in my own current game, PFs may end up saving Kzintai. I could conceivably take it even now on turn 33 or 34, but 100 ships evaporating might cost me the game elsewhere. This is of course my own fault for not devastating the capital planet before PFs though.

BTW, just to be contentious as is my wont, the ROC has the same compot as a Fed NCA and can't absorb damage for free--although of course it can be in the formation spot instead of escorted.
I think for the Coalition to seriously threaten a three capital win they have to play specifically towards that goal. And doing so requires more aggressive play and expenditure of resources/ships/etc. at a level that jeopardises their victory levels if they decide it won't be feasible.

So I would not worry that you did not get to that point in your game - if you are well set to win on points you were just playing the more conservative full game plan instead.

I personally think the coalition should be planning on taking two alliance capitals, minimum (usually Kzinti and Hydran). The return on the cost is well worth it. And from there decide if you want to go for three or just a VP win. I would not expect to take the final capital before turn 20. Around turn 18 you should 'know' if it should be possible or not and then proceed accordingly.

BTW, just to be contentious as is my wont, the ROC has the same compot as a Fed NCA and can't absorb damage for free--although of course it can be in the formation spot instead of escorted.

I'm guessing you mean the Fed CVA?

For my purposes, I am not assuming that the ROC or the DNP would be escorted, this would reduce their density (although in the case of both those races, especially the Roms, the escorts are so powerful it can work out).

A unit with high ComPot that doesn't need escorts is what I'm looking at.

Timothy,
"...for the Coalition to seriously threaten a three capital win they have to play specifically towards that goal. And doing so requires more aggressive play and expenditure of resources/ships/etc. at a level that jeopardises their victory levels if they decide it won't be feasible."

Very well said Tim. That is perhaps the overall strategic equation right there and this is as it should be. The Coalition can risk all for total victory. And it's quite a risk since only you seem to be able to pull it off.

Apparently (based on experience in my own game) choosing not to seriously threaten the three capital win is also a viable strategy. I set out to see what happened if the Coalition didn't impale their fleets trying to win outright--and it looks like this is also a potential path to a victory at the peace talks--though less spectacular. This is contrary to the prevailing opinion when I started that if the Coalition don't win an auto-win they are dead meat. The game could have ended last turn, so I have at least proven that this is not necessarily true.

I can't argue with your beliefs and that is indeed probably the best way to play the Coalition. It would not have been a terrible risk for me to go ahead and at least destroy the Kzinti shipyards to force rebuilding, but I erred on the side of caution and built two double SB instead. However, as you yourself have said, killing their shipyard is the absolute best way to kill Alliance carriers--by preventing their construction in the first place. Who knows what the consequences would have been though.

Based on what I now know to be my opponent's risk-aversion, I think I made the right choice for this game. His caution has played right into my strategy--by not pressing me hard before my defenses were solidified.

And Peter,

I am also a Hydrax first advocate. Simply looking at the map with minimal strategic sense demands Hydrax sometime early.
Minimizing the two-front war is critical for the Coalition I think. Of course I've thought a lot of things that turned out wrong.

Pete,

I realize not having escorts increases compot so the ROC CVA comparison doesn't tell the whole story. Just for clarity, the Fed CVA is the best carrier in the game until the Fed SCS comes out--and it continues to more or less equal even the heaviest Coalition ships depending on what you value (other than the REDHawk but an SCS trumps even that). No this isn't an exact comparison, but roughly speaking this is how I see it. By the way, those DNPs and ROCs can be directed from formation though (DNP for 54 ROC for 69--both high but not as high as a carrier group and very possible for late war)--so again with the risk associated with the Coalition trying to wheedle an advantage. The Coalition must use PFTs in that way no doubt, but this means more risk than on the Alliance side of the battle board.

Paul, the ROC should be only 60 ((13+7)*3) ...

In my view, it comes down to which side is willing to lose their fleet in taking (or keeping) the hex in question, after all the only way to destroy his fleet is to offer your own...

All true Stewart. In my head I was thinking the ROC had compot like a CNH but of course you're right. True to make an omelet you've got to break some eggs.

Paul,
I think it does pretty much tell the whole story. A Single ship carrier/PFT has higher density than a carrier/PFT that must be escorted. It can be used in formation, and it can be used in addition to another Heavy Carrier/SCS.

So, go ahead and direct 3 to 1 on the ship. Can't have omelets you know...

I'd modify your statement though. The Federation is the best CVA in the game in terms of it's attrition factor. Yes, that is true.

But the most powerful CVA groups in the game in terms of ComPot belong to the Romulans. And again, just to demonstrate this - show the "best" CVA groups possible in terms of escorts:

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<td>DWA</td>
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<tr>
<td>SKE</td>
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That's a massive ComPot difference in exchange for 3 fighter factors. We could certainly debate which is better, but clearly the Roms win this matchup in terms of ComPot and Density.

