SECRET · REL NATO · EXERCISE · FICTIONAL DOCUMENT



COM BAD · STRAY LIGHTS · BALTIC JAMMING · NOV 2026

OPERATION STRAY LIGHTS

CAMPAIGN EUROPE 2026 · SCENARIO 5

BALTIC JAMMING, 2026

Stray Lights — jammed drones from two wars drift into the Baltic states and Finland

START	DURATION	COMMAND	ROE
25 NOV 2026 · 1600Z	24 HOURS	COM BAD · CRC KARMELAVA	WEAPONS HOLD

TITLE PLATE — THE EASTERN BALTIC, 25 NOV 2026. SATELLITE IMAGERY: NASA EOSDIS WORLDVIEW (MODIS/VIIRS TRUE COLOUR), RENDERED MONOCHROME; BORDERS, BASES AND THE TWO FLOWS DRAWN OVER IT.

OPORD 26-058 · ANNEX B (INTELLIGENCE) · SERIAL 05

Baltic Jamming, 2026

Stray Lights · Operation STRAY LIGHTS · 25–26 November 2026

COM BAD · STRAY LIGHTS · BALTIC JAMMING · NOV 2026

Originator
NATO CAOC Uedem, intelligence cell, on behalf of Allied Air Command (AIRCOM), Ramstein

Fusion support
CRC Karmėlava · NATO AEW&C Force, Geilenkirchen · the national air operations centres

For
Commander, Baltic Air Defence (COM BAD), CRC Karmėlava

As of
25 NOV 26, 1600Z

Order
CAOC-UE/OPS/BAD/26-058, DTG 250900ZNOV26

Campaign
Europe 2026 · scenario 5

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Tonight Kyiv strikes the Russian oil ports of the Gulf of Finland, and Russia sends its own wave at Ukraine through Belarus. Both sides jam, and the jamming throws drones off course: Ukrainian ones into Estonia, Latvia and Finland, Russian ones into Lithuania and south-east Latvia. On radar the two look the same. You command the air defence of four countries for twenty-four hours, and not one unit of it may fire until a government says so. A drone brought down over a field is a good result; the same drone brought down over a town is not. And somewhere in the day Russian aircraft will come and see whether anyone is watching.

THE SCENARIO, FOR THE PLAYER RATHER THAN THE COMMANDER

COMPLEXITY

4/5

Classic Command: you build your own patrols. Twenty special actions in five families, a political layer with three governments, and fire rules that change with the hour.

DIFFICULTY

4/5

Slow, small targets that are hard to identify; a border nothing may cross; wreckage that must not fall on a town. The night is not the same from one game to the next.

DURATION

24 h

1600Z on 25 November to 1600Z on the 26th: one long night, a short day, the next dusk. Five to six hours of play at compressed time.

1 Situation

1.1 Two wars' worth of drones

Since the spring, the war in Ukraine has been spilling into the air of its neighbours' neighbours. When Ukraine strikes the oil terminals of **Ust-Luga** and **Primorsk**, its long-range drones fly north for hours and meet Russian jammers near the end of the trip; those that lose their way come down in Estonia, Latvia or Finland. When Russia sends its waves at Ukraine through Belarus, Ukrainian

electronic warfare does the same to them, and cheap Russian **Gerbera** drones wander into Lithuania and Latvia.

Tonight both happen at once. Kyiv has announced a large strike on the two ports; Russia is launching through Belarus. The Alliance's air-policing mission over the Baltic states, renamed **Baltic Air Defence** in August, has for this night been given what its new name promises: one commander over the allied fighters and the national ground-based air defence of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and, for the approaches to Helsinki, Finland. That commander is you, at the Control and Reporting Centre at Karmėlava, from 1600Z.

1.2 Why the capitals are nervous

Each of them has already paid once this year. In March a stray hit the chimney of the Auvere power plant in Estonia. In May a drone exploded on the fuel depot at Rēzekne; the alerts had come late and nothing had been fired, and the Latvian government fell. In May again, two million people around Helsinki were told to stay indoors for a drone that was never found. In September an Italian fighter shot down a Gerbera near the Kruonis pumped-storage plant, half an hour after it had entered Lithuania from Belarus, and the Lithuanian President called a fighter missile "not an efficient solution" for a foam drone.

So the governments have kept one thing for themselves: **the right to open fire over their own soil**. You must ask each of them for it, it is given for six hours at a time, and it can be taken away for good.

> ON THE PUBLIC RECORD, AND IN THIS EXERCISE
>
> **Real (public sources):** the strays of March, the Rēzekne depot and the fall of the Latvian government in May, the alerts in Helsinki and Vilnius, the first drones shot down over Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the four Italian Eurofighters at Šiauliai and the five Turkish F-16s at Ämari, the Russian Su-30 at Vaindloo in March and the Mi-8 that crossed into Poland in September, the daily jamming of satellite navigation, and the talks on an energy truce that were under way in late September 2026.
>
> **This exercise:** the night of 25 to 26 November 2026 and everything in it. In the fiction no truce is in force on 25 November. Section 9 gives the dated record with its sources and draws the line between the two in detail.

1.3 This evening

At 1600Z it has been dark for more than half an hour. Nothing of yours is in the air. The four Italian Eurofighters (**LUPO**) are at **SIAULIAI**, the five Turkish F-16s (**PARS**) at **AMARI**, the four Finnish Hornets (**ILVES**) at **RISSALA**, all armed and available. Sixteen ground-based air-defence units and fifteen radars are in place from Narva to Vilnius and round Helsinki. A NATO **E-3A** is on station over the Lithuanian–Polish border; it is not under your orders, it shares its picture with you, and it goes home at 0000Z unless you ask for a relief.

Every unit you own is on WEAPONS HOLD, and no government has authorised anything. Airliners fly between Riga, Helsinki, Vilnius, Tallinn, Warsaw and Stockholm as on any evening.

If you come to this night from the Baltic in October, Ushant, Sardinia and the North Sea, the autumn follows you: the mood in the capitals, how hard Moscow's line has become, what NATO can still spare and what the earlier operations learned carry over, and an opening message says what has changed.

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2 What intelligence believes

The analysts at Uedem know what is coming and roughly from where. They do not know how many, at what hour, which of them carry a warhead, or where any of them will end up. Nothing in this pack favours an answer: **the night is not the same from one game to the next.**

2.1 Two flows that look the same

	UKRAINIAN LONG-RANGE STRIKE DRONE	RUSSIAN GERBERA
Why it is here	Sent against Ust-Luga and Primorsk; thrown off course by Russian jamming	Sent against Ukraine through Belarus; thrown off course by Ukrainian jamming
Where it comes in	From Russia: north-east Estonia, Lake Peipus, eastern Latvia, the Finnish shore of the Gulf	From Belarus: the Vilnius and Kaunas side of Lithuania, south-east Latvia
What it is	A propeller drone with a real warhead. Assume it is armed	A cheap foam decoy built to saturate air defences. Most carry nothing; some carry a warhead. You cannot tell which
On your screen	The same thing: a small, slow track, about 80 knots, a few hundred metres up. Once identified, the contact shows which of the two it is	

Neither is aimed at you. A stray is a machine that has lost its satellite fix and is flying on what is left of its navigation. That decides how it behaves.

2.2 How a stray flies, and how it ends

A drone under jamming **wanders**: a leg one way, a turn, a leg another, at walking pace by the standards of air defence. It gives you time, and it makes its end hard to predict. Some turn round, or drift out again over the border or the sea, and are never heard of again: that is a good result, and it costs nothing. Some run out of fuel over a forest. Some come down on a town, or on something that matters more than a town. Whether it then explodes depends on what it carried, and nobody knows that before it hits the ground or is brought down.

2.3 What the picture tells you

Detecting a drone and identifying it are two different things, and tonight the difference is everything: on WEAPONS TIGHT a unit fires only at a contact shown as **HOSTILE**.

— **Beyond the border** a drone shows as **UNFRIENDLY**. It is not a target, whatever you do. It turns HOSTILE **one to four minutes after it has crossed**, which at its speed is one to five miles inside. Units right on the border have little time.

— **The E-3A identifies from far away**: tens of miles, the Gerbera more readily than the Ukrainian drone. Under its cover a drone is usually HOSTILE well before it reaches a battery.

— **Ground radars detect, and do not identify.** They see a drone at about thirty miles and can tell you nothing more. Away from the E-3A a contact often stays a **BOGEY** or a **UAV** until a camera of the Latvian wall, a Mistral post's eyes or a fighter gets close; or until you decide, and mark it hostile yourself (section 6.6).

— **The E-3A reports on the tracks it has held for a while**, once for each. Each report gives the track's position and how it is flying: its course, its speed, its heading. Read them with the rest of the picture. These reports come only where the E-3A covers.

— **Satellite navigation is jammed** over Ida-Virumaa, the Gulf of Finland and the Lithuanian–Belarusian border, as it has been all autumn. Expect a notice to airmen; airliners will be on radar vectors.

2.4 Russian aircraft, by day

The drones are an accident of war. The aircraft are not. In March a Su-30 cut across Estonian airspace at **Vaindloo** island, transponder off, for about a minute. In September a Mi-8 from Kaliningrad crossed a few hundred metres into Poland. Uedem expects both kinds of visit again on the 26th, in daylight: fighters along the Gulf of Finland, and a helicopter on the Nemunas near **Jurbarkas**, where Lithuania meets Kaliningrad. You will be warned some twenty minutes before, by the Estonian Air Force or the Lithuanian Border Guard. Whether the pilots mean to cross, to test your reaction, or only to be seen, nobody can say.

They are manned aircraft. **They are met, never engaged**: a fighter of yours close enough to see them and be seen, weapons held. A visit that nobody meets is noticed in the capital concerned.

2.5 What they are likely to do

MOST LIKELY COURSE OF ACTION

Both flows arrive during the first night, in waves, each announced a few minutes ahead by open sources or by the border guards. A second, smaller Ukrainian strike later in the night would surprise nobody. Most of the strays wander and end in the countryside or go out again; a few head for places where people live. By day Russian aircraft show themselves at Vaindloo and at the Kaliningrad border. Russian waves are launched at dusk, and dusk comes early: the second one may fall inside your watch.

MOST DANGEROUS COURSE OF ACTION

A warhead on a town or on a sensitive site, with nobody warned and nothing done. Or the damage is done by us: wreckage on a town, a shot without a government's leave, a fighter across the border, a manned aircraft marked hostile and shot down. **The second kind is entirely in your hands.**

3 Area and geography

3.1 From the Gulf of Finland to the Nemunas

The area runs from southern Finland to the Polish border, roughly 54° to 63°N and 20° to 30°E: the Gulf of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and to the east and south the Russian border (the Leningrad and Pskov regions), the Belarusian border, and Kaliningrad in the south-west corner. It is flat, wooded, thinly peopled country with a handful of towns close to the border: Narva *on* it, Sillamäe, Jõhvi, Rēzekne, Daugavpils and Vilnius within a few minutes' flight of it, even at eighty knots.

The fighter bases are not where the drones are. **SIAULIAI** is in northern Lithuania, about a hundred miles from Vilnius and rather more from Latgale. **AMARI** is west of Tallinn, more than a hundred miles from Narva. **RISSALA**, near Kuopio, is about twenty-five minutes' flying from the Gulf of Finland. Figure 1 shows the whole of it.

