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Slow Train Coming

An INVASION U.S. Adventure

by Joseph Benedetto, Jr.

John Daniels glanced around the restaurant once before taking his usual seat near the side wall; the only other person in the room (not counting the 2 old women having tea by the window) was Paul McCord, Political Commissioner for the Lower Valley Sector of the Eastern Social Republic; what used to be known as southwestern Pennsylvania before the Soviet takeover. Since McCord was a regular here, just like Daniels, no one paid much attention to him.

He was brushing a spot of lint off of his People's Army uniform (Railroad Detachment) when the waitress came over; she slopped a glass of water down on the table before him, opened her pad and looked at him. "What'll it be today, comrade?"

Ignoring the sarcasm in her voice, Daniels glanced over the menu for a minute before finally pointing at one of the selections. "Train coming through, soon." he whispered. "Very important cargo. I think your people should do something about it."

The waitress shook her head. "Sorry, comrade, we've been out of that for almost a week."

Daniels slipped her a \$5 bill. "Why don't you check again?" He said, smiling at her. "I'm certain that you might be able to find something back there for me." She took the bill and slipped it into her apron.

"Maybe." She turned away, went through the kitchen, and headed for the telephone with Daniels' note inside the folded bill....

SLOW TRAIN COMING is an **INVASION U.S.** adventure for a group of six characters, all members of the American Underground. The characters are locals living in Bridgeville, a small town south of Steel City, ESR (formerly known as Pittsburgh, PA). In the year since the Soviet takeover, they have endeavored to become a minor thorn in the side of the Soviet authorities.

The information John Daniels has passed on concerns a train...a very special train. It will be passing through the Bridgeville area in just under 4 hours; Daniels does not know what it is carrying, but it certainly isn't passengers: The Central Authority gave it a Class A2 clearance to pass. Whatever the cargo is, it must be important if it rates an A2 rating. That means it must be fairly valuable. And in the People's Republic of North America, anything valuable is fair game for stealing by the Underground.

There are several constraints on the players: First of all, they have a limited amount of supplies (see the **PLAYERS WEAPONS** list for details) and can only get a few other things, such as a pickup truck, a couple of walkie talkies, one pair of binoculars and some rope before the train is due through. Also, the local rail HQ's are usually protected by at least a full platoon of Motorized Rifle; the rail yard has a full platoon and a tank. Because of this, there is only one good area where the train can be stopped, where the local Soviet forces won't be able to swoop down: Mill Valley west of Bridgeville.

The other areas of the line are either too exposed to Soviet helicopter patrol, or are too close to the nearby towns or Collectives. The two-mile stretch of track leading up Mill Valley to the old Smith Tunnel is the best place to stage the attack.

As locals, the PC's can be assumed to have a working knowledge of the area. The GM should allow the players up to 1 hour in real time to plan the attack and get themselves and their gear into place; remember, they have a deadline to meet if they want to

pull this off. Players who argue about what to do and when to do it usually get rushed into action at the last moment with disastrous results.

Considering the proximity of the rail line to several Soviet garrisons, the attack *must* take place in Mill Valley. However, if the players insist on staging the attack someplace else, let them. Merely remember to bring in the Soviet Air Cav and several platoons of troops in APC's the moment they see trouble!

FACTORS

The PCs are aware of the following facts: The local Soviet garrison is not in a state of alert, although it can respond quickly to calls for help. The train is coming through at a speed of about 45 mph, although it will have to slow down to around 30 mph when it climbs the slight grade into Mill Valley, which should be around 10 minutes past 4 p.m.

The local forces *do* make occasional spot checks of the line, but this is most often by helicopter, and if the pilot sees nothing extremely suspicious, he will fly on. The trees above the track are dense enough to hide even a pickup truck, if need be. On that point the PC's should have no trouble.

