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BESIEGING BRITAIN

The Indirect Strategy

by Bruce Harper

Introduction

There are many strategies open to the European Axis in *A WORLD AT WAR*. One strategy that the Axis often stumble into by default comes about when Germany fails to attack Russia. This only delays the inevitable, as Russia will declare war on Germany in late 1942 or 1943, but for a number of turns Britain will be on its own before a partly mobilized U.S. enters the war. During this time, the Axis will do something, but what, if not an invasion of Britain?

The Mediterranean Strategy

One option is a "Mediterranean strategy", which almost every Axis player has tried at one time or another. The best thing about the Mediterranean strategy is that the Axis can always power their way into Egypt and may well be able to isolate and capture Gibraltar as well (Malta is a given). Spectators looking at the board uncritically will compliment the Axis on their position, and for half the game the Axis will have everything their own way. Victory will follow victory, and the list of captured territories will expand every turn. The entire German force pool will be built, with BRPs to spare, and the Axis DP totals will be high.

But with RGT steadily increasing and USAT rising rapidly, the party comes to an end soon enough. Then comes the hangover.

Russia will be large, getting larger, and very close. Once the danger of a German attack has passed, Russia will shift its research, production and mobilizations to offensive mode, and with its ICs intact and a large BRP

base, the Russian offensives will be continuous.

In the west, Britain will be unbroken and every American unit will deploy to Britain (where else can they go?), creating a threat of an early invasion of occupied France. By 1943, the bulk of the German forces will be tied down in the east and the Western Allies will likely land in France, in order to begin the hard fight across France.

The pluses and minuses to an Axis Mediterranean strategy are fairly well understood, and it is rarely good for anything but a draw, at best. Russia is just too scary to be left alone, unless the Axis can accomplish something significant in the west.

Focusing on Britain

This issue of *ULTRA* will explore an alternative strategy for the Axis, which many players may have wondered about, but few have analyzed or explored. Most German players have experienced the sense of frustration of bombing Britain in Fall and Winter 1940, then having to switch to Russia just when they were getting somewhere. Similarly, victory in the Atlantic can be like a mirage, which disappears once you get close to it.

But what would happen if the Germans kept bombing and kept the pressure on the British in the Atlantic. Might something not give? And what if this were a deliberate strategy, rather than the result of a miscalculation as to the forces available for a Summer 1941 attack on Russia, or an opportunistic change in strategy based on a lucky diplomatic die roll or some other fortuitous development? The British are tough, but

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just how much can they really take?

If it turns out that even a focused, concentrated effort by the Axis to undermine Britain by bombing, submarine warfare, raiding and other means can't accomplish anything worthwhile, then it will be clear that it is pointless to adopt such a strategy, especially by chance. On the other hand, if such a strategy has the potential to land Britain in serious trouble, then yet another strategy will be open to the Axis and the game will be richer because of it.

An Integrated Strategy

An integrated anti-British strategy involves preparation and planning, both with respect to research and production and from the military standpoint.

This type of strategy is, in some ways, especially difficult to implement, because no one aspect of the strategy can be decisive. Absent an incredible run of luck (and even then), the game is too well balanced to allow a single-minded Atlantic, bombing or other strategy to collapse Britain. The pressure on Britain

must come from as many different directions as possible, with the aim of triggering a downward spiral from which the British cannot recover. This issue will try to analyze how the various components of an anti-British strategy might work together.

The Numbers Game

Since the essential idea underlying this anti-British strategy is to overload and collapse the British construction limit, the analysis will necessarily involve some numbers. BRP levels must be tracked; air and naval losses estimated; USAT and RGT levels projected; research results approximated.

In an actual game, the numbers will inevitably come out differently. This should neither surprise nor disappoint us, as it is this variability that makes A WORLD AT WAR so interesting and gives it such a high replay value. No two games are ever the same, because even a slight variance in results can make a big difference if it causes the system to reach a tipping point (or, to use an older metaphor, if it sends the opponent – or you – over the edge).

As with all strategic planning, optimism must be balanced with a realistic assessment of the situation. For that reason, the analysis will try to determine not only what happens if the strategy works, but also what the Axis prospects will be if it fails. This is sometimes fairly easy to do (a 1:1 attack that succeeds is brilliant, while one that fails is a disaster). In the context of an overall, indirect strategy consisting of a number of components, the challenge is greater. Complete success may be more elusive, but total failure is less likely as well. Instead there should be various degrees of success, and the costs and benefits of these must be assessed.

Unless, of course, the whole strategy is unsound to begin with.

Conclusion

This issue of ULTRA analyzes an Axis plan, rather than recounting a successful or unsuccessful siege of Britain in an actual game. There are many variations of the plan, some of which are discussed at the end of the issue, and every game in which this type of strategy is tried will play out differently. In the future critical readers may well discover hidden possibilities and alternatives for both the Axis and the Allies, as well as flexible applications of the plan if the Axis switch to an attack on Russia or something else.

And that, after all, is why we play the game.

EDITOR: Markus Kässbohrer

GUEST EDITOR FOR THIS ISSUE: Bruce Harper

ASSOCIATE EDITOR, ARTICLE DEVELOPMENT: Ed Schoenfeld

PROOFREADERS: Tim Schroeder (lead), Bryan Brinkman, Michael Confoy, Todd Dunnivant, Bill Humphrey, Donald Stanley

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THE AXIS PLAN

What the Axis are trying, and trying not, to do

by Bruce Harper

Introduction

The basic Axis plan is very simple, although it is by no means obvious where it leads. Germany will embark on an extended campaign of economic warfare on Britain to the exclusion of everything else, in order to try to shatter one of its three main enemies. If Britain can be effectively knocked out of the war economically, the United States and Russia will have to carry the war to the Reich on their own, with the British acting more as garrison troops. A British collapse will put heavy naval pressure on the Western Allies, which will benefit Italy and Japan, and divert American resources from the invasion of Europe.

The plan is terribly risky, as Germany will not attack Russia, which will enter the war intact on the Polish and Rumanian borders. Once the Axis strategy becomes apparent, Russia will mobilize and research offensively, with all that implies.

