

Strategy Concepts in

BY MARK HERMAN



INTRODUCTION

Probably no one was more anxious to see **Empire of the Sun** published than game developer Stephen Newberg and myself. For me this was the conclusion of an almost four year journey that began soon after the publication of **For The People**. Now that it is out on the market, I have been heartened by the tremendous interest that the gaming public has shown in this game.

Although **Empire of the Sun** uses my card driven game (CDG) system as its core mechanic, it is unlike any game I have designed before. Almost all of the systems in the game break many traditional paradigms, so playing the game as intended takes a close reading of the rules.

The main focus of this **C3i Magazine** article will be on strategy in the campaign game opening and how this impacts the middle and late game. I will also discuss some practical illustrations on how to leverage the game systems to accomplish player goals.

The Japanese Opening: December 1941 and The Big Picture

The early war (1942) establishes the basic outline of the Japanese position. The Japanese are faced with perhaps their most important decision of the game, either play for a broad defense trying to win a mid-to-late game victory or a focused offensive against one of the major nations (Australia, India, or China) with an attempt at winning the game early due to negotiations. If the Japanese pull an extraordinarily good hand on Turn 2 they could blend the two concepts to some degree, but a strong or weak hand tends to drive an *either or* type of decision.

In the broad defense strategy the Japanese

are planning to follow a more historical path and wear down the Allied counter offensives as they try and advance toward Japan. To prosecute either strategy the Japanese want to ensure that they are getting a base of seven cards prior to Strategic Warfare, which means that at a minimum the Japanese need to capture 13 of the 14 resource spaces by the start of Turn 5. This requires the capture of the Philippines, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies (DEI), plus either Vogelkop (3219, the resource space in New Guinea) or Rangoon (2008) as the 13th resource space. In the broad defense, the Japanese will typically knock down US Political Will (PW) by three due to National Surrender, with the possibility of one additional PW loss due to how the war in Burma turns out.

The broad defense seeks to make Allied progress of the war the pivot of its strategy. The goal is to force the Allies to fail their 1942 and early 1943 progress of the war requirements through aggressive reaction to Allied offensives. This simulates an intense period of combat reminiscent of the Solomons campaign. However, where on the map this intense conflict occurs will often vary.

Now there are other things that the Japanese can accomplish, such as eschewing some of these objectives and using a focused offensive strategy. The defining attribute of this path is the use of resources in an aggressive manner to knock one of the big three (India, China, or Australia) out of the war. The surrender of each of these countries reduces US PW by two and diminishes the Allied hand size for the remainder of the game. This strategy tends to result in a all or nothing outcome due to higher losses earlier in the game than with the broad defense strategy. If it fails, then the US advance across the central Pacific tends to proceed ahead of historical schedule.

The IAI card is one of those great opportunities for a player to write an alternate history. The comprehensive example-of-play depicts the historical record. Although the historical Japanese plan worked to near perfection, there are some more aggressive options available in the South Pacific or over in Burma. One of the more interesting options players have explored has been to hold off taking some of the initial historical objectives and instead leapfrogging forward for a more rapid attack on the DEI. Most of these plans focus on achieving air and naval superiority by eliminating the Commonwealth MA air unit, the US FEAF air unit, plus both US Asia naval units, while leapfrogging ground units into some key

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DEI spaces. The goal of these alternative IAI plans is to stifle any Turn 2 Allied counter play and rapidly capture the DEI to free up resources earlier for other strategic ends.

The reason that the Japanese did not do this historically is they wanted to secure their lines of communication as they moved forward. They could have taken a more risky posture, but chose not to; players of the game do have this option. The downside to this strategy in *EotS* is an aggressive Allied player can often move forces onto the Japanese lines of communication using carrier escorted ground strategic transport. For instance, if the Japanese choose not to take Manila initially, letting the USA garrison wither on the vine, the Allies could send a carrier with a ground unit (using strategic transport that does not use ASPS) into Manila thus reopening up the Allied supply line. These Allied ground units on Luzon could then begin to take back territory, and if augmented with ground based air, could create havoc on a Japanese line of communication. This is the historical reason why the Japanese avoided this option. I have seen similar options for Malaya and even Hong Kong. The game system does not script the Japanese IAI offensive and if the Allies do not react aggressively to throw off the Japanese advance, then this leapfrogging tactic could play out well; but if not, the Japanese usually do not regain their offensive stride.

Japanese: January to April 1942 (Game Turn 2)

Moving from the broad to the specific, the Japanese need to knock the Dutch East Indies out of the war rapidly. Accomplishing this by Turn 2 captures the key resource spaces and stops the Allies from deploying their reinforcements in an offensive

manner. At a minimum, the historical plan demonstrates the basic outlines of how to quickly capture resources and avoids allowing the Allies to salvage the DEI situation. Assuming a start akin to that shown in the comprehensive example-of-play, the Japanese need to capture Kuantan (2014), Singapore (2015), and Manila (2813) with a minimum of activations and units. This ensures that the Philippines and Malaya will surrender at the end of the second turn.

The big unknown is can the Japanese knock out the DEI with their remaining activations. There are no special rules forcing the Japanese to go this way, but failure to do so gives the Allies bases that they historically spent 1943 and 1944 trying to capture. Additionally, failure to conquer the DEI ensures that the Japanese will be at a card disadvantage for the

remainder of the game, hence no requirements for any special rules. Although historically the Japanese also pushed into Burma and the Solomon, it will depend on what kind of hand the Japanese player is holding on game Turn 2. Suffice to say, the Japanese should not consider playing any non-Offensive events on Turn 2 if it would jeopardize successfully forcing the DEI to surrender. The one exception to this is War In Europe (WIE) cards. If the Japanese can quickly drive the WIE to level 3, the Allies start losing critical ASP reinforcements. However, if playing WIE cards sacrifices too much offensive momentum, it may not be the best thing for the Japanese to play these as events. WIE exceptions aside, the Japanese are likely to have some tough choices whether or not to use a great resource event as an OC to enable continuation of their initial offensives.