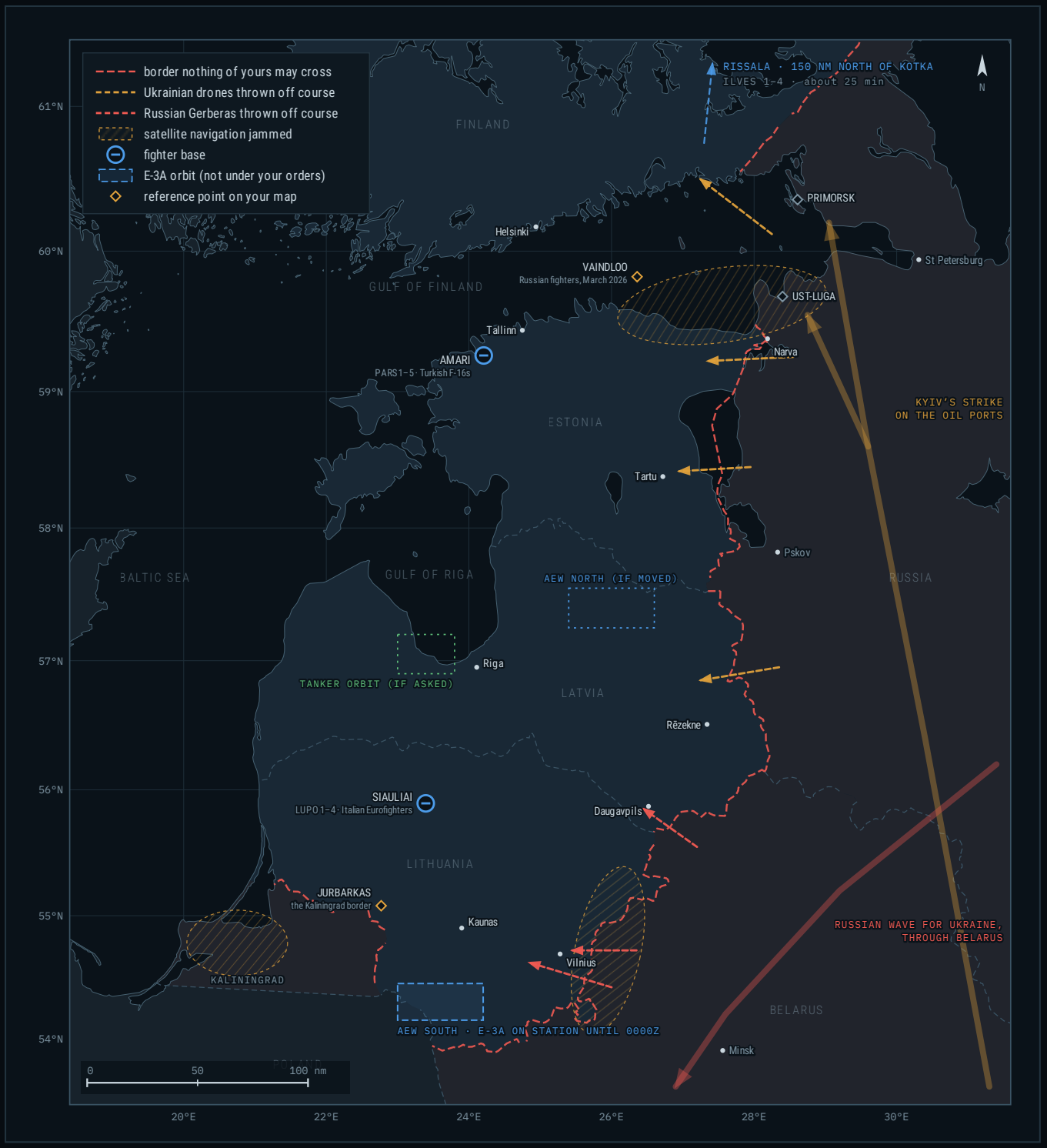
3.2 The fourteen sensitive sites

Fourteen places are highlighted on your map. A drone that explodes on one of them, or wreckage that falls on one, is the worst thing that can happen in its country tonight.

COUNTRY	NAME ON YOUR MAP	WHAT IT IS	POSITION
Estonia	AUVERE POWER PLANTS	The Auvere and Eesti power plants, close to the border	59.27N 27.90E
	TALLINN AIRPORT	The capital's airport	59.413N 24.833E
	MUUGA PORT	The main cargo port, east of Tallinn	59.50N 24.96E
Latvia	REZEKNE FUEL DEPOT	The depot hit in May	56.50N 27.33E
	INCUKALNS GAS STORAGE	The underground gas store of the three states	57.10N 24.69E
	RIGA AIRPORT	The region's largest airport	56.92N 23.97E
Lithuania	KRUONIS PUMPED STORAGE	The pumped-storage plant that balances the grid	54.80N 24.25E
	ELEKTRENAI POWER PLANT	The main thermal plant, between Kaunas and Vilnius	54.77N 24.65E
	VILNIUS AIRPORT	The capital's airport, some fifteen miles from Belarus	54.634N 25.286E
	VISAGINAS (IGNALINA)	The closed nuclear plant and its fuel store, nine miles from the border	55.60N 26.56E
	KLAIPEDA LNG	The gas terminal on the coast	55.66N 21.14E
Finland	LOVIISA NPP	Nuclear power plant on the Gulf	60.37N 26.35E
	KOTKA PORT	Port, close to the Russian border	60.47N 26.95E
	HELSINKI-VANTAA	The capital's airport	60.32N 24.96E

They appear on the battery maps of section 4.4. A site is a small place: what counts is what lies within a couple of miles of the point where a drone, or its wreckage, reaches the ground.

FIGURE 1 — THE AREA AND THE TWO FLOWS, 1600Z



The broad arrows are the two strikes as they are meant to go; the dashed arrows show where jamming throws the strays, in general terms only. The hatched areas are those where satellite navigation is reported jammed. VAINDLOO, JURBARKAS, UST-LUGA and PRIMORSK are reference points on your map.

3.3 Light, weather and the clock

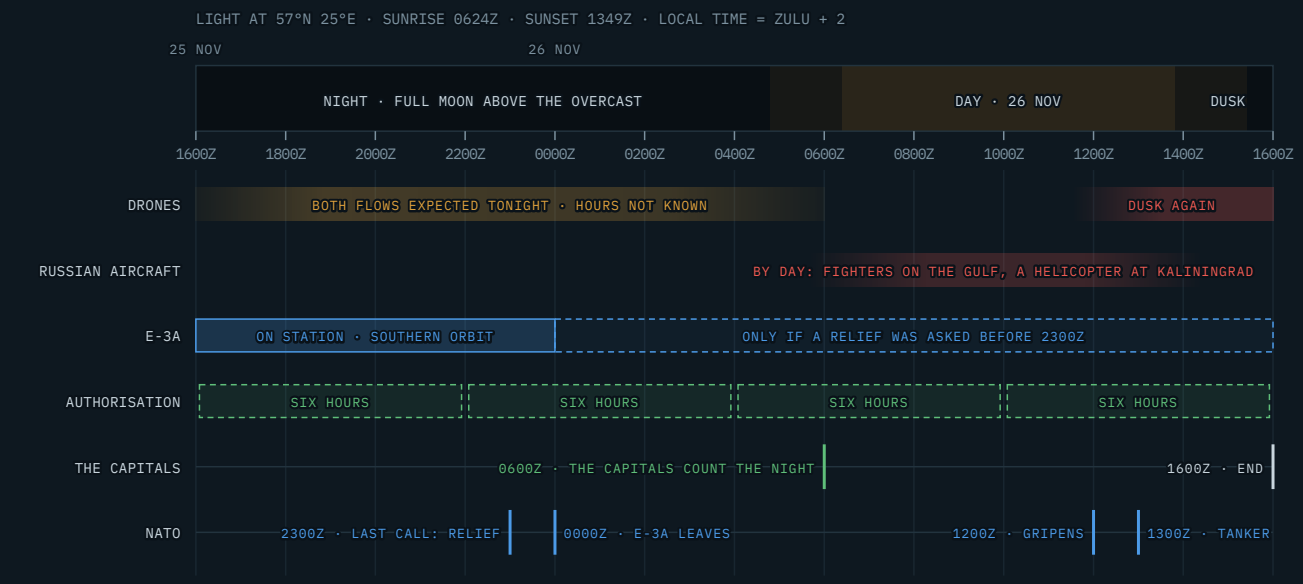
All times are ZULU. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Kaliningrad are two hours ahead in November: 1600Z is six in the evening. Moscow and Minsk are three hours ahead.

26 NOVEMBER	TALLINN	RIGA	VILNIUS
Nautical dawn	0456Z	0451Z	0441Z

26 NOVEMBER	TALLINN	RIGA	VILNIUS
Sunrise	0641Z	0627Z	0610Z
Sunset	1334Z	1353Z	1401Z
Nautical dusk	1519Z	1529Z	1530Z
On the 25th	Sunset 1336Z, dusk 1520Z	Sunset 1355Z, dusk 1530Z	Sunset 1402Z, dusk 1531Z

You take over in full night. The first night lasts about fourteen and a half hours; the day that follows is short, seven hours at Tallinn and not quite eight at Vilnius; the last two hours of your watch are played in twilight and darkness again. The moon is full and up all night, above an overcast that hides most of it. The weather does not change: about 2°C, seven-tenths cloud, no rain, sea state 3.

FIGURE 2 — THE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS



The amber and red spans are indicative and are not drawn to the hour: nobody gives you the hours of the waves in advance.
An authorisation runs six hours from the moment it is granted: a country covered for the whole watch needs four in a row.
The NATO marks are the last moments to ask: relief before 2300Z, Gripens not after 1200Z, tanker not after 1300Z.

What is fixed is drawn as a line: the E-3A's departure, the capitals' morning count, the last moments to ask NATO for help. What is not known is drawn as a shade.

4 Forces

4.1 The fighters

Thirteen fighters at three bases, all on one side in the game under your command, all armed and available at 1600Z, none airborne.

CALL SIGN	TYPE	BASE	CARRIED	REMARKS
LUPO 1, 2, 3, 4	Eurofighter F-2000A, Italian Air Force	ŠIAULIAI, Lithuania	4 Meteor, 2 IRIS-T, gun	Air policing, Lithuania and Latvia. Its infrared sensor sees a drone from a long way off

CALL SIGN	TYPE	BASE	CARRIED	REMARKS
PARS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	F-16C, Turkish Air Force, 181 Squadron	AMARI, Estonia	4 AIM-120B, 2 AIM-9X, gun	Air policing, Estonia. No targeting pod: it must come close to identify. Five days from going home
ILVES 1, 2, 3, 4	F/A-18C Hornet, Finnish Air Force	RISSALA, Finland	2 AIM-120C-7, 2 AIM-9X, Litening pod, gun	The only fighters allowed to fire over Finland

The magazines are not bottomless. Each base holds about a night and a half of missiles beyond what is already hung on the aircraft; when they are gone, they are gone. The gun is not limited.

