

Reprinted from the pages of ULTRA, a quarterly newsletter devoted to *A WORLD AT WAR*, GMT Games' strategic simulation of World War II.

To order AWAW, go to [www.gmtgames.com](http://www.gmtgames.com) or phone 1-800-523-6111.

# PREPARING FOR BARBAROSSA

## Collapsing the Rotten Structure of Bolshevism

by Ken Cruz and Bruce Harper

### Introduction

One of the showpiece operations of any game of *A WORLD AT WAR* is the invasion of Russia, more commonly referred to by its historical name "Operation Barbarossa". This was a vast undertaking by the Axis. Historically, the Axis were not well prepared. The Germans had envisioned a quick conquest of Russia before the year was out. They felt the fighting would be over before winter set in, so little winter equipment or clothing was provided, nor were any long term preparations made. Logistical problems were largely ignored. The rest is history.

As an *A WORLD AT WAR* player, you can do more to prepare for Barbarossa than your historical counterparts – and you had better make sure you do if you want to avoid a repetition of the disaster on the eastern front. No plan survives the first contact with the enemy, but this article will explore the preparations that can be made by the Axis to provide a successful foundation for the prosecution of the war against Russia and the end of the Bolshevik threat to European civilization.

### Preliminaries

Before attacking Russia, the Axis have to complete several tasks to ensure that they can concentrate on Russia without undue interference from the meddling Western Allies.

#### France

It goes without saying that France must be conquered before Germany can seriously consider attacking Russia. There will undoubtedly be an ULTRA article exploring the possibilities of a German attack on Russia in Summer 1940, but that will be a different article. Whether the Germans attack in the west in

Winter 1939 or Spring 1940, France and the Low Countries should be in German hands by the end of the Summer 1940 game turn.

#### Norway

While attacking France, the Axis also need to take care of Norway. Once Norway is conquered it is no longer a diplomatic target and the German iron ore shipments from Sweden are safeguarded. More importantly, German control of Norway allows Germany to base naval and air units in the Murmansk box. This gives Germany the option of opposing Murmansk convoys, while at the same time it allows Germany to raid into the Atlantic if the opportunity presents itself.

#### Britain

Before launching Barbarossa in Summer 1941, the Axis need to weaken Britain so the British have trouble sending aid to Russia or causing other mischief. In addition, even the most optimistic Axis player should recognize that it is possible that Russia might survive the Axis onslaught, and then the position on the rest of the board becomes important to the next stage of the game. There are a number of ways the Axis can hamstring Britain, both before and during the invasion of Russia:

- **Submarine Warfare:** A serious effort in the Atlantic, at least in 1940-1942, is the best way to keep Britain, and eventually the U.S., off balance. If the Western Allies are rebuilding transports and building CVEs, they aren't building destroyers. And if the U.S. has to grant BRPs to Britain, this may reduce the BRP grants to Russia.

- **Raiders:** The Germans should raid every turn they can. The window of opportunity for raiding opens in Fall 1940, with the conquest of France and German air superiority over the English Channel, and closes at the end of 1941 when the U.S. enters the war. There is some risk to an aggressive raiding campaign, of course, as the German capital ships later may be very useful for preventing Murmansk convoys. But every transport sunk delays the destroyer buildup necessary for a Western Allied invasion of France later in the war, and fleet combat arising out of raiding may attrition the British navy and make it more difficult for the Western Allies to take the initiative in the Mediterranean. At some point the remaining major German naval units should switch to the Murmansk box.
- **Freeze the British with an invasion threat:** While we, and every ULTRA reader, know that your ultimate goal is Russia, an Allied player who assumes that Britain is safe from invasion is taking a big chance. After France falls, the Germans should set up for an invasion of Britain, if only to prevent the British from sending units to South Africa and the Middle East. If the British don't take the invasion threat seriously, you may have to carry out the threat, and the game will take an entirely different turn. It can also happen that the *Luftwaffe* hammers the Royal Navy, so even a failed invasion can turn out to be an Axis success. If the German AAF goes to the Mediterranean, no credible threat to invade Britain can be made, so the Axis player has to be sure that the German air achieves something concrete in the Mediterranean.
- **Bombing:** Unless the German air leaves for warmer climes, the Germans should bomb London at least once, usually in Fall 40. If possible, the Germans should bomb again in Winter 1940 and Spring 1941. Bombing will eliminate a sizeable portion of the British air force, reduce Britain's BRP base, or both. The British will eventually rebuild their missing AAF and develop the potential for offensive operations, but this takes time and American aid rarely as great as the Germans fear or the British hope. However, the Axis player must be careful not to overdo it, because excessive air losses over Britain may make it impossible to have all the

German AAF built in time for Barbarossa.

- **Push in Egypt:** A small number of German units in Libya may energize the Italians and allow the Axis to push the British back towards Suez. Absent an Allied blunder or a run of very good luck, getting across the Suez canal is too much to hope for, but a series of 11-20 attritions using two German 3-3 infantry units could get the Axis an occasional hex, while a timely 1:1 attack might result in a big payoff. Again, as with bombing, the Axis have to be careful not to commit too much to Egypt, as air and armor units in the Middle East won't be in Russia, and their absence could be crucial, especially in 1942.



## Research and Production

Preparation for the attack on Russia can begin as early as Fall 1939, with the initial Axis RP allocations. A word of caution is in order, though. If the Axis skew their research and production towards Russia early in the game, they may miss other, more promising opportunities against Britain. This applies to all aspects of the game, as there is an inherent conflict between committing to a specific plan early, for maximum effect, and flexibility and opportunism to take advantage of the

possibilities generated by luck or your opponent's mistakes. The advantages of preparation and planning, in research and production and in other areas, are obvious, but players often overlook the drawbacks to an early commitment to a single goal. Most of all, the Axis player must not lock himself into a single, all-consuming plan without any regard for what is actually happening in the game.