So, as with all things you have trade-offs.

And that extra 11 points of compot will score 3-4 additional points of damage -- thus killing those extra 3 fighters anyway.

Also, the higher damage output does give you more options if you want to direct.
I would still argue the CVA is better based on it's ubiquitousness, and earlier availability. Those escorts make the difference in compot of course, not the carriers. If the Romulan wants to use a modular DN as an escort (costing 21 EPs IIRC), they can have a maximum of three such escorts ever, anywhere. Also as I have noted, building the MGH-E allows the Gorns a CVA in return which I would caution against (in exchange for a REDHawk, yes, but I think I would choose PFT variants before DN escort variants).

OK, ok the Romulan carriers have the highest compot except for Fed SCS because of heavy escorts. In my experience, SCS are far more common than MGH-E escorts.

Either I'm not computer savvy enough, or my computer is too old to use nice tables like you, but what about this one:

SCS=35
HDW-E X2=14
DE=5
Total=54, way more attrition factors than any CNV or even the REDHawk (and free replacements), just as common as CNVs if not more so, and don't require unique escorts.

What helps the Fed CVA is the third way with the CVBG. That adds a second carrier group to the equation but reducing the count by 1 for command limits much like the battlegroup rule does for war cruisers and war destroyers.

Paul,

A few points.

1 - Ubiquitous. Remember, the Feds do have 2 fronts and have to fight the Klingons on the other side. Also, the CNV becomes
available on turn 14 for the Roms, but the SUP has only 3 less ComPot and is available on turn 10. Even so, the fact that there might be more of them doesn't mean it is better, which is what we were discussing.

2 - Even if you get rid of the DN escort, you would only lose 3 ComPot by using an FHK. I'd probably use the DN, but we have some flexibility.

3 - Actually, it doesn't allow the Gorns to build a CVA, it allows them to build either a BCV or a CVS.

4 - If we are going to use the SCS for the Feds, we should use the SCS for the Roms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCS</th>
<th>PHX</th>
<th>HDWE</th>
<th>MHK</th>
<th>FHM</th>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
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<th>DWA</th>
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| HDWE | 57  |

Definitely an edge in attrition still for the Feds, but Roms are competitive on ComPot.

if you want to insert a table, just type in \table and then bracket the table with { }

By Douglas E. Lampert (Dlampert) on Thursday, December 20, 2012 - 12:12 pm: Edit

The Documentation menu (to your left) has a Formatting link, which gives a pretty good explanation of how to make fancy stuff on this board.

It also lets you do annoying stuff like put things in blue and underlined that aren't links. 😊

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Thursday, December 20, 2012 - 02:33 pm: Edit
Heh. Thanks everyone.

BTW, I am enjoying this discussion. F&E definitely demands hours and hours of analysis, and having a sounding board or two is great.

I thought I should have compared SCS to PHX right after I sent that post. You're correct.

Of course the PHX will cost money to replace PFs--as you point out. Plus, everyone has built up FCRs and other carriers to supply replacement fighters by the dozen, but it's tough (for the Romulans at least) to have much for replacement PFs in any given battle at least until very late in the game (assuming they have the money anyway). Meanwhile those Fed escorts supply even more free FCR fighters...

As Turtle pointed out, if we compare these late war carriers, it would be appropriate to consider the 3rd way as well. So you get the SCS plus CVL CVBG (or as my opponent is now doing the SCS plus GVX CVBG), which adds a ship (allowing a BG and un-beatable attrition plus protected EW all at once) plus the SWACS however you need to use it. Right there the Feds have an extra ship on the line before command points or Admirals or playing their ace in the hole SWACS. This will more than make up for any discrepancy in compot due to heavier escorts.

Also, with X-ships the PHX's 6 fighters are gone automatically. Surely you'll put another carrier out there (I guess an FAKH in formation?) or feed fighters forward to avoid self-killing PFs right? So you might be able to absorb 8 damage for free or 20 by killing one of your two flotillas of PFs in the hex. In comparison the Fed will absorb any amount of damage no sweat essentially forever, and smile about it to boot. Meanwhile the Fed should let his own damage fall fall fall unless he scores enough to blast the FAKH or maybe the expensive FHC in the scout box. Let the Romulan self kill his own escorts or cripple his own X-ships as payment for choosing to try to out-compot you. Federation takes no risks here--you can shoot at my X-scout in the scout box, or my other one in the formation box if you will please but I have plenty and can build
plenty more.

