

# Lessons Learned from Writing the Zefra Scenario

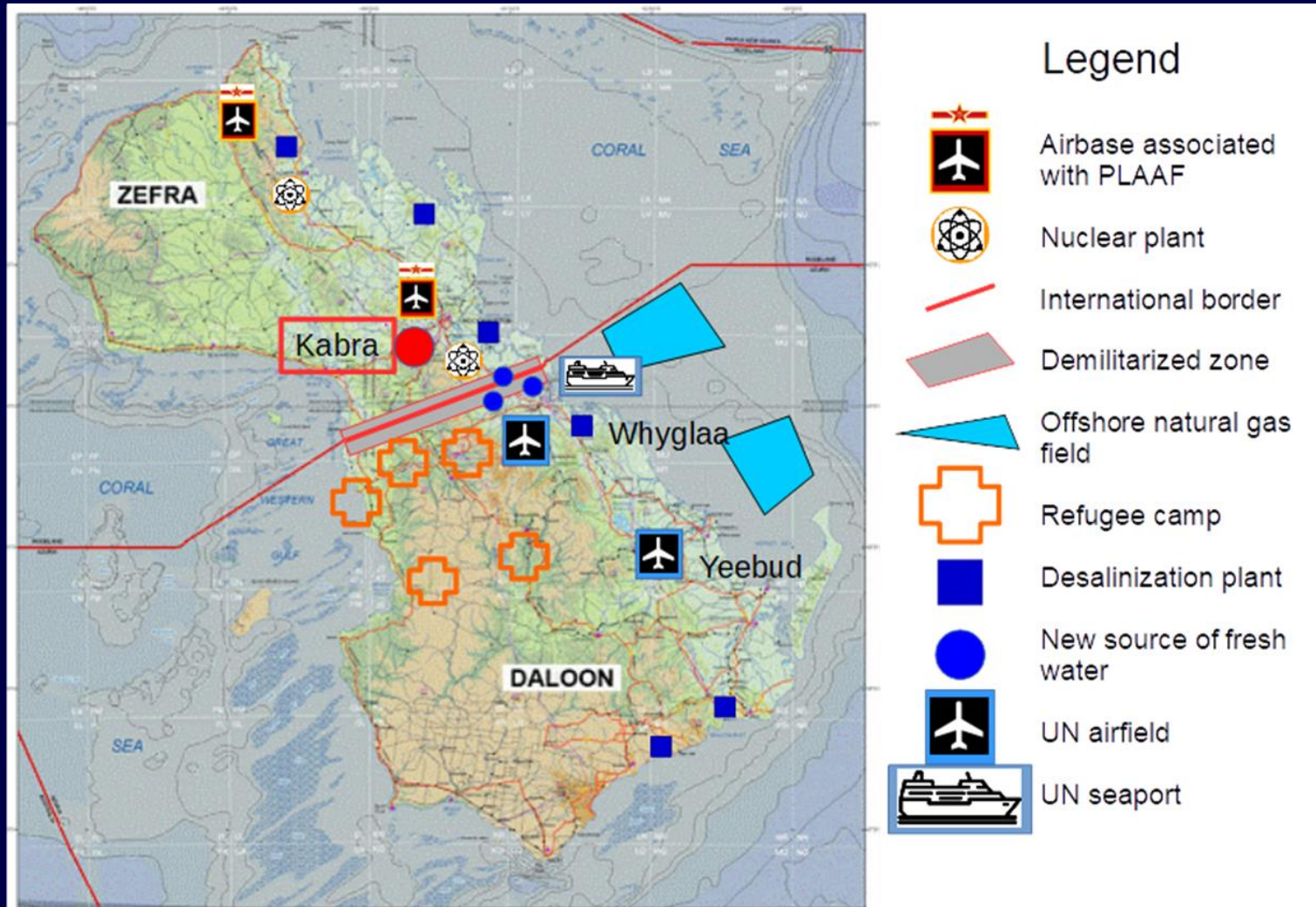
Fred Cameron

Crisis on Capricornia  
*The Zefra Situation*



Briefing from  
Australian Defence Force planning staff and  
U.S. South Asia and Pacific Command (SAPCOM) J3/J5

