



Wargaming History

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How Wargaming Changed my Mind

- Background on the use of Structured Analytic Techniques (SATs) in intelligence analysis and its application to historical research.
- The potential of wargaming to introduce social-scientific rigour into historical methodology.
- Key research questions: Can wargaming provide structured, plausible analyses of historical counterfactuals? How does it compare to traditional historical methods?



Methodology and Data Collection

- Description of the wargame design and implementation focused on the 1929 Palestine disturbances.
- The process of data collection through student participation, game diaries, and after-action reports.
- Iterative gaming and qualitative methods.
- Counterfactual Analysis
- Validation

Individual Reflective Analysis:

After comparing notes your classmates, you will have had documented different versions of the same events. This reflection is meant to explain and understand how that happens.

Share and Compare Perspectives (max 300 words): Describe some differences in your understanding of events, decisions and information. Which details did you record which others did not? What did others record that you neglected? How do you account for these differences?

Analysis and Bias (max 300 words): Consider the differences in interpretation of intelligence and your approach to collection and analysis. How do you account for these differences? Is it about perspective (per above)? Was it a disagreement about priorities, strategy, or was it something else? What variables were key to success and failure?

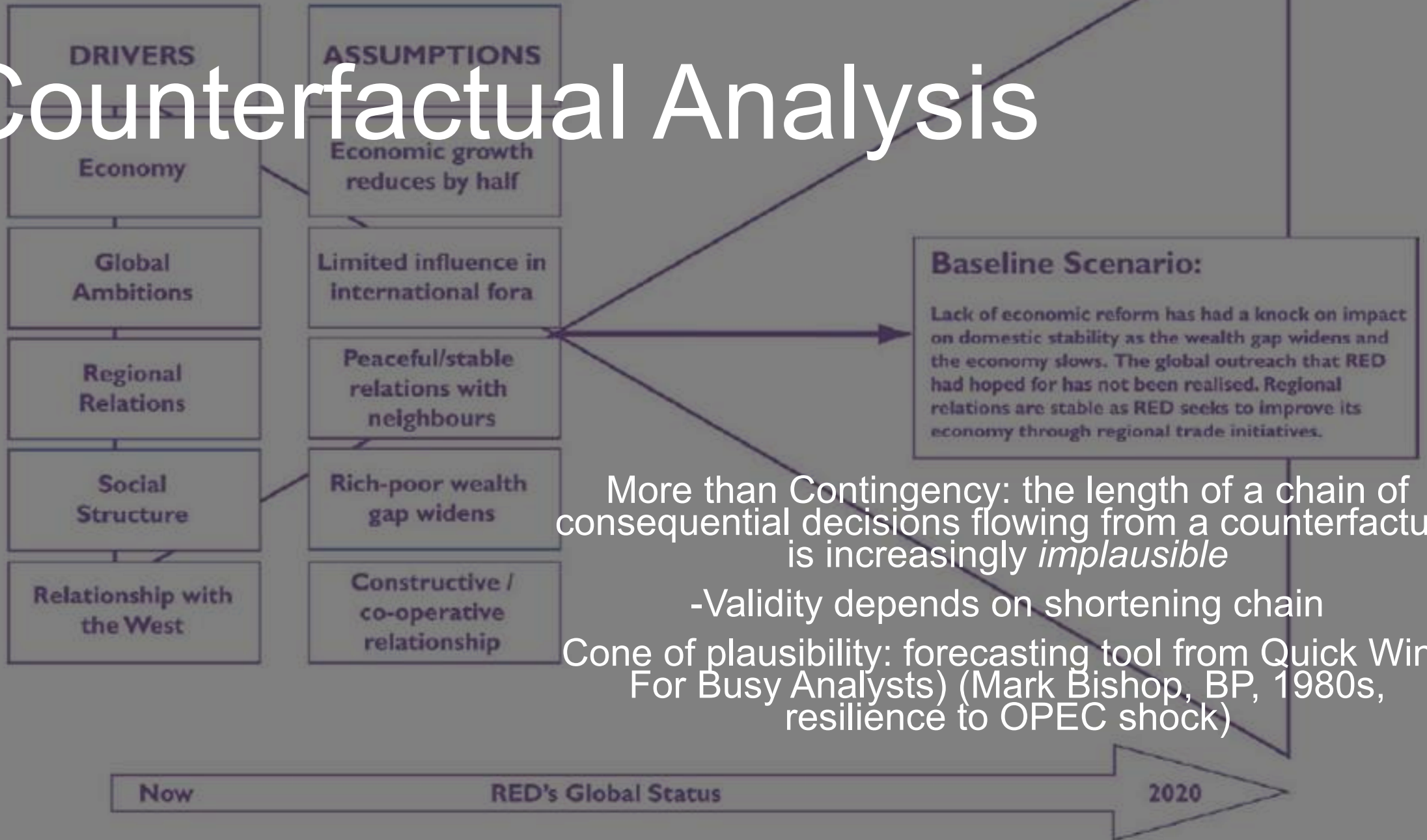
Long form (1000 words):

Present an analytic reflection on the result of the game as compared to real events. Answer **any** of the following questions as part of your reflection. You may also seek my approval in writing for another question of your choosing:

- Explain the result of the game as it compares to true events. If they diverged, why? If they were similar, why? In other words, what were the important historical variables which determined peace, or Armageddon during the 1983 war scare?
- What were the key variables to intelligence success or failure?
- Did intelligence success/failure lead to policy success/failure?
- How does this exercise help us understand the forces of historical agency versus structural forces in shaping events? What power did individuals have to rewrite the narrative? Does this reflect a realistic understanding of how events unfold?
- Scholars and professionals have debated whether or not the world was truly in danger of destruction during Able Archer 83. Argue for either side, adding what insight the game has provided to this counter-factual problem?

