MASSIVE ASSAULT NETWORK 2

STRATEGY GUIDE

Strategy guide
for Massive Assault Network 2

Are you easily kicking AI opponents but get beaten heavily by live opponents? Would you like to find the secret of how to win against stronger players and dramatically improve your skills in this game? Are you ready to climb to the top of the ranking ladder?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions then this strategy guide is for you. Whether you are an experienced player or just a newbie looking for some advice, this guide is tailored by game developers to give you precious tips on how to master and improve your strategy in Massive Assault Network 2!

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Introduction

Massive Assault Network 2 (MAN2) takes all the best from its predecessor Massive Assault and adds new features that elevate gameplay to a higher level and that make the gaming experience even more exciting.

This game is not just about moving units and collecting lots of forces. Every single turn in every single battle requires a lot of planning. **To get maximum enjoyment from MAN2, you'll need to think about next turns in advance and to try different strategies before completing any single turn.** The turn-based style of game rewards players' strategic skills. Don't forget that the enemy will exploit every mistake you make which might affect the outcome of the entire battle.

This guide will help you to learn most of the game tricks and teach how to plan and conduct successful combat operations.

Chapter 1: Strategic planning

Each battle against AI (Emily and Kate) or a live opponent can be divided into several steps, each one of which passes smoothly onto the next:

1. Player's preliminary strategic plan and disclosure of first country (if playing for PL).
2. The opponent's first turn and disclosure of his first country (consider steps 1 and 2 in reverse order if playing for FNU)
3. A possible correction of the initial strategic plan.
4. Struggle for resources and initiative supremacy.
5. Slight upper hand of one side and attempts by his/her adversary to reverse the situation.
6. The supremacy of one player becomes overwhelming (end of game).

Preliminary strategic plan and disclosure of the first country

Once the game has been set up, both opponents must disclose their first Secret Ally. In this phase the disclosure actions of the PL-player are visible to the FNU-player during his disclose phase.

This stage is the right time to think seriously about your initial strategic plan for the upcoming battle. The "blind luck" factor in MAN2 is minimal since the distribution of Secret Allies over the planet is the only parameter which is defined randomly. All other settings are either defined by players or are preset in strict accordance with game rules. Even though your distribution of Secret Allies is not favorable, you may still win if you deploy armies precisely and exactly as defined in your initial strategic plan. Moreover, the greater the size of the planet, the less the influence of random distribution of Secret Allies on the final result of the battle.

That is why a **preliminary strategic plan** is so important! Try to think over and **define the location** where you have the highest concentration of bordering Secret Ally countries, what revenue these countries will bring at the end of each turn, how easy it is to bring reinforcements in, in other words, define the place on the planet where you have the most effective resources for fast reinforcements. Once this is done, disclose a country from one of these locations, preferably a country with the highest economy level.

> **Note:** in online-play mode disclosing a country reveals your Secret Ally to your opponent, so even though you can undo the disclosure the secrecy is lost!

While disclosing, bear in mind that the goal is **to capture the maximum number countries within the minimum number of turns**. In MAN2 the saying "**time is money**" is the best formula for a winning strategy. As a rule both sides initially have equal numbers of countries and revenues, but the sooner you gains control over new countries (whether neutral or hostile), the sooner you begin to earn extra revenue. This enables you to purchase extra units and launch new attacks. Thus extra forces will inflict more damage on the enemy, shifting the balance of power to your advantage.

It is very useful to disclose the most developed country on the first turn. It will bring you the biggest revenue and allow you to recruit the maximum forces for the first attack. If you decide to choose this disclosure option, then don't worry about defending the borders of your recently disclosed country. When you disclose a country with revenue of $4, for example, you will have one turn to move troops, and at least one revenue round. Therefore, you can concentrate forces along the border where you plan to launch your attack, and along other borders you can leave breaches which, if necessary, can be filled in successive revenue

rounds. At the end of the turn for $4 revenue you can buy 4 Bunkers or Smallfoots, which can block 4 hexes on the border defending your enemy's attack. Also, in case of invasion, you can use Guerrilla assistance (to be described later in this article). In some cases it is impossible to avert an enemy invasion and an unprotected border may cost you all future revenues from a recently disclosed country. You are however free to make offensive disclosures. The ancients had good reason to say "Fortes fortuna adjuvat" (lat.), which means, "Fortune favors the brave". Taking a strong defensive position by covering all your borders with low-cost, slow-moving units leaves you with a lot of useless forces and thus lowers your chances of victory. Even capturing neutral can only be done at "tortoise" speed. Therefore, you should find a balance of defensive and offensive strategies.