Japanese Alternate: An alternate IAI plan that leapfrogs the Philippines, Malaya, and Hong Kong for early DEI gains, coupled with air and naval superiority.

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Another option that Japanese players have been exploring is to conduct a *hedgehog* defense. The intent of this strategy is to limit the Japanese conquest to the minimum needed to gain 13 resource hexes and to deny the Allies additional hexes that they can conquer to achieve their late 1942/early '43 progress of the war requirements. First off, this almost happened historically. After the Japanese conquered their pre-war objectives by May of 1942, there was a strategic debate in the senior military circles over what to do next. In the end a 'Central Agreement' was reached whereby the Japanese decided to advance toward New Caledonia through the Solomons and take Port Moresby in order to cut off US aid to Australia. In addition the Japanese Navy, as per their doctrine, wanted to bring the US fleet to decisive battle, which was the genesis of the Midway offensive.

That was what happened historically, but if the 'Central Agreement' had not been reached the Japanese would have essentially taken up the *hedgehog* defense option. In game terms, the theory behind this strategy is to manipulate the US Political Will mechanic through national surrenders and progress of the war failures to force the US Political Will to 3 by the end of Turn 5.

An important feature is to deny the Allies hexes to recapture as a means to deny them progress of the war opportunities in game Turns 4 and 5. The hope is that a low US PW level is coupled with fortuitous asymmetrical pull of the respective side's political cards (Tokyo Rose/Tojo Resigns

vice Doolittle Raid/Bataan Death March) to achieve an automatic Japanese victory sometime before game Turn 9 (when the B29s arrive on the scene).

My design philosophy is to create game situations based on the historical dynamics to encourage correct historical decisions. I do not believe in a lot of special rules to script a situation just to make it work. I want it to work dynamically, which requires that both sides play their part to thwart long-shot strategies. The downside of the *hedgehog* strategy is its success requires that the Allies cooperate and play passively.

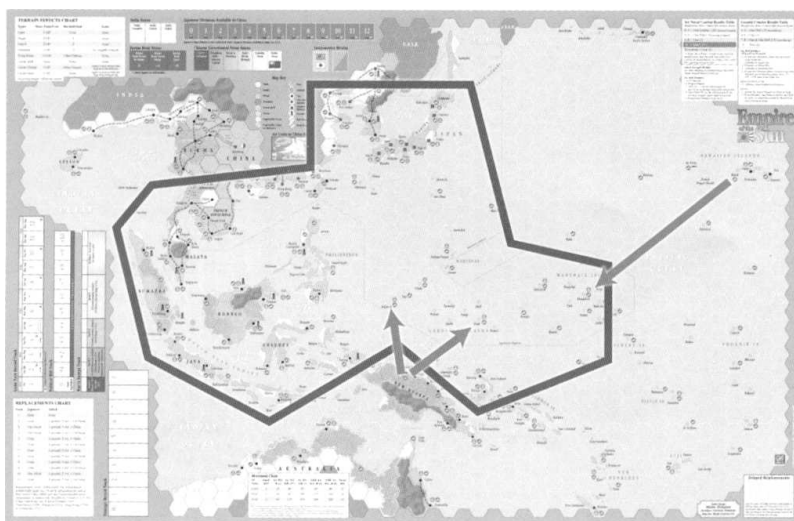
The Allies are in a tremendous spatial position if the Japanese play in this manner (*hedgehog*), and can paralyze almost all Japanese reactions in the Central Pacific if the Japanese player stays within his Empire boundary. For example, Wewak (3720) is within LRB range of Truk (4017), neutralizing it as a naval base. If Truk were to fall, then all Japanese ports in the center of the board (Saipan 3813, Palau 3416, and Ulithi 3615) are within LRB range. What this means is by using their advantage in LRB air units, the Allies during any offensive can declare any port where the Japanese are massing naval and air power as battle hexes, preventing them from reacting to more critical battles. This depicts a month long bomber campaign, which historically would neutralize a base. Leveraging this spatial advantage, the Allies can usually meet their Turn 4 progress of the war requirement by conquering the

Marshall Islands (only requires two hexes, Kwajalein 4715 and Eniwetok 4415) ahead of schedule. If the Allies only take one of the Marshall hexes on Turn 4, it is almost a lock to make their Turn 5 progress of the war requirement when the island chain falls. Once game Turn 6 rolls around, the Allies have sufficient ASP and naval forces to keep the steamroller going. This is now enhanced by the Allied ability to leverage their early spatial advantage (created by the Japanese *hedgehog* defense), in conjunction with the judicious use of air power, to smother most important Japanese reactions. It is important that the Japanese player keep this in mind when they contemplate the *hedgehog* defense.

The historical *hedgehog* defense option is a great example of my design philosophy. I do not legislate that the Japanese do what they did historically. However, I have created a situation that encourages the Japanese to pursue the historical option due to its game advantages. You as a player can explore both options and see which one fits your play style better.

Another interesting Japanese option is what I call the *Tsushima opening*. The goal of the *Tsushima opening* is to bring the US Pacific Fleet to decisive battle and eliminate it, reducing US political will by two for destruction of all on map US naval forces. The Allied player will know if this option is brewing if the Operation Z attack force (CVs *Akagi*, *Soryu*, *Shokaku*, & BB *Kongo 1*) ends their initial offensive in the Marshall Islands. The goal of this strategy is to attack Pearl Harbor in a one-two punch with the Operation Z force sinking both of the US CVs in Pearl Harbor and then later in the turn Japan eliminates the US Asia Fleet (CA and DD).

The key to the *Tsushima opening* is the Turn 2 Pearl Harbor attack. The US forces in Oahu comprise the CVs *Lexington* and *Enterprise* plus the 7th AF units for a total of 38 combat attack factors. The Japanese CVs attack totals 36 combat factors, so in order to gain a combat advantage the attack needs a 3 OC card to enable the BB *Kongo 1* to throw in its 17 attack factors, raising the Japanese total to 53 combat attack factors. Another key element of this attack is to include the CL *Tenyru* to raise the force to 57 factors since it requires at least 56 combat factors to eliminate one of the Allied CVs in the first combat. If the Japanese attack Wake Island (4612) with



1942 Hedgehog

This diagram shows the basic outlines of the *Hedgehog* defense and the early US offensive against the Marshall Islands launched from Hawaii with supporting air attacks from Northern New Guinea.