BASE	LONG-RANGE MISSILE	SHORT-RANGE MISSILE	ALSO
SIAULIAI	8 Meteor	8 IRIS-T	12 drop tanks
AMARI	8 AIM-120B	8 AIM-9X	10 drop tanks
RISSALA	8 AIM-120C-7	8 AIM-9X	12 drop tanks, 4 Litening pods

4.2 Ground-based air defence, country by country

Sixteen units, national property placed under your orders for the night. They are where the governments put them, they do not move, and each obeys the fire authorisation of its own country. Their names in the game begin with the country: **EE** Estonia, **LV** Latvia, **LT** Lithuania, **FI** Finland. Find them on the maps of section 4.4 (figures 3 to 6) before you start the clock: a battery you cannot find stays on HOLD all night.

COUNTRY	UNIT (NAME IN THE GAME)	WHAT IT IS	POSITION	WHERE, AND WHAT FOR
Estonia 5 units	**EE IRIS-T IDA-VIRU**	IRIS-T SLM battery, medium range	59.33N 27.45E	Just south of Jõhvi, facing Narva. The only medium-range system in the north-east
	EE MISTRAL NARVA	Mistral 3 platoon, 3 posts	59.37N 27.98E	Between Narva and Sillamäe, 6.4 miles west of Narva's centre (section 5.4)
	EE MISTRAL SILLAMAE	Mistral 3 platoon, 3 posts	59.39N 27.74E	At Sillamäe, on the coast
	EE PIORUN AUVERE	Piorun section, 3 posts	59.28N 27.88E	At the Auvere power plants
	EE PIORUN TARTU	Piorun section, 3 posts	58.37N 26.74E	At Tartu, behind Lake Peipus

COUNTRY	UNIT (NAME IN THE GAME)	WHAT IT IS	POSITION	WHERE, AND WHAT FOR
Latvia 6 units	**LV RBS 70 REZEKNE**	RBS 70 NG platoon, 3 posts	56.50N 27.36E	At the fuel depot and the town
	LV RBS 70 DAUGAVPILS	RBS 70 NG platoon, 3 posts	55.88N 26.54E	At Daugavpils, facing Belarus
	LV RBS 70 RIGA	RBS 70 NG platoon, 3 posts	56.93N 24.00E	At Riga airport
	LV DRONE WALL NORTH	Counter-drone unit: guided rockets, infrared camera	57.10N 27.60E	On the Russian border, east of Balvi
	LV DRONE WALL CENTRE	Counter-drone unit, as above	56.55N 27.92E	On the Russian border, east of Ludza
	LV DRONE WALL SOUTH	Counter-drone unit, as above	56.02N 27.62E	On the Belarusian border, in the south-east corner of Latgale
Lithuania 4 units	**LT NASAMS VILNIUS**	NASAMS platoon (AMRAAM-ER), medium range	54.66N 25.24E	Just north-west of Vilnius airport
	LT NASAMS KRUONIS	NASAMS platoon (AMRAAM-ER), medium range	54.82N 24.22E	Just north-west of the pumped-storage plant; twelve miles from Kaunas
	LT RBS 70 VISAGINAS	RBS 70 platoon, 2 posts	55.59N 26.50E	Beside the Ignalina site
	LT RBS 70 SIAULIAI	RBS 70 platoon, 2 posts	55.90N 23.41E	At the air base
Finland 1 unit	**FI NASAMS HELSINKI**	NASAMS II platoon, medium range	60.25N 25.00E	Between Helsinki and its airport. Needs no authorisation

4.3 NATO: the E-3A and what else can be asked for

— **NATO AEW 01**, an E-3A from Geilenkirchen, flies the orbit **AEW SOUTH** over the Lithuanian–Polish border. It is an ally, not a unit of yours: you cannot give it orders in the usual way, but its contacts appear on your picture. Against targets this small its reach is tens of miles, not hundreds: from the south it serves Vilnius and Kaunas, and Latgale and Estonia are beyond it. **It leaves at 0000Z.**

— It can be asked to move to the orbit **AEW NORTH**, over northern Latvia and southern Estonia, and later to come back (Narva is a long way from both orbits); and a relief (**NATO AEW 02**) can be asked for, to keep the orbit manned after 0000Z.

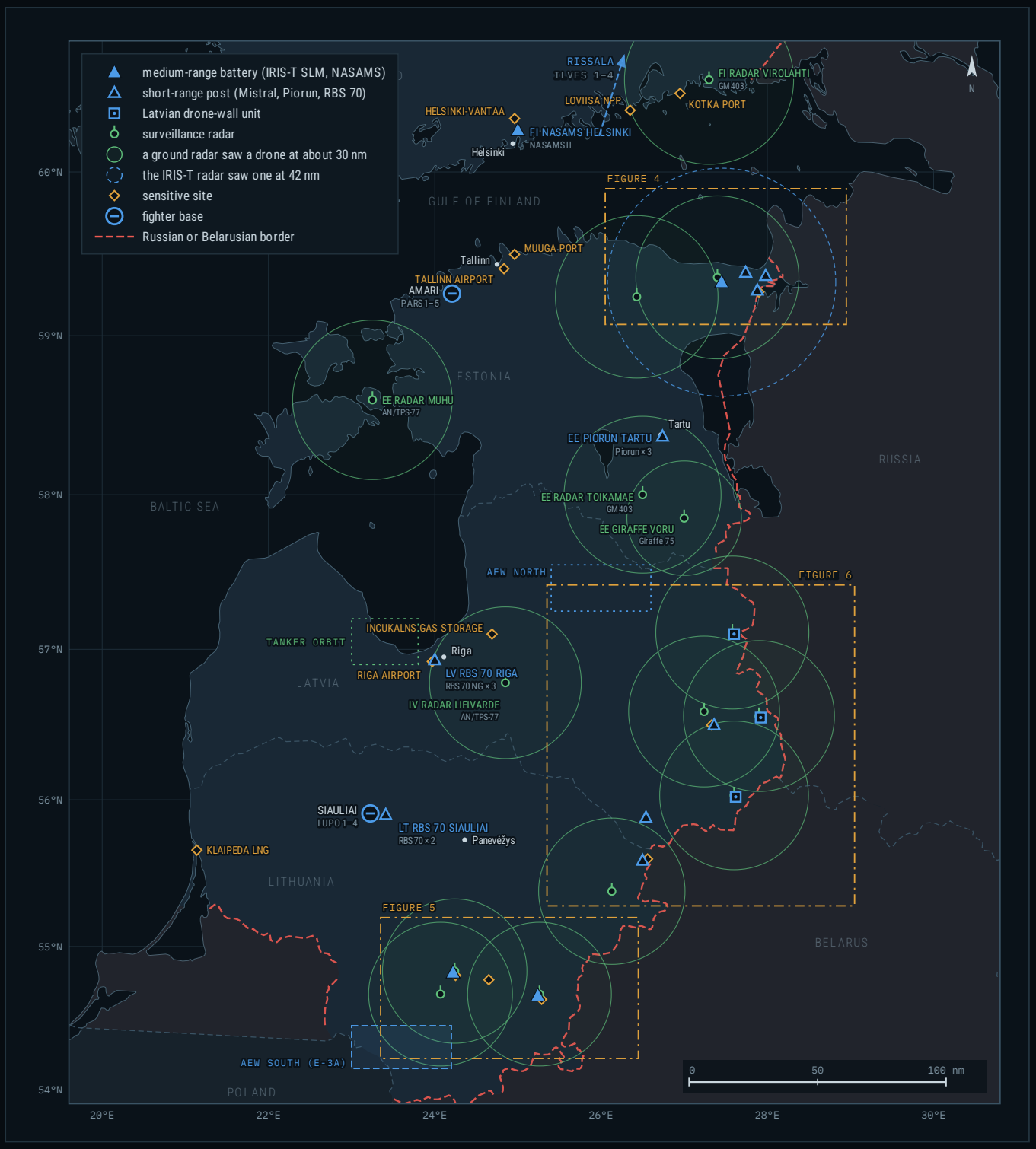
— A tanker (**NATO MRTT 01**, an A330 MRTT from Eindhoven) can be asked for; it flies the mission **TANKER ORBIT** over the Gulf of Riga, which already exists on your side, empty.

— Two Swedish Gripens (**GRIPEN 1** and **GRIPEN 2**, JAS 39C from Ronneby, with AMRAAM and IRIS-T) can be asked for; they land at one of your two Baltic bases and are then yours.

All of this is done with Special Actions and drawn from a small **NATO reinforcement pool**: three points unless the autumn has changed it, and the four requests together would cost more than that. Section 7.6 has the details.