On medium and large planets the purchase of transports during initial disclosure might be advantageous for fast invasions, but in reasonable numbers (one Land or Naval Transport for every 2-3 Tanks or Robots is optimal). The combined use of transports and combat units is very effective for conducting fast offensive operations during the course of the game. As regards offensive tactics, to paraphrase the Prussian and German military tactician and theorist General-field Marshal Moltke the Elder, "Do not build many Towers and Bunkers, build Transports". If there is an opportunity to deploy units to cover two borders within a single turn, transports will help you a lot by moving the units, and they will also cover "holes" in critical situations. Below is the example of a "defensive" disclosure allowing player to protect any border:

On the small planets you won't succeed without transports either, but for the first attack it would be useful to buy an extra Tank, and when you learn more about the situation, it will be time to buy a Transport on the first revenue round.

> **Tip:** To find out if enemy units can attack a hex, place the mouse cursor over it and press the Shift button. You will see red circles over enemy units that can hit this hex during the enemy's turn. Holding the Shift button pressed you can move the mouse cursor over the planet to find a place which is unreachable by enemy fire.

Correcting the initial strategic plan

Do not be afraid to change your strategic plan during the fight! The plan is made for you to picture the general course of the battle. And after a few turns it

inevitably transforms into a simpler form: the conflict may fragment into several local battles on different fronts, or it may proceed as one general battle, or it may develop into a series of small clashes once all resources have run out.

Moreover, the more flexible your plan is, the quicker you can adjust it to suit the changing situation and the more chances you will have for the victory. **The main thing is NOT to give the initiative to your opponent unconditionally and just react to his actions, but to FORCE him to act in a way that is advantageous for you.** Try to seize the initiative. Think of how to set complicated tasks for your opponent, and if he/she is not able to solve them, then make use of his/her mistakes.

For example, you are ready to invade a country (and you don't know if it is Neutral or an enemy Secret Ally), and you have left the other border weakly covered. After the enemy's disclosure, it turns out that this border runs close to enemy lines. In this case you should calmly think the situation over. Remember that your army is not a "fire brigade", so transferring all your forces to new front will most likely produce a fragmented approach to the new front and you could well sustain significant losses as a result. Hence you will lose initiative, and this may lead to defeat. How long do you reckon your troops plus Guerrilla forces can hold the enemy at the border? How much time will it take to capture the country? Where do you plan on sending your main forces? Do you have a neighboring country in reserve to make use of its resources? Could the country that you are going to invade be the enemy's Secret Ally? How might it this influence the whole situation? It is impossible to foresee all possibilities and variants, but you should aim to **find a reasonable combination of risk and defensive strategies**.

While developing or correcting your initial strategic plan, you should decide whether you'd like to adopt aggressive (attacking) or passive (defensive)

tactics. Both variants have advantages and disadvantages; therefore a combination of both gives the best result. But bear in mind that defending alone will not win you the entire battle. During the battle you have to learn to sacrifice territory and even countries for the sake of supremacy on another front and hence final victory. For instance, you could pull back deeply on a part of the planet where the enemy has a serious advantage, and try to engage him in a continuous battle. If you succeed, try to use up all resources from your defending country before the enemy captures it. While defending you should try to inflict maximum damage on the advancing enemy's units and force him to call for reinforcements from other fronts. Simultaneously, you should gather your troops in the region of the planet where you've got more units, try to occupy enough countries to compensate for your losses, and then launch a global strategic attack with newly gained resources.

Although the ability to concentrate forces may secure you an important success, you shouldn't forget about reserves, as without timely reinforcements the impact power of your group will start to dwindle. And reserves will only be available if your rear-guards are safe. You should remember that you cannot protect yourself completely from enemy invasion: Copters, for example, can break into your territory almost anytime. Therefore, try to secure your Capital. The loss of a Capital means the loss of at least one revenue round from that country and might lead to the loss of all aviation based in the Capital. Moreover, the enemy can use a captured city as an airdrome for his aviation.

Fighting for slight domination and getting overwhelming supremacy

No matter how the battle unfolds, don't panic and assume you're going to lose. **Psychology is one of the most crucial factors in this game.** Fear causes uncertainty, which leads to thoughtless actions. For example, once you start

buying "defensive" units when playing against a stronger opponent, your enemy gets the perfect chance to steal the initiative. On the other hand, arrogant treatment of a presumed weaker player may lead to needless risk-taking and, as a result, to shattering defeat.

It is very important to impose your will on your opponent, to seize the initiative and force the enemy to do what **you** need. For instance, you and your opponent have disclosed two countries to invade a third which acts as a buffer between your positions. What needs to be done in this situation? Firstly, you should realize that if the enemy wants to invade this country, then it is almost certainly neutral. Secondly, if anybody attacks it, then the opponent will get free access to this country, as well as control of Guerrillas. It might be a cunning move to let the enemy invade the country first, especially if the opponent has more forces and gets more revenue in that region. Meanwhile, you may wish to send your forces to another front and capture a country, which you won't require you to conduct protracted battles. Another example: the enemy is going to attack a Neutral country near your Secret Ally. Let your opponent do this, thus making that country your Ally, and then you can disclose a neighboring Secret Ally and try to dislodge the enemy from the Neutral country. Napoleon used to declare: "Never interfere with the enemy when he is about to make mistakes. It's not polite".