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the IAI card and the Marine 21I air unit manages to get a critical hit, the reduction of the CL *Tenyru* neutralizes this possibility. Another option is to bring the reduced BB *Yamato* reinforcement into the Marshall Islands to support this attack. After the initial combat, the goal is to use the second Japanese card play to attack Oahu a second time to finish off either one or both US CVs for a 1 US PW reduction. This is followed by other offensives that sink the remaining US naval units for another -1 US PW penalty.

To be absolutely effective the *Tsushima opening* requires surprise attack (10% probability) or that the Allied player is not holding one of five key cards (73% probability). These key cards are the two Ambush Intelligence cards, Heroic Repair, Skip Bombing (reduces the CL *Tenyru*), and Darter-Dace (submarine attack prior to combat). The attack can still succeed without surprise attack, but then the Japanese are likely to take some carrier losses.

Since the dice love no one, it is my belief that good strategy creates situations that yield probabilities greater than 50% and poor strategy yields situations that yield probabilities of less than 50%. The *Tsushima opening*, if surprise attack is desired, has approximately a 8% probability of success (calculated as the probability of surprise*probability of the Japanese having two 30C cards*probability that the Allies do not have any of the 5 key cards*probability of the Japanese achieving a 1 times combat result). If surprise is not desired, then the probability of success rises to 25%, but the Japanese have a 70% probability of losing at least one CV step and a 40% probability of losing 3 CV steps. Based on this analysis the *Tsushima opening* is not an optimal strategy, but it can happen in the game and is one of the Japanese opening options. One particularly important downside of this option is that if pursued it almost guarantees that the Japanese player will not conquer the DEI by Turn 2. The ramification of this is whatever US PW advantage gained may be lost by not achieving DEI surrender.

A variant of the *Tsushima opening* is to conduct the historical Midway offensive but during the second turn (early '42). Mathematically it plays out about the same way, but it is more difficult if the Japanese adopt a *hedgehog* strategy or fail to take

Wake Island. This is just another legitimate Japanese option, but such diversion of offensive activity on game Turn 2 also significantly reduces the Japanese chances for conquering the DEI.

Japanese: Mid-to-Late 1942 (Game Turns 3 and 4)

The beginning of Turn 3 may or may not be required to finish off the DEI, but depending on what the Allies do, this may be a bit of a dogfight. Assuming the DEI is forced to surrender at the conclusion of Turn 2 (or when it is hopefully assured to happen at the end of Turn 3), the Japanese player faces a number of key choices that all revolve around how do they intend to win the game.

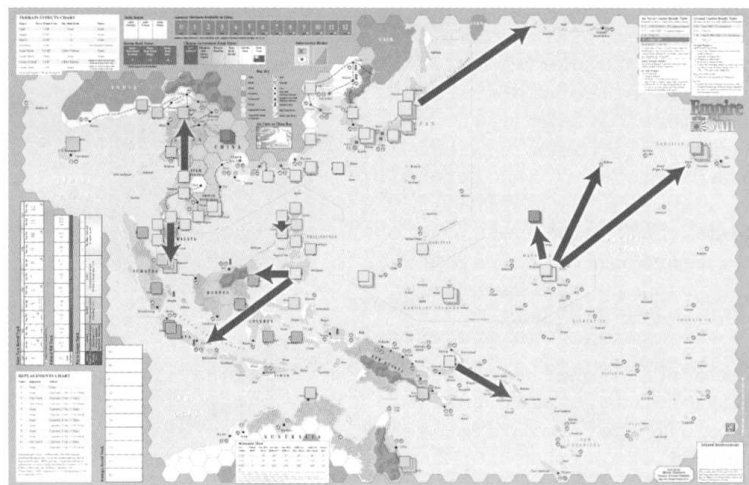
In the broad defense strategy, Japan needs to keep the US forces at bay for as long as possible. This usually entails capturing the Solomons and New Guinea as a buffer to Allied actions. The goal is to stop the Allies from making their progress of the war requirements in game Turn 4 (end of 1942) and game Turn 5 (early 1943). The best way to accomplish this is to centrally deploy the main Japanese fleet in Truk to react to moves against the Marshalls, Solomons, or New Guinea. Pour your reinforcing ground and air units into this region and prepare

to fight it out with the US forces. The disadvantage of the *hedgehog* strategy is Truk cannot fulfill its historical role because it is too easy to neutralize with a long-range bomber offensive, as mentioned above. If you can hold off the US advance for at

least one of the turns (4 or 5), and the US PW card events that may arise neutralize each other, the Allies will have a US Political Will of 4. If the Americans make a mistake and let you either wipe out all of their carriers and/or eliminate a major ground unit, then the Allies are in (or close to) the 'Tojo red zone' (US PW of 2 or less). It is usually a bad idea to play the Tojo Resigns card with a US PW greater than 3 as it opens up the possibility of losing Manchuria and a card every turn. Although this is not a principle, the Japanese should usually only play Tojo Resigns if it will drive the US PW to zero.

Another component of the broad defense strategy is the China-Burma-India (CBI) theatre. Conquering Burma further reduces US PW and makes the possibility of defeating China much greater by cutting the Burma Road. But the CBI is the one area on the map that does not require Allied use of amphibious shipping points (ASP) to prosecute offensives, so the more aggressive the Japanese are in the CBI, the more exposed they are to Allied counterattacks.

