

Core Principles of Advanced A&A

Posted By: Robert Brink

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If you are new to competitive club play, once you finish this article, you will increase your winning percentage significantly. There are even a few tricks included that may surprise the old hands.

The allies must either contain and crush Germany or blast Japan out of Asia. Crushing Japan is a complex task and currently, among all of the A&A clubs, only DexDex of Spring has a consistently effective anti-Japan strategy. Everyone occasionally pushes Japan off the board but that's more as a result of Japan teching in an effort to save Germany. Slowing Japan is a component of crushing Germany, but actually setting out to eliminating Japan is a rare strategy style.

To keep things clear, I'll stick with the more direct approach of going after Germany.

For the allies to win, they must eliminate or completely contain Germany before Japan can acquire major techs and enough units to make them effective. Because of infantry push mechanics, that is to say, the superior defensive capacity of units in the game, it is more effective to absorb territories than to take them by force.

The First Three Rounds Determines The Winner

In club play, the Axis and Allies is the exact opposite of Larry Harris' vision. It is not the Axis the must make a move early but rather the allies. Germany and Japan are weak early and that is when they must be controlled. Between rounds 1 and 4 Germany doesn't have the capacity to hold WE and EE while guarding Germany. Plus, they have not had the benefit of several rounds of African IPC control. It is during this time that the allies must make their move or face a strong probability of defeat.

A. EE is the Game

Locking down EE is the key to defeating Germany. In addition to the six IPC swing from losing EE and not being able to trade Ukraine, eventually it will result in the trading of another six IPC in SE. Lastly, it will allow the allies to eventually take SE and lastly WE. This encirclement is necessary to complete the destruction of a skilled Axis player. The allies can move into SE before they have enough to hold for certain. They just need enough that Germany will be decimated in the attack. This will allow the allies to lock down WE. In addition, the allies get a much better trade rate than they would in an attack. They may still be losing more IPC value but it's nothing like it would be if those units had been present for the final defense of German. See IPC recapture below.

B. North Sea is Critical for Axis

By using openings that force Germany to leave the North Sea alive, UK2/R3 becomes the perfect opportunity. In cases where Ukraine or a Ukraine counter did not go terribly wrong, Russia can keep Germany from moving into EE by threatening with all units available. Do not take Finland with USSR if you have the opportunity to lock down EE! When you see the USSR sending 4 or more infantry to Finland on R2, you can relax as axis. That simple act often means victory for the Axis. Every single unit is key in making a Russian threat on EE real. If Germany can move into EE on G2, on G3 the ftrs can land. After than Germany just gets stronger while UK and USSR get relatively weaker. If UK can move in 5 units on UK2 or 8 units on UK 3 followed by the USSR units and two USA ftrs, a German counter will leave only a few armor behind. Not only will the armor be destroyed but also USA will lock down WE. Result: early death for the Axis.

From the Axis perspective, you've got to figure out a way to get the Russians to let you hit the North Sea with the Spain sub. Two in EE generally ensures this. Unless you have an 18 bid, that means a two ftr swing in Asia. Japan will lose a ftr in Manch and won't be able to kill the USA ftr in China if the allies successfully run Manch/Kwang, the "Kwang Surprise". Two rounds later the allies will have 8 trans, 6ftrs and two bombers threatening Germany. That means that EE is going down. Next time you hear some A&A guru say, "Let them run Kwang, I will kill all the Russian units. It's a trap I set as Axis," take a

look at that player's Axis record against opponents of his own rate. Putting one in Kwang is generally needed to prevent or discourage the dual attacks.

As for myself, I always put at least one unit in EE for the following reasons:

1. Two inf or even one in EE will often force Russia to retreat if the battle in Ukraine goes poorly. An extra ftr will allow Germany to hold EE on G1, pure paradise for an Axis player.

2. It is generally not the best choice to go after the North Sea if you don't have a sub to send. That extra transport just isn't worth it. You may as well hit the Med BB instead which means you can't land the ftrs in EE and must pull out for a round even if things went well in Ukraine. Hence, the need to encourage Russia to send the sub/trans to the Baltic.