If the enemy is about to attack your Secret Ally, or has already attacked it, don't thoughtlessly disclose that country since a badly timed disclosure will only lead to a brief delay before the final invasion. And the enemy will not only get the revenue, but also a big Indemnity. You may just have to put up with the loss of revenue from that country and keep it as an undisclosed Secret Ally. You could reap more benefits later when you unexpectedly disclose it to the enemy.

When fighting for resources and initiative you should bear in **mind the time factor**. As a rule, the scattering of attack forces in several directions means potentially large revenues from newly captured countries, but the time you take for this may be much more costly than the benefits gained. Moreover, during your advance you may incur heavy losses as one or two turns will not be sufficient to deal with Guerrillas, and you could get engaged in prolonged battles for new countries. The enemy may try to kill two birds with one stone by transferring reinforcements and knocking out your weak group from one of these countries, or else he may turn the fighting for this country into a war of attrition. At the same time, if you act single-mindedly and employ powerful groups equipped with transports for the **successive capture** of countries, then, using the new resources, you will be able to obtain more with fewer losses and, if you are lucky, you will win control of the enemy's Secret Allies.

Try to use all available units for battles and don't have them just sit on the battlefield. As already mentioned, the initial disposition of Secret Allies is the same for the both sides and the player who makes the most use of units gets the final advantage. There's no need to transfer your spare units to the furthermost fronts. Instead, try to find the closest Neutral country and capture it in order to get more reinforcements in future.

If you can, **do not rush to disclose all your countries**. "For as long as you still have reserves, the game is not lost". It is likely that your delay in disclosing the last country will allow you to launch a crucial offensive operation, and then you can disclose your country next to the enemy's unprotected border. Also, the fact that you still have an undisclosed Secret Ally will put psychological pressure on the enemy, thus offering yet another benefit from this strategy.

In situations where the enemy has significant superiority, for example, he has invaded your high economy country, do not rush to surrender. Reverting to

passive defense on all fronts will not bring success either, but only postpone an inevitable outcome. To change the situation to your own advantage, try to define the enemy's weak points, for example, the countries you can capture with your remaining forces. Moreover, it is wise to have combat reserves and to capture neutral countries at your rear.

Some tricks for successful naval battles

Players can build fleets on almost all planets in MAN 2. The fleet, or to be precise, the reasonable distribution of land, air and naval units is the key to success. Naturally, Naval Transports and Copters are the fastest way to break well-prepared enemy defenses and escape from long costly battles. The planes based on Carriers and Battleships can fire at naval or land units from a safe distance, and a Leviathan can eliminate almost any unit in just a few turns.

At the same time you should be aware of some specific features of naval units and battles they are likely to be involved in:

1. Naval battles are brief and bloody due to the high firepower and high price of the ships along with their fairly limited vitality.
2. Many types of naval craft, such as Battleships, Destroyers, and Carriers have relatively limited speed and cannot be carried by transports. Therefore, long-distance transfers are quite complex during combat.
3. Leviathans are the deadliest units in the game, but their price, the same as a Secret Army in a low economy country, makes this type of ship a rare participant in naval battles.
4. Submarines are high speed naval units, but they are rarely used due to their price/hitpoint ratio.
5. There are three types of units, which act both on land and on sea:

Amphibians, Battle Platforms and Copters. The tactical deployment of Amphibians will be described below. Battle Platforms play a subsidiary role and they are of great value with certain land units. An Attack copter is a universal weapon with limited vitality.

6.   Bear in mind that sea supremacy doesn't produce automatic victory, but only ensures free maneuver of forces with the help of naval transportation (the fastest way to transfer units). Additionally, fire support from the sea can greatly facilitate landing operations or the defense of your units on the shore. However, only the invasion of new countries and preserving the ones you already own will guarantee fresh reinforcements and final victory in the game.

Chapter 2: Tactical tips and tricks in Massive Assault Network 2

1.   **Mastering effective deployment strategy:** Always consider units' fire range and hitpoints during the initial disclosure phase. For instance, try to avoid placing Rocket Launchers in front line of attack. This perfect long-ranged weapon can be covered by cheap units or natural obstacles of the landscape. Don't forget to check the threat of enemy attack in a given hex by pressing the "SHIFT" button.

2.   **Planning an invasion into a neutral or enemy country:**

    2.1.   **Capture the capital during the first strike of the invasion** (Loaded transports and attack copters are very useful for this). Furthermore, the captured capital can serve as an air base - make sure to place unit there which can survive Guerilla attacks. In addition, enemy Guerrillas will have less chance of dragging the battle out. Remember, even one enemy unit in the Capital, which can be destroyed with one hit, does not allow revenue in this country until the end of the next turn (assuming it has been destroyed).