If one considers the focused strategy alternative, there are two basic variants. The first focuses on Australia. This is the more difficult objective since it requires the redeployment of the South Seas HQ or a very aggressive *suicide* attack that sacrifices ground units for control. There are two basic paths for taking Australia, either capture the East coast first, redeploy the South Seas HQ to Biak (3319), and then conquer the West (Broome 2426 is still



1942 Japanese Axes of Advance
This diagram shows the basic axes of Japanese advance during the early game.

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tough). The alternative is to conquer New Guinea (Port Moresby 3823 is a must have), then redeploy the HQ to Biak and you can go for either coast. Although Darwin (3023) is the best place for the South Seas HQ it is out of supply unless you move an HQ twice. Regardless of the technique used, going for Australia forces a strong position in the Solomons and New Guinea and to some degree it can be considered a variant of the broad defense strategy.

The other option is to be less aggressive in the East and focus all of your offensive efforts in the CBI. The advantage of this approach is at a minimum it tends to cut the Burma Road enabling a China focus, while preserving an India option if the situation presents itself. China can actually be defeated without ever getting a China EC Offensive. It takes five unanswered successes to put China down. The Japanese get 6 China OC offensive opportunities (one every even numbered game turn), and have 4 potential China EC China Offensives (one dependent on the Doolittle raid) versus 5 Allied EC China Offensives. The China option doesn't require closing the Burma Road, but it does improve Japanese chances. As a side benefit, if Burma is defeated it further erodes US PW. Of the three focus strategies, the China option is the most viable.

India on the other hand is quite hard to take. Even with Gandhi cards supporting Japanese efforts, it takes from 3 to 4 turns to be successful and further requires that the Allies do not retake even one North India hex to reset the conquest clock. Once the Allies lose North India, they can usually bend sufficient effort to take back Dacca and nullify all preceding Japanese efforts.

If the Japanese do decide to go for Northern India, it is usually best to support this effort with the conquest of Ceylon. By positioning a Japanese air unit in Colombo (1307), Madras (1406) is neutralized through ZOI as a reinforcement debarkation port, which helps to stifle any Allied counterattacks before they can be organized.

On balance, a Japanese move into central Burma offers the best payoff for the least effort. This must be balanced against giving the Allies offensive opportunities for the duration of the game.

There are a large number of options and permutations of these basic openings. How one proceeds is based on player style and

how the situation developed over game Turn 2. Basically, what happens in the opening defines the strategic context that the Japanese and the Allies will have to deal with for the duration of the game. The cards and your playing style should be guides on which way to take the opening.

Allies: 1942 (Game turns 2-4)

One of the biggest mistakes the Allies can make in the opening turns is passive play. Historically the Allies were aggressive and were planning on holding portions of their pre-war possessions as bases for future counteroffensives. It was the totality of Japan's historical success that forced the Allies to rearrange their thinking on when and where the counteroffensives would be launched.

To a great degree the Allies must exploit the openings the Japanese give them as it is often difficult in the beginning to drive the pace of the game. One issue the Allies need to keep in mind is how to first stop the Japanese from defeating Allied nations without paying a price. If you can halt the Japanese, all the better, but at a minimum you need to eliminate or weaken some of pre-war elite units so things will be easier down the road.

Game Turn 2 is a tough one for the Allies. The Allies should focus on playing events such as Arcadia Conference (card #4), which is now permitted to be in their initial hand for the 1942 start (but not for the 1941 Campaign Game, although try it as an optional rule). The presence of the ABDA HQ gives the Dutch a little sting, and compels Japan to commit proper resources to conquer the DEI. In general,

the Allies should preserve as much force as possible, while making Japanese advances as costly as possible.

Great moments for the Allies on Turn 2 are getting any resource card (especially those that give units), Japanese Inter-Service Rivalry (ISR), submarine reaction cards, and any Ambush card (to be put into future offensive status or used to counter the *Tsushima opening*). With the SEAC HQ going to India, the only Allied choice on unit placement for game Turn 2 is where

to bring a 7th AF air unit (presumably lost in the Pearl Harbor raid) back into Splay through replacements. The best location for this air unit is Midway, which gives the Allies a chance to respond to any early Central Pacific offensive. The overarching Allied perspective on the second turn is to make the Japanese pay for their successes and to slow their offensive momentum in any way possible.

The first offensive opportunity the Allies should look for is where can they bring in their delayed game Turn 2 reinforcements (that arrive on game Turn 3). If the Japanese have failed to force the surrender of the DEI by Turn 2, then look to bring in most of these reinforcements into Koepang (2721) or Darwin (based on where you place the arriving ANZAC HQ, and ABDA HQ if in play). The British fleet is very powerful based in Timor or Darwin. Its presence forces the Japanese to deploy their big naval units to deal with the British by pulling these forces west and opening up the eastern Japanese position to US led counteroffensives.

If the Japanese decide to forgo taking a strong position in the Solomons and New Guinea (the *hedgehog* strategy), they open up their southern flank to a more rapid advance into the Caroline Islands and the Philippines. The big variable in *EotS* is air power. Allowing the Allies to have early unfettered access to the New Guinea airfields puts their LRBs in range of Davao (2915), Leyte (3014), Palau, Ulithi, and Truk. This can neutralize the utility of these ports as reaction bases. The Allies should not ignore the potential for getting Allied ground forces onto multi-hex islands (e.g. Borneo) that maximize Allied ASP resources when they are thin by using overland movement to take key Japanese hexes.

Empire of the Sun

The Pacific War, 1941-1945
Published: 2005 **Award:** GAMES 100 Magazine
Game Design: Mark Herman
Game Developer: Stephen Newberg
Art Director: Rodger B. MacGowan
Map: Simonitch **Counters:** Simonitch & MacGowan



Contents: Two sets of counters (1/2 & 5/8 inch); One 22x34 inch Map; Two Card Decks; One die; Rulebook; 2-Player Aid Cards; Bookcase Box
Time Scale: Four months per turn
Map System: Hex = 150 miles
Unit Scale: Brigade, Division, Corps, Army
Players: 1-2



As mentioned earlier in the article, if the Japanese delay in taking some key Allied ports in their rear areas this opportunity needs to be exploited. Look for opportunities to use carrier escorted convoys to bring a powerful ground unit with air support into the Japanese rear. This is an excellent use for the CVL *Hermes*, a weak expendable unit, which can confer great advantage in the right circumstance. This option is particularly useful in the Philippines if Manila is not captured on game Turn 2.

