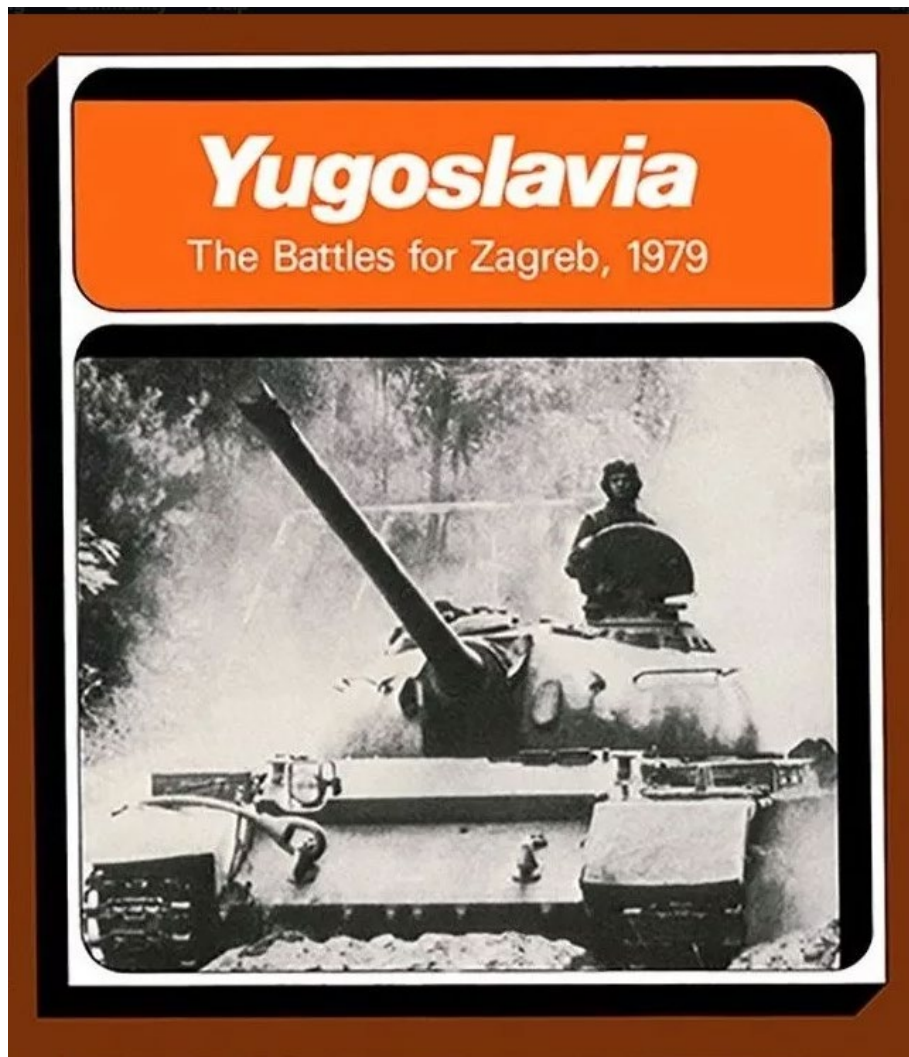

Yugoslavia, SPI 1977

Scenario: “Thrust for Zagreb”

Replay by George Nap



Yugoslavia – SPI Publications

Breaking out **Yugoslavia** from the *SPI Modern Battles II Quad*, a battle that never happened, at least not in the way imagined, but an exercise in military thought.

The **MB II** quad consisted of four games: **Jerusalem** (from the Six Day War battle), **Bundeswehr** (Soviets attempt to cross northern Germany and NATO is not amused.), **DMZ** (North Korea action with or without US forces), and **Yugoslavia**.

Yugoslavia is a hypothetical battle where the Soviets are driving on Zagreb, the Yugoslavs are defending. NATO in the form of the US and Italy are responding. Pretty basic game. To win you hold more of Zagreb than the other guys. The designer is currently the US Ambassador to Kosovo [since retired] and based on his BGG portfolio was in Najaf when I was in Balad.