Screenshot: Transport Copter speeds up the invasion of the capital

2.2. **Consider pursuit in advance.** Before the invasion, recruit a Land Transport and load two Tanks into it or use two Attack Copters - this is the best Guerrilla-hunting machine. You should always keep in mind that the enemy can win time by scattering his Guerrillas to distant corners of the invaded country - so that it takes normal units (no matter how powerful) many turns to reach them.

2.3. **Don't forget that an invaded country or a neighboring country might turn out to be the enemy's Secret Ally** - and always have "Plan B" for this eventuality. It is always wise to keep at least one UNDISCLOSED Secret Ally in the region of the planned invasion. Sometimes, if the player lacks enough forces or Secret Allies to deal with the enemy's

possible disclosure, it would better to put off the invasion for a couple of turns.

2.4.   **Watch out for Guerrilla forces.** It is counter-productive strategy to invade a country with forces that can be eliminated by the enemy's Guerrillas, immediately giving the enemy control over an extra country. Furthermore, it will take you extra forces and time for a second invasion. Don't leave loaded Transports within possible reach of Guerrilla fire! Protect your Capital by placing any unit there; otherwise the enemy might block your country revenue using Guerrilla forces. A covered land border doesn't necessarily guarantee safety, as the enemy can use Naval Transports or Copters to capture your Capital.

3.   **Defining goals to set your Guerrilla forces** upon enemy invasion of Neutral Country or your Secret Ally:

3.1.   **Liberating a country**
Provoking an enemy invasion of your country artificially in order to get extra forces as Guerrillas can be a valid tactic for gaining supremacy in a specific region (an AI opponent sometimes falls into this kind of "trap"). With precise advance calculations of extra damage, you might not only destroy all the invader's units but also "lock" the border for extra several turns with fresh Guerilla troops and even shift the balance locally to your advantage.

If the enemy player has attacked a Neutral country and the Guerillas can't resist, try to estimate if it is possible to get

reinforcements from your neighboring allies by placing units on transports purchased from Guerillas recruitment revenue and destroy the invaders in the same turn.

Screenshot: FNU Tank (green flag) has just attacked a smaller country controlled by PL (red flag) player. PL player will get $6 to recruit Guerilla forces which is enough to destroy the invader's tank and seal the gap in the border.

3.2. Delaying tactics

Often the only thing that can be done with a small detachment of Guerrillas is to keep the enemy from getting the revenue from this country for as much time as possible. Place the Guerrillas in the most distant and inaccessible parts of the country, such as forests, peninsular tips etc., or in the Capital and try not to engage enemy forces. Obviously, cheap light troops (LAVs/Smallfoots and Dots/Bunkers) are

the best for this purpose - they can be purchased in bigger numbers and they have maximum cumulative "stamina". However, sometimes it makes sense to use Guard Towers (Death Turrets) or other troop types in narrow passes or other specific terrain formations.

Screenshot: It will take the invader's tanks quite a while to reach and destroy the distant Dots and Death Turret through the thick forest which slows down movement.

3.3. Inflicting maximum damage

If the terrain does not favor delaying tactics or if a counterattack is imminent, it might be best to deploy the Guerrillas and go on the immediate offensive. Remember, the Guerrillas can deploy to any open area in the country and they get to attack first, so target high-value units (like Copters, Rocket Launchers, Anti-Air Tracks, etc.) and

loaded transports. Do not rule out the opportunity to recruit a Guerrilla Battleship, it can often engage at a safe distance, and while it will not prevent the country from falling, it can continue to be a thorn in the enemy's side long after ground troops succumb.

3.4.   **Counter-attack into enemy territory**
As luck would have it, perhaps an enemy invasion was already in the pipeline. In this event, it might make sense to use the Guerrillas for the initial invasion. Set various goals:

-        **Summon enemy Guerrillas** (they must be deployed immediately after the invasion and can be used only once in each country). After the enemy deploys Guerrillas, his country becomes considerably less protected in the face of the ensuing "main" invasion. Plus in the future, it becomes much easier to block revenue collection in such a country - one unit deployed in a distant outpost is enough, because there will be no more Guerrillas.

-        **Block the enemy's revenue for as long as possible.** Move as many Guerrilla units (LAVs & Smallfoots, or something fast-moving such as Transport Copter or UPS loaded with Tanks or Bio-Ts) into enemy territory as possible. Seek the enemy's Capital and deprive him of revenue.

However, remember that a counter-attack by Guerillas is reasonable if there will be no response by enemy Guerillas, i.e. you should attack a Neutral country controlled by the

enemy or an enemy Disclosed Ally where Guerillas have already been raised.

Screenshot: PL player is faced with sudden attack by Guerilla transport and tank that sneaked into country from the left border and captured the Capital.