Of course, you also shouldn't run down every rabbit hole that comes along, and a good Allied player who discerns the Axis plan will do everything he can to distract the Axis player from following through. No one said the game was simple....

Back to the topic at hand. There are many things to consider so let's look at each research and production project that can assist the Axis with their assault on Russia. Unfortunately, the items on this "wish list" are often mutually exclusive...

## **Air**

### **Army Air**

As long as the Axis have the oil to use them, additional AAF are always useful. A couple of extra AAF may make all the difference in getting enough combat factors together for a critical overrun or to get to a 2.5:1 attack.

As the invasion of Russia develops, a larger German air force will give the Axis the potential to attack in more places in 1942, which may cause sufficient losses to collapse the Russian defense.

### **Air Transport**

Germany starts with one air transport and two airborne units, which limits Germany's airdrop capacity to one each turn. Adding a second air transport by production allows Germany to drop both their airborne units in the same turn. In Russia this can create tactical opportunities which make it more difficult for the Russians to defend effectively. The air transport units may also be used to provide air supply to isolated units. These possibilities make the production of a second air transport worth considering, despite its cost (two RPs with one air general research breakthrough; one RP with two air general research breakthroughs). A second air transport can also create all sorts of opportunities for invading Britain, but that's another story.

### **Strategic Bombers**

The development of a German strategic bomber

force allows the Axis to bomb Russian ICs, with three important consequences. Bombing eliminates Russian BRPs; reduces the Russian construction limit; and may create firestorms which erode the Russian resistance level. This last effect may be very important, as it means a Russian surrender may turn out to much more than just a temporary truce while Russia rebuilds its forces.

It's very difficult for the Russians to defend their ICs with AAF, because Russia is so big. This means Russia will probably have to produce some interceptors, but they are likely to be a step behind the German bomber force. The problem with German bombers is that they are expensive in terms of Axis RPs. Their value also declines as the game goes on if the Axis are forced onto the defensive.

## **Naval**

Our intention in this article is to confine our analysis to research and production which *directly* impacts on the Russian campaign, but, as noted above, naval pressure on Britain indirectly helps the invasion of Russia by weakening the Western Allies and making it more difficult for them to create an effective second front.

Whether direct or indirect pressure on Russia is more effective depends on a host of factors, including the temperament of the Axis player.

## **Military**

### **German Heavy Armor**

Heavy Armor may not be produced until after Germany is at war with Russia, and so cannot participate in an Operation Barbarossa. However they can be produced after Russia and Germany are at war, so investing RPs in Heavy Armor research and production can allow one 5-6 armor to be produced in Summer or Fall 1941 and a second in Spring 1942 to assist in the 1942 Summer offensive in Russia.

### **Italian Armor**

Italian 2-5 armor units may only exploit three hexes (unless their CTL is increased) and they are not as mobile as the German armor (which has a movement

### **The Fuehrer is Always Right**

"We have only to kick in the door and the whole rotten structure will come crashing down."

Infalible Nazi Dictator Adolf Hitler, referring to Bolshevik Russia's vulnerability

factor of six), but an extra Italian armor unit or two can extend the distance that the German armor can move during exploitation by serving as links in the exploitation chain. The Italian armor units are also handy for creating breakthrough hexes, provided the breakthrough attacks are made at 3:1 or greater odds (to create a breakthrough, the attacking armor unit must take part in the final round of ground combat –16.11A). This lets an additional stronger, more mobile German armor unit exploit. Italy starts with only one 2-5 armor unit. A second Italian 2-5 armor unit should be mobilized in Fall 1939 and built in Spring 1941, while one or two more Italian 2-5 armor units may be produced.

### **Infantry**

The Axis can produce either additional German 3-3 or 1-3 infantry units or Italian 3-3, 2-3 or 1-3 infantry units. While these units are always useful, they are primarily defensive in nature. The Axis must think offensively if they are going to destroy the Russians. These units are probably not the best investment early on, but may turn out to be very necessary later in the game.

### **Railheads**

In 1941 railheads are of little use to the Axis in Russia, because the front is so fluid and the advance to the east so rapid. In 1942, however, a railhead or two can be very handy, because some areas of Russia have almost no objectives and are therefore hard for the Germans to reinforce. If Turkey is activated by the Axis, a railhead in Kars (hex Z43) can be a nasty surprise for the Russians or even for the Western Allies.

### **Winter Preparation**

There are two schools of thought about winter preparation.

One is that winter preparation is a very worthwhile place to invest 1940 and 1941 Axis RPs, and that in A WORLD AT WAR the Axis player should not repeat the German mistake of having no plans or equipment to deal with the harsh Russian winters. Historically the Germans paid a heavy price for this lack of foresight, but why should you? This school of thought recommends producing one, if not two (at the maximum rate of one winter preparation per year, starting in 1940) levels of winter preparation before attacking Russia.

The other view is more cold-blooded, so to speak. Even with two winter preparation results, the German

offensive will grind to a halt in Winter 1941 and the Russian attrition will be harsh if the Germans expose their armor units. Regardless, the Germans will renew their attack in Summer 1942 and will benefit from an automatic two winter preparation levels in Winter 1942. From this perspective, winter preparation isn't important enough to justify more than one RP per result, because a severe winter in 1941 could mean a heavy investment in winter preparation in 1940 and 1941 is wasted.