Some nice additions to this game: untried units, paratroops, and an airmobile cav element for the US.

The Yugoslavs defend, no bridges across the rivers all have been dropped, Soviets cannot use road movement rates due to partisans (my people can be stubborn that way). Still, given the high movement rates the Yugos have to defend everywhere to start, the Soviets set up second.

Strategy: Not going to finesse this, the 35th Guards and 102nd MRD are going to drive up the north bank of the Sava straight to Zagreb with paratroop support and complimentary thrusts on the flank. I envision a bloodbath in the city between NATO and the Rooskies.



Victory Conditions: 16 game turns, need to be able to trace a road line of communication from hexes of Zagreb you control to your side of the map, or no points for them. You commit all units to battles and allocate all arty before revealing (zero units remain in the game since CRT is combat differential). You choose CRT (active=bloody, mobile=less bloody) for each battle, a change from the base Modern Battle II rules. Locking ZoC's, unaffected by presence of friendly units.



SPI miscut a few counters with the die, but based on the letter from my grandparents to me when I was at the Transportation Officer Advanced Course in 1988 that I found in this game, I haven't touched this game in three decades and certainly do not remember the strengths of those units we will let it ride. (Nice to read a letter from them, they have been gone twenty and twenty-eight years now.)

Soviets: Active attacks up and down the line.



Mixed results but the beginning of a breakthrough on the Zagreb road.











Turn 5: 3 Sov/ 1 NATO, no paras (rolled a six) 2nd ACR arrives for NATO.

Soviets: Well, we will show the Americans how the Red Army fights. We take one hex of Zagreb, this is going to be a slog for the MRD.



Turn 6: No air support either side (been rolling horribly for the Soviet). Both variable arrival reinforcements will arrive on turn 8.

Soviets: The Americans are spread out on the Sava plain, we will have a go at them. 1/5/2ACR is eliminated by 1/5th Soviet Tank Division crushed under the entire division artillery. 3/2/2 takes out 2/5 in an EX, but the American lines are breached.





The Soviets are all but eliminated damned by a lack of retreat routes with no losses to us.



They did denude Zagreb so we will attack there, concentrating our air and ground forces. We make progress north of the city and seize some downtown blocks by the river.



Yugoslav: We will clear out the south bank of the Sava and are forced into counterattacks in the city itself. If our counterattacks make sufficient progress, we can cut off retreat paths of the Soviets in the buildings near the river. A horrible turn of events, with our counterattack south of the river beaten off, our units in the city forced into unfavorable counterattacks never secure a retreat path, the Yugoslav army is decimated in the ruins of Zagreb by the Red Army.



Turn 9: NATO 7 air and the airborne arrives, along with the last brigade of the 8th Mech.

Soviets: It is becoming problematic to protect our artillery. We must clear the elements of the Yugoslav 1st Division from east of Zabreb while ejecting their heavier elements which have crossed the Sava holding the south edge of town. A pair of exchanges which we cannot afford clear the enemy directly east of Zagreb. In heavy fighting we eliminate a mech regiment but their armor repels our attacks at the Sava River bank.







Calling it here. The Soviets were doomed by a few key rolls outside the game. Their air support rolls were horrible all game. Six airborne battalions were never able to come into play. Another three ground regiments also failed to arrive per the variable reinforcement rolls. I think in any case this is a tough fight for the Soviets. They will spend themselves taking Zagreb (as the Yugoslav I defended forward which cost units but purchased time. An argument can be made for hunkering down in Zagreb and making the Soviets dig you out, but as you saw with the Soviets trying to do that once you lose a perimeter you are vulnerable to being forced to retreat and the enemy can use the mobile CRT to do it bloodlessly on their end. I think with reasonable reinforcement and air support roll results this is a well-balanced game.

At least for Croatian pride I called it before the Italians arrived to save the day, that would have been a tough pill to swallow.