Meanwhile the Romulan has no extra EW out there and doesn't have a formation slot available because of how great the FAKH is. Feds can also throw scouts out on the line just like the Romulans can, so that's no answer. I think if we add up total lines here the Fed has the advantage in compot, EW, and attrition--all without trying, risking anything more than normal, and without purchasing expensive specialty units, and has no limits on the number of such lines he can field plus has the money to keep building such lines. They have the money to keep this up essentially forever (depending on game circumstances of course). The Romulan only builds a few SPXs, and the Fed can out-last him with dozens of DDXs all day long. What am I missing here that the Coalition has that can touch that?

Now, full-disclosure: I have mostly been able to avoid such a frightening situation in my own game for the most part by running from similar lines--and so far I still have ground to give up. I believe I have been very fortunate though, and if I play the Alliance in the future I will stive to make my opponent face this everywhere it matters.

Yep, doing a 34 turn plan of take 'enough' and build horrendous hardpoints for the alliance to have to wade through while keeping your ship advantage a bit longer by not spending it is a fine way to win as the coalition - and can be a lot more interesting than a 'take three or die!' strategy.

For me the reason the Feds are weak isn't that the CVA/etc. are bad (it is probably the best CVA), but that far too much of the supporting stuff isn't. And when it really matters - turn 10-15 when the coalition is driving on the capital and taking all your stuff. I've had things happen like:

DN+,CVA+3DE,CVB+2DE, 4NCL, 4PDU, 3 SWAC, SC (142/11EW)
BT, 6DN, 2D6M, 4D6D +12DB, D6S (144/12EW). Sure the coalition spent a command point, but getting outcompotted and out EW'd over a major planet with a strong fleet really sucked. Even if they got to pop a D6D and cripple a bunch more.

I never found the Federation having enough good stuff to counter all the good stuff the coaltion can pile on with early - and after you've lost most of fed space and had a lot of the capital devastated, it takes a long time to turn that around. Gotta last to Xships and third way, and then have the money to exploit them!

Doesn't the fed SCS use F-111's? I always figured I'd never build the SCS - better stuff to play with then (only 24 fighters for three squadrons? Ick.), and I really don't like F-111's. A20's are MUCH better IMO.

And while I thought building DN escorts for the Romulans looked really nice, they should not do that IMO. They don't get enough DN builds - you have to give up a CNV or equivalent to get a DN escort. I'd rather just build more CNV's and use FHM's. 9 point escorts are good enough!

Fed SCS uses A-20s.

Paul,

GVX can't be in a CVBG.

Good stuff Tim.

Not sure the "VP win" strategy for the Coalition is more interesting
than going for the win. It's a Pereclean strategy and not dissimilar from WWI trench warfare. For anyone considering it my advice is to conceal your true strategic intention for as long as possible because as soon as the Alliance realize what's going on they can make it more difficult to achieve.

To both Pete and you I concede that all of my assumptions (and yours) depend on the strategic situation. I suppose it is possible for the Feds to be hurting for money while the Romulans collect from captured territory.

I also concede that earlier on the Feds aren't nearly as fearsome early as they become. Can't they hold their own well enough though? The CVAs are out there when there is no CNV yet and are available 6 turns before the 1st C8V comes out--not to mention CNVs. It faces those Coalition patrol carriers and fighters fed forward. There is no match for the CVA for a long time. Funny you disparage only 24 fighter factors for three squadrons and you are correct--especially for the Feds this is weak--yet it all adds up to the ship with the highest compot in the game.

My lack of experience with the Alliance limits me here. When you say Fed supporting units aren't good, what are you referring to? Their much cheaper 4-pt scouts which use a less valuable hull? Sure their G-ships don't impress, but the Klingons are just as bad unless you want to spend extra money or sub for good ships to have D6Gs with 2 compot, which I can't justify. (It's either give up a D6M, D6S, D6D or D7 build or convert which costs you an EP it wouldn't cost newly build and they aren't worth it). I don't know what the Fed needs good G-ships for early anyway, and mainly all you want is a G who cares about 5 points of compot?

The Feds have drone ships, which is all that matters there, and some have scout channels. I'm not saying you're wrong about Fed weak supporting units, I just don't see where their weakness in this area lies.

Are you referring to escorts? Ok, they have worse escorts than the Lyrans or Romulans except that they all eventually get a free FCR
factor--which makes up for a little compot surely. Of course they can build HDW-Es just like everyone else, and that is the best compot escort in the game except for the Romulans. Maybe the Fed escorts are ultimately the very best then with their free FCR factors?

I think Fed X ships are fine. A handful of compot either way doesn't impress me as much as ability to absorb 40 damage for free.