Even if the Allies lose the exploiting units, they will easily resurrect via replacements and their presence forces the Japanese to expend resources to remove them. This is another example of my design philosophy. If the Japanese do not want this to happen they have to make good decisions, decisions which happen to coincide with historical motivations for such actions. If the Japanese play fast and loose with good military tactics, then the Allied counter tactic should change that player's perspective for future games.

If the Japanese decide to ignore Malaya and move directly on Burma, bring the Chinese units into Central Burma and do not stack them. This will cause the Japanese several

cards to clear them out of their way as they advance on India. The key to not losing India is Ceylon. If the Japanese manage to conquer Northern India during 1942, it is still extremely difficult to force Indian surrender (even with Gandhi card) if they do not also conquer Ceylon. The idea here is that Japanese air units on Colombo (I307) and in either Akyab (2206), Dimasur (2005), or Dacca (1905) create a ZOI over Madras (1406) and Calcutta (1805) respectively, preventing Allied reinforcements. If Ceylon is still British controlled, then reinforcements can continue to enter Mainland India via Madras and then move up to try and break the Japanese Northern India position. If the Japanese achieve this lock down position, the only viable Allied option is to launch an Amphibious Assault offensive out of the Maldives (1005) against Dacca.

If the DEI has surrendered and the Japanese have developed their position in Burma, New Guinea, and the Solomon, the Allies need to consider where to deploy their main axes of advance. Assuming that the Japanese do play along the historical path, then the historical record is a reasonable guide on how to proceed.

An important feature of this design is the US PW index. US PW is a resource that is broadly expended through game actions. There are a few mechanics that energize this will, but until the B29s start knocking down Japanese cities, PW is a scarce resource in the game. The Political Will mechanic is intended to drive both Japanese and Allied thinking. So it is understood, the design is trying to push the US PW level to 4 where Allied historical incentives should encourage appropriate historical behavior. A great deal of electronic ink has been spilled with a plethora of claims of easy Japanese victory. As time has gone on, most of these claims have been significantly muted as knowledge of Allied counter play has diffused into the **EotS** metagame environment.

The Allies begin the game with a US PW of +8 and assuming that the Japanese follow the historical script, they could drive it down to 5 by the end of Turn 2 through the surrender of three Allied nations (Philippines, Malaya, and DEL). The surrender of Burma or Allied failure to achieve progress of the war requirements on one of the first two opportunities are meant to drive PW down to 4. The other US PW requirements are there to ensure that

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historical objectives (e.g., Midway or the Aleutians) or casualties are present in player strategic decisions and risk calculations. Once US PW begins to fall below 4 the Japanese start to gain opportunities for early victory through card play (Tokyo Rose/Tojo Resigns). Some Japanese players play Tojo Resigns at the first opportunity. This is dangerous if it does not win the game, it activates the Invasion of Manchuria. If the Allies survive the early play of Tojo Resigns, it thus substantially increases the probability of an Allied A-bomb victory (no invasion of the Japanese home islands required). The Allies must always be sensitive to their US PW level and any Japanese action that threatens it is by definition something that requires a reaction. It will be a rare game where the Allied player is not sweating over his US PW level at some point during play.

The US PW effects for Midway and the Aleutians often causes the Japanese to expend early effort in these directions. It is important to note that in order for the Japanese to qualify for these US PW reductions, a Japanese ground unit must occupy the hex in question during the US Political Will Segment — simple control alone is insufficient. If the Japanese go for Midway on Turn 2, the Allies should throw their entire Hawaiian force at this offense. Assuming that there is a US air unit on Midway, there is a very high probability that the Allies will be able to react. The goal is to win the air-naval battle to prevent the Japanese landing a ground unit. If Wake has not been captured and the Japanese are not providing naval escort, the Allies can use their single Turn 2 ASP to perform a reaction AA move with the Wake Marine unit thus making Japanese success even more problematical. Even if the Japanese do not try to make this attack, it is usually prudent to redeploy the Wake Marine unit to Midway if it is still in play. In the event that the Japanese are successful in taking Midway, it has hopefully come at the expense of some important naval units and a loss of offensive momentum in the all-important DEI sector.

In regards to the Japanese taking an Aleutian hex on game Turn 2, the Allied response should be to place both Marine brigades with naval and air support in Dutch Harbor (5100) during the reinforcement segment of game Turn 3. Using a low value card, preferably a I OC, the two Marine brigades (with air and naval modifiers) have a 90% chance of eliminat-

ing a Japanese reduced army and so avoiding the US PW penalty. If the Japanese send a full strength army to an Aleutian hex, the 1 OC offensive prevents any Japanese reaction (due to range) allowing the Allies to first reduce the army through air-naval combat, prior to its destruction during ground combat.

The progress of the war requirement forces the Allies to be aggressive. Without this mechanic the Allies could sit back and wait until their overwhelming reinforcements arrive before starting to move forward. During playtesting this created an ahistoric 'Sitzkrieg' environment with the Japanese too weak to hurt the Allies, and the Allies waiting until they had a pat situation before prosecuting the war. The solution was to introduce the political pressure that drove many Allied strategic decisions.

The Allied imperative is how do they start to achieve their Political Will requirement starting on Turn 4 when their available ASPs are less than 5. The goal is to fight in locations that allow for large macro conversions of spaces (e.g., the Solomons, New Guinea, and the Marshalls), coupled with judicious successes in the CBI. As stated earlier, one of the key goals of the Japanese *hedgehog* strategy is to deny the Allies these macro conversion opportunities in the Solomons and New Guinea. The response is to use the enormous Allied spatial advantage to capture the Marshall Islands a year earlier in the war. Again, remember that another possible way to avoid early progress of the war penalties is combat in the CBI (China-Burma-India) theater.

