

Greetings to all Axis and Allies players.

As Gold db master I would like to concentrate on games with no RR(Russia Restricted) by sharing my tactics with you. As a professional psychologist I have some remarks about the psychology of the game.

Part A Strategic:

1. Bid- You may agree or not but I have noticed a tendency to bid a little higher lately. A few years ago you could see a typical Anzio bid at 0, 3 or 5, but now have become extremely rare.

Also, the Omaha and Gold bids tend to go high. Perhaps this is because the majority of players use effective defense tactics. I started to bid higher myself especially in the Gold (20+) db. The reason is Germany needs extra land forces to cope with bad luck on the opening round. Otherwise they may easily collapse. It's sad to say but the Power Europe tactic seems to be effective in Gold matches. This is mainly because the German fleet (1hit bb) is in grave danger from the get-go. You'd rather not count on having it afloat for supporting Africa. On the other hand, forces from Africa can't be used to strengthen Europe in the long run. I do not recommend you put too many units in Africa. This can cause the inability to hold EE when Russians are doing well on their western front. A loss of EE is a certain prescription for disaster! Put about 3 units in Africa or whatever is necessary enough to hold it for a few rounds. Africa should be like a good investment and you need put into it as minimal as possible and try to take as much as possible territorially speaking. Some inexperienced players over support Africa (placing a huge bid or too many reinforcements there), which risks the loss of initiative on the main theatre - Europe. My final remark about bidding is people tend to overestimate its importance. Hits in the first couple of rounds shape the fate of the game more so than the bid does! So bid in such a way allowing you to play the side you like and don't worry about giving and taking too low or high of a bid.

2. Casualties- Sometimes we click mechanically putting casualties on units. Perhaps it's worth considering putting it on a fighter instead of tank. Example: You can take some African territories and hold them a couple of turns. Lets count, I killed a fighter instead of a tank this puts me at -7 ...However I can take a territory for 1 ipc--this is +1. If it can't be retaken in the following turn this also means the opposite side loses 1 ipc - this is another +1 for me. Next round you can take another territory/territories for 2ipc - this is +8. Plus your opponent would need to put some forces in Africa to retake territories taking his units from the main theatre - and this is priceless!

3. Bombers- Its best to have at least one. They play a strategic role with their existence itself! Why? Because the threat is a useful tool to achieve strategic goals. Example: USA round 1 builds a battleship. You don't even need to risk your bomber to attack his fleet, it has already achieved it's goal of making your opponent buy a 24 ipc unit (incidentally in terms of economy attacking 3 lonely transports with a bomber is NOT WORTH DOING) Another Example: British land their bomber in Moscow. Japan is losing 10 ipc to buy aa guns to cover their newly bought factories. The Bomber has won 10 ipc doing nothing and can be used in ground support during its combat phase! In short, bombing threats tie your opponent's hands resulting in an inefficient use of his forces. Keep in mind that when start strategic bombing their protected industries... Don't whine when you roll only 1.... According to the probability calculus you were lucky. You may know or not, but the fact is statistically, you should only collect +0,4 ipc's each bombing raid when the aa guns fire. Is this worth risking such a precious unit? All the above does not refer to heavy bombers. Ruining their economy is the most effective way to use them. I would like to present here an interesting defense tactic against HB. Sometimes it works against Japanese HB. As USA economy is reduced they usually don't need so many transports on the Atlantic front. Move them to the Pacific Ocean threatening to retake some islands. The Important thing is to never gather them in the same sea zone. This would cause bombers to over hit on your single transports and drag them from their main purpose - strategic bombing. Heavy bombers are a great power but sometimes overestimated. Rolled too late will not save you. Plus, keep in mind the fact that you can still lose by the IPC victory. Also an interesting fact is that super subs are as effective as killing naval units as HB's. Why? They are cheaper and their hits face no retaliations - so they can absorb greater number of counter hits.

4. Retreating from Africa- As stated above, Germany needs to hold Africa for a few rounds to collect extra income. But finally a time comes for their retreat. A majority of people will retreat their ground units to Asia hoping to use them in combat. Those attempts usually fail at that stage of the game. My idea is why not retreat them south. Yes they go for certain death but the key of that tactic is dragging the Allied forces. Just count how many rounds it will take the Allies to move in from South Africa to the main battlefield? At least 5 or more. This is an advanced strategy for most masters preparing to hit Russia and needs special coordination between the Germans and Japanese on when to attack Russia with the best time and place to do it. Let your opponent ask himself - are there any benefits of soldiers after a war?

Part B: Psychological tips and tricks. I would like to discuss some “white” not “dark” tricks like irritating delay by putting units into casualties or prolonging a lost game and many others, which are considered un-sports-man-like.

1. Confusion- Disinformation is a key tool in real war. Everyone knows tons of examples. Disinformation can be performed in the game on a limited scale. Examples: Sometimes Germany can afford to buy tanks only. Let your opponent believe you are going hit Karelia. There is an even easier way to do that, which will cost you nothing. Just use the game chat and ask how many fighters there are in their Karelian defense. This implies that you counted defenders and you are now planning to hit that territory. He will strengthen Karelia leaving Moscow less supported.... And bang! You hit Moscow with the Japanese on their Russian capital.

2. Unexpected maneuvers- The human mind can usually cope with very limited portions of data simultaneously. Some lose concentration after unusual game events (dicing's, tech rolls and others). Your opponent will most likely tend to make mistakes after dicing's or even losing a fighter on a transport attack (which is almost 1 in 3 chance). When you suffer a dicing, in some cases you can use it in your favor. Sounds paradoxically? After such event there is a chance your opponent will feel relief and lose his vigilance. This is the time to take your chances² - attempt to perform an unexpected economic victory (IPC Victory) or prepare a combined Allied attack on the German capital. On the other hand you could be extra careful when you receive increased chat activity. Someone can manipulate you . After a bunch of similar games people fall into routine. That is why unexpected maneuvers are dangerous. Can u believe a top Anzio player allowed me to take England by surprise once? It's not so surprising if you take into consideration how many times the Japanese fleet were in the Atlantic Ocean... Some will lose their cool after you succeed in attacking infantry vs. infantry. In terms of economy it's not worth doing but... Oh well some dark ideas come to my mind.

3. Dice- Many will make psychological biases, counting on better dice after a series of bad ones. Always keep in mind that the dice are random and have no memory. Also be aware of battle procedures in the game favoring extreme outputs, not “fair” ones. Plotinus, in one of his threads brilliantly explained this. To calculate the probability of independent events combined with all the individual probabilities which should be multiplied. For example when there is a 50% chance to get a red light at each junction, a chance to pass all 5 junctions without stopping is $1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2$ (individual probabilities multiply) hope the meaning is the same. This implies that after fighting a bunch of battles, even having a great advantage, each of you shouldn't count on winning all of the battles. For Example: there is a slim chance for Germany to achieve all of their strategic goals round 1 (RR games with a reasonable bid placed). Usually something will go wrong among these attacks: 1) annihilating Allied fleet without plane casualties. 2) Taking Caucasus. 3) Taking Egypt without considerable losses. 4) Not being hit by and or destroying the UK Mediterranean submarine. So you should always have a plan “B” to become more prepared for different scenarios.

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¹ Often in the game Germany needs to abandon some territories to avoid spreading their forces and endangering them for counter attack. My advice is to never abandon EE unless your Capital is in danger or you will be able to return there next round and withdraw their counter (perhaps with Japanese support) without considerable casualties.

² I mean using opponents strategical mistakes not technical ones like mis-clicking or skipping a phase etc.