I definitely agree building a DN escort is a questionable call. Personally I said "screw the ROCs the first few turns after PFs and instead went for the REDHawk, and now a DMH-E because of their 1EW (or 4EW and become 1/2 a police ship compot-wise). In retrospect the CNV is better because non-X EW is only marginally valuable at this point in the game. Almost all Romulans will use FHMs no doubt though.

It comes down to high density in fleets. The Lyran/Klingon synergy is really a very sick sledgehammer. Lyrans have gobs of high ComPot hulls that are absurdly easy to build (they are basically the Klingons's bouncers).

Klingons provide the attrition, the EW and drone support. Throw on top of that the free fighter exchanges, and it can get ugly.

There are ways to deal with it, but it does present a challenge.

The Feds don't really get fearsome until the 3rd way, but, as has been said, they have to hold on until that point.

A way to look at is this:

Federation starts the war with 18 CAs and 6 CCs. 6 more CAs and 2 more CSs are in mothball.

So the Feds (without bringing future builds into account) start the
war with 32 cruiser hulls, although it takes time to roll out the mothballs.

Klingon starts the war with 21 D7s, 21 D6s, 7 D7Cs. 30 more D6s are in the mothball reserves. 3 more D7Cs and 6 more D7s are in the IWR.

So, the Klingons start the war with 88 cruiser hulls!!! And all of those D6s become something awesome. That cruiser superiority does play out in the early to mid war once the Klingons start ramping up their conversions.

So I guess what I'm saying is that while the Feds have a great CVA (arguably the best), their overall fleet doesn't have depth.

Just to be clear - I'm not saying that the Feds can't do stuff, just that they have challenges too.

The big Fed strength is not their fleet at this point in the game (even though they have the CVA), it's their geography.

I agree with all you say here Pete. No doubt the Klingons start with a large edge in hulls including cruiser hulls. No doubt the Klingon Deep Space Fleet dominates at least the first half of the game because of that initial advantage.

Also no doubt that the synergy between Lyrans and Klingons is a force multiplier that the Alliance has no answer for. I'd go so far as to say the Klingons and Lyrans sharing fighters is the strongest Coalition advantage in the game--more important than maulers, SFGs, Penals, B-10s, or the cloaking device.

But of course you probably realize by now that I see free damage absorption as the priority over-riding all other considerations (within "reason") throughout the game- so others may disagree with that
analysis. This opinion is likely biased by my long stint as the Coalition fielding inferior attrition lines to the Alliance and striving (failing mostly) to overcome that disadvantage. An Alliance player might have different priorities since their attrition edge is taken for granted and out of necessity they focus on other issues.

I can see the point. It's an interesting position.

And if that is the position, I can see some disappointment with the Klingons, because even though they have an incredible assortment of fleet options and magic hulls, they have relatively mediocre carrier groups. And if you take a look at their SIT, that really doesn't change. The Klingons simply don't have a "great" carrier (unless you count the B-10V, and that's really a separate matter). The first great carrier they get is that C7V and at that point they are concentrating on PFs anyway.

Conversely, the Kzintis have the CV - which is the best medium carrier for at least the first half of the game, and the Feds have the CVA, which is arguably best CVA in the game period - with the only real competition on that front coming from the Roms (which comes later).

But, the thing is, when you look beyond the Fed CVA and the Kzinti CV, you have... blah in both of those navies for quite some time.

And yes, the Klingon-Lyran fighter exchange is really amazing. Truthfully, I wish it was deleted from SFB and F&E. Not for balance purposes, but because I can't see the Lyrans operating drone fighters.

In response to that, I guess I'd argue that the Coalition forces are optimized for the attack. The High ComPot gives "shock" value to their battle lines and that combination with maulers makes Alliance defenses relatively easy to take.
Alliance forces are optimized for the defense. They don't have crunch power - except for the Hydrans who are vulnerable and they really can't bring the battle to the Coalition well even if they have ship numbers because they don't have maulers and shock value - at least not for a while. The key to their survival is to trade those free factors for crippled/dead hulls. But that very dynamic means that they want to basically spread the damage received over turns. They have a much harder time with long/high impact battles.

Thank you for understanding my position. Correct, the Kzinti CV has no peer among the Coalition until the C7V, and by the time those are available there are bigger and better things to produce.

To be clear, this doesn't mean I dislike playing the Coalition. I prefer a challenge. My intention is to remind players of this discrepancy, not change it. I hear a lot about how great the Coalition heavier hulls are, and it seems to me that the attrition disparity is often overlooked or disparaged when I think it is the key factor in the game. Again, not that the Coalition can't potentially overcome it.

Also, you've helped me understand the resistance I get to my analysis--as you say the Alliance doesn't get many *flashy* toys--just boring carrier superiority. I think Alliance players see those toys and experience envy, so I'm just reminding everyone that the Coalition needs those toys because of their inherent disadvantage in basic fleet elements (carriers).