At all costs defend Burma and strive to avoid having it surrender. The Allies do not need to hold onto more than one key hex to prevent surrender, so focus your energy on achieving this and avoiding the US PW hit. If the Japanese focus on CBI, then be prepared for a meatgrinder. The Allies in the aggregate have more ground replacements than the Japanese, but over a given turn both sides have the same rate of two (assuming the Japanese are pulling divisions out of China). Players will note that operations in CBI are slow. It is usually hard for a unit to advance more than one space per offensive, so only fight for key hexes. The Allies also have a natural spatial advantage due to China. Try to keep some units in China because it causes the Japanese to leave units to block their

movement. In the end, air power and a layered defense are the keys to a successful Allied strategy in the CBI.

If the Japanese choose to stand on the defensive on the Siam border or southern Burma, then the Allies need to attack. The Allies should expend at least one or two cards per turn in the CBI. They should also try and stretch the Japanese defense by starting an overland advance on Hanoi. The main goal is to force the Japanese to defend Indochina and bleed their ground and air forces. A successful offensive out of Burma can even begin to advance along the Chinese coast because it is presumed that the subsequent Japanese defense will inevitably have to draw down their divisions in China, making this an easier proposition late in the game.

Another Allied option that can be used is what I call the *Chicken Caesar* defense. If the Japanese do not conquer the Philippines or Malaya, look for opportunities to withdraw available ground units and reposition them in the DEI. Also, wherever possible preserve your air units until Allied reinforcements enter the game on Turn 3. In the end it is the Japanese that define the basic outlines of how any game will proceed, especially in the opening moves.

So, the key theme for the Allies is to hurt the Japanese elite units, fight for the DEI and exploit opportunities as they arise. It seems that early on players often find Japanese strategy and opportunities easier to exploit in the game. **EotS** is very finely balanced to achieve a 50-50 result. Most Japanese victories will come early. If you find that the Japanese are winning too often, I strongly encourage players to use the US Political Will bidding system, so more end games and a faster learning curve can be achieved.

Both Sides: Middle Game, 1943 to mid-1944 (Game turns 5-9)

It has been said about the game of **GO** that it has as many possible moves as there are atoms in the Universe. A friend and I once tried to figure this out and if you use some heroic assumptions about the size of the Universe you can definitely get an answer in the correct order of magnitude, giving tacit support to this assertion. If this idea is even close to true, then **EotS** possesses more possibilities than **GO**. The point of this comment is it is very hard to say how to

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proceed in the Middle game without characterizing the opening.

A good way to think about how to conduct Allied Offensives is taken right out of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey of 1 July 1946, *"For long-range amphibious advances against strongly defended positions a typical pattern developed. Japanese bases flanking the United States objective were smothered by a concentration of air power. Such bases as were within reach were hammered by shore-based air. Carrier-based air and available shore-based air softened the area to be occupied, and as the amphibious force moved up, fast carriers advancing beyond the objective struck swift blows at all positions which could threaten the objective area. With close air support from both escort and fast carriers and a concentration of gunfire from combatant ships of the support force, an amphibious assault over the beaches was made. The objective was secured under air support and cover from the carriers, which were not withdrawn until air fields ashore could be prepared and activated."* This is a textbook formula for how the Allies need to coordinate their assets to achieve maximum results in **EoS** and is built into the fabric of the design.

Assuming that the Japanese have followed the historical script, then the Allies will probably find themselves doing the same. The early Allied efforts should be to first retake the Solomons and the north coast of New Guinea. This will put Allied air power in range of Truk, neutralizing it as a base. Once this has occurred, the Allies should then isolate and conquer the Marshall Islands. The key to any middle game strategy for the Allies is the capture of the Marianas Islands, particularly Saipan/Tinian (3813), although there are alternative locations like Marcus Island (4110). These alternatives are particularly important if the Japanese player over-defends the Marianas. If the Allies capture Saipan (or an alternative site) by game Turn 8, then their Turn Nine B29 air unit (remember the B29, like HQs, cannot be delayed) can be placed there and the strategic bombing campaign begins on schedule. Another alternative is to base a B29 out of China. This is an additional incentive for the Japanese to have an active CBI theater by cutting the Burma Road to slow this B29 deployment. If B29 deployment can't be accomplished (flying in from Northern India means it cannot bomb on Turn 9), then the invasion of Japan is the only way for the Allies to win the game.

Even if the Allied strategic bombing campaign begins on schedule, the Allies still need to continue playing the game as if they are going to invade Japan. The best way to think about this is to work your way back from the final objective in terms of land based airpower range. A good strategy is to get land based air within range of Honshu, and the best way to do that is from Kyushu. Getting Allied land based planes into normal range of Kyushu is usually done from Okinawa (3209). Working even further back, the best place to get air power within range of Okinawa is Formosa (3009), and the next step back is the Philippines.

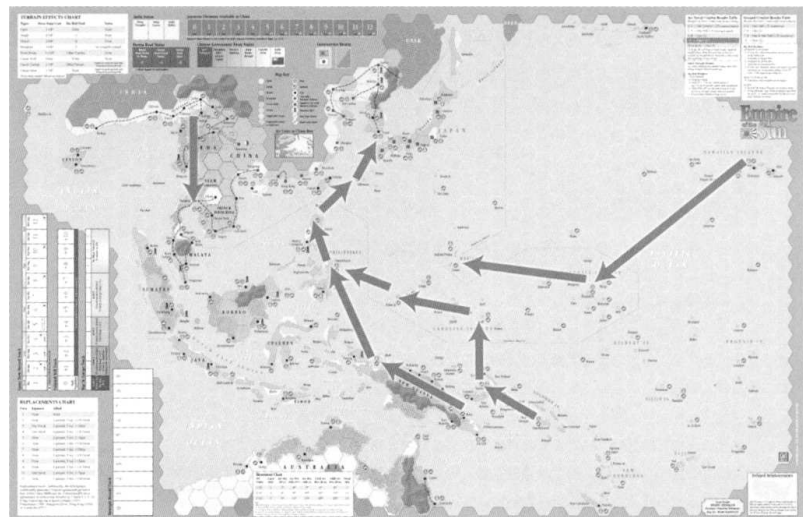
The Philippines can be circumvented by a direct attack on Formosa, but this will require a large fleet of CVs and a reasonably weak Japanese air force. Consequently it is often a good idea to take Luzon via Leyte as a platform to attack Formosa, or make a direct attack on Okinawa using non-LRB air at half strength from the north Luzon airfield. There are also a number of excellent cards that make the Philippines an attractive objective for the late-middle game. In either case, the Allied advance at some point in the late middle game needs to end up in the neighborhood of Kyushu with land based air power if they are to effect a successful invasion of Honshu.