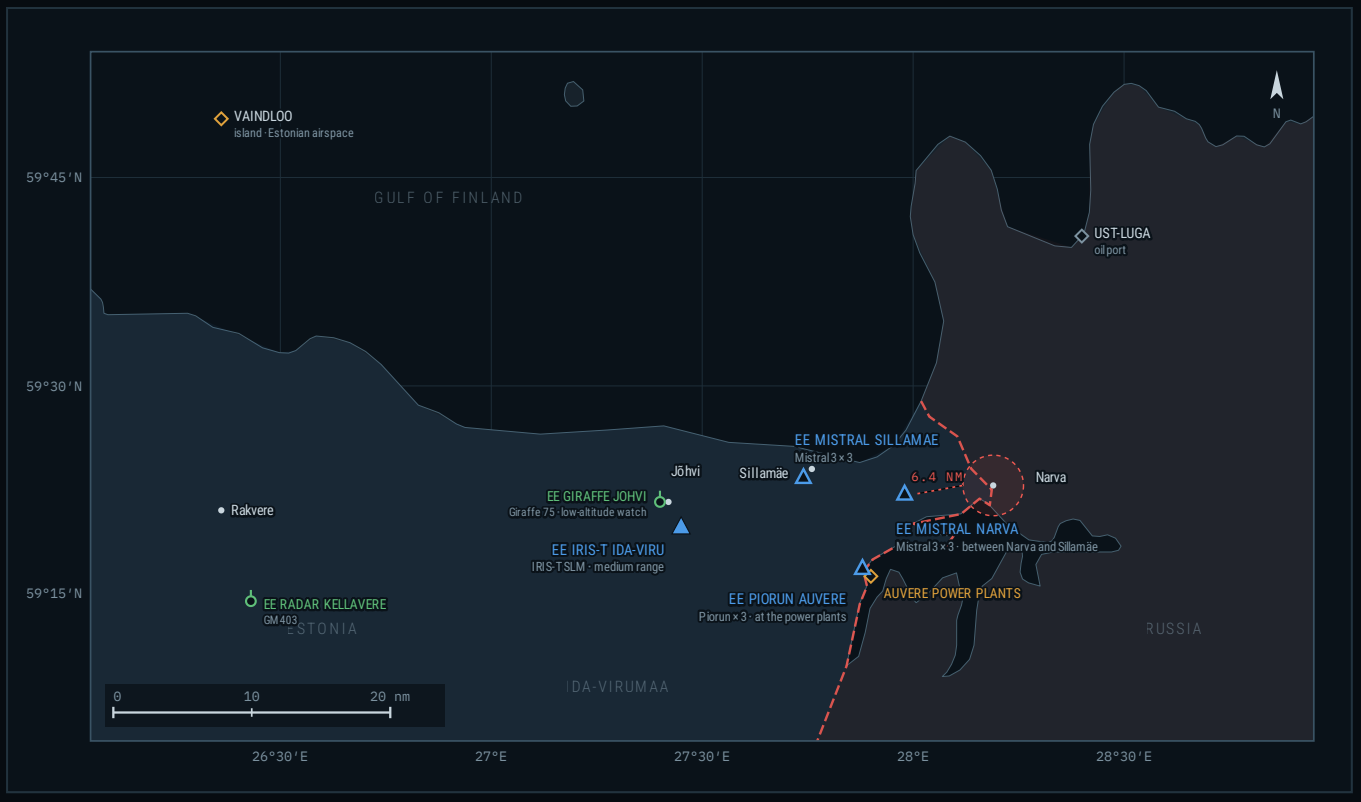
4.4 Where they stand: the battery maps

FIGURE 3 — AIR DEFENCE BATTERIES AND RADARS: OVERVIEW



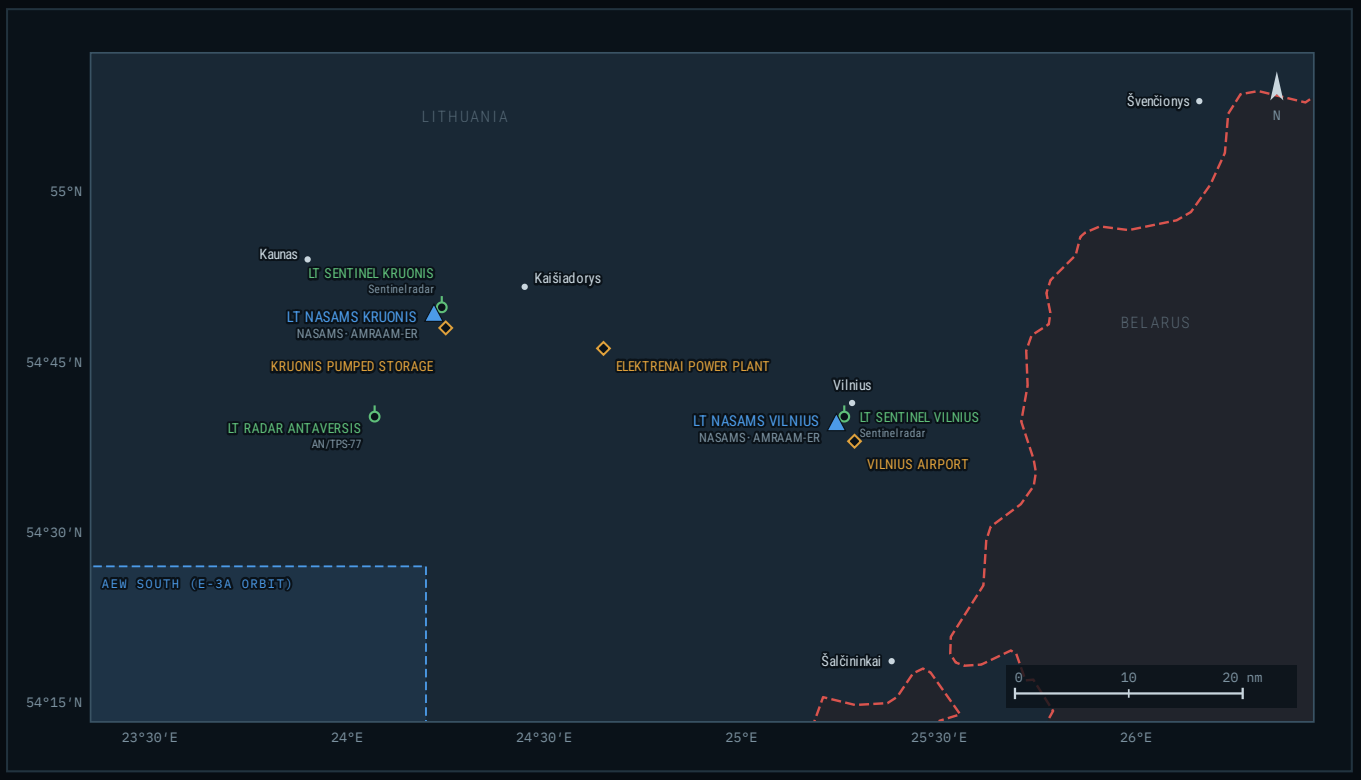
Every battery and every radar is drawn; those inside the three boxes are named on figures 4 to 6. The green rings show where a ground radar detected a drone in testing (about 30 nm; the Giraffe at Võru 22 nm), the dashed blue ring the radar of the Estonian IRIS-T battery (42 nm). They are sensor distances against a small drone, indicative only. No weapon range is drawn: read it in the game, on the unit's range rings and in the database viewer.

FIGURE 4 — ESTONIA: IDA-VIRUMAA AND NARVA



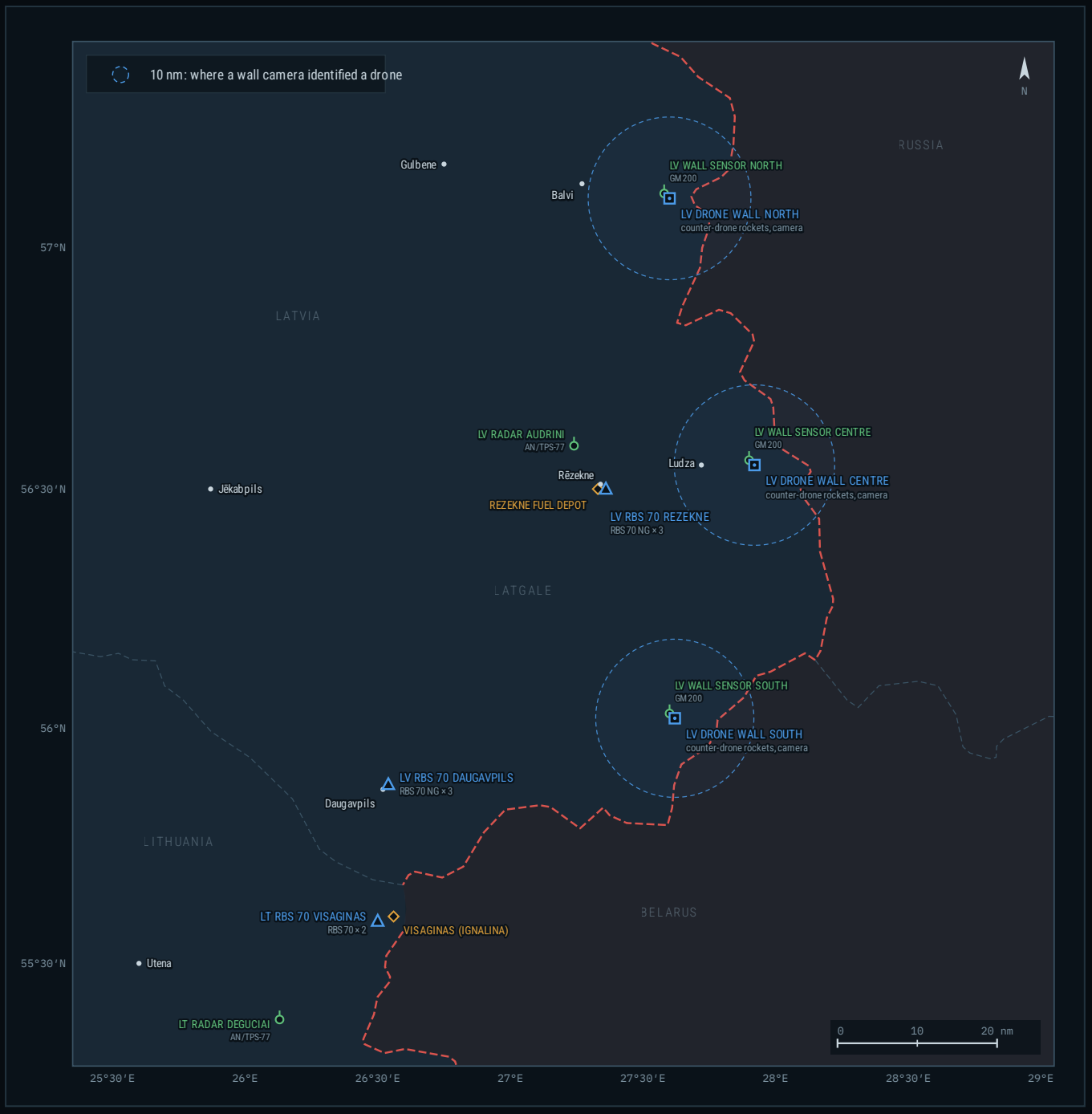
Four of Estonia's five units stand in thirty miles of coast. The red circle is the town of Narva, on the border itself; EE MISTRAL NARVA is 6.4 miles west of its centre. VAINDLOO is the island where Russian fighters cut the corner in March.

FIGURE 5 — LITHUANIA: VILNIUS, KAUNAS AND KRUONIS



LT NASAMS KRUONIS is the blue triangle beside the KRUONIS PUMPED STORAGE reference point, about twelve miles east-south-east of Kaunas; LT NASAMS VILNIUS stands just north-west of the airport. Each has a Sentinel radar next to it. The E-3A's southern orbit begins in the corner of the map.

FIGURE 6 — LATVIA AND NORTH-EAST LITHUANIA: LATGALE AND THE THREE BORDERS



The three units of the wall stand on the border with their sensors beside them. The dashed rings are the 10 miles within which a wall camera identified a drone in testing. LT RBS 70 VISAGINAS and the Dėgučiai radar belong to Lithuania and obey Vilnius.

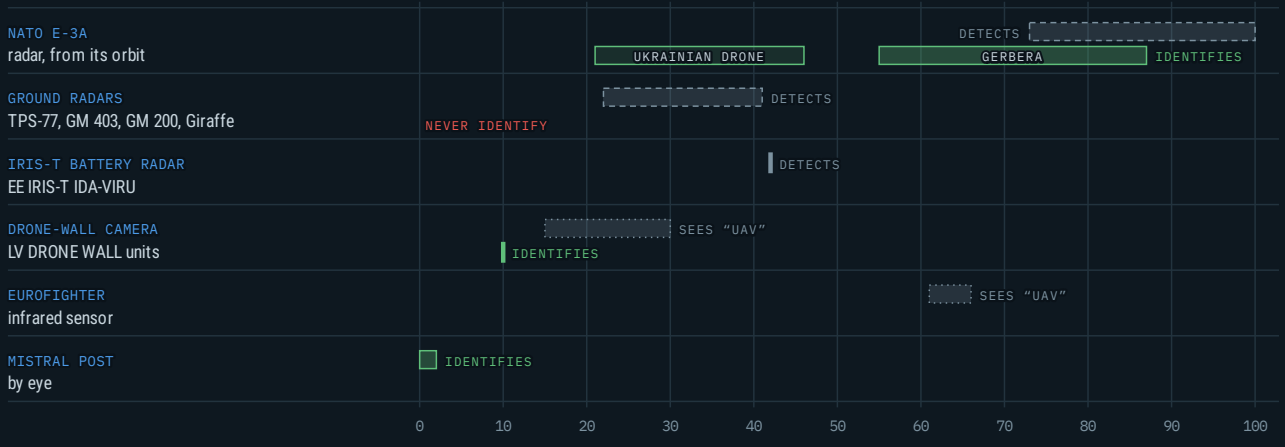
Latvia has no medium-range system. Its defence is the wall on the border and three short-range platoons; whatever gets past the wall belongs to the fighters. A Lithuanian NASAMS platoon has twelve AMRAAM-ER ready. For every other unit, look at its magazines in the game before the first wave: nothing is resupplied tonight.