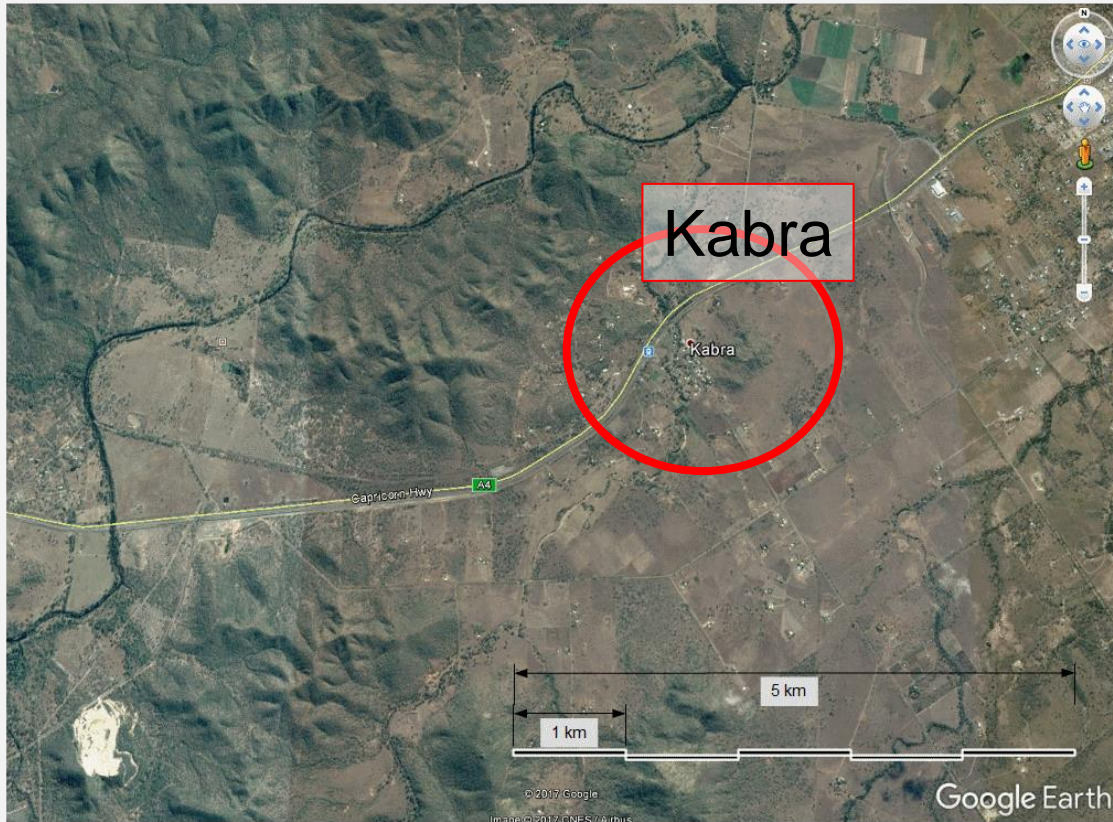
# Zefra: A troubled nation in the South Pacific



- Border and Military Exclusion Zone, established and enforced by Daloon
- Refugee Camps in Daloon
- Refugees are Zefrans (mainly Truscans) who have moved south of the border
- Desalination plants
- New sources of water
- Offshore natural gas fields
- Rogue battalion near Kabra
- Zefran airfields with Chinese PLA Air Force presence
- Two nuclear power plants
- UN seaport and airfields

