

The back (See below, signatures given under the agreement that this will not be appearing on eBay):



Yes, I claim (happily) to be the saddest wargamer, but very content with the title [a title already bestowed on me by my lovely wife - who when she found out that Tim Gow had been selling off part of his vast book collection she fixed me with a stern look and said "You can take some of your books next year seeing as you are the only wargamer with wargaming models no other wargamer wants!" (reference to my 1:100 "modern" aircraft/helicopters nobody else wanted on the "bring and buy" stall - but as Jerry said, "There must be a game in there". Well I have a year to think on it and many other 'new game' ideas too.) My ambition is to bring a game along to CoW 2019. Many thanks to all participants at CoW, looking forwards to seeing you again at CoW 2019. I hope for the people of the "tented city's" sake the weather is as good as it was this year. Regrets none, well perhaps I should have bought more unpainted lead from the "bring and buy stall". Honourably yours as a friend, Mark Flanagan, please take care until next year. PS: Please feel free to contact me on LinkedIn or by email at [markandrewflanagan@googlemail.com](mailto:markandrewflanagan@googlemail.com)

---

## Dragonstrike Revisited

### Onside Report by Stephen Aguilar-Millan

---

This has turned out to be quite a versatile game. Those with long memories will recall a game similar to this one being played as a plenary game in the late 1990s. In that game, we wanted to explore some of the issues around the rise of China as a commercial and financial power. 20 years later, China has become established as a commercial and financial power, and we are now exploring how that power might be used to shape international relations over the next decade or so.

This particular iteration started as a large player game, delivered for a client, over a short week in April. To play the game, we had about 30 players and 6 umpires. The structure of the game is quite straightforward. The umpires would deliver a sequence of events, over which the players had no control, to which the players would then have to respond in order to achieve their personal objectives. Each player took on

a character from the real world, and were invited to assume something of that individual's characteristics.

I was unsure of the numbers who would want to play the game. I had prepared 16 spaces, with a few spares. In the event, 4 players came forward to play the game. I guess that many may have found this to be a bit too heavy for a Friday night at CoW. This is where the versatility of the game came into its own. After a bit of re-arranging, the four players took on the roles as the central bank governors of China (Charlotte Aguilar-Millan), the US (Robert Eagling), Japan (Graham Eyre), and Russia (Mike Young). In effect, this turned out to be the 'War of the Central Banks'. Played on the evening that China retaliated to the imposition of US tariffs, the game had a certain currency that I quite liked.

The setting was an armed confrontation between China and Japan just off the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea. There have been several confrontations in the past off the coast of China, the latest being in 2013. What marked the difference in this game is the willingness of the US to provide military support to Japan in the incident. The game was set over just a few days (21st April 2020 to 15th May 2020) and represents the prelude to a US carrier strike group sailing from San Diego to the Paracel Islands. The diplomatic manoeuvring of this period was external to the game, whose focus was to be the movements in the financial markets during this period.

As umpire, I played all roles other than those played by the players. The play sequence was quite straightforward. Each turn, I would announce the events within that turn, and invite the players to respond to those events in relation to how they moved the markets. I appreciate that this was a steep learning curve for the players, who tended not to have a background in financial markets. To that extent, it was something of a learning experience. The players would then tell me what they intended to do, I would map out the consequences of this onto a master scoreboard, and we would move on to the next turn.

The scoreboard consisted of a series of financial indicators in five key areas – stock market indices, the foreign exchange markets, the bond markets, shipping rates, and commodity prices. The actions, or inactions, of the players would move the markets, up, down, and sideways, according to what they did. The aim was to move the markets to achieve the goals of their characters.

In the event, we only managed to play four turns before tiredness, heat, and the flies overcame us. This represented the period 21st April 2020 to 29th April 2020, a bit more than a week. In this time, stock markets worldwide fell, in the US more than Japan and China. This represented the activities of the People's Bank of China in the US stock markets. I would have liked to explore that further. The Dollar fell appreciably against the Euro, as the Euro became a safe haven. I found that interesting. The bond markets were quite unstable, with the US and Japan both experiencing a downgrade. I think that reflected quite aggressive behaviour on the part of the China player, but it was to be expected. Shipping rates rose considerably. This was to be expected if the South China Sea were to become a potential conflict zone, but it also reflected the purchase of spare shipping capacity by Chinese and Japanese governmental agencies. Commodity prices rose as all nations started to stockpile key resources, and the price of oil rose significantly. This was to be expected. Looking at the results as a whole, there were no major surprises in store. In a sense, that's satisfying because it argues for the validation of the game, but perhaps not the complete validation of the game. My thanks go to the players for making this an interesting and enjoyable evening.

It is my view that the wargaming fraternity has largely ignored economic wargaming through a focus on war fighting. I regret this because I see economic conflict as an interesting avenue in which to explore the ability of actors to continue to wage war. As we move further into an age of hybrid warfare, I expect that we shall see more of this type of thing in the newspapers. The bond markets can be just as frightening as a carrier strike group, in the right hands.

---

### Offside report by Michael J Young

---

In 1999, Stephen Aguilar Millan ran a plenary game called "Dragonstrike". This game was an updated rerun of it looking at the economic consequences of political confrontation in the East China Sea, set in very near future. It was a rerun of some work Stephen had done for the DoD futures unit.

At first sight this was like a standard matrix game. We were given a single A4 sheet with a description of our roles and objectives and had to react to external events every turn. There was a military incident near the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, a Japanese warship had disappeared in mysterious