4.5 Radars, and who identifies what

Fifteen surveillance radars watch the borders. They are yours, they are switched on, and they give you the first sight of a drone; none of them will tell you what it is.

COUNTRY	RADAR (NAME IN THE GAME)	TYPE	POSITION
Estonia	EE GIRAFFE JOHVI	Giraffe 75, low-altitude watch	59.36N 27.40E
	EE GIRAFFE VORU	Giraffe 75	57.85N 27.00E
	EE RADAR KELLAVERE	Ground Master 403	59.24N 26.43E
	EE RADAR TOIKAMAE	Ground Master 403	58.00N 26.50E
	EE RADAR MUHU	AN/TPS-77	58.60N 23.25E
Latvia	LV WALL SENSOR NORTH	Ground Master 200, with the wall	57.11N 27.58E
	LV WALL SENSOR CENTRE	Ground Master 200, with the wall	56.56N 27.90E
	LV WALL SENSOR SOUTH	Ground Master 200, with the wall	56.03N 27.60E
	LV RADAR AUDRINI	AN/TPS-77	56.59N 27.24E
	LV RADAR LIELVARDE	AN/TPS-77	56.78N 24.85E
Lithuania	LT RADAR ANTAVERSIS	AN/TPS-77	54.67N 24.07E
	LT RADAR DEGUCIAI	AN/TPS-77	55.38N 26.13E
	LT SENTINEL VILNIUS	AN/MPQ-64 Sentinel, with the NASAMS	54.67N 25.26E
	LT SENTINEL KRUONIS	AN/MPQ-64 Sentinel, with the NASAMS	54.83N 24.24E
Finland	FI RADAR VIROLAHTI	Ground Master 403	60.55N 27.30E

FIGURE 7 — WHO SEES, AND WHO IDENTIFIES



A unit on WEAPONS TIGHT fires only at a contact shown as HOSTILE: detecting is not enough. Under the E-3A a drone is identified long before it reaches a battery. Elsewhere it often stays a BOGEY or a UAV until a camera, a fighter or you decide.

Distances measured in test games against these two drones; treat them as orders of magnitude. A fighter's own radar found a drone only at about ten miles: fighters have to close in to identify.

4.6 What you will see on the other side

CONTACT	SHOWN AS	WHAT IT IS	WHAT YOU MAY DO
DRN-01, DRN-02 … beyond the border	UNFRIENDLY	A drone that has not crossed yet	Watch it. It is not a target
The same, one to four minutes after crossing	HOSTILE	A stray over one of your countries, once identified	Engage it, if that country has authorised fire and the place is right
A BOGEY or a UAV inside the border	UNKNOWN	A contact nobody has identified yet	Identify it, or mark it hostile yourself if you are sure
FLANKER 1, FLANKER 2	UNFRIENDLY	Russian Su-30SM2 fighters, by day	Meet them. Never engage
HIP 1	UNFRIENDLY	A Russian Mi-8 helicopter, by day	Meet it. Never engage
BTI, FIN, LOT, SAS, RYR and a number	NEUTRAL	Airliners between Riga, Helsinki, Vilnius, Tallinn, Warsaw and Stockholm	Leave them alone, and never mark one hostile

Drones are numbered in the order they appear, whichever flow they belong to. None of these contacts ever fires at you: nothing you own is in danger tonight except from your own decisions.

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5 Constraints: the rules of the night

5.1 Rules of engagement

```
1   Everything starts on WEAPONS HOLD.
```

In practice: on HOLD nothing fires, not even on a manual attack order. Nothing will change that by itself: you open fire, unit by unit or with the Special Actions, and you close it again. Never use WEAPONS FREE.

```
2   To fire over Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania you need that government's
authorisation.
```

In practice: one Special Action per country. The answer takes time, more from a weak government. The authorisation lasts **six hours** and must be asked for again before it runs out. Where none is in force, every battery of that country and every fighter over it is put back on HOLD within a minute or two, whatever you set by hand; a kill there in the meantime is a kill without the government's leave.

```
3   Finland: only Finns fire over Finland.
```

In practice: the Hornets (ILVES) and FI NASAMS HELSINKI may fire over Finland with no authorisation. Italian, Turkish and Swedish fighters never fire there. Hornets over a Baltic state need that state's authorisation like everyone else.

4 Never fire on a manned aircraft.

In practice: a Russian fighter, a Russian helicopter, an airliner. They show as UNFRIENDLY or NEUTRAL and nothing on WEAPONS TIGHT will touch them, unless you mark one hostile. If a manned aircraft is shot down, the three governments and NATO order all weapons held and the operation is over.

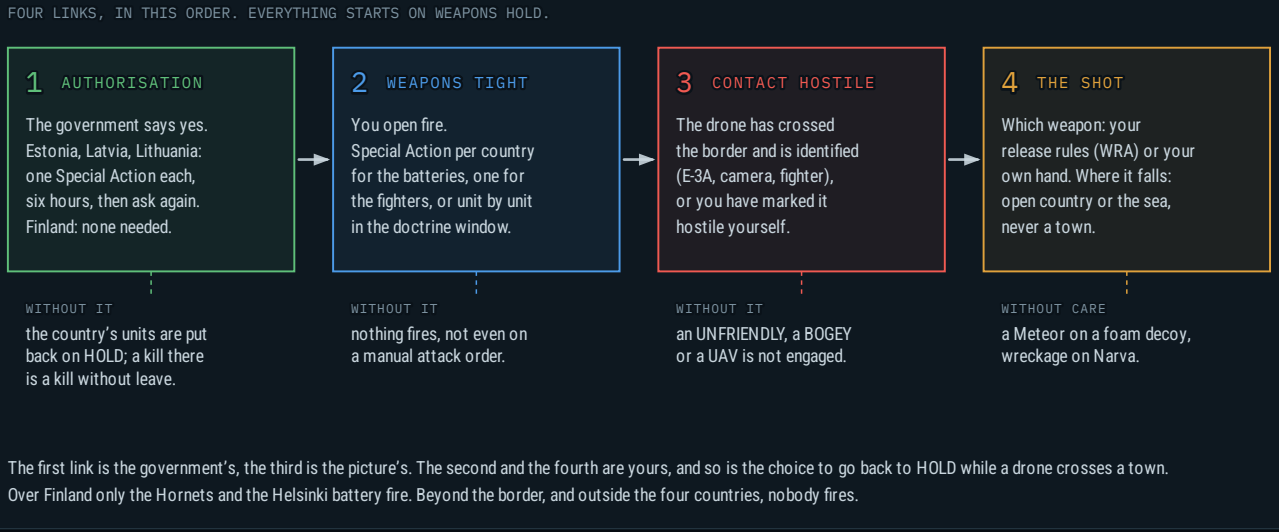
5 Nothing of yours crosses the Russian or Belarusian border: no aircraft, no missile.

In practice: Kaliningrad counts as Russia. A drone still beyond the border is not a target. A fighter that strays is called by the CRC at once and has **two minutes** to come back; after that it is a border incident, and another every half hour it stays.

6 Outside the four countries, nobody fires.

In practice: the open Baltic, Poland, Sweden, the Russian strip of the eastern Gulf. A fighter there is held, and a drone brought down there is a shot outside the rules.

FIGURE 8 — FROM AUTHORISATION TO SHOT



If nothing fires, one of the four links is missing. Check them in this order: is the authorisation in force, is the unit on TIGHT, is the contact shown as HOSTILE, is it within reach.

5.2 UNFRIENDLY, then HOSTILE

Every drone first appears beyond the border, as an UNFRIENDLY contact. It becomes HOSTILE one to four minutes after it has crossed, and only then do units on WEAPONS TIGHT engage it. Marking it hostile yourself while it is still on the other side does not hold: within a minute it is UNFRIENDLY again. This is the rule that keeps your missiles out of Russia and Belarus; do not try to get round it.

The delay matters most on the border itself. The Narva posts and the Latvian wall may see a drone become a target when it is already almost overhead; batteries a few miles back have more time.

5.3 Where a drone comes down matters more than whether it does

— **Open country or the sea.** A drone brought down there is a clean result. So is a drone that wanders out again.

— **A town.** A drone destroyed over a town, or within a mile or two of its edge, drops its wreckage on it, and the capital hears about it whether the drone was armed or not.

— **A sensitive site.** The same, and worse.

— **Left alone.** A drone you do not engage ends where its bad navigation takes it. Over a forest that may be the better choice; a drone heading for a town is better taken *before* the town than over it.

So the question for each track is not "can I shoot" but "where will it be when the missile arrives". Going back to HOLD for the two minutes a drone takes to cross a town is a decision, not a failure. The messages after each kill say where the wreckage fell and what the drone was.

5.4 The Narva battery

EE MISTRAL NARVA stands between Narva and Sillamäe, 6.4 miles west of Narva's centre (figure 4). It is the first unit a drone from the east meets, and Narva is on the border: a drone that this battery kills at the limit of its range, to the east, comes down on the town. There is no clever position that avoids it.

The choice is yours and it is a real one: **hold that battery** by hand in the doctrine window and let the IRIS-T, the Sillamäe posts and the Auvere section take the drone further west; or leave it on TIGHT and **accept** that some wreckage will fall on Narva. Remember that "Air defence - WEAPONS TIGHT: Estonia" sets all five Estonian units at once, this one included.

5.5 Missiles: few, and not equal

A fighter on WEAPONS TIGHT fires its most expensive missile first at every hostile drone in reach. A Meteor or an AMRAAM spent on a foam decoy is counted against you, in the capitals and in the detachments' home countries; from dearest to cheapest: Meteor, then AMRAAM (the fighters' and the NASAMS'), then IRIS-T, then AIM-9X, then the shoulder-launched missiles (RBS 70, Mistral, Piorun), then the rockets of the Latvian wall; the gun costs nothing. Stocks are limited (section 4.1) and there is a second dusk to get through. Section 6.5 shows how to keep the big missiles for what deserves them.

5.6 Public alerts

You can have the sirens sounded in Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania, for two hours at a time (section 7.5). People in shelter are not hurt by what comes down, and a government that warned its people in time is forgiven a great deal. But an alert closes the airport, cancels flights and stops the trains, it costs the country money every time, and an alert during which nothing came is remembered. There is no alert to raise in Finland.

5.7 The E-3A leaves at 0000Z

Unless a relief has been asked for **before 2300Z**, NATO AEW 01 leaves its orbit at midnight Zulu and the picture goes back to ground radars and fighters: detection at thirty miles, identification only close in, and no more track reports. It can also cover only one end of the area at a time: the southern orbit for Lithuania, the northern one for Latgale and southern Estonia.

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6 What the capitals expect, and how to do it in Command

6.1 What is expected of you

— **Nothing explodes on a town or a sensitive site.** This comes before everything else.

— **No wreckage on a town.** Bring drones down over open country or the sea, or let them go.

— **No shot outside the rules.** None without a government's leave, none beyond the border, none outside the four countries, no fighter across the line, and never a manned aircraft.

— **The Russian aircraft are met.** A fighter beside them when they come, weapons held.

— **The governments are still with you at 1600Z.** Alerts in time, questions answered by what happens in the air, and missiles not thrown away.