3. As noted in 2., EE helps establish the North Sea attack.

a. The North Sea attack is important because; first it prevents UK from clearing Finland and encourages Russia to do it - thus removing enough forces to allow Germany to control EE from G2 on; and secondly because it will sometimes even allow Germany to hold both WE and EE on G1 because the ftrs can land in EE.

b. It sets up a situation where UK will be tempted to trade BB for BB forcing them to buy a CV. That slows down UK by a two rounds of action. Why spend 8 on a blocker for the UK BB? If you're Russia, you want Germany shipping guys to Africa. You'll have EE from R3 on.

c. It allows Germany to threaten the USA trans. If the Russian sub went Baltic, the USA must hold back a trans or risk getting bitten. If possible, this should be used in conjunction with taking Hawaii in Asia. It will often motivate USA not to buy any trans USA 1. -Critical for not getting forced out of EE.

4. Germany must get off to a solid start. After G3-G5, German defenses are set; in addition Japanese ftrs should have arrived. Early, Germany is struggling to hang on. It's great to have Africa but if you've lost WE or EE in the process the points you're gaining in Africa will be more than offset.

C. Long Term Implications of Not Taking EE Early

If the allies do not take EE early, by round 7 Germany will have enough units in Europe that the eventual capture of Germany will require a minimum of six additional rounds just to ship in the attackers. -And that's assuming no trading losses for allies! Often this delay will result in Russia being traded for Germany. This is a good deal except that Japan will have numerous units on the board and will be able to tech heavily. To liquidate Germany early it is often good to ignore all but the four western most African territories and drop every other available unit into EE or Spain. The 12 IPC gained for trading WE and SE will offset the IPC loss of eastern Africa: 8 IPCs. In addition, it will bleed off some of Germany's units making the final capture of Germany easier.

Spanking the baby: Germany is like a little infant that quickly grows up to be a gnarled old man. Don't let Germany get away with saving three IPC to mess around in Sweden or buying a sub to block the UK BB on G1. The two extra units missing from Europe should be enough to force Germany out of EE early if Ukraine went normally: especially since UK didn't need to buy a capital ship! If Germany wants to do anything other than play conservative, make sure you put so much pressure on WE and EE that they'll be shipping units to Europe from Africa, not the other way around.

When ever someone tells you, "I think it's great when the allies put everything into Europe, Africa stays mine and Russia must face Japan alone," look at their Axis record against players of their own rate. It won't be good even if that person is highly skilled.

D. Resource Allocation and Misdirection

1. Africa

Per Russell's GOA corner, use trans to hold Africa and don't give up Egypt to the Allies until very late. This is only partially for IPCs.

It's primarily for timing and misallocation of resources. Africa is a con game; don't fall for it as allies if you can lock down Europe quickly. Otherwise as allies, you've got to get units into position

quickly and do an all armor buy timed with moving the AF in position to hit Egypt EARLY.

Frequently, as Axis, you can bait the allies into sending as many as 80 IPC worth of units to take back Egypt, sometimes much more. This is only possible if they didn't position themselves to hit it hard early. That is why being able to hit the North Sea is so critical. I'm almost to the point of recommending an all German bid for this reason. ie 2 EE, 3 Lybia, or 5 Lybia. For the time being, I still recommend a 3/1/1 variation. 2 inf and armor in Africa, 1 EE, 1 Kwang. The reason for placing the armor in Africa is simple. It reduces the odds of UK getting 3 hits by 3%; from 6% to 3%. If you don't place it there, 1 in 20 games, UK will be able to easily counter Egypt. Since I recommend using a BB trade opening, this means certain defeat for Axis barring abnormally good tech rolls.

Kwang/Manch, the "Kwang Surprise" is brutal but if you can get off to a good start as Germany, the Axis is still in a position to win. The two fighter swing and severe IPC loss hurts but not as much as having Germany surrounded by G5. Pick your poison, EE threat or Kwang. Much of it depends on knowing how aggressive your opponent is. Alternatively, learn to play allies well enough to ensure your opponents give an 18 bid. If you follow the recommendations in this article and go after Germany early, you'll get a good record no matter how skilled your opponent is with Axis. Eventually, they'll start giving up the big bids.