3.5. Lure the enemy into a trap

If the invaded country or the neighboring country is a Secret Ally, recruit Guerrillas in the most distant corners of the Secret Ally's border. Then, when the enemy approaches these distant lines and is about to engage, disclose the country, either surrounding his forces or cutting his retreat/supply route or building an unassailable battle line in front of the enemy, etc. The downside of this tactic is that the Disclosure Phase comes AFTER the Movement &

Combat Phase, so the enemy will get to shoot first at those newly deployed troops if placed in harm's way. If possible, surround enemy Land Transports (UPS) packed with units, so that the Transports can neither move nor unload troops. Bear in mind that Copters and Bombers can only be blocked (disabled from flying away or from firing) by Anti-Air Tracks (or Pteroshields) if they are covered by a generated shield.

Screenshot: FNU player's 4 Attack Copters are blocked by Pteroshields recruited on Guerilla revenue. It is enough for the PL player to destroy the Attack Copter that is not blocked and then calmly deal with the blocked ones.

3.6. **Force preservation**

If there is little chance of saving the country or doing significant damage to the invader, the Guerrillas might be

saved by moving them to another region with land or naval transports. Being able to come back within a single turn, your Guerilla forces will maintain a threat for the enemy by returning suddenly and will thus force him to recruit several units to deal with such a threat. Another option may be to purchase a Guerrilla Bomber and conduct a couple of strikes before the enemy captures the capital, and then relocate the Bomber to another friendly city or Carrier.

3.7. **Sabotage Actions**

There are often situations when Guerrillas might be used for organizing "special" destructive actions which can be really damaging to the enemy (much more damaging than just blocking revenue for a couple of turns). Look around and see if there are any enemy Land or Naval transports (preferably packed with expensive units) within 5-6 movement hexes from the territory of the invaded country. They may not necessarily be a part of the enemy's invasion forces, they may be just a reinforcement detachment on their way to a completely different faraway region. Deploy a Guerrilla transport, load it with units, and destroy these available targets. Similarly, you could move an empty Guerrilla Land Transport into a neighboring enemy city with a couple of Bombers in it - thus by sacrificing a single $2 Transport, several expensive units are immediately destroyed.

Also look for opportunities to blow up enemy Naval Transport using ground Guerrillas (long-range troops, such

as Mortars, Heavy Bots or Rocket Launchers). Not only are long-term enemy plans disrupted, but they still have to deal with the Guerrilla ground forces.

4.   **Crafting the army's structure according to the situation**

There is no ideal or universal army structure for all situations. All troop types are quite unique and have their own typical usage schemes. While thinking of which units to recruit, consider multiple factors:

4.1   **Offensive or defensive operation?** Naturally, high-speed units with powerful weapons are better for offensives, while more durable units are better for holding the ground defensively.

4.2   **What units does the enemy have?** Consider their range, speed and durability. For instance, the enemy keeps firing at you from a distance using an Annihilator hidden in woods.

Purchase a Battle Platform and mount your Rocket Launcher on it, so that you gain movement advantage and will have a chance to fire first thus destroying the Annihilator.

4.3   **On what terrain will the forthcoming battle take place?** Is there room for maneuvering or are there narrow gorges, forests, impassible ridges and the like? Remember that tanks lose their movement advantage in desert, swamps and forest, while Mortars (Scorchers) with the same movement

speed in such territory have greater range. Expensive Bullfrogs can be transported only by Naval Transports so it makes sense to place them close to shores for higher mobility.

4.4   **Does the enemy have air support?** Transports and Rocket Launchers are in grave danger whenever an enemy airbase is in range. Robust units with a lot of hit points should be sent to take care of the enemy air threat prior to exposing weaker, valuable units (if not covered by an Anti-Air Track or Pteroshield).

5.   Enemy aviation based in cites may inflict critical damage and prevent your attacks. There are several techniques for **destroying or neutralizing enemy aviation**:

5.1.   The easiest way to protect units from bombardments by enemy aviation/attack copters is to **recruit an Anti-Air Track** (or Pteroshield) unit and hide offensive units under the shield. This is a passive defense which doesn't threaten enemy aviation and the shield protects units in the adjacent 6 hexes. However, an Anti-Air unit may be used as offensive weapon to block enemy bombers and copters (see screenshot in section 3.5 above).

5.2.   **Enemy aviation is based in an unguarded city** (a common mistake for inexperienced players). To destroy the Bombers you will have to move your unit into the city. This can be done effectively by Land Transports or Copters. Keep in mind that Land Transports/Copters can be easily destroyed

by Bombers before they reach the city - that's why you should prepare more than one Land Transport/Copter or offload Land Transports from a Naval Transport. A land unit like an Amphibian or a Tank loaded into a Land Transport increases the operational range of this kind of Bomber-killer Land Transport.

