

And in the “Where the #@\$% does he think this stuff up” category . . . If you were an invading alien force, what would be your best strategy to take over the Earth?

Of course, this has to be a fair test. Even though your technology is advanced enough to permit interstellar space flight, you can't have overwhelming superiority or things get ridiculous. No, your crack alien troops consist solely of fourteen light infantry battalions equipped with obsolete tentacle-mounted 22 cm pulse firearms, of which two must remain on board the mothership at all times. Since you're a fragile, cerebral race, your numbers and firepower are weak. On the plus side, your mobility and air support are outstanding – you do have starships, after all.

You don't have nuclear weapons but do have a shield against nuclear weapons, so you don't have to worry about getting nuked to oblivion. (Keep in mind that you want to capture the Earth, not blow it up, although blowing it up would be preferable to defeat.)

#### OPP/CHOICE: WHERE ON EARTH DO YOU LAND?

Gov picks the Middle East (unless opp picks the Middle East). We'd specifically say Jerusalem, assuming that we get to wipe out the landing area.

Key arguments:

(1) Transforms your fight from an offensive war, which is hard, to a defensive war, which is easier. Why? Because all you have to do is take over the Middle East and wait – eventually, the rest of the world will run out of oil. Sure they'll attack you, but it's easier to defend than to attack.

Subpoint: Easily defensible. Arabia is a peninsula that's mostly surrounded by water. Black Sea to north, Med to west. Very easy to seal off Bosphorus/Dardanelles and Suez Canal, leaving only vulnerability to land invasion as the Caucasus/Iran front. This isn't so bad because the Caucasus are hard-to-penetrate mountains. As for Iran, it's a pariah state that would be very reluctant to let troops from other nations (such as the U.S., Russia, China, or India) to use its territory to invade you.

(2) Strategic location. In addition to oil, Israel has nukes, we'd take them over. But mainly, it'd be very easy to seal off Bosphorus/Dardanelles and Suez Canal... goodbye, world shipping!

Subpoint: Most strategic areas on Earth are occupied by countries with powerful armies, like the U.S. The Middle East has the highest ratio of strategic location to the power of local countries. The only modern militaries in the region are Israel's, Russia's in Chechnya, and the U.S.'s in Iraq, all of which are engaged in fighting other conflicts. (i.e. hit the U.S. military where it's most overextended, battle-weary, and vulnerable... don't let them pull back to regroup and grow more powerful, which they would do if you don't strike them immediately)

(3) To these primitive Earthlings, this will look like Armageddon. The U.S. might not intervene immediately since Christian fundamentalists would initially think that this is God wreaking his wrath upon Muslims, it's the apocalypse, and so on. It would reduce Earthling resistance and increase their panic levels.

- Changes fight from offensive to defensive
  - Oil
  - Easy to defend
- Strategic location
  - Centrally located
  - Weak local militaries
  - Except the U.S., whose military you get to divide and conquer
  - Nukes
- Looks like Armageddon
  - Weaken resistance
  - Longer U.S. response time

If opp picks the Middle East, then gov picks Washington, D.C. due mainly to the fact that you'd get to destroy the city upon landing.

- Cripple world's #1 power
  - Goodbye command and control
  - Divide and conquer its military while most of it is away in Iraq. (The U.S. can always recruit more soldiers, so it's better to conquer the country than to take out its standing military.)
- Need a blitz, rapid strike; remember, we have no reinforcements while the Earthlings have a limitless supply of resources. Time is not on our side, so the "wait them out" strategy is dumb.
- Rest of world won't interfere due to anti-Americanism. In fact, they'll like it. Then, once the U.S. is sunk, the rest of the world will be easy pickings. Divide and conquer.

First you have to pick a landing spot. Not anywhere near the United States, that's for sure – its military is your most formidable obstacle. On the other hand, you will want your initial foothold to be of strategic significance, so you can strike outwards quickly. How about the Middle East? It meets both criteria, plus has wide open desert spaces (perfect for UFO landings) and lots of oil. Perfect.

The alien forces have only twelve light infantry battalions equipped with obsolete tentacle-mounted 22 cm pulse firearms, but their mobility is good and of course their aerospace support is outstanding. Seven battalions land near Buraydah, approximately

171.38 kilometers southwest of Kuwait City. One moves south to secure the lower Arabian Peninsula, another strikes east to exert control over the strategically crucial Persian Gulf region, and two each head for Iraq and Israel. The remaining battalion, held in reserve, begins rapid construction of an air/ground base in the An Nafud Desert.

Caught by surprise, human forces are overwhelmed. The weak Arab states crumble. The 145,000 occupying troops in Iraq get cut off from the U.S. Fifth Fleet in the Gulf, finding themselves trapped between encroaching armies and a hostile Iran. The Israeli Defense Force puts up a good fight – against the Palestinians. One alien battalion advances to the Suez Canal and digs in to disrupt inter-ocean shipping and communications, while another swings north into Syria.

Alien strategists had naturally recognized that the greatest human rapid-response threat rested with highly-trained NATO troops positioned in central Europe. Accordingly, concomitant landings of four battalions occur in Bucharest, Salonica, Skopje, and Novi Sad. In close proximity, these forces rapidly establish a communications network and exert control over the Balkans. Three battalions fortify themselves in a semicircular ring within Hungary to absorb the brunt of the NATO assault, while the fourth invades Turkey in an attempt to link up with the Mideast task force.

The American power center mobilizes, hampered only by the destructive raid by a reserve alien airborne battalion of the Panama Canal. The Indian Ocean-based *Enterprise* carrier group sails for the Strait of Hormuz to reinforce naval forces in the Persian Gulf for relief action for the besieged U.S. divisions in Iraq. NATO forces indeed attack the Balkan task force to prevent it from being redeployed elsewhere. Diplomats call on the Iran military, reduced 34% in strength from the 1980s but still a formidable fighting force, to resist the invaders, but elicit in response only a surly “Yo’ mullah.” Other diplomats seek assistance from the nearby Indian and Pakistani militaries, but neither country will grant transit rights to the other. Still more diplomats employ F/A-22 Joint Strike Thundercats to fly to the alien mothership and threaten to use nuclear weapons, only to be momentarily deterred by the nonexistent nuclear arsenal that the aliens didn’t seize from Israel.

Turkey soon falls to the two-pronged attack on it, leaving Russia’s southern flank exposed. Entangled in Chechnya, the Russian military falls back to Volgograd, only to come under attack through Ukraine by the Balkan task force. Then it regroups, optimistic that Chinese reinforcements will arrive soon from Xinjiang.

But now, in a daring move evocative of the late, great Alien Squad Commander Gjgohaorehate, the three remaining alien battalions land in Kazakhstan to interpose themselves between the two human army groups. Under attack from three directions, Russia collapses

(use Russia’s nukes to deter while starve humans of oil) Stick a fork in them, they’re done.

The moral of this sad tale? Don’t believe everything you see in the newspapers. Heck, don’t even read it.