BTW, I hope you are right that the GVX can't go in a CVBG. That seems correct to me, but we're waiting on a ruling.

Understood about the Klingon-Lyran fighter exchange. I never used fighters in SFB except I once fought the "Kzinti Attack Shuttle Carrier" with a D6 and an F5 before there were other fighters in the game (and got blasted into space dust for the cost of a few fighters-no ADD and no refits). Do Lyran fighters in SFB have drones?
Someone told me they use Klingon fighters so I guess so. I suspect the fighter exchange is critical to balance in F&E at present though. Could be wrong, but the Coalition position would be much more difficult without it.

Another angle on this is that the Alliance doesn't need fighter exchange really. Each Alliance navy fights more independently than the Lyrans/Klingons must do. The Kzinti start with FCRs in every fleet--so they start with quite a lead in replacement factors already. I suppose the Feds and Gorns would like to exchange fighters, but the Feds can supply enough FCR factors on their own within Gorn territory I think. The western Coalition is mostly forced to work closely together to have any chance of overcoming their attrition inferiority at least in the early turns.

By A. David Merritt (Adm) on Friday, December 21, 2012 - 11:29 am: Edit

Paul; Yes the Lyrans use Klingon drone fighters in SFB.

By Timothy Mervyn Linden (Timlinden) on Friday, December 21, 2012 - 04:00 pm: Edit

As Pete said more eloquently, the Federation early lacks depth. They have too much low density stuff and not much time/ability to really beef that up, whereas the coalition has been spending 9 turns building good stuff and getting to concentrate it to hit the feds with. Even though some of that is holding down the Kzinti and Hydrans.

As for the Federation holding it's own, I generally find it doesn't. They can hold the shipyard easily, and about a quarter of their space also easily. But a coalition who wants to can push their way into holding a majority of fed territory, disrupt a bunch more and raid the capital as well. Over time of course - it does take a bit to go that far. The federation geography helps them more than it hurts them (but occasionally it does hurt them...)

I generally find that when attacking, carriers (other than 3rd way) are often not particularly useful. Most of my attacking battlelines won't have any carriers - I just have to cripple/blow up battlegroup ships. Which is not an ideal exchange but that's basically just tough.
The coalition has SE superiority and out EP's and outbuilds the alliance for most of the game, so they just have to spend that taking stuff. They are hoping they take enough to stay on top, but that is nearly always what I have seen happen in our games. High enough compot trumps carrier superiority when backed up by enough EP's/shipbuilds.

I generally divert the vast majority of Klingon/Lyran carriers to defense/garrison duties. Even though they aren't as good, they are good enough when backed up by the good stuff left with the garrisons.

The Klingons don't really have any great carriers. But the D6U and DWB are both nice, with the latter being a good carrier to attack with as well as defend with.

Understood Tim.

I suspect the game I am involved in has been played differently than you play for better or for worse. Of course every isolated gaming group will develop their own unique ruts or innovations in the game. I understand and am intrigued by not using carriers as the Coalition. As many times as I tried to comprehend how to acheive your Coalition strategy, this is the peice I have been missing. Also, this explains the extremely low number of cripples and repairs in my game compared to what I generally see reported from others.

My question to you is how the heck to you supply your offensive? It is so easy to kill supply points and cut fleets off. Kzinti and Hydrans are shallow enough this doesn't become such an issue, but every time I have tried to penetrate far into Flathead space I have become enmeshed in a treacherous maze of potential supply paths, retreats, reserves, etc. that have prevented any penetration beyond what I can reach from secure supply/retrograde points on my own frontiers. How do you do it?
When attacking, my own Coalition has taken the opposite philosophy from you Tim for better or for worse. My attitude has been "the Coalition attrition units lower compot; but tough it must be done; so we must fight without any real advantage in compot even on the offense." Pretty much the opposite of your solution to the problem. Thus I now employ DWBs, UD7, D7U, and C8VHs almost exclusively with everything else becoming expensive FCRs. Those Kzinti CVs from the first turn still remain capable, if unspectacular opposition on turn 32 by comparison.

I have employed the maximum compot lines mostly for ambushes and occasional use to keep the enemy honest and I feel I have gotten a lot of mileage out of the threat of such lines. This has had the unlooked-for benefit of allowing me to build up *lots* of heavy hulls--11 and 14 pointers for the Lyrans, mostly 9 point D7C, D7D, and DDW and some C7 for the Klingons, and lots of 9 point KE, FH, and a few SPJ for the Romulans (can't really afford KHs now that they're available but I am tempted).