Dos and Don'ts

One aspect of this plan is that Axis players will have to restrain themselves. There is a tendency to tamper with the plan by invading Spain, attacking in the Mediterranean or trying to increase the pressure on Britain by other means at the expense of the main thrust of the plan. What the Axis *don't* do is almost as important as what they actually do. Here is a list.

Dos

The Axis:

- put the bulk of their RPs into air and naval research and production.
- conquer Poland in Fall 1939.
- build up in Winter 1939.
- research and produce at least one strategic bomber factor in 1940, if possible, as well as one interceptor and two Middle Eastern partisans.
- allocate the maximum possible number of DPs to the U.S. from 1939-1941.
- declare war on Denmark, Norway and the Low

Countries in Spring 1940 and attack in the west.

- concentrate wherever possible on eliminating British ground and especially air units, even at the expense of an adverse French surrender level.
- bomb Britain with the maximum forces, starting no later than Fall 1940, and continuing indefinitely.
- send out raiders in Fall 1940 and thereafter for as long as possible.
- gain diplomatic control of the Balkans in 1942.
- build German ground units in time to meet a Russian declaration of war.

Don'ts

The Axis do not:

- invade or airdrop into Britain.
- attack Russia.
- take any offensive operations in the Mediterranean, except possibly an invasion of Malta when the U.S. is about to enter the war.
- declare war on Spain.

The Rationale - USAT

The underlying rationale of the Axis strategy is to put Britain under so much economic pressure that it collapses. An essential part of the plan is to keep USAT as low as possible, because while it might be possible to run the British out of BRPs, the Americans will never have that problem. While the U.S. is an inexhaustible source of BRPs for Britain, there are two important constraints on American aid.

The first is political:

40.331 EUROPE:

A. AMERICAN BRP GRANTS TO THE WESTERN ALLIES: American BRP grants to France and Britain, including Canada and South Africa, are limited to one BRP per turn for each USAT level above 25 at the moment the grant is sent (one BRP could be granted if the USAT level was 26, two BRPs could be granted if the USAT level was 27, and so on), up to a maximum grant of 25 BRPs per turn. Once the U.S. is at war with Germany, there is no limit on the number of BRPs the U.S. may grant France and Britain, including Canada and South Africa, other than the logistics of the BRP grants themselves.

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	+1	+1	+1			
Allied major powers at war ¹	+	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2		
Russian mobilizations ²	+					+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4			
Axis penetration of the Balkans ³	+1					+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1			
Axis ground units in Britain	+1														
Axis territorial acquisitions ⁴	+				+2										
Axis expansion ⁵	+									+4					
Rus. penetration of the Balkans ⁶	-1														
Russian expansion ⁷	-	-2													
Current turn tension change		0	+2	+2	+4	+5	+5	+6	+6	+11	+7	+8			
Tension level		0	2	4	8	13	18	24	30	41	48	50+	50+	50+	
Russian mobilizations (5)						M1		M2		M3		M4	M5		

U.S. - Axis 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	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
DPs and covert operations	+/-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Allied major powers at war ¹	+	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Axis ground units in Britain	+1														
Axis gains in Mediterranean ²	+1														
Japan and the U.S. at war	+1											+1	+1	+1	+1
Axis offensive operations ³	+	+1		+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
Axis declarations of war ⁴	+			+5											
Axis bombing ⁵	+					+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
Axis territorial acquisitions ⁶	+				+2										
Atlantic transport shortage ⁸	+														
Allied aggression ⁹	-	-2													
Current turn tension change		+1	+2	+8	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+6			
Actual tension level		1	3	11	16	21	26	31	36	41	46	52			
American mobilizations (12)				M1		M2		M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10

The second is logistical:

40.223 TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS: BRP grants by sea require one transport for every five BRPs granted (round up). If combat losses cause the number of transports assigned to a BRP grant to drop below that required, some or all of the BRPs being granted are eliminated.

The Axis want to keep USAT as low as possible so as to limit the number of BRPs the U.S. may send to Britain to offset the effects of bombing and transport shortages. Once the U.S. is in the war, the Axis will try to weaken the Western Allied position in the Atlantic sufficiently that there are not enough transports available to revive the British economy.

The Axis Window of Opportunity

If the Axis try to collapse Britain economically, both sides will be both checking the numbers and watching the clock. How long will the Axis have to get the job done?

The RGT and USAT figures are on the previous page. Irrelevant rows of the charts have been deleted to save space. A number of assumptions have been made in estimating these tension levels:

- the Axis follow the plan as outlined above.
- Russia occupies eastern Poland and declares war on the Baltic States in Fall 1939.
- both the Axis and the Western Allies allocate equal DPs to USAT.
- Germany takes full offensives on the western front every turn, starting in Spring 1940.
- German bombing of Britain inflicts at least 10 BRPs of damage each turn, triggering a +1 USAT increase.
- The Western Allied transport losses do not exceed the Western Allied light shipbuilding capacity.
- the Axis do not undertake any additional activities which will increase USAT.
- the random tension die roll for USAT has no effect on the effective tension level (the fluctuations should balance out).

As can be seen, there are two major deadlines and a series of minor ones. The major deadlines are Russian and U.S. entry, while the minor deadlines are the USAT results which allow greater aid to Britain, including the increasingly liberal limit on BRP grants across the Atlantic. None of these deadlines are absolute, in the sense of automatically solving Britain's problems.



For the Germans, the turns will go by quickly.
For the British, it might seem to take forever
until the U.S. enters the war.

Russia

The first major deadline is Russian entry into the war. It can be forecast with a fair degree of certainty that RGT will hit 50 in Spring 1942, as shown in the chart opposite.

This assumes that the Axis take control of the Balkans in 1940, which triggers one-time event modifiers as well as a +1 status modifier each turn. The Axis may stay out of the Balkans altogether, but this is a dangerous gambit, because while it will keep RGT lower it allows Russia to eventually take control of Rumania and create a serious oil problem for the Axis once Russia goes to war.

Moreover, it doesn't matter all that much whether Russia declares war on Germany in Spring 1942, Summer 1942 or defer declaring war on Germany until Spring 1943.