### **Atomic**

Axis atomic research may be decisive, but not against Russia. By the time Germany gets the atomic bomb, London will be the only possible strategic target, although a timely tactical atomic detonation inside Germany may save the Reich for a turn or two.

### **Intelligence**

#### **Vlasovs**

Vlasovs arrive too late to make any appreciable difference in the 1941 and 1942 attack on Russia, but they can help defend against Russia in 1943 and 1944. Each occupation policies result also provides an additional modifier for the Ukraine, so the earlier Vlasovs are produced, the better.

#### **Counter Intelligence**

A counter-intelligence result is nice to have when the Russians place a spy ring somewhere the Axis don't want them to – such as German air or military research. When using a counter-intelligence result to eliminate a Russian spy ring, be gracious and smile broadly as you tell the Russian player to pick up his cherished spy ring counter.

#### **Covert Operations**

It is always handy to have a covert operation result in your back pocket, although covert operations are not particularly anti-Russian in their effect. They can be played to help reduce the effects of Russian subversion or to help cancel a Russian DP for a critical diplomatic roll.

#### **Espionage**

Axis spy rings can be very effective. Rumania and especially Turkey are excellent locations for an Axis minor spy ring, as a spy ring gives the Axis the upper hand in a crucial area of the board. But a particularly mean thing to do is to place a spy ring in Russian

general military research in 1939 or 1940. If the first Russian military breakthrough can be delayed, this can play havoc with the Russian player's carefully calculated production schedule.

## A Sample Research Program

The chart opposite shows one of many possible RP allocations for Fall 1939 and the 1940 and 1941 YSS, with an emphasis on a standard Summer 1941 attack on Russia. What is presented is by no means the final word on what the Axis can do prior to their attack on Russia. It is only provided as one approach of many. Readers are encouraged to experiment and modify these allocations to find something with which they are more comfortable or which seems better.

The tables below are abbreviated research sheets as the focus is on projects that will directly help the attack on Russia. Average research rolls ("3's" and "4's") are assumed. Most of the allocations to Intelligence are DPs. The remaining RPs can be allocated to whatever else the Axis might want to do. One obvious possibility is to put the bulk of them into naval projects to help out in the Atlantic, but that's a topic for another article.

The goal of this plan is to obtain the following results by the end of the Spring 1941 game turn:

- five AAF
- two levels of winter preparation
- one counter-intelligence result
- one covert operation result
- one occupation policies result
- and have two 5-6 armor units ready for the Summer 1942 offensive

The German five AAF and winter preparation results are the keys to this particular plan. The counter-intelligence and covert operation results are held in reserve to kill off an Allied spy ring in Rumania or Turkey and to help with the Rumanian diplomatic die roll.

While this is by no means the maximum amount of units that the Axis could produce prior to Summer 1941, it does represent a significant investment, while still leaving some RPs to pursue a submarine campaign in the Atlantic. But there's no doubt that with this type of RP allocation the Axis are banking heavily on a successful eastern campaign.

Axis RPs		10	15	16
	Code	1939	1940	1941
<b>Air</b>		1 <sup>Fa</sup> ③	+3 2 <sup>Sp</sup> ③	1 <sup>Sp</sup>
Air Production	2,3,4,5...		3 <sup>Sp</sup>	1 <sup>Sp</sup>
Air Transports	3,4,5,6...			
<b>Military</b>		2 <sup>Fa</sup> ③	+4 1 <sup>Sp</sup> ③	1 <sup>Sp</sup>
Heavy Armor		1 <sup>Fa</sup> ③	+2 1 <sup>Sp</sup> ③	1
Military Production	2,3,4,5...		Wi	3 <sup>Sp</sup>
Winter Preparation	3		2 <sup>Wi</sup>	2 <sup>Wi</sup>
<b>Intelligence</b>		1 <sup>Fa</sup> ③	+3 2 <sup>Sp</sup> ③	1 <sup>Sp</sup>
Counter-Intelligence			1 <sup>Sp</sup> ③	1 <sup>Fa</sup>
Covert Operations		1 <sup>Wi</sup> ③	+2 1 <sup>Sp</sup> ③	
Espionage				1 <sup>Su</sup>
Occupation Policies	4,5,6			3 <sup>Sp</sup>

## Diplomacy

The next part of the Axis preparation consists of maneuvering to secure the allegiance of Finland and the key Balkan minor countries, while simultaneously keeping Russia placated and docile. Much of what happens will be driven by the Russians, who have a variety of options; the Axis need to be ready for whatever transpires. The Russians may or may not demand the Finnish border hexes and Bessarabia from Rumania, and can do so at a time of their own choosing. Russia may also attempt to subvert a Balkan country. The Axis must be ready to deal with each eventuality, either diplomatically or militarily.

Before considering each relevant minor country, what Russian might try to do and what the Axis can do to counter likely Russian moves, it is important to understand the various modifiers that affect Finland and the Balkans.



## General Modifiers

The following general modifiers apply to all minor countries. The two most important modifiers are highlighted:

### General Modifiers:

- +/-3 The minor country is an active minor ally following a diplomatic result of "10" or "-3".
- +/-2 The minor country is an associated minor country following a diplomatic result of "9" or "-2" or an enemy declaration of war.
- +/-1 The minor country's hexes are controlled by a major power following a diplomatic result of "8" or "-1".
- +/-1 For each unbuilt minor country air, armor or infantry unit.**
- +/-1 For every five friendly ground/air factors in the minor country.**
- +/-1 For every five enemy ground/air factors in the minor country.