6.2 The twenty-four hours as you can expect them

WHEN	WHAT
1600Z	You take over. Opening message from CRC KARMELAVA with the rules; a carry-over message if the campaign hands something on. Everything on HOLD, no authorisation, the E-3A on the southern orbit
Early evening	Quiet. Airliners. A notice that satellite navigation is degraded. The first questions from the press. The time to ask for authorisations, launch patrols and set weapon release rules
The first night	Both flows. Open sources announce the Ukrainian strike, the Lithuanian Border Guard reports engines over Belarus: each some minutes before the drones are at the border. Hours not known in advance
2300Z	Last moment to ask for the E-3A relief
2330Z	The E-3A calls "off station in 30 minutes", or its relief checks in
0000Z	NATO AEW 01 leaves. Without a relief, no airborne radar for the rest of the watch
Later in the night	A second Ukrainian strike would be no surprise; the CRC will warn you
0600Z	The three capitals count the night, country by country. The message also gives the hour at which engines are expected over Belarus again
Daylight	Russian fighters on the Gulf, a Russian helicopter at the Kaliningrad border: each announced about twenty minutes before. Rearm, refuel, count the magazines
1200Z, 1300Z	Last moments to ask for the Gripens (1200Z) and the tanker (1300Z)
Dusk	Sunset between 1334Z and 1401Z. Expect the Russian wave from Belarus again. Check that your authorisations run to the end
1556Z	The debrief. The watch ends at 1600Z; drones still in the air are someone else's

The operation ends early in two cases: two governments have taken their airspace back (section 8), or a manned aircraft has been shot down.

6.3 No missions in the box

This scenario is played the classic way. Apart from the empty TANKER ORBIT, **there are no missions**: nothing takes off when you start the clock. You build your own patrols, decide who flies when, and keep enough aircraft and missiles for the dusk. Thirteen fighters cannot be airborne for twenty-four hours.

The four procedures below are those you will use all night. Menu names are those of Command: Modern Operations 1.09; where a label may differ slightly on your build, the path is described rather than quoted.

6.4 How to put a unit on WEAPONS TIGHT or HOLD

1. Select the unit on the map: a battery, or an aircraft. To act on several at once, drag a box round them or Ctrl-click them.
2. Open its doctrine window: **Ctrl+F9**, or the doctrine entry (“Doctrine / RoE / EMCON”) in the unit’s right-click menu or in the **Unit Orders** menu.
3. On the first tab, find the line **Weapon Control Status, Air**.
4. Choose **TIGHT** to let the unit fire at contacts shown as hostile, or **HOLD** to stop it. Leave the surface, subsurface and land lines on HOLD. Never choose FREE.
5. Close the window. The unit’s status changes at once; check it in the unit panel on the right if in doubt.

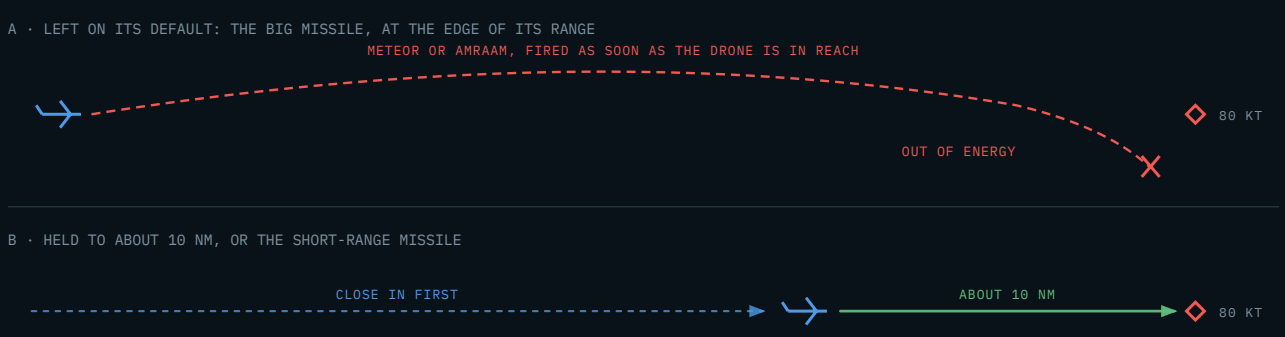
Set it on the unit, not on the side or on a mission. The scenario sets every unit’s own status, and a unit’s own setting overrides whatever its mission or its side says: changing the side doctrine (Ctrl+Shift+F9) or a patrol’s doctrine will not open fire for anybody.

Why the one-click Special Actions exist. Estonia has five units and Latvia six, and a drone crosses a town in two minutes. “Air defence - WEAPONS TIGHT” and “Air defence - WEAPONS HOLD” do a whole country in one click, and the TIGHT order is remembered: it is applied again by itself each time the authorisation is renewed. A unit you set by hand is not remembered; when the authorisation lapses it goes back to HOLD and stays there until you set it again. Use the Special Actions for the country, and the doctrine window for the exception: one battery held near a town, one fighter held while the others hunt.

6.5 How to choose the weapon and the firing range (WRA)

Left on its default, a fighter on TIGHT fires a Meteor or an AMRAAM as soon as a hostile drone is inside the missile’s maximum range. Against a target at eighty knots that is a long shot, and the missile often arrives with no energy left.

FIGURE 9 — FIRING RANGE AGAINST A SLOW DRONE



In one test game seven of ten fighter missiles were lost “out of energy”, fired at the limit of their range at drones flying at 80 knots, while the ground batteries hit with five of eight. The 10 nm is the author’s advice as a starting point, not a measured optimum.

The **Weapon Release Authority** (WRA) tells a unit which weapon it may use against which kind of target, how many, and from how far. Set it once, before the first wave:

1. Open the doctrine window as in 6.4, either for one aircraft (Ctrl+F9) or, better, for the whole side (**Ctrl+Shift+F9**, or the side doctrine entry of the **Game** menu): units that have no setting of their own inherit the side’s.
2. Go to the **WRA** tab. It lists target types; under each, the weapons that can engage it, with columns for the number of weapons per salvo, the number of shooters and the **automatic firing range**.
3. Find the air-target lines. A small drone may be filed under more than one of them according to how well it is identified (an unknown air contact, an unspecified aircraft, a low-performance type), so treat all the aircraft lines alike: no manned aircraft is a target tonight, and nothing is lost by it.
4. On those lines, for each radar missile (**Meteor**, **AIM-120B**, **AIM-120C-7**, and the Gripens’ AMRAAM if they come), change the automatic firing range from the maximum to a short fixed distance. **About 10 nm is the advice to start from.**
5. Or forbid the big missile against these targets altogether: set its weapons per salvo to none (the entry that means “do not use this weapon”). The fighter then closes in and uses its short-range missile, IRIS-T or AIM-9X.
6. Set the salvo to **one** weapon and one shooter per target. Close the window, and check on one aircraft that the values show as inherited.

Or choose the weapon yourself. With the aircraft on TIGHT, select it, press **Shift+F1** (manual weapon allocation) and click the contact: the window lists what the aircraft carries; allocate one short-range missile, or the gun, and close. A manual order fires nothing from a unit on HOLD.

COMMANDER'S ADVICE, FROM THE TEST GAMES

Against these slow drones, hold the fighters' radar missiles to short range (about 10 nm as a starting point: the figure is the author's advice, not a measured optimum) or prefer the short-range missile. In one test game **seven of ten fighter missiles were lost "out of energy"**, fired at the edge of their range, while **the ground batteries hit with five of eight**. Ground-based air defence did far better than fighters at long range. Use the batteries where there are batteries, and the fighters to identify, to fill the gaps, and to meet the Russian aircraft. Short-range posts miss too: do not count a drone as dead because a battery is near it.

6.6 How to mark a contact hostile

1. Make sure of what it is: its speed (about 80 knots), its height (a few hundred metres), where it came from, and that it is **inside** the border. An airliner flies at 430 knots and nine thousand metres; a Russian fighter at 440 knots; a helicopter at a hundred knots, low, near Kaliningrad.
2. **Right-click the contact** and choose **Mark contact as hostile**; or select it and press **H**.
3. The contact turns red. Units on WEAPONS TIGHT within reach will now engage it, if their country has authorised fire.
4. To take it back, use the same right-click menu and mark the contact unfriendly or neutral again.

When to do it. Where the E-3A does not cover, a drone inside the border often stays a BOGEY or a UAV, and nothing on TIGHT will fire at it. If you are sure, marking it is the intended tool. It is not needed for a contact that already shows HOSTILE, and it does not hold on a drone still beyond the border (section 5.2).

The danger. Mark a manned aircraft hostile and it will be shot at by everything on TIGHT that can reach it. By day, when Russian fighters and the helicopter are about, look twice before pressing H; and never press it on a contact near Vaindloo or Jurbarkas without reading its speed.

Lost and found again. A contact that is lost and detected again later is a *new* contact for the game: your mark is gone and it must be marked again. In testing this happened a quarter of an hour to three quarters of an hour after the first mark. If a drone you had marked is no longer being engaged, look at it first.

6.7 How to set up a patrol near the border, and how to bring an aircraft back

1. Place three or four **reference points** round the area you want patrolled (**Missions + Ref. Points** menu, add a reference point, click on the map). Keep the box **well inside** the border: ten miles at least, more near Narva and Vilnius.
2. Select those points, then create the mission: **Missions + Ref. Points** menu, add a new mission (or open the Mission Editor with **F11** and add it there). Class **Patrol**, type **AAW Patrol** (anti-air), built from the selected points.
3. In the Mission Editor, with the mission selected, **untick "Investigate contacts outside the patrol area"**. This is the step that matters.

4. Leave the mission's weapon settings alone (6.4). If a prosecution area is offered, do not draw one that reaches the border.
5. Decide the **one-third rule**: ticked, Command keeps part of the assigned aircraft on the ground as reliefs; unticked, everything assigned takes off. With four or five aircraft per base and a dusk to come, ticked is the safer start.
6. Assign the aircraft: select them in the list of unassigned units and move them to the mission. They take off by themselves.

Why. A patrol left on its default goes to look at every contact it sees, and the contacts are on the other side of the border. In testing, patrols with the option ticked crossed again and again; with it unticked, never. The CRC calls the aircraft the moment it crosses; two minutes later it is a border incident, and again every thirty minutes it stays. One fighter left chasing the Russian pair spent two and a half hours in Russian airspace.

To bring an aircraft back, when the CRC calls "CROSSING THE BORDER" or at any time:

1. Select the aircraft (the message names it).
2. Order it home: the **return to base** order (RTB) in the **Unit Orders** menu or in the right-click menu. It leaves its mission and lands.
3. Or keep it flying: press **F3**, click a point well back to the west, and end the plot. It turns at once. Then take it off the offending mission (unassign it in the Mission Editor), or it will go back to it when the plotted course is flown.
4. Then mend the cause: open the mission and untick the option of step 3 above.

Jurbarkas needs the same care as Narva: a fighter sent to meet the helicopter flies beside Kaliningrad, and Kaliningrad is Russia.