For Russia to be a serious threat to Germany, it has to have both significant military forces and the BRPs to use them. Given the nature of the Axis plan, BRP grants from the Western Allies are unlikely, so Russia will be on its own.

A German declaration of war on Russia accelerates Russia's mobilizations and also triggers IC increases in subsequent YSS. The converse is not true:

37.14 A Russian declaration of war on the Axis has no effect on the BRP value of Russian ICs, which remains fixed at 10 BRPs for each IC unless Russia surrenders and the Axis subsequently declare war on Russia.

This means Russia will have to rely largely on BRP growth to develop the economic power to take offensives on both the eastern and Mediterranean (and later the western) fronts, build mobilized and produced units and replace what are likely to be heavy losses.

After the 1941 YSS, Russia usually has a base of about 50 BRPs, ICs worth 80 BRPs and conquests worth 45 BRPs (eastern Europe and the Ukraine), for a total of 175 BRPs.

During 1941, Russia will add 20 BRPs for additional ICs, and will spend around 15 BRPs in Spring 1941 to build produced air and ground units and a fort, and will spend another 12 BRPs in Spring 1941 to build infantry units mobilized in Fall 1940 (if Russia mobilized an armor unit in Fall 1940, this expenditure will be reduced), another 12 BRPs in Fall 1941 to build infantry units mobilized in Spring 1941, and perhaps one more infantry unit in Winter 1941. Unless Germany attacks it, Russia will end 1941 with around 150 BRPs.

In the 1942 YSS, RGT will be 38, so the Russian growth rate will be 38%:

35.31 GROWTH RATES: During each YSS, unspent BRPs from the previous year, as determined at the end of the previous winter game turn, are multiplied by the major power's growth rate. Fractions are dropped and the result is added to the major power's BRP base. The remaining BRPs are lost. The major power growth rates are:

...

B. Russia: The RGT level at end of the preceding winter game turn, up to a maximum of 50% (each RGT level equals one percentage point). Once war has broken out between Germany and Russia, the Russian growth rate remains at 50% for the remainder of the game.

38% of 150 = 57 BRPs of growth. The 1942 YSS calculations therefore give Russia a base of 107 BRPs, ICs worth 100 BRPs and conquests worth 45 BRPs, for a total of 252 BRPs.

Russia can afford to declare war on the Axis in Spring 1942 if RGT reach 50, but it may want to wait for economic reasons. Russia will add another 20 BRPs to its total from its final two mobilizations, but will also be building units mobilized in late 1940 and 1941.

Russia can expect BRP growth of at least 100 BRPs in the 1943 YSS if it waits until Spring 1943 to declare war on the Axis, but it will get some BRP growth regardless.

From the military point of view, by Summer 1942 Russia will typically have added the following forces from mobilizations:

- Spring 1941: Four 3-3 infantry units (from the Fall 1940 mobilization).
- Fall 1941: Three 3-3 infantry units (from the Spring 1941 mobilization).
- Winter 1941: One 3-3 infantry unit (from the Summer 1941 mobilization).
- Summer 1942: One 4-5 armor unit (from the Winter 1940 mobilization).
- Summer 1942: Four 3-3 infantry units (from the Winter 1941 mobilization).
- Winter 1942 One 4-5 armor unit (from the Summer 1941 mobilization).
- Spring 1943 One 4-5 armor unit (from the Fall 1941 mobilization).

At some point, when it is clear that the Axis are irrevocably committed to attacking Britain (usually Spring or Summer 1941), Russia will probably start mobilizing AAF rather than infantry. Since air units take four turns to mobilize, as opposed to only two turns for infantry, this will slow down the Russian mobilization further.

The bottom line is that Russia will only start getting its mobilized armor and air units in mid-1942 and early 1943. This means that in 1942 Russia will be able to attack the Axis only with its starting armor and air units, plus whatever quality units it has produced.

Russian power in 1942 is by no means negligible, but if Germany has built all its ground units by the time Russia attacks, they should be able to hold the front without assistance from Axis air units.

This means that the threat or actuality of Russian entry into the war in 1942 does not force an immediate cessation of the German bombing of Britain if there are good reasons to continue it. Each turn, however, the threat on the eastern front will increase.

The Axis also have to reckon with Russian meddling in the Balkans prior to a Russian declaration of war. We will return to this topic.

The United States

The status of the U.S. is even more important to the

Axis plan, because the U.S. can grant BRPs to Britain once USAT pass 25, and when USAT reach 34 the U.S. may convert DDs to ASW at the rate of three DDs/one ASW per turn.

For this reason, the Axis will do everything they can to avoid increasing USAT unnecessarily, knowing that bombing Britain itself will probably increase USAT by an additional point each turn from Fall 1940 to the end of 1941. The result is the USAT profile set out on page 4, which we will use for the purpose of analysis. The chart below summarizes the USAT levels for Fall 1940 to Spring 1942, as well as the level of allowable BRPs grants:

Turn	USAT	Grants
Fal 40	21	none
Win 40	26	1
Spr 41	31	6
Sum 41	36*	11
Fal 41	41	16
Win 41	46	21
Spr 42	52	unlimited

*When USAT reach 34, the U.S. may construct American CVEs, using the American naval air training level. American destroyers in the Atlantic U.S. box may be converted into ASW or transports, deployed to the Atlantic SW box and used against German submarines.

As mentioned earlier, U.S. entry does not guarantee an immediate solution to Britain's problems, because the Western Allies may have a transport problem in the Atlantic, and because the U.S. will not have an overwhelming number of AAF in 1942.

The Axis Tools

The game gives the Axis a number of different ways to attack enemy economies. The Axis plan involves coordinating at least four of these techniques in the hope of reaching a critical mass capable of inflicting permanent damage to Britain's economy. If, in particular games, opportunities to pressure British by other means arise for the Axis, so much the better.

Bombing

The techniques and likely results of a German bombing campaign against Britain were discussed at length in the Fall 2006 issue of ULTRA, although the expected BRP losses for Britain were not extrapolated in 1941 and beyond. An extended bombing campaign against Britain is one of the two main pillars of the Axis strategy.