The +/-1 modifier for each unbuilt minor country air, armor or infantry unit is important because a Russian border war with Finland or Rumania will almost certainly lead to heavy casualties for the minor country involved, and the later this happens, the more likely there will be an adverse modifier for activating that minor country. This is because a minor country may only rebuild one infantry unit each turn:

### 84.47 UNIT CONSTRUCTION:

- A. An associated minor country may rebuild a single one- or two-factor infantry unit at no BRP cost each turn (EXCEPTION: Dutch units in the Dutch East Indies may not be rebuilt). No more than one infantry unit may be rebuilt each turn.
- B. Associated minor country units must be rebuilt in a controlled, supplied hex in the minor country which is not in an enemy ZoC (27.44).
- C. Associated minor country air and armor units may not be rebuilt unless the minor country activates as a minor ally.
- D. Associated minor country naval units may be repaired, but not rebuilt, in a shipyard controlled by their alliance faction.

For example, a Finnish border war in Winter 1939 and Spring 1940 is fine for the Axis, even if it leads to the elimination of all five Finnish 2-3 infantry units.

By Summer 1941, the Finnish army will be fully rebuilt. Conversely, a Russo-Rumanian border war in Summer 1940 which results in the elimination of all eight Rumanian infantry units will trigger a significant negative modifier which may keep Rumania out of the war until 1942.

The other important modifier is the +1 for every five friendly ground/air factors in the minor country. If the Axis obtain hex control of a minor country in 1940, they can get a +2 modifier for their 1941 diplomatic die roll for that minor country by stationing ten ground or air factors in the minor country. Once the required result is obtained, the troops can end their goodwill visit and go to the front.

## Balkan Modifiers

The Balkan countries also have a set of common modifiers that are worth a look, with the most commonly applicable ones being highlighted:

### Balkan Modifiers:

The following modifiers apply to each of Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania and Yugoslavia:

- 3 If Russia and Germany are at war and Russia controls more Balkan hexes than the Axis control hexes in Russia (eastern European hexes do not count).
- 2 If Italy has surrendered.
- 2 If France has not fallen (applicable only if the Axis are making the diplomatic die roll).**
- 2 If Germany has declared war on Spain.
- 2 If Germany had an economic interest in a Balkan country and failed to support it against a Russian attack.
- +1 If Russia has entered the Baltic States, Bessarabia or the Finnish border hexes.**
- +1 If Russia and Rumania fought over Bessarabia (66.2).
- +3 If Russia is at war with any Balkan country, other than an active German minor ally (including a war with Rumania over Bessarabia).
- +2 **For each use of Russian subversion to modify a diplomatic die roll, other than for the target of the subversion in the diplomatic phase it is used.**
- +2 If the Western Allies have declared war on any Balkan country.

Because of the -2 modifier for France not having fallen, the Axis almost always wait until Fall 1940 to roll for the Balkans (assuming a Summer 1940 conquest of France).

The +1 modifier for Russia having entered the Baltic States is a given. Any dissenters can write their own article on the topic.

There are two other modifiers worth mentioning. The first is the -2 for Germany declaring war on Spain. If the Axis plan involves conquering Spain, which could also be the subject of a completely different article, they should do so after rolling for the Balkans. If the Balkan diplomatic rolls go badly, the Axis may want to

reconsider their planned attack on Spain.

The second is the +2 modifier for Russian subversion. Here it is important to know the rules. If Russia elects to use a subversion result it will get a favorable modifier for the target of the subversion, but the Axis will get the +2 modifier for the other Balkan minors, and even if they've rolled for them they can try again, because subversion allows the Axis to make reaction rolls:

**49.634 RUSSIAN SUBVERSION:** The Axis may make a reaction die roll for one or more of Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece during any Axis diplomatic phase in which Russian subversion is used to modify an Axis diplomatic die roll, or during the Axis diplomatic phase following Russia's use of subversion to modify one of its own diplomatic die rolls.

**A. SUBVERSION DURING THE AXIS DIPLOMATIC PHASE:** If Russian subversion is used during the Axis diplomatic phase, the following modifier

+2 *For each use of Russian subversion to modify a diplomatic die roll, other than for the target of the subversion in the diplomatic phase it is used.*

will apply to any of Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece. This modifier applies both to minor countries which were selected by the Axis player as a diplomatic target in the Axis diplomatic phase prior to the use of Russian subversion and to minor countries which were selected for a reaction die roll after the use of Russian subversion was announced by the Russian player; this modifier does not apply to the target of the subversion itself. The diplomatic die roll for the subverted minor country is made first.

**B. SUBVERSION DURING THE ALLIED DIPLOMATIC PHASE:** If Russian subversion is used during the Allied diplomatic phase, the Axis may make a reaction die roll for any of Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece, other than the target of the subversion, during the Axis diplomatic phase following Russia's use of subversion. The following modifier

+2 *For each use of Russian subversion to modify a diplomatic die roll, other than for the target of the subversion in the diplomatic phase it is used.*

will apply to each eligible minor country's reaction die roll.



## The Foreign Minister's Job

The diplomatic efforts prior to the outbreak of war

between Germany and Russia require some thought. Let's take a look at each country that can have bearing on the initial attack on Russia.

## Finland

It is nice to have Finland associated or allied for the attack on Russia, but it is not crucial, as the threat of Finnish participation will still tie down Russian forces in the north.

Russia will usually demand the Finnish border hexes in Winter 1939, and the Finns always fight (67.12). While the Finns will lose the three 2-3 infantry units they deploy in the border hexes, these will be rebuilt at no BRP cost long before the German attack on Russia. A prolonged Winter War, which may turn into a full war with Finland, could give the Axis unusual opportunities for a Scandinavian diplomatic strategy, but apart from that the Axis will usually just roll for Finland in Summer 1941, taking advantage of the +2 modifier for Germany and Russia going to war.