6.8 Practical advice

- **Ask early.** A government takes a while to answer, and longer when it is weak. Ask before the first drone is at the border, not when it has crossed: a country that sees a drone cross before anyone had even asked for the right to fire will want to know why.
- **But not for nothing.** Governments do not like being asked for a right that is never needed. You do not have to hold three authorisations for twenty-four hours; you do have to hold the right one when the wave comes.
- **Mind the six hours.** The government warns you shortly before an authorisation expires; a renewal can be asked in its last half hour and runs on without a gap if the answer comes in time. An authorisation that lapses just before the dusk wave is the classic way to lose a site.
- **Batteries first, fighters second.** Under the E-3A, ground-based air defence on TIGHT is enough for most of what comes. Keep the fighters for the gaps, for identification where the E-3A does not look, and for the Russian aircraft.
- **Decide where the E-3A looks.** In the south it serves Lithuania; the north-east has only ground radars. Moving it uncovers what it leaves, for forty minutes of transit and for as long as it stays away.

— **Read the track reports.** They tell you where a track is and how it is flying. Look at what lies on its heading before you choose where to take it.

— **Think about the ground under the shot.** Before each engagement, look at what is under the drone and under the next few miles of its track. HOLD a battery, or a country, for two minutes if a town is in the way.

— **Alert the country that is about to be hit, not all three.** An alert in time is worth a great deal; an alert for nothing costs twice.

— **Keep something for the day and for the dusk.** Aircraft, crews' turn-round time, missiles in the magazines, and a fighter that can be at Vaindloo or Jurbarkas within twenty minutes of a warning.

— **Never Weapons Free, never H on something fast.**

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7 Special Actions guide

7.1 How they work

Command cannot telephone a prime minister, sound a siren or ask NATO for a tanker. Those acts are **Special Actions**, in the Special Actions window of the **Game** menu. There are **twenty**, in **five families**, and their names begin with the family: **Government**, **Air defence**, **Fighters**, **Civil**, **NATO**. None acts on a selected unit; each is an order given now. The answer comes back as a message, and when an action cannot be carried out the message says why.

Before the clock is started every action answers "Start the clock first."; after the debrief, "The operation is over." The names below are exactly those of the game. For each: what it is for, what it needs, what it costs or risks, what a second click does, and when to use it.

FAMILY	ACTIONS	NUMBER	IN ONE LINE
Government	Fire authorisation: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	3	The right to fire over a country, for six hours
Air defence	WEAPONS TIGHT and WEAPONS HOLD: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland	8	A country's batteries opened or closed in one click
Fighters	WEAPONS TIGHT, WEAPONS HOLD	2	A standing order to every fighter
Civil	Public alert (2 hours): Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	3	People in shelter, the airport closed
NATO	AWACS: extend; AWACS: move orbit; Tanker; Fighters	4	Reinforcements from a small pool; each is run twice

7.2 Government: the right to fire

```
Government - Fire authorisation: Estonia
Government - Fire authorisation: Latvia
Government - Fire authorisation: Lithuania
```

You ask the government of that country for the right to fire in its airspace.
For: everything. Without it nothing may fire over that country, and whatever you set by hand is put back on HOLD.
Needs: time. The answer is not immediate: the first message gives the hour at which the Prime Minister will reply, sooner from a government that stands firm, later from one that is weak. Finland needs none and has no such action.
Lasts: six hours from the moment it is granted. The government warns you shortly before it expires. When it expires, the country's units go back to WEAPONS HOLD.
Costs or risks: nothing to ask. But the authorisation only *allows*: it puts no unit on TIGHT (unless you had already given the standing order of 7.3), and "debris over a town is yours to answer for". A government asked for a right you never needed remembers it.
A second click: while the request is pending, it repeats the hour of the answer. While an authorisation is running, it is refused until the **last half hour**; in that last half hour it asks for a **renewal**, and the new six hours follow the old ones without a gap if the answer arrives in time.
When: before the first drone reaches that country's border, and again in the last half hour of each authorisation you still need. To cover the whole watch a country needs four in a row.
For good: a government that has taken its airspace back answers that there will be no more fire authorisation tonight.

7.3 Air defence: a country's batteries in one click

```
Air defence - WEAPONS TIGHT: Estonia
Air defence - WEAPONS TIGHT: Latvia
Air defence - WEAPONS TIGHT: Lithuania
Air defence - WEAPONS TIGHT: Finland
```

Every ground-based air-defence unit of that country goes to WEAPONS TIGHT at once: five units in Estonia, six in Latvia, four in Lithuania, one in Finland. They then fire at every contact shown as HOSTILE within reach; a contact that stays BOGEY or UAV is not engaged until you mark it hostile.
For: opening fire over a country without setting each battery by hand.
Needs: that government's fire authorisation. Finland needs none.
It is a standing order. Once given, it stands: the batteries go back to HOLD when the authorisation runs out and **back to TIGHT by themselves when it is renewed** ("as you ordered"). And if you give it **before** the authorisation is granted, it is not refused: the government tells you that no authorisation is in force yet, **your order is noted**, and the batteries go to TIGHT the moment the authorisation arrives. You can therefore ask for the authorisation and give this order one after the other, and turn to something else.
Costs or risks: nothing to give. But from then on every battery of the country fires at every hostile drone in reach, wherever the wreckage will fall, with whatever missile it has: in Estonia that includes the Narva battery (section 5.4), in Lithuania the NASAMS and their AMRAAM-ER.
A second click: does the same again; useful after you have put single units on HOLD by hand and want them all back.
When: as soon as you have asked for the authorisation, in any country where a wave is expected.

```
Air defence - WEAPONS HOLD: Estonia
Air defence - WEAPONS HOLD: Latvia
Air defence - WEAPONS HOLD: Lithuania
Air defence - WEAPONS HOLD: Finland
```

Every ground-based air-defence unit of that country goes back to WEAPONS HOLD at once.
For: stopping all fire in a country for a moment, for instance while a drone crosses a town or while a Russian aircraft is close.
Needs: nothing.
Costs or risks: it **cancels the standing order**. After it, the batteries stay on HOLD, through renewals too, until you give "Air defence - WEAPONS TIGHT" again. Forgetting to give it again is the risk.
A second click: nothing more.
When: a drone is over a town and a battery could reach it; or you want a quiet country while you sort out the picture. For one battery only, use the doctrine window instead (section 6.4): a unit you hold by hand stays held until the next renewal or the next "Air defence - WEAPONS TIGHT".

7.4 Fighters: one order for all of them

```
Fighters - WEAPONS TIGHT
```

A standing order to all your fighters: WEAPONS TIGHT wherever fire is authorised. Each fighter goes to TIGHT when it **enters** a country whose government has authorised fire, or when that country becomes authorised while the fighter is over it; the Hornets also over Finland. Everywhere else (a country with no authorisation, Finland for anyone but the Hornets, the sea, Poland) it is held.
For: letting patrols work without setting each aircraft as it crosses from one country to another.
Needs: nothing; it simply has no effect where no authorisation is in force. The Gripens, if they come, follow it like the others.
Costs or risks: on TIGHT a fighter fires its most expensive missile first at every hostile drone in reach. Give this order only after you have set your weapon release rules (section 6.5), or be ready to choose the weapon yourself.
A second click: gives the order again and tells you how many fighters are on TIGHT at that moment. The order acts when a fighter enters an authorised country: an aircraft you have put back on HOLD by hand stays held until it leaves and comes in again.
When: once the weapon release rules are set and at least one authorisation is in force or asked for.

```
Fighters - WEAPONS HOLD
```

Cancels the standing order: every fighter goes back to WEAPONS HOLD and stays there until you decide otherwise.
For: stopping all fighter fire at once: when Russian aircraft are about and something has been marked that should not have been, when missiles are being wasted, when you have lost the thread.
Needs: nothing.
Costs or risks: nothing fires from the air until you give the TIGHT order again or set aircraft by hand.
A second click: nothing more.
When: by day, before meeting the Su-30s or the Mi-8, it is a cheap precaution.

7.5 Civil: the sirens

```
Civil - Public alert (2 hours): Estonia
Civil - Public alert (2 hours): Latvia
Civil - Public alert (2 hours): Lithuania
```

A public air-raid alert in that country for the next two hours: sirens, messages on every phone, people in shelter, the airport closed, the trains stopped.
For: the people. What explodes while the population is in shelter does far less harm, and a government that warned in time stands much better afterwards. An alert does nothing against wreckage, and nothing for a drone that carried no warhead.
Needs: nothing: **one click is enough**, there is no confirmation. There is no alert for Finland.
Costs or risks: it costs the country money **every time**, flights to and from its airport are cancelled while it lasts, and if nothing comes over the country during the alert it is a false alarm, which the government and the airlines hold against you.
A second click: adds two more hours to the end of the alert already running, at the same price. Do not click twice by mistake.
When: when drones are heading for the inhabited part of a country, not for every contact at the border; and early enough for people to reach shelter.

7.6 NATO: reinforcements

The four NATO actions draw on the **NATO reinforcement pool: three points** unless the campaign has changed it (the opening message says so). The relief costs 2, the tanker 1, the Gripens 2, the orbit move nothing: you cannot have everything. **Each is run twice:** the first click only shows what would happen and what it would cost, and ends with "To CONFIRM, run this same action once more."; the second click orders it. A first click costs nothing and does not expire.

```
NATO - AWACS: extend (relief at 0000Z)
```

A second E-3A from Geilenkirchen takes over the orbit when the first one leaves at 0000Z, and NATO then keeps the orbit manned to the end of the operation.
For: keeping long-range identification and the track reports for the second half of the night, the day and the dusk.
Needs: both clicks **before 2300Z**; after that a relief crew cannot be on the orbit in time.
Costs: 2 points. Once.
Risks: none, except what the two points could have bought instead.
When: decide in the evening. Without it, from midnight a drone is seen at thirty miles and identified only close in.

NATO - AWACS: move orbit

The E-3A changes orbit: from the south (the Lithuanian–Polish border) to the north (northern Latvia and southern Estonia), or back.
For: putting the only long-range eye where the night is being decided.
Needs: an E-3A on station. About forty minutes in transit.
Costs: no points.
Risks: the orbit it leaves has no airborne cover, during the transit and for as long as it stays away.
One move north and one move back, no more. If NATO has nothing left to spare, the crew leaves half an hour late.
A second click: confirms. Run twice again, later, it orders the move back.
When: when one flow is clearly the heavier, or when a country without the E-3A is about to lose a site. Not in the middle of a wave if it can be helped.

NATO - Tanker

An A330 MRTT from Eindhoven comes over the Gulf of Riga, on the mission TANKER ORBIT, and is under your orders while it is there.
For: keeping fighters on patrol longer, above all the Hornets, whose base is far from the Gulf.
Needs: two hours: it is on station two hours after the confirmation and stays **eight hours**. It cannot be asked for after 1300Z on the 26th.
Costs: 1 point. Once.
Risks: eight hours pass quickly: ask for it for the part of the watch you mean to fly hardest.
When: two hours before you need it.

NATO - Fighters

Two Swedish JAS 39C Gripens (GRIPEN 1 and GRIPEN 2) from Ronneby, with AMRAAM and IRIS-T. They land at Amari or Siauliai, whichever has fewer fighters, and are yours from then on.
For: two more aircraft and their missiles, for the day and the dusk.
Needs: three hours: they land three hours after the confirmation. They cannot be asked for after 1200Z on the 26th.
Costs: 2 points. Once.
Risks: they follow the same fire rules as the other fighters, and like them never fire over Finland.
When: early enough to have them rearmed and briefed before you need them.

THREE THINGS THAT ARE EASY TO GET WRONG

An authorisation fires nothing. It allows. You still have to give “Air defence - WEAPONS TIGHT” for the batteries and “Fighters - WEAPONS TIGHT” (or the doctrine window) for the aircraft.