If the Axis adopt the plan we are discussing, they will not bomb Britain intermittently, opportunistically or as a means of tying down British AAF and weakening Britain so gains can be made elsewhere. The German bombing of Britain will involve the entire German air force, as well as the Italian AAF, and will be relentless. As British resistance weakens, the German bombing campaign will become more effective, but American aid to Britain will increase as well.

In preparation for this bombing campaign, Germany will research strategic bombers and try to produce at least one strategic bomber factor and one interceptor in 1940. This represents a major diversion of RPs, but the Axis idea is to continue to develop the German strategic bomber arm in 1941 and 1942, in order to inflict more damage on the British and, at the very least, tie up Western Allied air units. The effect of these additional air units is analyzed in the Fall 2006 issue of ULTRA.

Submarines

The other main pillar of the Axis strategy is the U-boat war. The more successful the submarine war, the more BRPs the British lose and the more their construction limit is reduced. And, in contrast to bombing, submarine warfare virtually forces the British to spend BRPs to rebuild transport losses, as otherwise the Atlantic can spiral out of control.

Raiders

While raiding can lead to fascinating naval battles, which in turn can weaken the British fleet, the effect of raiders on the Western Allies transport situation is usually no greater in A WORLD AT WAR than it was in the real war. The Germans will raid every turn they can and hope for the best, but any transports the raiders sink are a welcome bonus.

Partisans

In 1940 and 1941, the Axis should build Middle Eastern partisans. Whether the British attack and eliminate them or just live with them, they will cost the British BRPs. The Axis strategy does not require any diplomatic successes in minor countries or any particular emphasis on intelligence research. Two Middle Eastern partisans will cost the British two BRPs per turn, and an additional two partisans will cost the British four BRPs per turn in 1941.

Irish partisans are worth a try, but may also be considered a bonus.

THE NUMBERS GAME

Deconstructing the British Economy

by Bruce Harper

Introduction

The plan described in this issue sounds great, but will it work? Let's see.

The BRP projections in this article are based on the following assumptions:

- Britain finished 1939 with all its available units built and no BRP growth.
- The British transport losses are an estimate, based on an amalgam of results from various games.
- The British and U.S. convert DDs to ASW for as long as possible, until they run out of DDs.
- The British defend against bombing with 10 AAF and rebuild only enough AAF to maintain this level.
- Air combat and strategic bombing dice rolls are a "7".
- The U.S. grants Britain as many BRPs as it can.

Overall, the BRP projections err on the side of the British, as they assume the Western Allies will react with an unrealistic level of foresight. In an actual game, the British might get into much more trouble.



1940

Spring 1940

In Spring 1940, Germany attacks in the west and spends 9 BRPs on naval builds (submarines), 12 BRPs for AAF and 4 BRPs for Middle Eastern partisans. The

rest of Germany's builds are used for armor units.

Italy enters the war and launches its two BB4s.

Britain is assumed not to have conducted any offensive operations or lost any units in France. Because Germany attacked, but did not immediately conquer, Norway, Britain gains 10 BRPs. We will assume, if only for the sake of simplicity, that Britain ignores the Middle Eastern partisans and accepts a two BRP loss each turn.

Britain builds the five AAF and one NAS that enter its force pool in Spring 1940, and, having increased its shipbuilding by one, spends the maximum 21 BRPs for naval construction. No newly produced units are built.

Spring 1940			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
Construction limit	50	21	40 - 2 = 38
Initial BRP level	180	73	170
Transport losses			-7
Bombing losses			
Additions/other losses			+10
Declarations of war	-30	-35	
Offensive operations	-15		
Partisan/ other losses			-2
Builds and BRP grants counted against grantor's construction limit	Armor: 24	Armor: 24	Armor: 24
	Infantry: 12	Infantry: 12	Infantry: 12
	Air: 9	Air: 6	Air: 16
	Naval: 4	Naval: 6	Naval: 21
	Other: 4	Other: 6	Other: 21
Total builds	-49	-6	-37
BRP grants			
Final BRP level	86	32	134
BRP base change			

Summer 1940

In Summer 1940, France falls.

Germany picks up 30 BRPs for conquering Denmark and the Low Countries in Spring 1940. With France gone, the Germans don't bother to rebuild any ground units and spend 9 BRPs on naval construction and 24 BRPs (an estimate) on bringing their air force up to strength (including the construction of an interceptor

and hopefully at least one strategic bomber factor).

It is difficult to estimate the number of British AAF that might be eliminated in this turn. The RAF might fight, in which case both Britain and Germany will probably lose 6-7 AAF, or the British might hold all their air back and let France fall without worrying about the French surrender level. For the sake of analysis, we will assume that Britain plays cautiously and doesn't lose any units in Summer 1940.

If the air losses are higher, the Germans can handle the additional builds, because they didn't use their entire construction limit. The British will feel the effect more.

Britain loses another 7 BRPs for transport shortages and loses the prorated value of Norway because Germany conquers it, plus 2 BRPs for the Middle Eastern partisans. Faced with a possible Sea Lion, the British spend five BRPs (an estimate) on infantry, building a produced 3-4 infantry unit and replacing attrition losses in Egypt. The British, having seen the appearance of the additional German air units, restrict their shipbuilding to construction directly related to the submarine war.

Summer 1940			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
Construction limit	50	21	40 - 2 = 38
Initial BRP level	86	32	134
Transport losses			-7
Bombing losses			
Additions/other losses	+30		-7
Declarations of war			
Offensive operations	-15	-7	
Partisan/ other losses			-2
Buils and BRP grants counted against grantor's construction limit	Armor: Infantry: Air: 24 Naval: 9 Other:	Armor: Infantry: Air: 6 Naval: 6 Other:	Armor: Infantry: 5 Air: Naval: 15 Other:
Total builds	-33	-12	-20
BRP grants			
Final BRP level	68	13	90
BRP base change			

Fall 1940

In Fall 1940, the Axis campaign kicks into high gear. If the British used AAF in France, their BRP total will be lower and they may even have unbuilt AAF, while if the German submarines have done well, the British may have lost a few more BRPs from transport shortages as



well. But the BRP levels used here are typical.

Germany picks up 40 BRPs for France, 10 BRPs for Norway and 30 BRPs for Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria, all prorated, and spends 15 BRPs on a western front offensive. The critical question is exactly what the Axis do during this offensive.