5.3. **Enemy aviation is based in a guarded city.** In this case, naturally, you first have to destroy the city's guards. Of course, this sort of thing can only be done if there aren't too many city guards. Another problem might be Guerrillas appearing after the invasion. These two problems can be solved only by a really MASSIVE invasion. Try to prepare a couple of transports packed with land troops, move them and then unload them simultaneously, surrounding the city and its defenders. Keep up the blockade while picking off adjacent units. The city will soon fall. Don't forget that an occupied capital cannot be entered until the turn following destruction of its garrison. If for some reason there are no Guerrillas available, these tactics of massive invasion and surrounding the city have a much greater chance of success. Remember that empty Land Transports can also be used for blocking the city or approaching enemy reinforcements - such a sacrifice can gain a couple of vital turns.

5.4. **Enemy aviation is based in Neutral territory or in your Disclosed Ally in a guarded city.** When you invade this type of country your enemy will not be able to raise Guerillas, so feel free to cross the borders thus depriving the enemy of

Revenue. In order to speed up the process of capturing the capital, try to encircle all enemy units around the city and block all paths for possible retreat. Also you need to take care of possible enemy reinforcements and don't let them sneak into the capital.

5.5.   **Enemy aviation is based in an unguarded city in your Secret Ally.** If the city is not guarded, just disclose the Secret Ally and place the cheapest unit into the city, and the enemy Bombers will be immediately destroyed. It is always very tempting to destroy three enemy Bombers in one blow, however, bear in mind that after such disclosure the enemy can recapture this country and collect the Indemnity.

5.6.   **Enemy aviation is based in your Secret Ally in a guarded city:**

-   If the opponent lands his aviation right after the invasion and he deploys a low-hitpoint unit in the capital, you can destroy these units by raising Guerilla forces and then disclose your Secret Ally as described in section 5.5 above.

-   If you have other forces outside this country, order them to destroy the enemy unit occupying the city and then at the end of this turn disclose your Secret Ally and place one of its units in the capital. This is a very effective and extremely demoralizing two-step operation.

-   If there is no external reinforcement available, disclose the Secret Ally surrounding the city. On the next turn the

defender can be destroyed, and the turn after that the city can be liberated. Don't forget to place an Anti-Air unit close to the capital to block bombers otherwise the enemy will be able to re-locate them on a Carrier or in the controlled capital within flight range. However, this method has substantial disadvantages: remember that the newly deployed Secret Army cannot move or fire - thus the forces will suffer causalities after deployment. Moreover, if the enemy breaks the blockade from outside, he'll be able to bring in more troops to guard the city.

6.   One of the important factors in MAN2 you should always think about during any battle is the **transportation range of forces**, and **hidden or obvious threats** which could be produced by possible use of Transports. Naturally, during the course of the battle, players may employ various tactical tricks with Transportation units. Let's consider some of them (leaving apart regular transfer of troops to the frontline):

6.1.   **Employing transports as Guerillas.** Capturing the Capital right after an enemy invasion with units brought in by transports (purchased with Guerilla money) from a distant location is one of a number of winning strategies that can spoil your enemy's plans. When planning such operation remember that the operative region may be extended by the use of transport combinations (Transport Copters and Naval Transports can carry empty Land Transports).

6.2.   **Use of combined transports.** Heavy damage may be

inflicted on the enemy with combined transports when, for instance, loaded Naval Transport offloads a Land Transport which then loads up with shock-troops (like tanks, amphibians or heavy bots) from the same Naval Transport. The newly-loaded Land Transport moves to the desired target and unloads shock-troops which fire at enemy in the same turn. The operational fire range for shock-troops enlarges to **13 hexes (!)**, and it is quite hard for even experienced opponents to foresee such sabotage operations (the computer opponent doesn't even dare to consider such threats).

6.3. **Hidden or obvious threat.** Additional psychological pressure on your opponent can be driven by the obvious threat of invasion from the sea (keeping a Naval Transport loaded with a few units ready to land anytime). Such a threat will force the enemy to keep charged Land Transports in the region of your **possible** intervention. Moreover, since you might employ combined transports (mentioned above in section 6.2), your opponent won't be able to define the region of possible intervention with the "Shift" button as usual, so he will have to display the entire grid with "Ctrl" button and calculate variants manually.

In the operational region of Naval Transports loaded with Amphibians the adversary will avoid using his Naval Transports or Carriers without defensive naval units. Moreover, sending a couple of empty transports up to the frontline will enlarge the operational region for

Amphibians by 6 extra hexes. Such a threat of sudden attack will cause the opponent to withdraw his units to a due distance and to take **extra** precautions. **By generating threats like this you may prevent the advance of even more numerous enemy units.**

7.   **Things to keep in mind when planning naval operations:**

7.1.   **While planning naval operations, always consider the ratio of naval forces and the distance to "supply bases".** If outnumbered in a naval battle, reinforcements from a distant base may appear too late, the main fleet will be destroyed and the enemy will make short work of the reinforcements. Thus, if the enemy has a larger fleet it is better to avoid battle and keep retreating, trying to unite with the reinforcements before the battle starts. Or, if lacking reinforcements, occupy some favorable position instead.