Limiting my use of heavy hull-lines throughout has had the unlooked-for benefit that nowadays with X ships my other hulls are often ignored--even Lyran DNHs and Romulan CNHs--so they live when they fight unlike happened earlier in the game. The overall effect of this has been that my Coalition consist of a higher percentage of heavy hulls than I imagine most players typically experience. I suspect my average Coalition density is slightly higher than most players experience--though I don't know for sure.

Heavy hulls or no, I have no illusions that my Coalition can hinder the Third-way whither it wishes to go.

You know, comparing early carriers to the Kzinti CV is always going to be to the Kzinti's advantage since the CV is basically a BCH-carrier before anyone else has BCHs to build on...
An interesting conversation - which as usual, I am late for!

First - tactics and strategies change with each new rule set.

As a good example - until Flexible Carriers came out in Carrier War - early Klingon carrier groups stank - and certain Hydran carriers were good targets to soak up directing but lost compot as they had 2 AH's.

So who gain the most with Flexible Carriers?

The removal of CEDS has had a significant effect on the game - who loses more, I don't know.

Kzinti - as they can't attack and then defend - or Coalition - as they can't defend then attack?

Personally, I think it's the former.

A fleet of 20 ships losing 5 is still 15 ships. A fleet of 10 ships losing 5 is down to 50%...

As other have mentioned - how the respective members of each side interact with each other makes a massive difference.

Just think of what the Hydrans could do with Drone Ships and a few more 4 EW Scouts?

But the Lyrans and Klingons can do just that in effect on turn 2.

Klingon speciality ships and Lyran brawn.

Maulers seem to have got a bit of a bad reputation though - they are expensive - but one thing they excel at is pursuits.

Pretty much any crippled ship is in effect 'Auto dead' if caught - and carrier groups are vulnerable.
That to me if the main different between the Alliance and Coalition (although how often it will occur is also key) - a Coalition retreat could be hurtful - am Alliance retreat could be a diaaster.

Each to their own though!

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Sunday, December 23, 2012 - 09:44 am: Edit

Good stuff Paul.

In my own game where I'm the Coalition I have very rarely had an opportunity to pursue more than one cripple (in formation of course, and the pursuer takes a hammering for trying to chase). My opponent self-kills rather than allow a good pursuit. Seeing the effect of this, after the early turns of the game I have tried to adopt the same policy--with moderate success.

Thus, in my own game at least, maulers have been useful for PDUs but precious little else.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Sunday, December 30, 2012 - 08:01 am: Edit

So I pose the question I've been thinking for, well, years.

Does anyone here see a good use for the Federation COV?

I mean, using it as a commando ship seems foolish. It's a very expensive hull, and it only has 1 G factor. You could escort it but then you lose the ComPot of the escorts so it hardly seems worth it.

You could just use it as a scout in scout bonus position. But Feds have plenty of 4 point scouts that are cheaper and can't do the other 2 nifty things that a Fed COV can do.

Which are mainly that it could become a CVL, which is, let's be blunt, an outstanding unit. 4 point scout with fighters escorted in formation and it can carry a SWAC - beautiful.
Or you could send it off the map to take advantage of existing survey lines and make more money.

But does anyone really intend to use this ship as a commando ship? If so, why?

Pete, it makes a good a good 1 EW point scout in pursuit battles where it's G can help capture a ship.

Not that you get a lot of chances to use it, but something that it can be effective at. You can also throw a Prime Team on it in capture mode as well then.

My other option would be just to send it off map and use one of the existing survey lines to add another survey roll.

edit:

Short of an available mauler or 3 full PF flotillas in the pursuit battle it willbe hard to generate enough damage to cripple it, let alone kill it.

Turtle:

Yeah, but you have to admit that's pretty limited use. Hardly enough to justify it's cost and potential other uses (like CVL conversion or off-map EPs).

And I could achieve a superior effect by simply putting a G-Pod and a Scout Pod on a Tug (2 Gs instead of 1)
I'll readily admit that Pete. The Tug + SP + G Pod is a 2 EW point ship without being overloaded in that case. However the other side of the coin is that for pursuit battles, where the Feds are the pursuer, the COV has better compot as a 6-8 with 1 EW or better EW as a 2-8 with 4 EW ship than the Tug Combo which is 2-8 with 2 EW regardless. The one big advantage to the Tug combo would be the fact that it has 2 G's when uncrippled. The COV does retain it's G when crippled.

Unless X-ships are involved. then as the pursuer I typically either don't want a shift against me or a shift in my favor.

Both options have their advantages and disadvantages.

The COV is definately a situationally limited ship because of the cost to replace it.

Yeah, that's my point. Believe me, I've pondered the COV for years and I have never been able to justify (for myself anyway) leaving it on the map as a COV. I've either converted it to a CVL or sent it off map.