For details on the Zefra scenario see:  
<https://www.opanalytics.ca/zefra/>

# Intelligence Update: The “Illustrious Fighters for Freedom” Battalion

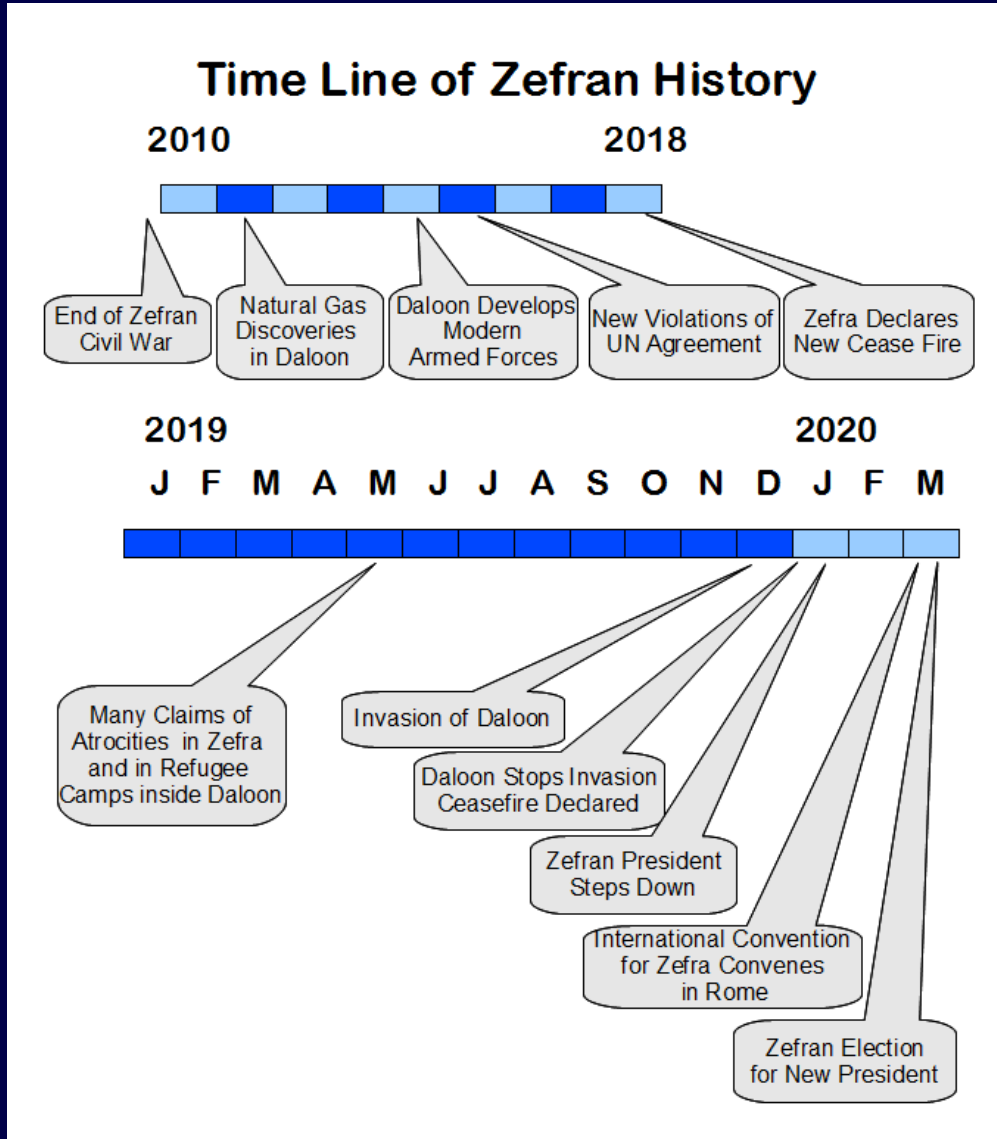


Kabra Area -- Along Capricorn Highway

- Rogue commander from Army of Zefra
- Infantry battalion from the Republican Guard
- Are suspected to have used their 120mm mortars to shell refugee camps in Daloon
- Intelligence says they are in the hilly terrain west of Kabra to the north and south of the Capricorn Highway “A4”

Rogue commander says: “We will turn back these foreign dogs, or leave their bones drying in the hot, hot sun.”

# “Road to War”



- It is now:

**April 2020**

- How did we get here?
- International Conference for Zefra
- Combined Joint Task Force – Zefra (CJTF-Z)
  - Aus/NZ leadership
  - Forces from Britain, Canada, Australia, and NZ... No U.S. forces
- U.S. South Asia and Pacific Command (SAPCOM) standing by
- Chinese Naval Task Force “South Pacific”
- Presidential Election year in U.S. and (maybe) Australia!