Our plan assumes that Germany sends out raiders and bombs Britain. But there are two feasible alternatives, depending on the situation. One is an airdrop into Britain, although if the possibility of this type of operation exists, it will likely have been carried out in Summer 1940. The second is a seaborne invasion of Britain.

The analysis assumes that Britain commits only 10 AAF to the Battle of Britain, and therefore Italian AAF can't be used to counterair the RAF. Since a direct invasion of Britain is more feasible if the British hold back some of their AAF, the Germans should leave a 2-6 armor and a 1-3 infantry unit in port at the end of their Summer 1940 turn in order to threaten an invasion and draw more of the British AAF into combat.

In any event, here are the overall results of the German bombing:

Fall 1940 Bombing		
	Air Units	
20 AAF (e), 10 AAF (b) 1 interceptor 1 strategic bomber		10 AAF
Air Combat Losses		
4/5		3/5
Bombing Losses		
7 AAF		defense level = 4
1/1		1/4 + 5/0 = 6/4
3 BRPs		22 BRPs
Total Losses		
15 BRPs + 5 air factors		22 BRPs + 3 air factors
30 BRPs		31 BRPs

Germany will spend 9 BRPs on shipbuilding and rebuild its air, then spend enough on ground units to get to 65 BRPs. This allows Germany end the year at zero BRPs, without wasting any on low growth.

Since the British are being cautious with their AAF, they won't have to rebuild any AAF, but the British BRP level still drops dramatically, to 39 BRPs, assuming the British spend 15 BRPs on naval construction, which might well barely cover their transport losses. Britain will end the turn with three unbuilt AAF.

Fall 1940			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
Construction limit	50	21	40 - 11 = 29
Initial BRP level	68	13	90
Transport losses			-12
Bombing losses			-22
Additions/other losses	+40		
Declarations of war			
Offensive operations	-15		
Partisan/ other losses			-2
Builds and BRP grants counted against grantor's construction limit	Armor:	Armor:	Armor:
	Infantry: 4	Infantry:	Infantry:
	Air: 15	Air: 1	Air: 15
	Naval: 9	Naval: 6	Naval: 15
	Other:	Other:	Other:
Total builds	-28	-7	-15
BRP grants			
Final BRP level	65	6	39
BRP base change			

Winter 1940			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
Construction limit	50	21	40 - 11 = 29
Initial BRP level	65	6	39
Transport losses			-10
Bombing losses			-22
Additions/other losses			
Declarations of war			
Offensive operations	-15		
Partisan/ other losses			-2
Builds	Armor: 24	Armor:	Armor:
	Infantry: 7	Infantry:	Infantry:
	Air: 9	Air: 1	Air: 15
	Naval: 9	Naval: 6	Naval: 15
	Other:	Other:	Other:
Total builds	-49	-7	-15
BRP grants	-1	+1	+1
Final BRP level	0	0	-10
BRP base change			-10

Winter 1940

Winter 1940 is another crucial turn. In many games, the Germans will stop bombing to prepare for Barbarossa, but with the plan under discussion, the Axis are not so inhibited.

The Germans again bomb Britain, with the same expected results as in Fall 1940, because Britain is committed to using only 10 AAF to defend. As in the previous turn, if Britain commits more AAF, the Italian AAF will counterair, in which case Germany may have to grant BRPs to Italy to allow the Italians to rebuild their air force, using some of the BRPs that would otherwise be used to build German ground units.

The German submarines will be slightly less effective than in the previous turn, because the British will have converted three more DDs to ASW in Fall 1940.

The British will now find themselves on the horns of a dilemma. Their 39 BRPs will be reduced to close to zero, and Britain will have four or five transports to rebuild. In this situation, the British will normally burn their BRP base in order to maximize their light shipbuilding, and let everything else slide.

If the British see this coming, they might restrict their non-naval construction earlier in the year, but on the other hand the British losses earlier in 1940 might be greater than projected. The British are likely to end the year with six AAF unbuilt, which will leave them with 12 AAF in Britain.



1941

1941 YSS

In the 1941 YSS, Germany will be close to 300 BRPs. A good diplomatic result in the Balkans, giving Germany at least 30 BRPs, will put the Axis over 300 BRPs, but otherwise there isn't much room for maneuver.

For the Western Allies, Britain will start with 160 BRPs. The American DP and RP totals, shown in parentheses, are estimates and will vary based on a number of factors, including whether a European or Global War scenario is being played. Depending on what happened in France in 1940, the British BRP base and level may be lower

1941 YSS			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
BRP base	150	63	110
Construction limit	50	21	36
Conquests and colonies	Russia 10	Colonies 10	Egypt 5
	Poland 20		Palestine 5
	Low C 30		Far East 40
	Den/Nor 20		
	France 40		
	Balkans 20		
	Total 140	Total 10	Total 50
Total BRPs	290	73	160
DPs	11	2	4 (+ 4) = 8
RPs	13	3	9 (+ 11) = 20

With 16 RPs, the Axis will allocate eight RPs to air projects and seven or eight RPs to naval projects. If the Axis can somehow get 17 RPs, so much the better, as an additional RP in air can't hurt. Whether Germany gets to 300 BRPs depends on how it rolls for the Balkans, including Yugoslavia.

The Axis will have 13 DPs. Four DPs are allocated to the U.S., three DPs are be allocated to partisan construction, in order to produce two more Middle Eastern partisans, and two DPs are allocated to other intelligence projects. This leaves four DPs for other targets. The Axis don't expect to get any diplomatic results.

Spring 1941

The Axis will produce two more interceptors and either four or five additional strategic bombers, depending on whether the Axis get a second air breakthrough in 1941. In addition, Germany will add its usual three submarines and increase its shipbuilding to four.

These additional air units won't affect the German bombing this turn, although the British might get an air defense research result. But for the sake of analysis, let's assume the same results as in Winter 1940.

Germany will build its new air units and replace the air units lost in Winter 1940, as well as spending 12 BRPs on shipbuilding. The remaining German builds will be ground units to bolster its eastern front defenses. Italy's builds will be light.