I could see the both options being used at Colonies or perhaps minor planets where the opposing defenses are light and it would be highly unlikely for them to generate enough damage to either kill the COV outright or kill it despite being escorted. Here a frigate or NCL might be enough to prevent that without sacrificing too much compot.

Pair the COV with the MMG for:

A) the free bonus "G" ship, or;
B) on commando raids with a MMG plus his free GCE then add a
prime team, or;
C) in late war commando groups with a DWG/CFF (the G escort can us its "G" also), or
D) B and C combined.

Chuck,

Yeah, but that's all stuff you can do with regular G-ships.

The question is why use this particular ship in that role?

Thomas,

you have the COV without escort and it goes up against 2 PDUs. BIR is 4. PDU has 18 ComPot... average die rolls would be 4 points of damage, enough to cripple the COV. Not that good in exchange for a possibility (not guarantee) of killing a single PDU.

...why this ship with an MMG?...

Short answer: 4EW plus the 'G'. I can add this survivable G-scout to the battle line and not eat a standard command slot.

In a base defense role:

SC+COV+4xPDU = 12 EW
SC+COV+Base = 9+ EW

Then it can use its 'G' to support the base as needed or in a capture attempt.

Province raider hunting force using SSC:
COV+FF+FF = (14)/(19) + EW Shift + G capture attempt (sub a POL for FF if hunting lone raider)

COV+NCL+FFS+PT = 13/(19) + EW 2 Shift + G capture attempt

If a reserve is sent to defend raider then send the FF/POL forward (min force) to shield your tactical retreat.

Chuck,

Ah, now you are getting into it!

...why this ship with an MMG?...

Short answer: 4EW plus the 'G'. I can add this survivable G-scout to the battle line and not eat a standard command slot.

But wait a second. If you use it on the line, you are risking it to directed damage, no? I mean, if you have a DN in formation, then this ship would be on the line. That means 28 points to kill without a mauler and 18 to kill with a mauler. That ship would go up like smoke wouldn't it?

I guess if you have a CVA flagship, you could put this in formation. Still risky, as it would now take 39 points to kill and in a big battle that kind of damage would be doable by the Coalition. I tend to assume that they will kill this unit on site. Still, with the extra EW, maybe you could deny them the 39 they need. Interesting and worth exploration.

In a base defense role:

SC+COV+4xPDU = 12 EW
SC+COV+Base = 9+ EW
Then it can use its 'G' to support the base as needed or in a capture attempt.

These are good points. I guess the conditions that make it workable are if it's actually at a base or large number of PDUs, and also if the Feds have a 10 point command ship that doesn't need formation (like the CVA or perhaps a tug with some pod assortments getting it to 10).

So maybe.... I'd have to think about it.

But I admit that for base defense with an MMG (and it has to be in formation) could be useful.

Province raider hunting force using SSC:

**COV+FF+FF = (14)/(19) + EW Shift + G capture attempt**
(sub a POL for FF if hunting lone raider)

**COV+NCL+FFS+PT = 13/(19) + EW 2 Shift + G capture attempt**

**If a reserve is sent to defend raider then send the FF/POL forward (min force) to shield your tactical retreat.**

This one is interesting but I admit that I think that the ship is too expensive to be used in this particular role. I like going after province raiders with escort carriers for the most part (or auxiliary carriers if I'm not worried about reserves).

Honestly, I think the 'trick' to the COV is just not being afraid to lose the thing, but don't replace it when you do.

It's an excellent ship to use for your MMGs free addition to a battle force, particularly over a starbase or a major planet where your
opponent will be suffering a substantial bit of extra pain by choosing to direct it (And where you can get some silly EW totals in combination with your free scout, fixed defenses, and possibly SWACs). If your opponent does direct it, though, there's no point in building another one. Leave that as a problem for the next administration.

Basically, you had all the pieces of the puzzle there above, the only one missing was that the replacement cost is irrelevant. You get your COV for free from the OOB, and when it dies... simply don't replace it.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 31, 2012 - 05:09 pm: Edit

No, it is relevent, because using it in this way has to be weighed against the benefits of sending it off the map. If I intend to increase my off-map surveys, then there has to be a compelling reason to leave this on the map, since I would in fact be replacing it (creating another ship to use the existing survey line).

It's not fear of losing it, it's finding the right use for it.

I think Chuck has made a good case that it can be well used in KEY battles where there is a 10 point command ship that doesn't need formation, and where the Coalition directing on it make it an enormous damage sponge, particularly in light of the fact that with the EW the Feds would have, it's very possible that they can force a shift.

It's something I would consider if I played the Feds again. Then again, just sending it off map and making cash always sounds good too.