“Air defence - WEAPONS HOLD” cancels the standing order. After a HOLD, give TIGHT again, or the country stays silent through the next renewal.

Six hours end. Ask again in the last half hour. The standing order then brings the batteries back to TIGHT by itself; the fighters follow theirs.

7.7 What they do not do

No Special Action identifies a contact, chooses a weapon, launches an aircraft or builds a patrol. None marks a drone hostile, and none can make a unit fire beyond the border or over a country that has said no. The authorisation is the government's; the picture is the E-3A's and the radars'; the decision to fire, and where, remains yours.

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8 The governments and the press

Three governments watch you, and each has its own measure of how the night is going. You will not see it as a figure; you will see it move through what they say.

— **Tallinn** starts the night the firmest of the three. Its worry is Ida-Virumaa: Narva on the border, Sillamäe, the Auvere power plants; and, by day, Vaindloo. It will not forgive Russian fighters in its airspace with nobody beside them.

— **Riga** is the most fragile. The last government fell in May after the Rēzekne depot, over late alerts and an air defence that did not fire. The new one has a wall on the border, no medium-range system, and a parliament that will ask whether anyone had leave to fire before the first drone crossed into Latgale.

— **Vilnius** stands in between. It has the E-3A overhead, two NASAMS and the capital some fifteen miles from Belarus. Its President has said in public that fighter missiles are not an efficient answer to foam drones, and Lithuanian television will count yours. By day its worry is the helicopter at Jurbarkas.

— **Helsinki** asks for nothing and grants nothing: over Finland only Finns fire, and there is no alert for you to raise. Loviisa, Kotka and the capital's airport are within reach of what strays up the Gulf.

What each of them wants is the same, and they will tell you so when things go badly: **nothing exploding on its soil, no wreckage on its towns, an alert in time, no fire without its say.** At 0600Z the three capitals count the night, each for itself: a night without an explosion steadies a government; one explosion means a cabinet meeting; more means calls for resignations.

Through the watch the press and the capitals speak, every two hours or so. Estonian public radio asks whether Ida-Virumaa is being defended; Latvian television asks whether it will be Rēzekne again; the Seimas calls in its defence committee; Rome asks how many missiles its detachment has left; the Turkish press, five days before the F-16s go home, asks what they are firing at; Kyiv regrets the consequences of Russian jamming and asks for restraint over towns; Minsk denies everything and warns against firing into Belarus; Moscow speaks of hysteria; the airlines ask whether the airports are open or not; the North Atlantic Council wants figures. **No answer is needed.** Each is judged a little later on the state of things: explosions or none, wreckage or none, big missiles spent, shots outside the rules, false alarms. What you do in the air answers them.

THE LINE YOU DO NOT CROSS

A government that loses confidence warns you, twice, and says again what it wants. If its standing goes on falling it **takes its airspace back**: no more fire authorisation in that country for the rest of the watch, its batteries on hold, your fighters held over it. The drones still come. **If two governments do so, the operation is over.** Take the warnings.

9 On the public record

Everything before this section is written as though it were real. This section takes the mask off. The year 2026 has given this scenario almost everything it needed; the table below is public reporting, checked on 1 and 2 October 2026.

9.1 The record, 2026

DATE (2026)	FACT	SOURCE
18–19 March	A Russian Su-30 violates Estonian airspace near Vaindloo island for about one minute; Italian Eurofighters, then based at Ämari, respond	Aerotime, The Aviationist
23–29 March	First Ukrainian drones thrown off course come down in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia (the chimney of the Auvere power plant is hit) and Finland (an AN-196 near Kouvola; its warhead destroyed in place), during the strikes on Ust-Luga and Primorsk	Wikipedia (2026 incursions)
7 May	A drone explodes on the Rēzekne fuel depot (Latvia): four empty tanks damaged. Defence Minister Sprūds resigns, then the Siliņa government falls (late alerts, no interceptors)	Wikipedia
15 May	Drone alert near Helsinki: nearly 2 million people in Uusimaa told to stay indoors, the airport closed for about 3 hours, Finnish fighters airborne; no drone confirmed	Al Jazeera
19 May	First drone shot down over Estonia, by a Romanian F-16 of the air-policing mission	Wikipedia
20–21 May	Lithuania: first air-raid alert since independence; parliament in shelter, Vilnius airport closed, trains stopped	Wikipedia
8 June	A French Rafale shoots down a drone over Latvia (Bērzgale)	Wikipedia
June	Estonia receives its first IRIS-T SLM system	Janes, Defense Post (23–24 June)
31 July	Changeover at Šiauliai: four Italian Eurofighters replace the French Rafales and Romanian F-16s	Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence
1 August – 30 November	Five Turkish F-16s (181st Squadron “Pars”) at Ämari. The mission is renamed “Baltic Air Defence”	Migflug
1 August, 1 September	About ten drones near the Estonian border during strikes on Ust-Luga; Turkish F-16s on alert, ground-based air defence activated, no shot	Grosswald, Migflug
14 August	An Italian Eurofighter shoots down a stray Ukrainian drone over Latvia (Rugāji, Balvi), with two Turkish F-16s from Ämari	Euronews, ItaMilRadar
August	Lithuania deploys a NASAMS near Vilnius against the drone threat	LRT, Defense Post (25 August)

DATE (2026)	FACT	SOURCE
15 September	A Russian Gerbera is shot down in Lithuania (Pratkūnai, Kaišiadorys district, near the Kruonis pumped-storage plant) by an Italian Eurofighter from Šiauliai, about 30 minutes after it entered from Belarus. President Nausėda says it was bound for Ukraine and pushed off course by Ukrainian electronic warfare; he calls the fighter "not an efficient solution"	LRT, Project Leaflet
Late September	Latvia: an automated "drone wall" along the whole eastern border. Lithuania: DroneBuster kits and 48 Merops interceptors; the Baltic states ask the EU for EUR 500 million. The Baltic presidents want an air-defence mission with a permanent counter-drone capability	LSM, LRT, Project Leaflet, Defense News
23 September	Poland: a Russian Mi-8 from Kaliningrad crosses 300 metres into Polish airspace for 42 seconds near Braniewo	Grosswald
23 September	After talks with the US President, President Zelensky says Ukraine is ready for an energy truce if Russia stops its strikes; Moscow and Kyiv voice interest in a "limited ceasefire"; Washington doubts that Putin will accept	Al Jazeera, CNBC, CBC, Irish Times
25 September	The war goes on (massive strikes on both sides); the United States tries to revive three-way talks and pushes a ceasefire on energy targets	Al Jazeera, Axios
September	Daily GNSS jamming over the Baltic; Finnair adapts its pilot training; flights disrupted over Sweden on 17–18 September	Aviacionaldia, Avi-Go

THE ENERGY TRUCE: DISCUSSED, NOT CONCLUDED

As checked on 2 October 2026, talks on an energy truce between Russia and Ukraine were under way in late September 2026 and no truce was in force in the sources consulted. A truce on energy targets would cover exactly the strikes this scenario starts from. **In the fiction, no truce is in force on 25 November 2026:** Kyiv strikes the oil ports and Russia launches through Belarus.

9.2 What is real and what is invented

— **Real:** the incidents and dates in the table; the detachments (four Italian Eurofighters at Šiauliai since 31 July 2026; five Turkish F-16s of 181 Squadron at Ämari from 1 August to 30 November 2026, so that 25 November is five days before they go home); the mission's new name, Baltic Air Defence; the Su-30 at Vaindloo in March; the Mi-8 near Braniewo in September; the Gerbera near Kruonis; the fall of the Latvian government after Rēzekne; the alerts in Helsinki and Vilnius; the Latvian drone wall; the Estonian IRIS-T SLM and the Lithuanian NASAMS; daily GNSS jamming; the energy-truce talks; the places (Ust-Luga, Primorsk, Auvere, Kruonis, Elektrėnai, Inčukalns, Visaginas and Ignalina, the Klaipėda LNG terminal, Loviisa, Muuga); CAOC Uedem, AIRCOM at Ramstein, the CRC at Karmėlava, the E-3A force at Geilenkirchen, the multinational tanker fleet at Eindhoven.

— **Invented:** the night of 25 to 26 November 2026 and everything that happens in it; the meeting of the four threats in one day; the make-up of the waves; Operation STRAY LIGHTS, OPORD 26-058 and the post of COM BAD, with one commander over the fighters and the national batteries of four countries; every order, authorisation and reaction of the governments; every quotation, press line and intelligence message; the Swedish Gripen reinforcement, the tanker and the E-3A relief; the exact positions of the batteries and radars; the Finnish Hornets placed under the same commander; and the absence of a truce. The Latvian IRIS-T, ordered but not confirmed as delivered, is deliberately absent.

— **Stand-ins in the game:** the database has neither the Gerbera nor the Ukrainian long-range drones; they are represented by the closest types it carries, as are the Estonian IRIS-T, the Lithuanian NASAMS and the units and sensors of the Latvian wall. Names in the game are written without accents.

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Cited by name only, in the table above: *The Aviationist*, *Janes*, *Defense Post*, Euronews, *Defense News*, Axios, CBC, Avi-Go.

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10 Glossary

AEW Airborne early warning: a radar aircraft, here the NATO E-3A.

AIRCOM NATO Allied Air Command, Ramstein.

AMRAAM AIM-120 radar-guided air-to-air missile; AMRAAM-ER is the ground-launched version of the NASAMS.

BOGEY An air contact that nobody has identified.

CAOC Combined Air Operations Centre; Uedem, in Germany, issues your orders.

COM BAD Commander, Baltic Air Defence: you.

CRC Control and Reporting Centre; yours is at Karmėlava, Lithuania.

Drone wall Latvia's line of sensors and cheap interceptors along its eastern border.

E-3A NATO's airborne radar aircraft, based at Geilenkirchen.

Gerbera Russian foam decoy drone, sometimes armed.

GNSS Satellite navigation (GPS and the like).

HOSTILE A contact that units on WEAPONS TIGHT will engage.

IRIS-T Infrared-guided missile: air-to-air on the Eurofighter and the Gripen, ground-launched (SLM) in Estonia.

Meteor Long-range radar-guided air-to-air missile of the Eurofighter.

MRTT A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport of the multinational fleet at Eindhoven.

NASAMS Ground-based air-defence system firing AMRAAM missiles.

NOTAM Notice to airmen.

RBS 70, Mistral, Piorun Short-range, shoulder- or tripod-launched air-defence missiles.

RTB Return to base.

UNFRIENDLY A contact that is watched but not engaged on WEAPONS TIGHT.

WEAPONS HOLD The unit does not fire.

WEAPONS TIGHT The unit fires only at contacts shown as hostile.

WRA Weapon Release Authority: which weapon, how many, from how far, against which target.

ZULU UTC. Local time in the area is Zulu plus two hours.

Baltic Jamming, 2026 — Stray Lights, fifth scenario of the *Europe 2026* campaign for Command: Modern Operations. Designer: totobimbo. Written from inside COM BAD's picture at 1600Z: what the commander is told, not what is true. The night of 25 to 26 November 2026, its orders, events, messages and quotations are invented; the incidents of 2026 listed in section 9 are on the public record. Coastlines, lakes and borders: Natural Earth 1:10 m.