No one has any solid idea of what the train is actually carrying, rumor has it to very, very valuable. It is likely that the locomotive and the caboose will have People's Army troops guarding the train. Although it would be easy to simply derail the train, it will be more profitable to the Underground (and more harmful to the Soviets) if the rebels can stop the train and steal the cargo. How the players plan to accomplish this is their business.

BACKGROUND

The PC's would not know of these details: First, the local Soviet HQ (in Carnegie) has started throwing up surprise checkpoints at odd places, running spot checks on everyone's ID papers. (See *Checkpoints*, p.10 in the **INVASION U.S.** gamebook.) Since these are

random and move from day to day, it is unlikely that players will know about the one that is going to show up between them and Mill Valley when they set up their ambush. The Soviets are using regular soldiers, and do not suspect anything is up; this is merely a routine surprise check.

An even larger surprise awaits the PC's: The train they are lying in wait for is actually two trains, a freight train and an escort, running through 5 minutes before it! This fact cannot be learned from the merger information Daniels has smuggled out to them; it will only become evident when the trains are actually on their way. Of course, there are clues that might be noticed at the last moment, such as twin horn blasts that sound different from each other; also, the grade leading up to Mill Valley can be seen by a spotter at the mouth of the valley.

The first train is the escort carrying troops and a tank on a flatcar; the second train, running five minutes behind the escort, is a Freight carrying gasoline, motor oil, goods, soldiers, and political prisoners bound for St. Louis, Missouri Detention Center - a radioactive hell from which few ever return. (See the **TRAIN COMPOSITION & CREW DISPOSITION CHART** for exact details on the train.)

But little of the details are obvious: The tank cars have only tiny placards, readable at close range; the box cars are not marked at all. However, if the players will think things out, they may discover the reasons why such elaborate precautions are being taken.

If the players are smart, they will place a spotter at the mouth of the valley with a walkie talkie; such a person can spot the 2 trains while the escort is still about 3 miles away...at 30 mph that means the players will have a maximum of 6 minutes in *real time* to change their original plans and decide on how to handle the 2 trains! (You should get out a watch and say "Go!" at this point.) Even if there is no spotter, the players will hear 2 different train whistles as they await the

springing of the ambush. If none of the players catches on, roll under WIZ for each character to realize what this means. In these circumstances, the players will have only 4 minutes of real time to change their plans.

AND ABOUT TRAINS....

Actual trains are not like those old cartoons and those toys we once played with: The "real" trains are big, noisy, and old. Few boxcars actually have walkways on top of them anymore, and virtually none have roof hatches. Even the tank cars lack the catwalks and handrails so prevalent on scale models. And the handwheels that manually set the brakes on each car are often rusty and untrustworthy. Players who have romantic ideas of jumping onto the train as it passes and then leaping across the rooftops are in for some very BIG disappointments!

A diesel locomotive is a huge, heavy object: By its sheer weight alone it qualifies as an armored vehicle. Still, a blown bridge or felled tree will stop it, and a well-placed stick of dynamite will derail it relatively easily. What effect this has on the cargo should be determined by the GM!

This is not to say that players cannot jump the train and then do heroics, like hang from a handhold and fiddle with coupler between the engine and the rest of the train! It's just wise to point out to the GM that what the players have in mind and actual reality may be 2 very separate things.

The escort is there to make sure that the track is clear of obstructions, like blown bridges and felled trees. The gondola full of Euro-Soviet troops is a box of sacrificial sheep: If anything is planted under the tracks, they are going to be the first to find out! For this reason, the GM should make these troops quite alert and concerned about sabotage.

As to the second train, they are a lot less concerned, since they feel safe behind the escort. They are not expecting trouble. Indeed, considering that there are two

platoons of Motorized Rifle present, backed up by a tank, the KGB are feeling pretty smug about the whole thing!