If Finnish participation is crucial to the overall Axis attack on Russia, then in 1941 some Axis DPs should be placed in Finland.

## Rumania

The situation in Rumania is completely different from that in Finland.

Rumania is considerably more important to the German attack on Russia than is Finland, although it's not as important as many players think. Still, the Allies will always be happy if Rumania stays out of the war in 1941, and the Axis want to pay attention to this possibility.

The difference between Rumania and Finland is clear if Russia demands Bessarabia. The plucky Finns should always fight if they can, but if the Rumanians are willing to resist, the Germans should rein them in, because so many Rumanian units will be eliminated in a Spring or Summer 1940 border war that Rumanian entry into the war in 1941 will become problematic. No one likes a plucky Rumanian.

If the Russians don't demand Bessarabia, the Axis should smell a rat. Either the Allies will try to keep Rumania out of the war by conventional means, by allocating either Western Allied or Russian DPs to Rumania, or Russia may use a subversion result on Rumania. Either strategy has the potential of keeping Rumania out of the war and shortening the Russian front. These strategies can be met by Axis DPs in Rumania or, more radically, an Axis attack on Rumania

in Spring 1941.

The normal modifiers for Rumania will be +4 for Rumania's basic modifier, +1 for Russia entering the Baltic States and +1 for Russia taking Bessarabia, for a net +6 modifier. Assuming equal DPs, the Axis will get hex control of Rumania on a die roll of "2" or more. Usually Russian will put a DP in Rumania in 1940, but even so, the odds favor the Axis. Hex control of Rumania in 1940 gives the Axis another +1 modifier and allows German units to enter Rumania. With two additional modifiers, activating Rumania in Spring 1941 is pretty much assured.

Therefore the most logical Axis strategy is to roll for Rumania in Fall 1940, once France has fallen, then roll again in Spring 1941.

## Hungary

The situation in Hungary is simpler than in Rumania, partly because Hungary is not subject to Russian territorial demands and partly because Hungary was rabidly revisionist, and therefore a natural German ally, despite fundamental ideological differences.

The normal modifiers for Hungary will be +5 for Hungary's basic modifier and +1 for Russia entering the Baltic States, for a net +6 modifier. Assuming equal DPs, the Axis will get hex control of Hungary on a die roll of "2" or more. Russia usually won't bother putting any DPs in Hungary, especially since the attack on Russia can go ahead without Hungarian participation. Hex control of Hungary in 1940 gives the Axis another +1 modifier and allows German units to enter Hungary. With two additional modifiers, activating Hungary in Spring 1941 is pretty much assured.

As with Rumania, the most logical Axis strategy is to roll for Hungary in Fall 1940, once France has fallen, then roll again in Spring 1941.

## Bulgaria

Bulgaria is often ignored because it does not occupy a strategic location vis-à-vis Russia, although it is crucial if the Axis want to attack Turkey. Control of Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania gives the Axis a DP in 1942, though, so Bulgaria is worth more than just 10 BRPs. Still, the best approach is usually just to hope for a good die roll.

## Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia is a larger Bulgaria, being worth twice as many BRPs and a DP all on its own, while at the same

time control of Yugoslavia does no more to strengthen the attack on Russia than does control of Bulgaria. The best chance to get control of Yugoslavia diplomatically is as a result of Russian subversion in Rumania. Otherwise, the Axis might well want to either invade Yugoslavia and fight Yugoslav partisans for much of the war or just leave it alone entirely.

## Greece

As we head farther south on our Balkan holiday, we get further and further afield. There are undoubtedly benefits to the Axis associated with controlling Greece, but none of them relate to the invasion of Russia. Greece is only mentioned here to remind Axis players that should Russia subvert another country, this triggers a +2 modifier to the Greek diplomatic roll.

## Turkey

Turkish strategies are an entirely different topic and require an entire article for themselves.

Axis control of Turkey prior to the Summer 1941 German attack on Russia risks sending RGT over 40, forfeiting surprise against Russia. Gaining control of Turkey in Fall 1941 is certainly a coup for the Axis, but requires the Allies to be asleep at the switch, or for the Axis to have gained a number of territorial modifiers which affect the Turkish diplomatic die roll.

Equally, Russian control of Turkey in 1941 is a huge pro-Allied result, but is unlikely unless the Axis completely ignore it. The prudent Axis player will put one DP in Turkey and roll for it in Spring 1941, daring the Russians to take a favorable result if they manage to get one. The drop in RGT as Hitler and Stalin celebrate their second honeymoon at the expense of the Turks may well leave the British stuck with the tab, and Russia facing a hangover in 1942.

## The Ukraine

Once Germany invades Russia, the Ukraine becomes an interesting target. An occupation policies production result gives the Axis a favorable modifier, and the Ukrainian units can come in handy as attrition losses and during the defensive struggles to come.

## Russian-German Tensions

Throughout the Balkan diplomatic maneuvering, the Axis player must keep one eye on the Russia-German tension level. There is really only one goal in managing the RGT; be sure it's less than 40 at the start of the Axis

Summer 1941 movement phase, so as to preserve the advantages of surprise against Russia. This is easy to do as long the Axis don't do something foolish diplomatically (and if they do, it has to be worthwhile).

The chart illustrates a standard buildup of RGT. For the Russians it is assumed that they declare war on the Baltic States and occupy eastern Poland (which is mandatory). It is also assumed the Axis conquer France in Summer 40, don't invade Britain and successfully roll for the Balkans in Fall 1940, after France has fallen. Following the above line of events, the Axis will always be guaranteed to attack Russia with tensions below 40.

