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A quarterly newsletter devoted to *A WORLD AT WAR*, GMT Games' strategic simulation of World War II.  
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# JAPANESE NAVAL RESEARCH

## Pretending Japan can win in *A WORLD AT WAR*

by Bruce Harper

### Introduction

The Japanese research plan outlined below is for a *GATHERING STORM – A WORLD AT WAR* game at the 2014 convention. The situation in Europe was different from classic *A WORLD AT WAR*, but in many ways was curiously historical:

- War broke out in Summer 1939 over Poland, Germany having taken Danzig and the Corridor without war in Spring 1939. Germany would conquer Poland in Fall 1939.
- The Axis plan in Europe was flexible and unclear. France had four 4-5 armor units and a normal Maginot Line; Belgium had an extra 2-3 and 1-3 infantry unit. Germany had more armor and AAF to start than normal. A Summer 1940 conquest of France was projected. What the European Axis will do then was not known.
- Russia's unit construction limit is higher than normal, because of economic preparation research results stemming from Russia's high purge level. Russia also got an extra 5 BRPs of Pact concessions.
- Germany could roll for advanced subs in 1942, and had a [+1] modifier for both jets and rockets in 1943. The Western Allies had a [+4] for atomic general research and therefore will have a more robust (or at least more guaranteed) atomic program than normal.
- Italy started the game at war with a weakened Greece, and has two 3-5 armor units.
- USAT start at 9, which means American shipbuilding in Europe will be faster than normal.

Various Japanese options were considered, including a Summer 1940 Japanese attack on Russia, which I had tried in the previous year's convention game. In the end it was decided that a traditional Japanese naval strategy was the best fit with the ambitious Axis strategy. Since the U.S. would mobilize earlier in Europe, and therefore more American forces would be available for the Pacific (unless they went to Europe) and American Atlantic shipbuilding would increase earlier as well (it might be that the European theater would absorb this increase, but there was no guarantee of that – or much else, for that matter).

To sum up, Germany was to be the hammer, while Japan would be the anvil.

### The Japanese plan

The basic Japanese plan was:

- Refrain from laying down any additional carriers prior to the outbreak of war, because the U.S. would have a second shipbuilding in the Atlantic in Fall 1939, and therefore could immediately match the Japanese carrier.
- Increase Japanese shipbuilding at some point in 1940, then again in 1941, to attenuate the ultimately hopeless campaign against the American submarines.
- Avoid excessive production, because Japan often can't build all its units anyway.
- Focus on research that increases the quality of the Japanese air and naval forces, reducing Japanese losses, namely Air and Naval Nationality DRMs, and therefore radar as a preliminary (which also helps Japanese ASW research and defense against surprise attacks in carrier combat).

### Japanese Research and Production

With this in mind, the Japanese adopted the research and production plan is set out below.

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.

While this Japanese research plan was for a *GATHERING STORM – A WORLD AT WAR* game, it can also be used in a classic *A WORLD AT WAR* game.

### Result

In the game, Russia surrendered in 1942, came back into the war in 1944, and Germany was defeated in Summer 1945, mainly by the Western Allies. Japan surrendered in Summer 1945 as well, but after an unfortunate misunderstanding as to the relative Western Allied-Japanese Air Nationality DRMs that probably cost Japan at least a turn (Japan fought at -2, rather than -1, for two years). So, overall, a hard-fought draw.





## Japanese Mobilizations and Production

1 9 3 9		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]	[20]		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																			
4	Fall	M2	6[23]	1[11]																4
0	Win	M3																		
1941 Pr.			5[28]										2[12]	2[10]		1[3]				5
1	Spr	M3	5[33]								1	1[21]	2[14]							
9	Sum											1[22]	2[15]	2[12]						
4	Fall			5[16]																
1	Win	M4		2[18]																
1942 Pr.								4												
1	Spr												1[14]	1[18]						
9	Sum																			
4	Fall																			
2	Win																			
1943 Pr.																				
1944 Pr.																				
1945 Pr.																				
1946 Pr.																				
Maxim.									[3]	[3]	[3]	[30]	[15]	[20]	[2]	[3]				