One important note: 1 of the 2 KGB agents aboard the second train is a woman with closely cropped blonde hair, known to the resistance as "Red Jennifer". She is an expert in torture, and is a prime target of the Underground. She has *double* the normal point value if killed, and *4 times* the normal point value if captured! Of course, the PC's don't know she's aboard, and it may take an INT roll to spot her during a gunfight. (The GM should roll secretly for each PC involved; on a 10% or less, that character has a personal score to settle with Red Jennifer.) She is one of a tiny handful of trusted Americans who holds a high office with the KGB, and is renowned for her techniques in making even the hardest prisoners break. (It is rumored that the best of the lot become members of her "stable", although there is little to support this accusation.) Overall, she is rated high on the list of things the Underground wants eradicated. For this trip to the St. Louis, Missouri Detention Center, she has what she calls "a special toy;" Jilin Chang, a captured Chinese Army saboteur. Red Jennifer has her handcuffed to a toilet in one of the passenger cars' two bathrooms, and goes back every hour or so to "convince" Chang to talk about her mission; Chang has been gagged to keep her cries from bothering the other people in the car. If the players can rescue Chang, it will be worth an extra 1000 points.

How the players handle the ambush will be interesting, to say the least. The GM should encourage them to do more than merely mine the tracks and sneak away; the rumors of important cargo are true, although how much of it the players can use is uncertain: Gasoline, motor oil, KGB records and files, and (or course) the 35 political prisoners. It may seem hopeless at first glance, but if they let the escort pass and then stop the freight train, it will be easier: A few well-placed grenades

could decimate the troops packed in the passenger car, and it will take many minutes for the escort to stop and back up; a fast team can profit handsomely.

THE GREAT CHINESE ARMY OF AMERICAN LIBERATION

The GCAAL sent support to the Bridgeville area 2 months ago in the form of an air drop of 4 Chinese Army personnel and 2 Fast Attack Vehicles. Due to Soviet Air Intercept during the transport's approach run, the GCAAL unit jumped into the wrong zone and came down in the middle of Carnegie, 5 miles away, and only blocks from the local Soviet HQ. Only one of the GCAAL, Jilin Chang, escaped and was last seen limping into the trees east of town; her current whereabouts are unknown. Local rebels managed to recover a Chicom Type 56 rifle and some ammunition before being driven off by Soviet troops; the remainder of the GCAAL equipment was lost. Is it doubtful that the GCAAL will be making another such drop anytime soon.

RIFLE	Semi-Auto	"Type 56"
ROP 1	AMO FGI	
ROL B	CYC n/a	
CAP 10	WTE 7.8	
CIR 1956	MIS 1% d	
HSM +3	KDM +1	
PB VS SH	ME LO EX	
-1 0 +2	+3 +1 -3	
EFFECTIVE	EX +	
5d	2d	
SPC (d)		

An effective Chinese copy of the old Soviet SKS rifle, predecessor of the AK-47. A particularly strong and simple design equipped with a folding bayonet under the barrel. The weapon uses the same ammo as the AK-47 and the RPK. (*7.62mm M43*)

OTHER CHINESE WEAPONS

Because of their former association with the Soviets, the Chinese use weapons that are very close copies of the standard Soviet

ones. For this reason, the GCAAL weapons dropped to the American rebels can use ammunition stolen from Soviet stocks.

The 4 basic weapons used by the Chinese are the AK-47, the Type 50 (a copy of the PPSH-41 "Burp Gun"), the Type 56 (a copy of the Soviet SKS rifle, a weapon no in use by the Soviet forces, although it is used in both Yugoslavia and China) and the type 64, a silenced submachinegun designed and built by the Chinese. If the GM needs to give GCAAL forces or rebel units Chinese weapons, he may use these. (The stats for the Type 64 SMG are listed below.)

MACHINE GUN, SILENCED "Type 64"

ROF 1 to 3	AMO FH
ROL A	CYC 30a
CAP 30	WTE 7.4
CIR 1964	MIS 1% d
HSM +1	KDM --
PB VS SH ME LO EX	
-1 0 0 -1 -3 -8	
EFFECTIVE	EX +
3d	1d
SPC (b/g, n)	

A Chinese weapon designed for silenced operations. The Type 64 will operate quietly firing the same ammo as the PPSH-41 (as SPC b) but works better with ammunition designed specifically for it (as SPC g). (*7.62mm type P*) (*7.62mm type S*)

PLAYERS WEAPONS

The following cache of weapons and gear are available to the players' group as a whole.