One possibility that could cause problems arises if the Russians don't demand the Finnish border hexes or Bessarabia. Axis control of both areas causes RGT tensions to increase by an additional +4, which may put RGT over 40 by Summer 1941. This is one of many examples of a basic principle: if something strange happens in the east, double check the RGT!

### Spring 1941

Normally Germany will attack Russia in Summer

winter. This deadline determines the timetable for the Axis preparations.



### Builds

At the end of the turn prior to the attack on Russia (Spring 1941), Germany should have all its armor and air units built. Ideally, the German infantry will be built

### Russo - German Tension Record

		1939		1940				1941				1942			
		Fall	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall	Win
Automatic	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1						
Allied major powers at war <sup>1</sup>	+	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2						
Russian mobilizations <sup>2</sup>	+					+1	+1	+2	+2						
Axis penetration of the Balkans <sup>3</sup>	+1					+1	+1	+1	+1						
Axis ground units in Britain	+1														
Axis territorial acquisitions <sup>4</sup>	+				+2										
Axis expansion <sup>5</sup>	+					+7									
Rus. penetration of the Balkans <sup>6</sup>	-1														
Russian expansion <sup>7</sup>	-	-2													
Current turn tension change		0	+2	+2	+4	+12	+5	+6	+6						
Tension level		0	2	4	8	20	25	31	37	50+	50+	50+	50+	50+	50+
Russian mobilizations (5)						M1		M2		M3	M4	M5			

1941, which avoids spring mud in the east and gives the Axis two full turns of good campaigning weather before

as well, but this is not essential, as not all the German infantry is needed in Russia in the initial turn of attack.

## Concentration of Force

The main strategic principle which governs the Axis deployment for the Russian campaign is concentration of force. It is easy to get sidetracked with adventures in the desert and many Axis players are concerned about allowing the British opportunities in France. What's wrong with having a few armor units in North Africa and maybe some AAF, in order to keep the British honest? And shouldn't France be defended securely?

The answer to both questions is the same. Employing units against Britain in 1941 may, in the right circumstances, allow the Axis to retain their initiative against the Western Allies, and strengthen their position for later. But these gains may come at the expense of lost opportunities in Russia.

The Axis need only a token force to guard the French coast, to ensure that there are no undefended beaches on which the British may land. A small reserve is enough to limit any British incursions, as the Germans are strong enough to evict the British in Winter 1941 and Spring 1942 should they make a serious attempt to return to the continent. But the British will have their hands full in the Atlantic, and are unlikely to have enough forces to invade anywhere, much less France.

North Africa is a more tempting distraction. If the Axis can conquer Egypt, Italy will be much harder to knock out of the war, quite apart from the DP swing in favor of the Axis. And if the Axis can get across the Suez canal, then anything might happen in the Middle East...

But how much should the Axis invest in what is, at best, only a possibility? Certainly the Germans can't afford to have ten or fifteen AAF and several 4-6 armor units in Egypt if they're serious about Russia. On the other hand, two Italian 2-5 armor units and even a German 2-6 armor unit won't be missed unduly in Russia in 1941. Rommel will be on a tight schedule, though, as in 1942 the Axis can't afford to be without these units. Still, if the Axis are intending an all-out attack on Russia, they may well want to ruthlessly shut down the Mediterranean and leave only infantry units in the desert. The British will have a hard time cracking the Axis defenses and extra armor units in Russia can stretch the Russian defense in some situations.

## The Russian Restrictions

Russia is hamstrung in two ways, both of which hardwire Stalin's tunnel vision into the game.

The first relates to where the bulk of the Russian forces have to deploy prior to the German invasion. The second relates to the impairment of the Russian forces in the first turn of the German attack, both during the Axis player turn and the ensuing Russian player turn.

These impairments will be analyzed in more detail in other articles, but every A WORLD AT WAR player must be conversant with them:

### Russian Garrison Requirements

At the end of any Russian player turn in which RGT are 20 or greater:

- Ten Russian 2-3 infantry units, four Russian 3-3 infantry units and six Russian 3-5 armor units must end their turn within four hexes of an Axis-controlled east Prussian, Baltic or Polish hex, or an Axis-controlled or neutral Rumanian hex.
- 15 Russian AAF must end their turn within three hexes of an Axis-controlled east Prussian, Baltic or Polish hex.

These requirements do not apply to Russian one-factor infantry or airborne units, Russian ground and air units added to the Russian force pool after Fall 1939, Russian units which begin the game in the Pacific theater, or to Russian associated or minor ally units. These restrictions are lifted once Russia and Germany go to war or when RGT reach 50.

### Russian Prewar Force Pool Additions

Until Russia and Germany have gone to war or the RGT level is 40 or more, half of each type of newly-produced Russian unit must be constructed and remain in Leningrad or Moscow; the other half may be deployed without restriction. If there is an odd number of a certain type of unit, it may be deployed without restriction. This restriction does not apply to units mobilized with the assistance of deferred production (42.336B).