Back to misdirection. The Axis is much more mobile and can control Africa more easily. I'm assuming that Japan has gone with a trans strategy. IC's can be very useful using this method if they are placed in FIC and then India. Still, this should only be done in games you're clearly winning. You won't have the IPCs to place units, roll tech, and defend your ICs as Japan. Plus it makes it much easier for the allies to counter your tech. Late game, the allies can roll 12 dice per turn to catch up. Southern ICs not only back Russia off but they allow direct shipment of units to Egypt. Don't put an IC in Manch until you're going for the kill. It is a total waste. The FIC IC is much more critical for position control and going for the IPC. Don't place an India IC until you've got a very strong position in Asia or you've got a shot at IPC. India can hit Persia, which is key for the IPC. The allies will come after it if Japan is weak, so watch out. Again, the ICs also set the axis up to have their tech countered so weigh the risks.

The southern IC's help prevent Persian Push type tactics. With Germany controlling Africa with Japan's assistance, they can maintain enough pressure on Karelia to prevent the massive UK movement to Persia that is necessary for the Push to work. It's a system that must tie together. i.e., Triangulation. Japan helps Germany stay in Africa and by doing so, Germany has the strength to pressure Karelia enough that Japan can continue to do so.

Eventually the system breaks down as Karelia become impregnable. By this time, Japan should be making about 43+ a turn, Germany should be defensively set and Africa should be well defended.

Much of the Egypt defense is in the form of ftrs that can evacuate quickly and it leaves the allies with a 20 or more units that are 4 rounds away from anywhere of major influence. That is huge. If the allies have fallen for the bait, stay conventional as Axis and you should be in position to take Russia. If not, the IPC situation and stable German defense will allow for exorbitant tech rolling. If the allies are going all out for Germany, you'll need to avoid taking risks with Germany and may be forced to ball up. Even so, Japan will have numerous rounds to tech and the allies won't be able to counter because of the lack of Japanese ICs. To take Germany out, the allies must sacrifice significant gains because of IPC recapture.

II. Spain

Running the Spain Gambit, or "Spanish Harlem" as it is occasionally called, is really tricky and can be a bad trap for the allies if done incorrectly. You must have one of two things working for you. Either A, you took Africa early as allies, in which case Spain is a great move; or B, you are pressuring Germany with Russian armor to keep Germany from loading WE heavily. This will allow USA to move in early. Combined with a move to SE on the previous turn, this is devastating. USSR can move into WE to lock it down for USA. USA puts in an IC and Germany will be done quickly.

On the other hand, if Japan has enough units in Novo that Russia is paralyzed and UK must send reinforcements each round, Spain is not a good idea. It may allow the allies to weakly hold EE but frequently you'll see 120 IPC worth of USA units trapped there until very late game. Eventually, those USA units will be useful but for

several rounds they are just sitting there. The axis will have Africa and Japan will be pulling in almost 50 IPC a turn for several rounds. By the time USA has the strength to force it's way into WE, Germany will have 60+ units in defense. Japan will either be able to make a move on Russia or will be able to tech for many rounds and still have a powerful ground force in the form of the retreated Novo units.

E. IPC Recapture.

To clear out Germany, the allies must waste several rounds of production. Unless overwhelming force can be used, the attacker loses a tremendous amount of IPC in units.

Plus, ground units that have moved significant distance must be wasted. If Germany is curled up late game with 70 units and 6 ftrs, one nation will need to amass 1bmb, 2ftr, 22 armor and 58 infantry to take her. That's 284 IPC worth of ground units. Since more than one nation must make the attack, it actually far higher than that! Just shipping them in takes long enough to ensure that Russia is threatened and Japan has all techs. Also, Germany is strong enough that they can shift back and forth crushing units, sometimes at a three to one ratio, recapturing even more IPCs. Losing 11 infantry in exchange for 4 is the same as having Russia heavy bombed to zero for a round. Generally however, power retreats are not good for Germany unless they can kill at a very significant ratio. Those extra defenders will make killing Germany very taxing.