- 1 Marlin 1984 Level-action Rifle w/25 rds (AMO P)
- 1 RPK LMG w/1 75-rd drum (AMO F)
- 1 M16 A2 w/3 30-rd clips (AMO F)
- 1 12-gauge Sport Shotgun w/20 rds (AMO L1)
- 1 Type 56 Chicom Rifle w/4 10-rd clips (AMO F)
- 1 Modern Crossbow w/11 bolts (BOLT TYPE E 02)

- 1 Colt M1911-A1 Pistol w/2 7-rd clips (AMO J)
- 1 S&W M10 .38 Revolver w/18 rds (AMO G)
- 1 S&W M29 .44 Revolver w/10 rds (AMO P)
- 4 M33 Fragmentation Grenades
- 1 RKG-3M Anti-Tank Grenade
- 10 Sticks, Commercial Dynamite
- 3 Blasting Cap Detonators (5-second delay)
- 1 Contact Detonator (Impact)
- 1 Remote Detonator (Short-Range Radio Signal, 1 mile limit)

This list comprises all of the weapons and ammunition that the players have managed to stockpile during the last year. The players will have to plan carefully to make the optimum use of their limited weaponry, but it can be done.

ENEMY WEAPONS

Because of the nature of the operation, the units involved are travelling light; the following is an outline of what *each individual* in a particular group will have on them at the moment of the attack. There are no other weapons present, nor are there any supplies of ammunition on board the train.

- EURO-SOVIET: 1 AK-47 w/2 30-rd clips (AMO F)
- TRAIN ENGINEER: unarmed
- SOVIET OFFICER: 1 Makarov PM 9mm Pistol w/1 8-rd clip (AMO F)
- KGB: 1 CZ Model 75 9mm Pistol w/3 15-rd clips (AMO H)
- SOVIET SOLDIER: 1 AKS-74 w/2 40-rd clips (AMO K)
- PEOPLE'S ARMY: either 1 AK-47 w/1 30-rd clip (AMO F), or 1 PPSH-41 w/1 35-rd clip (AMO F)

These figures are the standard gear and weaponry that any one person will have available to them at the moment of the attack. It should be noted that some of the People's Army have been equipped with the obsolete PPSH-41 "Burp Gun" instead of the more common AK-47; this is because the local Soviet Military Supply Commander is trying to clear out his stocks and trade the AK's to a nearby Euro-

Soviet unit in exchange for some "non-essential" (comfort) items.

TRAIN COMPOSITION & CREW DISPOSITION CHART

ESCORT TRAIN

1 Open Gondola (2 Squads Euro-Soviet MRR)
 1 Flatcar (1 T-62A Tank with Crew of 3, Euro-Soviet)
 1 Diesel Locomotive (2-man crew, Civilian)
 1 Caboose (2 Soviet Officers, 2 KGB, 2 People's Army)

FREIGHT TRAIN

2 Diesel Locomotives (each w/1 engineer, Civilian)
 3 Tank Cars (Gasoline)
 1 Tank Car (Motor Oil)
 3 Boxcars ("confiscated goods")
 1 Boxcar (35 political prisoners)
 1 Passenger Car (1 Platoon Soviet MRR, 2 Officers, 2 KGB)
 1 Caboose (4 People's Army)

The two trains are travelling the same line with only a 5-minute gap in distance between them.

Although the 2 are *supposed* to be in constant radio contact with each other, the system functions only 30% of the time; if it fails it will be out of order until the end of the trip. In that event, the two trains will use a combinations of visual signals (In straightaways) and blasts on the air horns (in curves, tunnels, etc.).