The other major component of the Allied

middle game strategy is to seek and destroy the Japanese air and naval forces. As long as the Japanese maintain a fleet in being, the Allies have to move under the assumption that every offensive could bring on a major battle. This threat of Japanese air and naval reaction, forces the Allies to seriously protect each of their middle game offensives (as they did historically) or suffer potential setbacks. Although the Allies appear to have overwhelming force by Turn 8, they still need to be careful. Only a limited amount of naval losses can be replaced and the combination of Japanese reaction forces, augmented by Kamikaze cards, can rapidly cause a large number of step losses. Therefore, the destruction of Japanese naval and air forces remains a constant Allied priority during the middle game.

The flip side of Allied strategy becomes the Japanese strategy. At this point in the game, it is assumed that the Japanese are probably not going to win a negotiated settlement. However, the Japanese still need to create situations where they can kill a US Marine Division or Army Corps (-1 PW) to keep the Allied player honest and potentially pull off a late game negotiation victory. All key locations need to have full strength armies on them supported by air power, if possible. This is where a CBI heavy Japanese strategy

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Allied Axes of Advance

This diagram shows the basic Allied Axes of Advance to set up the Invasion of Japan and initiate the Strategic Bombing Offensive.

Designer's Notes by Mark Herman

(Continued from page 43)

can hurt because the loss of ground steps with such a strategy is inevitable, making it difficult to properly defend the key invasion routes due to lack of replacements from China.

A defending full strength Japanese army, or two reduced armies, can potentially knock out six steps of Allied ground units in an amphibious assault. A valuable event play for Japan is the 'Defense Doctrine' card (#31), whose permanent +1 ground DRM (for battles fought on any one hex island) can be the difference between victory and defeat. A well-fortified island position will require that the Allies soften up the objective by reducing the Japanese army and air units, which takes a card. For the Allies to ignore this possibility is to court disaster. This is a situation where two reduced armies (which can't be eliminated via air-naval combat) are a bit better than a full strength army, but at the sacrifice of stacking limits (which reduces the amount of air power that can support the defense). Since even a reduced Japanese army can eliminate three steps in ground combat, the Allies are forced to bring three ground units to well defended positions if they want to avoid potential US PW casualty penalties.

During the middle game the Japanese need to embrace economy of force operations. A bold reaction at the wrong time can see the entire Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) eliminated, leaving the Allies with a fairly free hand for the remainder of the game. A fleet in being strategy works to the Japanese benefit because it causes the Allies to advance under the assumption that the Japanese can sortie out the entire fleet for the final showdown. This threat alone will cause the Allies to use more resources to take less territory. If this threat is removed, the Allied advance will quickly pick up momentum.

If the Japanese do not follow the historical script, then if the Allies have not lost the game by Turn 8, the possibility of the Japanese winning through a negotiated settlement becomes very remote. In this case, the Allies should have advanced faster than the historical timeline and consequently the possibility of an A-bomb victory increases. As I said earlier, it is very hard to say much more about the middle game without knowing the result of the opening plays. Having said this, geography and air power ranges drive Allied objectives, so applying the map's spatial logic is the Japanese player's best guide for where they need to defend.

Both Sides: Late game, late 1944-45 (game turns 10-12)

The dominating character of any **EotS** end game is how both sides position themselves for the invasion of Japan. Assuming that the Allied strategic bomber offensive is on track, and if the Tojo Resigns/Invasion of Manchuria combination has already played out, then the Allies should seriously look at going for an A-bomb victory. If only the Tojo Resigns card has been played, the Allies need to plan and position their forces for the big invasion. They should still pick up on the cheap any resource hexes that the Japanese have either abandoned or are weakly held as a hedge that the Invasion of Manchuria card play will occur prior to game Turn 12.

The Japanese player should start to pull forces back for the defense of Japan if it looks likely that invasion is the only way for the Allies to win. If the possibility of an A-bomb victory still exists, the Japanese need to be cautious in how much they denude their DEI positions of ground and air defenses. A successful Japanese defense of Honshu usually rests on having sufficient air power available. A significant Imperial victory is whenever the Japanese can turn

Charts and Tables

by Steve Carey

The charts and tables included with **Empire of the Sun** are extremely helpful, and they do provide the basics for navigating your way through the various aspects of play. Listed below are a small group of additional reminders that I've found helpful to pencil in:

- **Quick Start Set Up Map** — The DD US Asia naval unit should be in hex 2616 (Tarakan, with the Dutch regiment). A Dutch Regiment should be in hex 2721 (Toepang).
- **Air Naval CRT** — the +4 Ambush DRM applies to the Allies (not just the US).
- **Terrain Effects Chart** — the MP cost only applies when moving via a



Trans Route into a hex that is not enemy occupied (land units must pay the full terrain cost to enter any enemy occupied hex).

- **Replacements** — may not arrive into a hex that is within an un-neutralized enemy ZOI (that existed prior to the Replacement phase), i.e., the same restriction as a Reinforcement.
- **Submarine Warfare** — in addition to reducing the Japanese hand size by one card for the current turn, a successful submarine warfare roll also permanently reduces Japanese ASP by 1, and will also reduce Escorts (+4 to +2, or +2 to 0). Note that Japan's minimum hand size is 4 Cards, and Japan can never lose its last ASP.
- **Strategic Bombing** — a successful B29 roll also increases Political Will by 1 (limited to once per game turn).
- **US Political Will** — US Casualties penalty (-1 PW) only applies to indicated units that are capable of receiving replacements (not 'dot' units).