Please present a coherent essay-style response. Refer to your log and cite research (using department essay style) as evidence. You may paste the essay below, this box.

Counterfactual Analysis



Able Archer '83

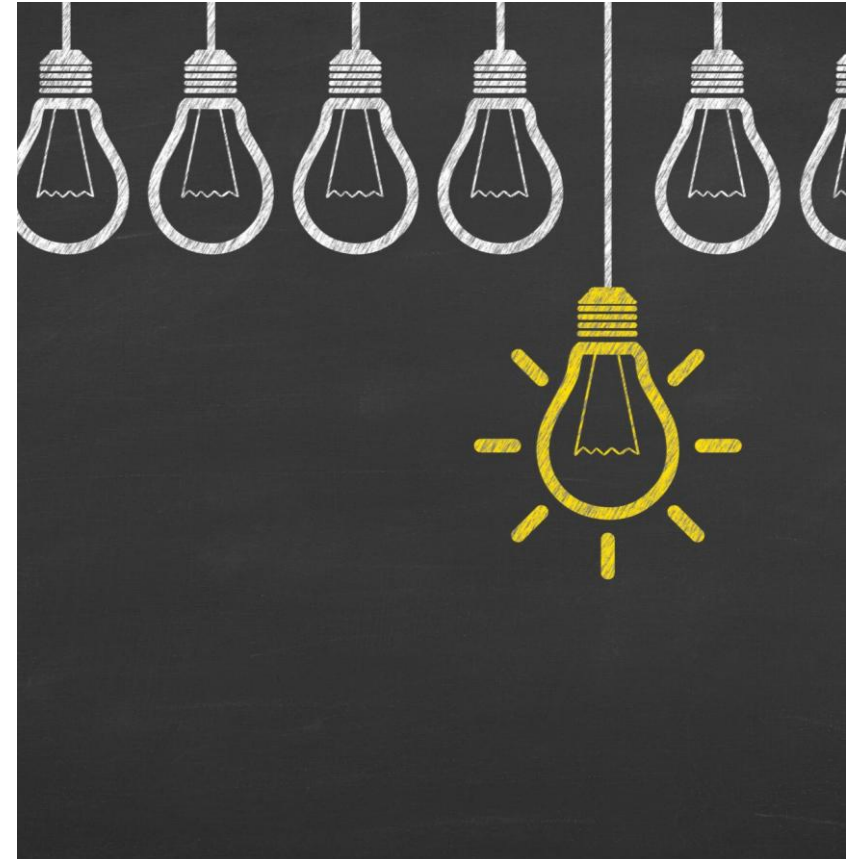
- Double Blind, narrative-driven
- Pedagogical purpose: rehearse I&W skills and concepts, while treating AA83 as a case study
- Research goal: “Were we close to Armageddon/ Was it a war scare?”
- Design: Based on the “YES” camp.
- So far: Soviets were paranoid but had good I&W model (good enough not to LOW in Nov 83)
- Next iteration:



NORTHAG Northern Army Group		Conventional Forces	Peace-time Operations	Increased Vigilance	Advanced Readiness	Full Combat Readiness
Forges Under the command of BAOR headquarters.		Air Forces	Peace-time Operations	Increased Vigilance	Advanced Readiness	Full Combat Readiness
- 1 Netherlands Corps - 1 German Corps - 1 British Corps - 1 Belgian Corps		Intermediate Range Missiles	Peace-time Operations	Increased Vigilance	Advanced Readiness	Full Combat Readiness
Reinforcement - III French Corps - US III Corps (REFORGER)		Tactical Nuclear Forces	Peace-time Operations	Increased Vigilance	Ready to Deploy	Dispersed in Field
Airpower - Dutch Airforce: 81 aircraft - Luftwaffe: 117 aircraft - RAF units: 76 aircraft + 92 reinforcement aircraft - Belgian Airforce: 122 aircraft - French units (reinforcements) - US units (reinforcements)		Electronic Warfare	Peace-time Operations	Increased Vigilance	Advanced Readiness	War-time Modes Ready
		Logistics + Support	Peace-time Operations	Increased Preparation	Advanced Preparation	Full Combat Readiness
		Special Forces	Peace-time Operations	Increased Preparation	Active Preparation	Dispersed to Hides
		Intelligence + Surveillance	Peace-time Operations	Increased Vigilance	Enhanced Collection	Deployed to Field
		Civil Defence	Peace-time	Increased	Active	On

Contributions and Challenges

- Early finding: As a method, wargaming AA83 has helped me to understand the institutional criteria to launch. The human side remains more mysterious.
- Design forces narrative plausibly close to true events. Tension: finding the threshold.
- Immersion & engagement normally quite good.
- Challenges in implementing wargaming as a research tool, including biases and the influence of game design.
- This is a good tool in history when
 - You have an entrenched debate and expect no further data
 - Where counterfactual analysis is helpful, or where it is being performed poorly (or unacknowledged) by others.



Conclusion and Future Directions

- Conclusion that wargaming offers a valuable, rigorous method for historical research.
- Superior to intuition. Leaves an audit trail of reasoning and analysis.
- Implications for the field of historical analysis and the potential for wider application of wargaming in research.
- Plans for further studies to explore and validate the use of wargaming in historical methodology.