Britain will again have some difficult choices. Its transport losses will be slightly lighter than in Winter 1940, because the German submarines added in 1941 won't yet be available. But Britain will probably have nine unbuilt AAF, and therefore will have dropped below the 10 AAF required for an optimal defense

unless it also rebuilds some air units. Britain will certainly add at least one ASW to its force pool and may add an interceptor or two as well. Britain will also be down to around six or seven DDs, so we will assume that Britain spends 15 BRPs on naval construction and six BRPs building air units. The British must also build 11 BRPs of Australian units (six BRPs this turn; five BRPs next turn) or run the risk of leaving Australia too exposed to Japanese attack. This leaves unbuilt the 4-5 armor units which enter Britain's force pool in Spring 1941. Britain will also have seven or eight unbuilt air factors.

Spring 1941			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
Construction limit	50	21	36 - 9 + 2 = 27
Initial BRP level	290	73	160
Transport losses			-7
Bombing losses			-22
Additions/other losses			
Declarations of war			
Offensive operations	-15		
Partisan/ other losses			-4
Builds and BRP grants counted against grantor's construction limit	Armor: 8	Armor: 4	Armor: 4
	Infantry: 3	Infantry: 1	Infantry: 6
	Air: 27	Air: 1	Air: 6
	Naval: 12	Naval: 6	Naval: 15
	Other: 0	Other: 0	Other: 6
Total builds	-50	-11	-27
BRP grants			+6
Final BRP level	225	62	116
BRP base change			





Summer 1941

The Axis strategy is now in full swing. In the Atlantic, the British BRP losses will be higher than in the previous turn, because the Germans will have seven or eight submarines operating. We will estimate 12 BRPs of losses from submarine warfare.



With 30 AAF, four strategic bombers and three interceptors, the Germans are very likely to inflict the maximum damage on London (30 BRPs). The problem the Germans have is that a single bombing attack on London can do no more than inflict 30 BRPs of bombing losses on Britain, and since engaging the attacking German air with 10 British AAF is unlikely to change this, the British will just let the raid go through and try to roll with the punch.



A more ambitious approach for the Germans is to

target both London and Birmingham, in the hope of inflicting more than 30 BRPs of damage. If the British concentrate on the London raid, here are the expected losses:

Summer 1941 Bombing – London	
	Air Units 
14 AAF (e), 7 AAF (b) 2 interceptors 2 strategic bombers	10 AAF
Air Combat Losses	
4/5	3/5
Bombing Losses	
5 AAF	defense level = 4
1/1	1/2 + 3/0 = 4/2
3 BRPs	14 BRPs
Summer 1941 Bombing – Birmingham	
	Air Units 
6 AAF (e), 3 AAF (b) 2 strategic bombers 1 interceptor	None
Bombing Losses	
5 AAF	defense level = 3
0/2	1/2 + 3/0 = 4/2
None	14 BRPs
Total Losses	
15 BRPs + 5 air factors	28 BRPs + 3 air factors
30 BRPs	37 BRPs

If the British allocate their air in rough proportion to the value of the two targets (2:1 in favor of London), the results are slightly better, but because there are more dice rolls, the British have a greater risk of a bad outcome. This is another example of the adage that, when it comes to bombing, “you can run, but you can’t hide”:

Summer 1941 Bombing – London	
	Air Units 
14 AAF (e), 7 AAF (b) 2 interceptors 2 strategic bombers	7 AAF
Air Combat Losses	
3/4	2/4
Bombing Losses	
6 AAF	defense level = 4
1/1	1/3 + 4/0 = 5/3
3 BRPs	18 BRPs

Summer 1941 Bombing – Birmingham	
	Air Units 
6 AAF (e), 3 AAF (b) 2 strategic bombers 1 interceptor	3 AAF
Air Combat Losses	
1/3	1/2
Bombing Losses	
3 AAF	defense level = 3
0/2	0/2 + 1/0 = 1/2
3 BRPs	5 BRPs
Total Losses	
15 BRPs + 5 air factors	23 BRPs + 3 air factors
30 BRPs	32 BRPs

Assuming the Germans attack both targets, the British will have to rebuild the air they lost in air combat, or else face the Fall 1941 bombing attacks with less than 10 AAF. They will also have to rebuild their lost transports and, if they hope to keep converting to ASW, some British DDs as well. We will also budget five BRPs for Australian builds.

Summer 1941			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
Construction limit	50	21	36 – 14 + 3 = 25
Initial BRP level	225	62	116
Transport losses			-12
Bombing losses			-23
Additions/other losses			
Declarations of war			
Offensive operations	-15		
Partisan/ other losses			-4
Builds and BRP grants counted against grantor's construction limit	Armor: 8 Infantry: 3 Air: 27 Naval: 12 Other:	Armor: 8 Infantry: 3 Air: 6 Naval: 6 Other:	Armor: 9 Infantry: 9 Air: 15 Other: 5
Total builds	-50	-6	-24
BRP grants			+11
Final BRP level	160	56	59
BRP base change			

Fall 1941

Fall 1941 will be a repeat of Summer 1941, so for the purposes of analysis we will assume the same results. As pointed out above, if the British air defenses have dropped below 10 AAF, then the bombing losses to London and Birmingham will be higher than

indicated.

The Germans follow the same construction plan: maximum naval construction, rebuilding any lost air units and the rest to ground forces on the eastern front. The Italians continue to build up their navy. The British rebuild their transports and try to maintain their basic defensive level of 10 AAF.

Fall 1941			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
Construction limit	50	21	36 - 14 + 5 = 27
Initial BRP level	160	56	59
Transport losses			-12
Bombing losses			-23
Additions/other losses			
Declarations of war			
Offensive operations	-15		
Partisan/ other losses			-4
Builds and BRP grants counted against grantor's construction limit	Armor: 23	Armor: 23	Armor: 9
	Infantry: 15	Infantry: 15	Infantry: 15
	Air: 12	Air: 6	Air: 15
	Naval: 12	Naval: 6	Naval: 15
	Other: 12	Other: 6	Other: 15
Total builds	-50	-6	-24
BRP grants			+16
Final BRP level	95	50	12
BRP base change			

Winter 1941

With the British BRP level reduced to 12 BRPs, the Germans have another opportunity to burn the British BRP base.