# Some Roles in the Zefra Game

- National Leaders
  - President of the U.S.A.
  - President of China
  - President of Zefra
  - President of Daloon
  - Prime Minister of Australia
  - Prime Minister of New Zealand
- Military Leaders
  - Commander of CJTF-Z (Australian-led Coalition under UN)
  - Commander of SAPCOM [U.S.]
  - Commander of PLA Naval Task Force "South Pacific" [Chinese]
  - Commander of the rogue battalion
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Commercial Organizations
  - TOKEN Counter-Threat Corp.
  - APAANZco
- Factions Within Zefra
  - Internal Security Bureau [Bongo]
  - People's Liberation Movement (PLM) [Truscan]
  - People's Liberation Armed Militia (PLAM) [Truscan]
- Media
  - *The New York Times* and *Al Jazeera*
- Data Analysis/Collection Team 1 and Team 2

# Questions?



Send them to:

U.S. South Asia and Pacific Command (SAPCOM)

# Purpose and Objective of the Zefra Scenario

- Purpose:
  - Provide a scenario for courses on wargaming:
    - To familiarize students with war game structures and procedures
    - To give students a shared experience as a case study familiar to all
    - To demonstrate data collection and analysis procedures
    - To put students in the “hot seat” of playing a role in the game
    - To provide students with an example of a rich scenario that could be used in their future wargaming assignments
    - To foster team building
    - To have some fun!
- Objective (ostensible):
  - Explore, for the United Nations force and the U.S. geographic combatant commander (SAPCOM), the consequences of proposed actions to deal with the crisis in Zefra
- Key Issues and Essential Questions



# Ideas in the scenario came from various sources

- Fictitious island in the South Pacific:
  - Source of terrain: Australian Army wargaming circa 2000
- Failing states, unscrupulous national leaders, superpowers manipulating client states, client states extracting commitments from superpowers, “secret police” units, plausible deniability, paramilitary thugs, criminal gangs, smuggling and piracy, non-state actors, refugee problems, naval freedom of navigation challenges, private military contractors, rogue military units, competition for natural resources, encounters with non-governmental organizations (e.g., charity and humanitarian assistance groups)
  - Sources: Current events, media stories, deployments of Canadian Armed Forces 1992-2021

# Lessons Learned

- Scenario content must be driven by sponsor's objective(s)
- Plan for analysis: conduct appropriate data collection around essential questions
- Cross-check between scenario events and essential questions
  - Bad: Events with no link to questions
  - Bad: Questions with no link to events
  - But there may be exceptions
- Extraneous content puts burden on players
  - But some additional content may be required
    - To add richness to the context
    - To provide prerequisite elements for deception (to keep players from guessing too much, to allow for deception plans of opposing sides)
- Decide early between real-world and fictitious setting

# Best practice

- Develop an analysis plan, based on your sponsors' objectives and the essential questions
- Review lessons from your and others' experiences and adopt/adapt as appropriate
- Periodically share drafts from each writing sub-team with others... for correction, for improvement, for inspiration
- Establish deadlines: for completion of writing tasks, for collaboration activities, for reviews. Use a GICOD: Good Idea Cut-Off Date
- For meetings (e.g., collaboration), have an agenda, keep to it, and record proceedings
- Work back-to-front:
  - What does the wargame need to explore?
  - So, what conditions must be set for that exploration?
  - So, what needs to be in the scenario (including injects) to establish those conditions?

# Worst practice

- Diverging from the sponsor's objective – can happen unintentionally
- For large teams, insufficient partitioning of the writing assignment:
  - A large writing sub-team leads to too much conferring and interaction (use sub-teams of no more than two members)
- Adding elements “just for the fun of it” – it may be an ego issue
  - But sometimes it may be useful to add elements that do not specifically support the sponsor's objective
- Underdeveloped rationale behind some scenario components
  - Reaction: “But that would never happen like that” – fighting the scenario

