

Summer 2012

ULTRA

Free

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 or phone 1-800-523-6111.

JAPANESE MILITARY RESEARCH

The Imperial Japanese Army's Plan to End the China Incident

by Bruce Harper

Introduction

There are two basic approaches to playing Japan in *A WORLD AT WAR*. One is to act in concert with the European Axis, in the hope of decisively affecting the course of the war. Examples include Japan:

- attacking Britain's southeast Asian possessions and India in 1941, in conjunction with a German invasion of Britain.
- raiding and invading of India in 1942, in conjunction with a European Axis drive into the Middle East.
- declaring war on Russia in 1941 or 1942, in conjunction with a German invasion of Russia.
- conducting a submarine campaign against the Western Allies, in conjunction with a German Atlantic strategy.

All of these approaches have the drawback that Japan compromises its position in order to assist its European Allies. In the most extreme cases, the European Axis might win decisively while Japan gets smashed equally decisively, for a net draw. This assumes that the joint strategy works, of course – if the strategy fails, then the Japanese might well suffer the drawbacks to the plan without the European Axis gaining any benefits.

The second basic approach is quite different. Japan doesn't worry about the European Axis, other than wishing them well, and concentrates on its own theater. While the occasional submarine or raider might be sent out if the Western Allies allow it, Japan always gives its own needs priority. If it is really true that charity begins at home, a "Japan first" strategy by Japan helps the European Axis by diverting the maximum Allied forces to the Pacific, and in the end helps the Axis as a whole by maximizing the Axis Pacific victory level.

This second approach is neither aggressive nor passive. Japan can try to capture Hawaii, cut off the sea lanes to Australia, invade Australia or India, try to crush China to free ground units or launch a preemptive attack on Russia. Or Japan can just sit and defend. The common theme is that whatever Japan does, it does to increase the chances of Japanese survival, and any direct benefits to the European Axis are secondary.

The Japanese research and production plan set out below is part of a Japanese plan which tries to implement the second Japan-centric, approach – by defeating China.

The Japanese plan

It used to be that if Japan captured Chungking, it received a +1 resistance modifier each turn. This turned out to be too strong for the Japanese, because if Japan conquered Chungking, the Allies could never recapture it.

Now Japan's goal in China is to go for a -3 Chinese resistance level, which gives Japan its +1 resistance modifier each turn. There is only one way to accomplish this – eliminate more Nationalist Chinese units than can be rebuilt. Japanese control of Chungking helps only indirectly (by reducing the Chinese unit construction limit from 6 BRPs to 5 BRPs) and Japanese control of Yenan actually encourages the Nationalist Chinese regime to fight on.

The Japanese strategy was therefore to:

- hold the Chinese objectives it already has.
- prevent Allied units from getting into China.
- cut off BRP grants over the Hump.
- eliminate as many Chinese units as possible.

Japanese Research and Production

With this in mind, the Japanese adopted the research and production plan is set out below, which emphasized increasing the size of the Japanese army, especially by adding 3-3 infantry units, so as to give Japan a higher attrition level in China.

The allocations assume cost-effective Japanese BRP management yielding the normal Japanese RP levels and average research die rolls. Expected research die roles are given, where relevant, and anticipated research results are indicated by yellow shading.

Japanese mobilizations, which are incidental to the Japanese research and production plan, are as shown.

Result

The result in the game was, in Japanese parlance, "disappointing". The plan, which still impresses me in terms of its meticulous detail, had one flaw – at the crucial moment, the Nationalist Chinese retreated, cutting the Japanese attrition level and allowing them to recover. So some refinement is required, perhaps involving more offensive options.

Japanese Mobilizations and Production

1	Air							Military							Naval					
	Jets	NAS	AAF	Int	Str B	Air T	NAT	1-3	2-3	3-3	1-2	2-2	3-2	1m2	1n2	Tr	ASW	Subs	SBP	
9	At St		[10]	[10]				3	[2]	[2]		[20]	[10]	[5]		[1]	[18]		1	3
3	Fall	M1	2[12]						1[3]	1[3]				3[8]	1[1]				1[2]	
9	Win																			
1940 Pr.			5[17]													1[2]				
1	Spr																			
9	Sum	M2																		4
4	Fall		6[23]	1[11]																
0	Win	M3																		
1941 Pr.			5[28]																	
1	Spr										1[1]	1[21]	1[11]	1[1]						
9	Sum		7[30]	1[12]								4[25]	2[13]	2[10]						
4	Fall		6[34]	2[13]																
1	Win	M4		2[15]																
1942 Pr.			1[35]		1[1]										1[11]			1[1]		
1	Spr		2[37]	2[15]																
9	Sum											1[26]	2[15]	1[12]						
4	Fall																			
2	Win			4[19]																
1943 Pr.																				
1944 Pr.																				
1945 Pr.																				
1946 Pr.																				
Maxim.									[3]	[3]	[3]	[30]	[15]	[20]	[2]	[3]				