The first consideration is whether the Germans should declare war against the U.S. The Germans will have 8 submarines against about 14 ASW. The net submarine warfare is likely to be about +4:

- **Naval Nationality DRM:** The Western Allies may have caught up in this category, but usually not until 1942: +1.
- **Ports:** The Axis control the French ports for a modifier of +2.
- **U.S:** The Happy Time modifier will be triggered: +3.
- **Torpedo research:** Germany should have one torpedo research result: +1.
- **ASW research:** The Western Allies can be assumed to have two ASW research results: -2.

- **CVEs:** The Western Allies won't have any CVEs, because the U.S. will have been devoted its entire grant capacity to sending BRPs to Britain.
- **Air range research:** The Western Allies will have one air range research result: -1.
- **Ultra:** Codebreaking levels will probably be equal, with neither side having added a submarine warfare or ASW card. There might be a modifier either way, but it's a matter of luck.

The Western Allies will have 25 transports in the Atlantic. Eight submarines with a +4 modifier will get a 2/5 result; 14 ASW with a -4 modifier will get a 2/7 result. The net result for the submarines will be 6/5, leaving 14 transports available in the Atlantic and five transports in the Indian Ocean. This will cost Britain 16 BRPs. However, the U.S. will be able to grant around 50 BRPs and will also be able to send some AAF to Britain to bolster the British air defenses.

Unless the submarine warfare modifiers are unusually favorable to the Axis, or the number of transports in the Atlantic is lower than projected, declaring war on the U.S. doesn't help the German cause. They are better off turning the other cheek and allowing the U.S. to grant BRPs to Britain in Winter 1941.

The Germans accordingly bomb, raid and conduct submarine warfare. A conservative estimate of the results is given below. Prior to unit construction and BRP grants, Britain will be at -34 BRPs (12 - 12 (transports) - 23 (bombing) - 4 (partisans) - 7 (Japanese conquests in the Far East)).

Britain will receive 21 BRPs from the U.S., reducing their deficit to -13 BRPs. The U.S. BRP grant will cover some British construction costs, but excessive spending will reduce the British BRP base. Since the British are more or less forced to spend for construction in Winter 1941, the British BRP level at the start of 1941 and the BRPs spent and lost by Britain during the year are critical in determining the extent of the deficit incurred.

The British player must decide whether to replace transports lost in Winter 1941, and also whether to deficit spend further in order to rebuild AAF and maintain his basic air defense level.

Usually the British player will deficit spend to rebuild lost transports (probably two or three of them in Winter 1941, but more if the Germans have been lucky) and will let the air go. We will make this assumption.

The result is that Britain's BRP base is reduced by nine BRPs (for rebuilding three transports), it will

deduct another 11 BRPs from its 1942 total, and Britain will have 11 AAF unbuilt at the end of 1941.

Winter 1941			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
Construction limit	50	21	$36 - 14 + 7 = 27$
Initial BRP level	95	50	12
Transport losses			-10
Bombing losses			-23
Additions/other losses			-7
Declarations of war			
Offensive operations	-15		
Partisan/ other losses			-4
Builds and BRP grants counted against grantor's construction limit	Armor: 23 Infantry: 15 Air: 12 Naval: 12 Other:	Armor: 6 Infantry: 6 Air: 6 Naval: 6 Other:	Armor: 9 Infantry: 9 Air: 9 Naval: 9 Other:
Total builds	-50	-12	-9
BRP grants			+21
Final BRP level	30	56	-20
BRP base change			



1942

1942 YSS

In the 1942 YSS, Germany will reach 300 BRPs. At some point in 1941 Germany will probably gain a few additional BRPs in the Balkans, and in any case is likely to have some BRP growth. Germany may also have received a DP for firestorming London.

The Axis now can try to play a dangerous game by continuing to allocate the bulk of their RPs to air and naval projects, rather than constructing forts on the eastern front and in Rumania. While the forts will

probably not be required in 1942, they certainly will be later on, and the more the Axis have the better. But the Axis strategy is more ambitious, as explained below.

For the Western Allies, Britain will start with 110 BRPs. The British DP and RP totals will be slightly lower than in 1941, but the American DP and RP totals will compensate, because USAT will be close to 50 and the U.S. will be at war with Japan. This will allow the Western Allies to allocate RPs to anti-bombing projects, such as air defense and radar research, and interceptor and flak production, should they be so inclined. From the Axis point of view, every Western Allied RP allocated to such defensive projects is one less RP devoted to more dangerous offensive projects.

1942 YSS			
	Germany	Italy	Britain
BRP base	159	74	110
Construction limit	53	24	36
Conquests and colonies	Russia 10 Poland 20 Low C 30 Den/Nor 20 France 40 Balkans 30 Total 150	Colonies 10	Egypt 5 Palestine 5 Far East 10 Deficit -20
Total BRPs	309	84	110
DPs	13	2	4 (+ 9) = 13
RPs	14	3	8 (+ 25) = 33

1942 and beyond

The Axis plan is now to continue bombing Britain, even though American entry into the war makes it unlikely that the Axis can collapse Britain's economy further. In Spring 1942, no American air units will yet have arrived in Britain, so the German bombing will be very effective, and might well eliminate 30-40 British BRPs. It's hard to know whether the Germans should declare war on the U.S. in Spring 1942 or not, but even if they do it's hard to see them clearing out the Atlantic, so the U.S. will be able to send AAF and BRPs to Britain. The raiding situation may determine whether Germany takes the initiative and declares war or lets the U.S. declare war in Spring 1942, triggering the Happy Time modifier in Summer 1942, when the Germans will have more submarines in the Atlantic.

Bombing

Even though the U.S. will enter the war in Spring 1941, it won't have that many AAF, so American entry doesn't end the German bombing campaign. In a Global

War game, it can be assumed that the units generated from the first American mobilization will go the Pacific, and in a European scenario this assumption is found in the rules themselves:

European scenario:

In the European scenario, U.S. mobilizations occur as determined by the USAT level. For each mobilization, the U.S. adds 25 BRPs to its BRP base and level and adds 20 BRPs of units to its force pool except as follows:

- When the U.S. mobilizes at USAT level 10, the U.S. increases its shipbuilding level by one and otherwise adds no units to its force pool, as any ground and air units mobilized are considered to go to the Pacific theater.