### Russian Unpreparedness

If the RGT level is less than 40 at the moment Germany declares war on Russia, the following apply in the first turn of a German invasion, in addition to all normal modifiers and movement impairments:

- During the Axis movement phase, Axis ground units must expend only one additional movement factor to leave a hex in the ZoC of Russian armor units, or to move from one such hex to another, rather than the normal two additional movement factors. During exploitation movement, the ZoC of Russian armor units impairs Axis movement normally.
- Russian armor units adjacent to Axis-controlled hexes at the start of the Axis player turn have no ZoC.
- During the Axis movement phase and regular combat, Russian infantry units in eastern Poland, the Baltic States and Russia that are overrun or attacked by at least one Axis armor unit are subject to a -1 DM unless defending in an objective hex or IC. Other DMs apply normally to such attacks. This -1 DM does not apply to Russian units in the Finnish border hexes, Bessarabia or conquered Balkan countries and does not apply during exploitation movement and combat.
- During the Axis player turn, Russian air units have their Air Nationality DRM reduced by one.
- During the Russian player turn following the Axis attack, Russian armor units have a movement factor of two and Russian infantry units have a movement factor of one. Russian specialized units and Russian units in the Pacific theater move normally.
- The above impairments also apply to Russian associated and minor ally units outside their home country.

## Deploying the Axis Forces

There is probably no optimal deployment of the Axis forces in Spring 1941, because the Axis won't know how the Russians will set up. The Axis therefore want to be as flexible as possible, in order to be positioned to take advantage of any flaws in the Russian defense (or, more realistically against a strong opponent, to limit the Russian options).

Below are some sample deployments for the Axis forces. Through the miracle of Warplanner, each component of the Axis war machine is presented separately, for clarity and ease of discussion.

The deployments assume that Russia has taken the Finnish border hexes and Bessarabia, and that Hungary and Rumania are Axis allies and that Finland might be.



## Airbases and Army Air Units

All four German airbases should be deployed forward to maximize the range of the AAF which will base on them. With the German airbases placed as shown in the illustration, the German AAF can concentrate on any sector of the front. It is best to centralize the German AAF themselves, so they can base anywhere along the front, so that Russia has to worry about the possibility of overruns against weak units.

The Italian AAF and airbases are important. The advantage of having the Italian air involved in the

Russian campaign is not so much having an additional five AAF, although that can often help, but rather the flexibility of being able to place both a German and an Italian airbase at the start of the Axis player turn. This lets the Axis switch ten AAF (five of which have to be Italian) to the precise location they might be needed to maximize their effectiveness. If Mediterranean or other requirements preclude having all the Axis air on the eastern front, then it is better to have some German AAF elsewhere and have the Italian AAF in Russia.

## Airborne Units

The precise missions for the German airborne units can't be known until the Russians finalize their defenses. These elite units must deploy flexibly, so they are ready for missions in any of the indicated hexes.



There are two locations for possible northern airdrops:

- **Hexes G40, H40 or H41, near Riga:** The Russians may decide to defend the Baltic States heavily, in which case a German airdrop during

exploitation will help crack the Dvina defense line. This allows the Germans to place an attrition-proof bridgehead as an anchor for their northern encirclement.

- **Hex M40, adjacent to the Pripet Marshes:** Should the Russians try to defend a line along the Dneiper in central Russia, an airdrop on this hex will negate the +1 DM for the river and make it easier for the Germans to create a bridgehead.

There are also two likely targets for southern airdrops:

- **Hexes Q37, R37 or S37, near Bessarabia:** The Russians have the option of defending in Bessarabia, where their infantry units are not subject to a -1 DM for surprise; defending behind the Dniester instead, defending both; or leaving the south empty. Where this river is used as part of the Russian defense, an airdrop may be the best way to create a breakthrough from which the Axis armor may exploit.
- **Hex V38 (Sevastopol):** If one of the German airborne units is deployed so that it can airdrop on Sevastopol, the Russians will probably have to scrounge up a 1-3 infantry unit to defend it. Otherwise the Axis will be able to seize an important city which is usually difficult to take. Control of Sevastopol allows the Axis to both SR (Sevastopol is an objective) and NR (Sevastopol is also a port) units into southern Russia to prepare for a later attack towards either Rostov or Maikop.

In addition to these specific operations, the German airborne units may also be used for two other purposes:

- **Overruns:** Normally the Axis overrun potential is limited to two 4-6 armor units (8) plus maximum ground support (3 x 8) for a total of 8 + 24 = 32 attack factors. This allows the Axis to overrun a stack of five Russian infantry factors defending at face value (i.e., surprised in a clear hex).

An airborne unit which is close to a potential overrun target gives the Axis the theoretical capacity to overrun a six-factor stack of Russian infantry with 27 air factors of ground support (we say “theoretical” because the axis have to have a massive air superiority over the hex in question, which is not a given). One additional movement point is required to overrun, so the airborne unit

either has to be close to the target, or has to start the Axis player turn on an airbase, then air transport (one movement point to debark) to a newly constructed airbase adjacent to the target.

- **Completing encirclements:** Often the Axis armor doesn’t need any help in destroying the Russian army in Summer 1941, but a timely airdrop into an empty hex may seal off a Russian pocket which otherwise might survive, at least for a turn. This tactic is more often seen later, but the Axis player should keep it in mind.

### Air Transport(s)

The location of the German air transport is easy. It should be within staging distance (eight hexes) of any hex from which an airdrop might be made. Krakow fits the bill.

More interesting is the question of whether it is worth investing the RPs required to get second air transport. As can be seen from the above analysis, airdrops are useful in the first turn of the Axis attack on Russia, but are rarely essential. A second air transport is probably worth an RP, but not two RPs, at this stage of the game, so the overall German research strategy will probably determine the answer to this question. A second air transport is more likely to be useful in 1942, but the Axis may want to pay the higher RP cost and get the air transport for 1941, just to get it over with.

A second air transport would also be placed in Krakow.

### Armor Units

The placement of the Axis armor units is the most difficult part of the setup for Barbarossa. Armor units may not move as far as air units and their movement may be reduced by terrain.