7.2.   **If the enemy fleet is not yet united, try to engage it piecemeal.** A much larger enemy fleet can be eliminated when it is split into two or more contingents or if the enemy reinforcements have not yet arrived. It may be risky - but that's the way great naval battles are won!

7.3.   **Be ready to retreat.** If the enemy has managed to engage your fleet, and the odds are obviously in his favor, try to save the most valuable ships (Battleships, Leviathans and Carriers) by covering their retreat with Destroyers. Empty

Naval Transports are also good for blocking the enemy fleet for a while. Try to draw enemy fleet off "supply bases" and drag the battle to shore under your control (where you can reinforce your fleet with new units to compensate for losses).

7.4. **Consider fire range of naval vessels.** In each battle the most expensive (and consequently deadly) units are the primary targets for attack. Therefore, **try to keep the most powerful ships afloat as long as possible** so that they will be able to inflict maximum damage on the enemy. Fire at the enemy fleet from the utmost distance, and try to block paths to your most precious ships. However, you should always consider the enemy fleet's special abilities. For instance, Submarines can easily sneak beneath your Destroyers but they can't attack ships in adjacent hexes. Therefore, you can create a barrier around a Leviathan with Destroyers so that hostile Submarines won't be able to fire on it (the same barrier is effective against the enemy's Destroyers):

7.5. **Shore-to-Ship combat.** Rocket Launchers, Heavy Bots, Guard Towers, Dots and Mortars can be deployed along the shores and give substantial fire support to a fleet fighting nearby. Moreover, if the strait is too narrow, the enemy ships will have to come closer to the shore - and even short-range ground units like Tanks and LAV's can be of great help. You are recommended to conduct such ground unit relocation to the shore by Land or Naval Transports; it can be more unexpected for the enemy to see these units suddenly appear on his flank. However, the greatest surprise can be achieved by the sudden disclosure of your Secret Ally, when the enemy fleet is pressed to the shore or is fighting in a narrow strait.

7.6. **While forming your fleet never forget about the goals you're aiming to achieve and the enemy formations your fleet is going to have to deal with:**

- If, at the beginning of the battle, you disclose a Medium or Large Secret Ally on the coast which is planning the invasion of a neighboring country, make sure to place a small shock brigade along the border comprised of smallfoots or tanks and spend most of the Treasury resources on the purchase of Battleships or a Leviathan. Ships like this will be especially precious to assist your shock brigade to break through enemy lines, or to destroy guerillas placed close to the shore. It will also help to prevent the possible transfer of enemy reinforcements and protect your coastline. Moreover, the possession of a powerful and expensive ship is a good

foundation for further development of your fleet.

- If you're planning to land on a hostile shore which is lightly guarded from the coastal front, then Carriers, Battleships or Attack Copters will be of extreme help to show fire support for your landing forces. Don't forget to locate your Bombers on Carries and think in advance about purchasing these aviation units. Check for aviation transfer routes using the "Ctrl" button. It is common practice to purchase Bombers in distant countries and place a Carrier (which is slow compared to aviation) as close as possible to the battle zone.

- If the aim is to stop the advance of an enemy fleet, then Destroyers have to be used as naval cannon fodder due to their low price and relatively high armor. Moreover, try to purchase Destroyers in groups (by saving money in advance) so that the enemy will not be able to sink them one by one.

- If you're planning a massive naval battle, try to engage all types of naval vessels: deploy Destroyers and Submarines (which might help to pursue the retreating enemy) to the frontline. Battleships and Leviathans should fire as medium-ranged units and Carries somewhere deeply behind the frontline (so Bombers will be delivering final strikes to seriously damaged enemy ships from the Carries).

- When your island is surrounded by a superior enemy fleet and you need to gain maximum revenue try to block the coastline with Bunkers or LAVs. Sometimes such tactics

help to delay an enemy invasion for several turns. So your enemy will have to waste time and ships to capture this country while your delaying tactics deprive him of potential revenue.

7.7. **Be ready to sacrifice some ships to gain control over a country.** During combat close to the shore with an enemy fleet it might be necessary to sacrifice some ships by locating them along the coast in order to prevent the enemy from landing reinforcements from the sea front while your land forces deal with guerillas or other hostile defending land-units. You will be getting revenue from the country after establishing control or you might even get Indemnity if the country is an enemy Disclosed Ally. With such reinforcements you will be able to pursue and destroy the enemy fleet.

7.8. **Forming special naval squadrons.** When fighting on big planets like Midgard or in the straights of Sea Switzerland there might be an emergency need to intercept a loaded enemy transport. The best unit for such operation is an Amphibian (Triton) which can be carried on any transportation unit. Moreover, a Naval Transport can load up to 4 Amphibians which is enough to destroy almost any naval unit on first strike. This type of formation can move up to 9 hexes in a single turn, but the maximum attack range may be increased up to 19(!) hexes when other Naval Transports are placed along the route.