This leaves the American Fall 1940 and Spring 1941 European mobilizations as sources of AAF, as well as

one American 1940 Pacific mobilization. These three mobilizations generate 60 BRPs of units, but 15 BRPs of these will be diverted to shipbuilding, so that leaves 45 BRPs of units. Normally 10 BRPs of this will be an American 5-6 armor unit, so the U.S. is likely to have no more than 10 AAF available to send to Britain's aid in Spring 1942. American BRP grants will let the British rebuild some air as well, and the Western Allies are likely to produce several American interceptors, which will be built in the U.S. and will reappear in Britain without using an Atlantic transport. Throw in possible air defense and radar research, and even flak in London, and Summer 1942 bombing will be harder.

Against this, however, has to be balanced the additional three (or even more) strategic bombers the

Axis Air and Naval Research

Axis RPs	10	14	16	17				
Code	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	Min.	Max.
Air	3 ^{Fa} ③	+5 1 ^{Sp} ③	3 ^{Sp} ③	+5 1 ^{Sp} ③			8+	
Nationality DRM (A)	-2						10+	
Jets (G)	+2			1 ^{Fa} ③	+3		13-14	17+
Air Range (G)			+3 1 ^{Sp} ③	+6 1 ^{Su} ③			10+	
Strategic Bombers (G)	2 ^{Wi} ③	+2 3 ^{Su} ③					9+	
Air Defense (A)							7+	
Air Production (A)	2,3,4,5...		1 ^{Su}	1 ^{Sp}	1			
Strategic Bombers (G)	2,3,4,5...		2 ^{Su}	3 ^{Sp}	3			
Air Transports (G)	3,4,5,6...							
Jet FP (G)	4,5,6,7...							
Naval Air Train. (G,I)	3,4,5,6							
Airbases (G,I)	1,1 (1/turn)							
Naval	3 ^{Fa} ③	+5 1 ^{Sp} ③	1 ^{Sp} ③	+3 2 ^{Sp} ③			8+	
Nationality DRM (A)	-3						10+	
ASW Technology (A)							6-7	8+
Torpedoes (G,I)		+2 1 ^{Su} ③	1 ^{Sp} ③	-1 1 ^{Sp} ③	+3		7+	
Advanced Subs (G)			1	2			10+	
Harbor Attack (A)							6	8+
Submarine FP (G,I)	1...		3 ^{Sp}	3 ^{Sp}	3 ^{Sp}			
Advanced subs (G)	4,5,6,7...							

Germans will produce in Spring 1942. Since the Western Allies won't be able to stop all the bombers that attack London, these additional strategic bombers will get through and the British will lose at least nine additional BRPs, plus whatever SW combat result these bombers achieve. Using the Italian AAF to counterair some of the Western Allies AAF, the Axis can reasonably expect to come close to inflicting the maximum BRP damage on London in Summer 1942 and probably for the rest of 1942 as well.

The idea behind continuing the bombing of Britain is to inhibit the British recovery and to impede the flow of American units across the Atlantic. The British will enter 1942 with most of their AAF unbuilt, as well as at least several unbuilt armor units (it would have been a mistake for the British to have built these in 1941, as they would incur a larger BRP deficit as a result, and they would have been very unlikely to have used them in 1941. The Canadian 4-5 armor unit can be built by the U.S. once it enters the war.)

If the Axis can keep eliminating British AAF and reduce the British construction limit through bombing, they can use almost all the German ground units to defend against Russia. The continuation of the bombing campaign is intended to buy time by tying up Western Allied resources in Britain.

The U-boat War

Dramatic as the German bombing campaign will have been, the German submarine campaign will prove to be just as important. One side effect of the German bombing is to force the U.S. to maximize its BRP grants to Britain, which adversely affects the number of CVEs the Western Allies will have in the Atlantic in 1942-1943. The Western Allied DD levels can also be expected to be near rock bottom, which takes the pressure off Italy in the Mediterranean.

To take advantage of the absence of CVEs in the Atlantic and the possible diversion of Western Allied RPs to anti-bombing projects, the Germans will obtain advanced submarines in 1943. The French submarine ports will be safe at least until the end of 1943, and it's not obvious that the Western Allies will be able to invade France in 1944 if the bombing and submarine pressure is maintained (although if the Axis cut things too close, the Russians might be in France by then). The Axis hope is that an extended and effective submarine campaign will make it difficult for the Western Allies to organize a Western Front, which in turn makes it possible to slow or even stop the Russians.

When the Wheels Fall Off...

When the wheels fall off, it's going to be ugly, but it always is. The turning point will come when the Russians become too powerful to stop, when the German construction limit can no longer sustain the losses incurred from bombing and the Atlantic submarine campaign, or when the Axis get into serious oil problems (or a combination of all these factors). From the figures used in the above analysis, the collapse might start in late 1943, but even then the Axis can shut down their bombing campaign and switch air units to the eastern front, gaining a breathing space. But can the Axis hope to do better than I've projected?

Improvements

As stated at the outset, the projections used in the preceding analysis are as favorable to the Western Allies as they could be. There are a number of possibilities that would make the Axis strategy more effective, and if the British BRP base is reduced by 50 or 60 BRPs by 1942, rather than just 20 BRPs, the long-term Axis prospects are much better. Here are some variables which hopefully will occur if you try the plan:

- the Axis might get an air or naval breakthrough in 1939.
- the Germans might attack in the west in Winter 1939, both to enhance German's DP, RP and BRP situation and to get to the Channel ports sooner and start air attacks on Britain.
- the British might lose more air in France, especially if the Germans defer the capture of Paris until Fall 1940 in order to engage the RAF.
- the Western Allied player may not maximize DP allocations to the U.S., which reduces the level of BRP grants to Britain.
- German raiders might be effective.
- Atlantic research might favor the Axis.
- the British might commit more than 10 AAF to the defense of Britain in Fall 1940, because of the threat of a German invasion, thereby losing additional AAF.
- The Axis might roll well in air combat and submarine warfare.

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