

Without America

Four Third Reich Variants on a Theme

by Steve Newton

When the carrier strike force of the Imperial Japanese Navy surprised the American naval base at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Adolf Hitler was just as shocked and upset as the United States Navy. Although he had attempted to involve the Japanese in a war with the British in 1940 and the Soviets in 1941, war with the United States was not something that the German dictator had desired or envisioned.

And as a member of the Tripartite Pact, plus some rash assurances by both Hitler and Ribbentrop, Germany was theoretically committed to support Japan if a war with America developed. In early December 1941, Hitler began to regret those promises. He seriously considered renegeing on the agreement (which would not, after all, have been out of character for him).

Yet Goring asserted that all the Americans could produce was razor blades (the next year Rommel was to remark that he wished that Germany could produce such razor blades). Ribbentrop, deluded by the reports of his agents in the States, was convinced that the American people would refuse to go to war for the "Jew-monger" Roosevelt. Even Mussolini wanted to take on the United States. Hitler wavered, if only for the moment. He had repeatedly claimed he did not believe that America had a great military potential. He hesitated, however, to commit himself against the United States directly.

But on December 11, 1941, apparently casting aside his doubts, in an impassioned speech in the Reichstag, he declared war on the United States. Italy would soon follow suit. By this action, Hitler had unleashed on the European war, the most powerful industrial complex in the world.

The rest is history. *Third Reich* accurately portrays the impact of America's entry into the conflict. When the U.S. appears, the balance of power immediately takes a subtle shift in favor of the Allies. If Germany does not win soon after, the change becomes more and more marked. By 1943, Germany is probably beginning to find herself busier

building flak and interceptors than submarines. Any attempts by the Luftwaffe or the Regia Marina to gain air or naval superiority are overwhelmed. Then, with the majority of the Wehrmacht, in all likelihood, on the steppes of Russia, the influx of American manpower begins to erode Germany's advantage in land forces.

The strange thing is, Hitler cut his own throat. Many historians, notably among them William Shirer, have voiced the opinion that there was a good chance that had not Hitler declared war first, Congress would have either delayed or outright refused any move by Roosevelt to enter the war against Germany and Italy.

This theory, combined with several possible changes of events in Asia, produces a number of significant "what-if" situations that are explored by the four Third Reich variations below:

Variation #1: No War in Asia

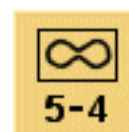
Historical Comments: Probably the most unlikely of the four, this variant presumes that the military government of Hideki Tojo does not come to power and Asian peace efforts are somehow successful. The extra British forces here are those that are obviously not tied down in India and Burma. The extra BRPs result both from the fact that all Britain's resources can now be directed into one effort, and "all aid short of war" that Roosevelt can pry out of Congress.

Rules: All rules of the regular campaign game apply, with the following exceptions:

1. Delete all U.S. units.
2. Minor Variation #4 is played in the Spring 1942 game turn.
3. Increase the British Allowable Builds for Summer 1942 by the following:
4. Add 50 BRPs to the British each year from 1942 on.



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Variation #2-British-Japanese War

Historical Comments: The possibilities for a limited war on the part of the Japanese were very real, and Britain and the Commonwealth was a likely target. The British-controlled areas of the Far East offered a chance to garner a large prize from an already heavily committed enemy who could not bring all his resources to bear, bearing the additional plus of not becoming entangled with the U. S.

Rules: All rules of the regular campaign game apply, with the following exceptions:

1. Delete all U.S. units.
2. Add 50 BRPs to the British each year from 1942 on.

Variation #3-Russo-Japanese War

Historical Comments: When it became apparent that the Soviet Union was not collapsing according to schedule, Hitler attempted to interest Japan in attacking Russia from the rear. The Battle of Moscow was decided, in part, by the Siberian reserves Stalin pulled out of the Far East when he knew that Japan was not going to attack the Soviet Union. What if ...

Rules: All rules of the regular campaign game apply, with the following exceptions:

1. Delete all U.S. units.
2. Reduce the Soviet Allowable Builds for Spring 1942 by four 3-3's.
3. Add 50 BRPs to the British each year from 1942 on.

Variation #4-Variable U.S. Entry

Historical Comments: This scenario can either be played by itself, or in combination with any of the other three. This one assumes that Hitler does renege on his agreement, or that if the United States does not become involved in a Pacific war, that Roosevelt has trouble with attaining a Declaration of War from the Congress against Germany.

Rules: All rules of the regular campaign game apply, with the following exceptions:

1. Starting in the Spring 1942 turn the American player rolls a die to determine the point of the United States' entry into the war. A roll of one sets the American date of entry at Summer 1942, a roll of two. Fall 1942, and so on, a six being the Fall 1943 game turn.
2. Add 50 BRPs to the British each Year-Start sequence in which the U.S. is not in the war at the beginning of the year.

The major effect that these scenarios have on play of the game is to really make it sticky for the British player as far as ground combat forces. These variants illustrate what Churchill's intent to continue the war, "if necessary, alone," could have entailed-a much longer war, with a greatly increased opportunity for an Axis victory.