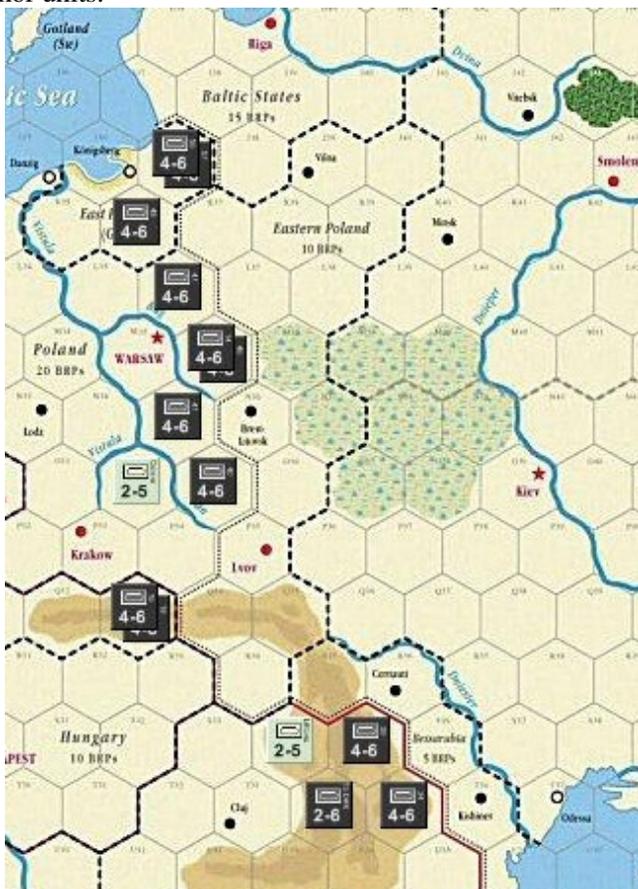
The ideal German Summer 1941 attack on Russia involves overrunning a weak stack of front-line Russian infantry, creating a breakthrough by attacking a Russian armor unit, then exploiting deep into Russia, untrammelled by Russian ZoCs. The Russian player simply can’t allow this, as the Axis would penetrate eight or nine hexes into Russia, and that would give them too advanced a position for Russia to survive. Wherever the Russians defend, they must set up an overrun-proof front line.

Here the mechanics of overruns become crucial:

**13.52 MECHANICS:** Overruns are conducted by moving no more than two units (EXCEPTION: Specialized units may overstack for overruns) through the same hexside into a hex containing enemy unit(s) at odds of 6:1 or greater. At least one of the overrunning units must be

an armor unit with a functional mechanized component. Each overrunning unit must expend one additional movement point to occupy the overrun hex. If the overrunning units do not have sufficient movement points, the overrun is prohibited.

The optimal Axis set up involves threatening overruns is as many places as possible, so as to force Russia to deploy enough units to prevent a 6:1 Axis superiority along its front line, rather than relying on a shortage of Axis movement points to prevent overruns. With this in mind, assuming two Italian 2-5 armor units, we recommend the following deployment of the Axis armor units:



The rationale for this deployment of armor units, which emphasizes the northern and southern flanks, is that the Axis player wants to threaten overruns in the north, where the Russians are bound to have units, while also threatening to occupy an undefended Ukraine in the south, should the Russians abandon that part of the front.

The northern sector has armor units deployed as far forward as possible. This is important should the Russians set up a defensive line of armor units one hex behind the front line. By setting up forward in this way,

axis forces are able to advance around defending armor units, or to overrun weakly defended hexes.

Here we see the situation in the south:



The armor units deployed along the Rumanian-Russian border may move as far as the gray dots unless the Russians set up some sort of defense in the south. This is too much for the Russians to handle, as an extension of the previous figure shows:



If the Germans get this far, they may redeploy infantry units and base air units within range of Rostov, and may also attack Sevastopol in Summer 1941 and threaten to expand out of the Crimean peninsula and attack Maikop. This is so dangerous for the Russians that it more or less rules out a defense which ignores the south.



The Axis need not be concerned about weakening their center by these deployments. The northern armor can exploit from any breakthrough north of the Pripet Marshes, and there is enough armor left over to go through the Lvov gap, should there be one.

### Infantry

The deployment of the German infantry is actually the easiest task of all. Any infantry not being used to defend France and Norway, or being used in the Mediterranean, take up whatever positions remain after the Axis armor is deployed.

Much of the infantry won't be used in Summer 1941, although by 1942 German infantry units will be essential in Russia. Only a few 3-3 infantry units are needed to help create the initial breakthroughs from which the Axis armor will exploit. Secondary attacks may be made to either create redeployment corridors so that exploiting armor units may be reinforced with additional infantry and AAFs, or to reduce the Russian attrition level in order to deny the Russians the attrition level required to guarantee obtaining a hex. Whether this second consideration matters is a tactical issue – it often doesn't.



### Conclusion

The attack on Russia is a huge and terrifying undertaking, at least by A WORLD AT WAR standards (remember, it's only a game!). Blow it, and the Russians will come at the Axis with a vengeance that can be awe inspiring. But the stakes are high for the Allies as well, as a Germany victory in Russia makes an Axis defeat in Europe all but impossible, and may well lead to ultimate Axis victory on a global scale.

Paradoxically, while the game hangs in the balance in Russia, the outcome of the campaign may well depend on a host of seemingly minor details. An extra factor here, a misplaced unit there, may have a cascade effect which blunts the Axis initiative or sends Russia into a downward spiral that it may not be able to halt.