When the allies take down Germany, they will be spent. The same is generally not true of Japan because the size of the armies involved is smaller and Japan has units in reserve that are slowly moving to the front. Even so, Japan is losing units that have advanced 3 to 4 rounds worth of distance! When they are spent, it will be a while before they will be able to move enough units into Europe to have any meaning.

Late game, Germany will often have enough to safely hold two territories using a weak or strong side defense. Clarification: Placing all armor and enough infantry/ftrs to keep then safe on one side with a stack of infantry in the middle, thus threatening allied units on the other side. Shifting left to right will keep the allies out of position for several rounds and also allow for tremendous IPC recapture. It is more critical to hold WE than EE when doing this as

Germany. It forces the USA to land in Spain or go all the way around to EE.

Here is a specific example: If the allies have left infantry holding down SE and have sent the Russian armor to fight Japan, you can shift into EE with a large force and leave a small one to defend Germany. This places pressure on Karelia while at the same time threatening WE. This threat prevents a major move into WE unless the IC in SE is given up. Even if a few armor are in Karelia, it won't be able to hit Germany so few troops can be left there and the bulk can be put in EE. This defense requires an odds calc to run properly.

You shut down such defenses as allies by buying a few armor with Russia when you make the move into EE. It prevents many of the defensive counters, especially the center press defense. This is where Germany gives up WE and moves all units into SE and Germany. If Russia has not placed significant armor in Karelia, Germany can threat EE and WE with every single unit without risking SE or Germany. Don't allow the German player to do this.

As a final note on this subject, it is often better to simply surround Germany then hit Japan with everything. Germany will only be adding 3 units a turn assuming that USA isn't bombing them to 0. By sending every available unit to hit Japan, it limits the tech that can be rolled and also limits the effectiveness of any tech acquired. Japan has fewer IPCs, fewer ground units, more targets to hit, more positions to defend, inability to divert units to distract or threaten USA, etc..

F. Planning One Round Ahead

You're not expected to be Yuri Geller; but you should calculate your moves one round in advance. If Germany couldn't hit the North Sea and you've made an early dump into Africa, following it up with an all-armor buy may not be a bad idea. You'll be able to hit Africa on UK 4 with 4/5/2/1 assuming a ftr was lost killing the German trans. You may even want to buy a bomber on the round that the armor lands in Algeria if two ftrs were lost. This will be followed by a USA hit (if properly timed) of 6/4/2/1 on USA 4. The Axis cannot resist those attacks that early in the game. That's another reason why North Sea is so critical. Everything must tie together for a strategy to work against a good player. Although it may seem like a stupid move,

allowing the German BB/trans to be destroyed by the second UK BB is often worth it. It sets UK back by two rounds on the Africa move. This is enough time for Japan to get into position to hold.

From the Allied perspective, calculate what German could throw against Karelia a round in the future. If Germany has all of it's armor, ftrs, and just a handful of infantry in WE when you're going after Japan with Russia, don't underestimate what Germany could do next round. Your opponent is setting up to hit Karelia. He's going to buy all armor, give up WE and shift every available unit to EE. That is a lot of firepower. Frequently when you move the armor/ftrs to WE as Axis, the allied player will see that there is no pressure on Karelia and send a significant force to Asia and Africa. To make matters worse, they'll often set up a situation where the UK ftrs must support the advanced USSR army. I see this all the time and it is the worst thing possible. Don't be one of those guys crying dice when you see a stack of German armor in Karelia because you weren't planning ahead in a game that you were winning. If you are pushing Japan back, don't screw it up by giving Germany a chance to put Axis back in the game. Alternatively, if you're doing the march to Caucus, be sure you purchased and positioned the Japanese armor properly in advance. - Whether moving the armor to Caucus in support or simply to Novo, you've got to have the timing set.

As either an Axis or Allied player, the keys to winning are timing attacks in advance, working as a collective, and holding key locations. Triangulate, absorb, and destroy.

RobertBrink
Periodic Spring GOA