Screenshot: The Green player is going to destroy the Red player's loaded Turtle with a special naval squadron.

Think twice before committing your orders

After committing your orders, the only thing you can do is to wait and think again and again about the action you have taken. Sometimes you might make shocking discoveries of past mistakes even before your opponent exploits them. Please note that until you commit your orders you can UNDO or REWIND all and any of your movement/recruitment/fire orders. Therefore, think carefully BEFORE confirming your orders and try to figure out if you have missed something crucial.

If you have decided to play with live opponent and have lost your first game to a stronger player - don't get disappointed, but try to use his tricks such a game might be a precious lesson for your future victories and reward you with more

skills than a dozen games played with AI or weak opponents. But nothing can be compared to that great feeling you get when you finally defeat a stronger opponent in equal and competitive battle!

Chapter 3: Finding opponents and moving up the ranking ladder

1.   Tips for finding opponents

Many players new to Massive Assault Network 2 start asking in Chat if people want to play with them right now. Don't be surprised if you got no response even seeing more than a dozen of people in Chat they might be playing other games or just be off their PC at that moment and have a game running in the background. So if you're anxious to start an online game, try the following:

- **Click the green "Play Online!" button.** You will see the list of players available for online play at that moment. Most of the time there will be the online AI opponents, Emily and Kate. If you'd like to play with them, just click "Join Game" and proceed with the selection of options for the upcoming battle. If you'd like to play with another human being click "Create Game". Choose a planet from the menu screen and click "Start" (this will create the game on the selected planet with default settings) or click "Options" to adjust more settings for the battle. The most essential thing is that after you press "Start" the system will generate a message on the Common chat channel notifying everyone that you're waiting for an online game opponent. **Please be patient and wait until other player joins your game (this may take up to 5 minutes)!** While waiting, you may describe the planet and settings you selected for the online game this will draw other players' attention to you and somebody will eventually join your battle.

- **Approach other players by sending Private messages in Chat.** Some people prefer to have the Chat window closed when playing their turns, since it takes up some space in the bottom left of the game screen. Or they may be on a private chat channel with another player. Therefore, they can't see ANY messages in the Common chat channel during the battle. When you create a Private chat channel with another player, the message you type in will appear on his/her screen regardless of whether the player is playing the game or browsing other sections (like Games, Challenges, etc). So private messaging is a sure way of reaching online players and the best way to set up a new battle.

2. **How to compete and get top scores.**

Climbing the ranking ladder up to Marshall is quite a long, arduous and challenging process. But the tips below will reveal some secrets about how to move up the ranking ladder really fast:

- **If you are new to online gaming in Massive Assault Network 2 starting with "Conscript" rank.** When you are at the very bottom of the ranking ladder, try to play a few games with really high ranking opponents (Colonels and above). Of course you will get badly beaten in the first few games, but you'll **still be getting some experience points** plus some really precious lessons from strong opponents. **Save the replays** of such battles once you're done, then load and watch them and try to analyze your mistakes and think of a better strategy for next battle. Then create a new battle with the same settings on the same planet with a medium skill player ranking from Lieutenant to Captain. It is very likely that you'll start

winning really soon and after a couple of dozen games you'll reach Captain yourself.

- **If you are in the middle of the ranking ladder.** The ranking system is based on the Gliko skill-oriented system normally used to rank players in Chess tournaments, **so the key to successful advance lies in the overall improvement of a player's skills.** In short, you get negative points for each battle you lose and positive points for each victory. However, the higher the player you beat is on the ranking ladder, the more points you get for victory, and the lower the player you lose to, the more points are subtracted from your total score. Remember, that even a drawn game with a weaker player will result in negative points for you! Therefore, to advance up the ranking ladder really fast you need to beat the strongest players at the top of ranking ladder. But in most cases this is impossible, therefore there is another sure strategy for gradually advancing to the top rank:

    a. Victory is always better than defeat   start challenging low ranked players, preferably those with many losses (you can check the number of victories and losses for any player from Personal Challenge section by clicking the "More" button).

    b. Once you're ready move to relatively stronger players on the ranking ladder, try to keep beating them. You'll get more scores for victories, but try to avoid defeat at all costs.

    c.   Although it's not a very honest strategy, you could also create many games with newbies who for one reason or another leave their game unfinished. All you have to do is to wait for the game to get timed out due to opponent

inactivity and then "finish" it at your victory. Easy scores without actual gaming. However, the higher your rank the less points you get for such "victories".

3.   Preserving achieved rank.

Remember that **it is easier to preserve an already gained rank than to climb the ranking ladder.** So you need to fight a couple of battles against relatively unchallenging players you're likely to beat. If you feel that the odds in a current battle are not in your favor, try to suggest a Draw or just surrender. It is always better to surrender now than later (you might have finished several other victorious battles and your rank will advance by the time your opponent wins the game so you lose more points for defeat and your opponent will get more points for victory).