- **Occupation of Alaska penalty** (-1 PW) requires the Japanese to occupy an Aleutian Island hex for 2 consecutive turns.

- **Occupation of Alaska** — (Clarification) this *does not* apply if captured on Turn 1; disregard penalty for entire game in such case.

- **Occupation of Hawaii** — (Clarification) this *does not* apply if captured on Turn I; disregard penalty for entire game in such case.

- **Progress of the War requirement** (+5 hex occupation starting on turn 4) may also include capture of a Resource hex, or a 1 hex Island (that contains a port or airfield), in addition to a mainland named location, port, or airfield.



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back an Allied invasion of a Honshu hex since it is usually attended by large Allied casualties.

The Japanese have to be a little bit careful to maintain a link to the Asian mainland, particularly the Korean resource hex (3305), otherwise there exists the potential for an Allied blockade (see 12.93). Historically the Allies never penetrated into the Sea of Japan with surface units, but if the Japanese air and naval forces are sufficiently reduced, the possibility of an Allied invasion of Korea to cut Japan off exists. The Japanese often will use the I8-18 Korean Army for offensive operations early in the game. It is a good idea to consider leaving this force in Korea for the duration of the game, or at a minimum returning it to this location to make this a difficult Allied undertaking.

Allied strategies in the end game are eliminating the Japanese air force and whatever remnants of the IJN that still exist. The most important focus of the end game is to get sufficient Allied ground power onto Honshu with sufficient time (e.g., cards in hand) to conquer Honshu's seven hexes (six of which have intrinsic garrisons; 3606 does not). This invasion is almost always very bloody and if US PW is

low enough a late war negotiated Japanese victory always remains a possibility.

The Allies usually need to reposition one of their HQs at the end of the game. It is particularly effective to get a Joint Allied HQ positioned close to Japan to enable the use of Commonwealth ground and naval units in the late game. A key card combination for the Allies is to use one of the Conference cards that confer the exchange a card with the discard pile bonus allowing the Allies to regain a major military event such as Operation Coronet to launch their initial Honshu invasion. Allied focus should be on taking a Honshu port as their first objective. Once a port is captured, the Allies should pour ground forces into Japan via Strategic Transport, particularly Commonwealth ground units who are immune from US PW penalties, for the final conquest of the island.

There is no particular subtlety to the defense of Honshu. Having every Honshu hex covered with a ground unit to augment the intrinsic defense, backed by at least one air unit, is the best hope for Japanese victory. Here again, the Defense Doctrine +1 DRM, coupled with the normal +3 AA benefit, can result in some nasty outcomes

for the Allies as they grind towards Japan. The Japanese should consider a ground counteroffensive prior to the Allies expanding from a Honshu port unless the number of Allied cards remaining is insufficient for them to finish the job. No matter how it goes, the final conquest of Honshu offers few opportunities for subtle moves and is very costly in resources for both sides. If the Allies can avoid invading Japan they should, but if not, use maximum force for all attacks or potentially suffer a game losing setback. For the Japanese it is a fight to the last unit, with victory often occurring on the last card of the game.

Conclusion

Japanese strategy always dominates the opening phase and the character of the game as a whole. Once the Japanese, through their early actions, have defined the broad outlines of their defensive perimeter it is up to the Allies to figure out how to penetrate it to bring their forces to bear against Japan. The number of combinations and permutations are beyond this article to fully articulate, but hopefully the basic themes are now a bit more visible. I hope you have as much fun playing **EoS** as I do.



Examples of Play

by Steve Carey

The following are a few clarifications to enhance examples included in the rulebook:

Page 12, 627 Special Reaction Move — for this example, it is presumed that the Japanese first moved a CV (just off-map example) to neutralize the ZOI of the 7th AF air unit and thus allow the landing of the ground unit at Kauai.

Page 40, Borneo Step 3 — Post-Battle Movement may occur, even though no actual battle occurred — any activated units are allowed to PBM as required.

Page 41, Hong Kong Step 2 — there is a modifier of -2 DRM to the roll of the Japanese 17th Army since the battle hex is Mixed Terrain.

Page 41, Philippines Step 10 — the invading Japanese 14th army would be halved on defense (since it is amphibiously invading), and the defending Allied NL Corps likewise gets +3 DRM

to its roll, so mathematically the I4th army must suffer at least 1 Hit (and would be eliminated with 2 Hits on an Allied roll of 6+). Note that Surprise does not apply to Ground Combat (which is always simultaneous).

Page 41, Philippines Step 11 — since hex 2913 is mixed terrain, the Japanese I9th Army would only receive a +2 DRM (+2 for Air Superiority, +2 for Naval Superiority, -2 for Mixed Terrain).

Page 42, Game Turn 2 — all Allied Turn 2 Reinforcements go into the Delay Box except the SEAC HQ (since HQ's are never delayed). Also, there is only I (not two) US Army ground unit (the I1th Corps) and 3 US Army air units present to each make a diversion roll for Europe.

Page 42, Replacement Phase — Place the



returning 7th AF non-LRB unit in Midway (5108) and the returning 7th AF LRB unit in Oahu (5808).

Page 43, Col Tsugi, Unit 82 — since the card text states that "Only Japanese ground units may be activated", the 22nd air flotilla and the BB Kongo2 would not be able to activate (done so in this example for illustrative purposes only). Also, the 25th Army could not move from Kota Bharu (2112) to Kuantan (2014) since *Col. Tsugi* only provides 2 MPs (it's OC value), and the Trans Route movement rate cannot be used to enter an enemy occupied hex (must pay full MP cost).

Further, note that the +4 DRM provided during combat is correct; *Col. Tsugi's* card text neutralizes the normal terrain benefit. Finally, the 8th Australian could not leave Singapore (to move into Kuantan) since it could not leave a declared battle hex.

Page 43, Battle of Kuantan — it is of course the British who retreat into Singapore, not the Japanese.