By Andrew Bruno (Admeeral) on Monday, December 31, 2012 - 05:42 pm: Edit

(Rules not with me--)

I believe the MMG has to be aboard the vessel to take advantage of the free command slot in the battle force, there by increasing the
value/cost of the COV as a target. Although, depending on the year, it could be escorted making it a tougher DD target. Seems pretty useful during the planet swapping that goes on in Fed space.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 31, 2012 - 06:18 pm: Edit

Andrew,

Actually, the MMG doesn't have to actually be on the ship. He can hang out on the CVA with the Admiral and get fine dining in 10 forward.

I don't think I would ever escort a commando ship unless it had a lot of Gs and I was going against a bunch of PDUs, due to the loss of compot.

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Monday, December 31, 2012 - 06:39 pm: Edit

Perhaps we are playing wrong, but couldn't the COV make a nifty solo commando raider if you remember since it doesn't have to do a commando raid: (320.41) says "...can roll a 'G' attack..." not must.

In this case about the best you can hope for from a commando ship is that it can regularly survive a called up POL. The COV doesn't even have to kill the POL just take no casualties to stay and disrupt the province per (314.27).

Tugs do have better uses than the commando slot in the raid pool, and the COV with MMG could threaten a genuine G raid against up to two unsupported PDUs where it might be handy to retain the G on the crippled side for the G attack after fighting one round.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 31, 2012 - 07:06 pm: Edit

Paul,

As I said earlier, the COV is going to get crippled if it attacks 2 PDUs.
And when you say tugs have better uses - you are talking about a far superior commando ship in every respect, and survey ships have other uses too!

By Paul Edwards (Pablomatic) on Monday, December 31, 2012 - 07:43 pm: Edit

Wouldn't a tug + scout pod, plus G pod be more expensive to lose? It's not superior v. 2 PDUs either, and having a single-ship capable ship in the commando slot in the raid pool is better than wasting regular slots to escort the ship. Plus it can always just disrupt a province if it doesn't do a G attack. You don't need 2 EW v 2 PDUs, but 4 would be nice. Pods don't function on a crippled tug but tug will be crippled v. 2PDUs also.

By Bill Powell (Bloodybill) on Monday, December 31, 2012 - 08:34 pm: Edit

Howdy. I have a question concerning the Feds and limited war. I'm playing the Coalition in the general war game and have been delayed in attacking the Feds on turn 7. We know that that means that the Feds are at a limited war status. Rule 602.43 state that home and 3rd fleets can maneuver in Federation space, but rule 654.1F states that rule 602.43 does not release home and 3rd fleet. Does that mean that these fleets can maneuver anywhere in Federation territory, or just in their setup area? Thank you for your time.

By Pete DiMitri (Petercool) on Monday, December 31, 2012 - 08:50 pm: Edit

Wouldn't a tug + scout pod, plus G pod be more expensive to lose? It's not superior v. 2 PDUs either, and having a single-ship capable ship in the commando slot in the raid pool is better than wasting regular slots to escort the ship. Plus it can always just disrupt a province if it doesn't do a G attack. You don't need 2 EW v 2 PDUs, but 4 would be nice. Pods don't function on a crippled tug but tug will be crippled v. 2PDUs also.

Why exactly would you need to use a Tug with both a G and a scout pod for a commando raid? The EW doesn't help the commando raid.
The possible shift that the COV could get (assuming it lowers it's ComPot to 2, which is also meaningless for commando purposes) still wouldn't be enough to prevent it being crippled.

But a tug could have 2 or 4 G attacks, meaning that the probability of a successful raid - which is the whole point - increases dramatically. With 4 g attacks, it's actually worth it to take an extra ship from the raid pool to provide an escort - your probability of successful g attacks with 4 is almost a sure thing.

Any ship can disrupt a province, so pointing to that as something the COV can do is not really compelling, frankly.

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Bill,

These fleets can go anywhere in Federation territory. What they can't do is go into Kzinti space.

I should also point out that even Chuck's suggestion - which is the best I've heard so far - can be moot if the Feds simply decide to spend a command point for a major battle. If the Feds are defending one of their starbases, they will probably use the command point anyway, so having that "extra" slot from the MMG won't be of any impact. Therefore, any ship could go into that slot, not just a marine ship. Sure, it could be the COV, but it could also
just be another scout, or a Tug with scout pods and G pods for that matter.

But in a situation where the command point would not be expended, the MMG + COV option can be attractive for the Feds.

Thanks Pete. My buddy started building up his defenses when I didn't attack on turn 7. I found where he was restricted to only upgrading the defenses in the 4th fleet setup area, but wasn't sure about were all home and 3rd fleets could go. I appreciate the help.

oops. I meant where, not were.