




HEARTS OF IRON IV

**ADVANCED GUIDE
FOR BEGINNERS**



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Hearts of Iron IV is one of Paradox Development Studio's most popular titles, but also a bit of an outsider. Unlike the broad open-ended stories that are available to you in *Crusader Kings II* or *Europa Universalis IV*, *Hearts of Iron* is a ruthlessly focused game. You are not shackled to history, but the game is about World War II and World War II will happen.

Of course, the World War II you encounter in a game will bear only a passing resemblance to the one we know from history. Maybe Germany goes after the Soviet Union first, and maybe Italy decides to go its own way in 1938. But *Hearts of Iron* is still a game about war – preparing for war, researching war related technologies, developing attack plans and then keeping that war machine going until the issue is settled.

To this end, *Hearts of Iron* has a much greater emphasis on military matters than political or economic matters. You acquire new weapons through factories. Money is irrelevant. Trade is highly abstracted and focused on specific materials. Your population exists not to be taxed, but to be given a gun and a mission. Diplomacy is a blunt instrument to pull someone closer to your side, or push them into war.

Hearts of Iron's focus on military matters, especially the act of war itself (battle plans, amphibious invasions, supply routes, equipment upgrades) make it closer to a traditional wargame than a grand strategy game in many respects. That means that its mechanics require a different way of thinking than most Paradox strategy games, and general advice can be hard to come by. Many people have been able to understand the basics, but then are unsure about how to think about getting better.

1. This guide is intended to help players make that next step. It assumes a few things.
2. You have a basic understanding of how things work in the game. You understand movement, can read tooltips, know what the fundamental terminology is, and so on.
3. You do not already have hundreds of hours of time in Hearts of Iron IV, including a game where you conquered the world as Cuba. Expert players will find little of value in these pages.
4. You want to get better at Hearts of Iron but have difficulty understanding some major relationships between systems or don't know what (or when) you should prioritize.

There is an assumption that you will have played through the official Tutorial, which takes you through the early game as Italy – winning the Ethiopian war, learning the basics of combat, production, and assigning units and commanders.

The tutorial is not especially clear on some things like supply, infrastructure, or how to adjust early game strategies to fit mid and late game situations. Hopefully this short guide will help guide you into, at least, asking the right questions about your game situation and help ease you on a path to stopping the pernicious ideologies that threaten your homeland.

THE EARLY GAME



We're going to assume, for the purposes of this guide, that you are playing one of the seven major powers in *Hearts of Iron IV* – the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union or Japan. These are the nations with the most to do in the game (at this point), and the ones with the greatest potential to rise to dominance.

We are also going to assume that you are using the 1936 scenario, since the 1939 scenario pretty much locks you in to the historical war and you are thrown into the thick of military planning. If you prefer to play the 1939 scenario, skip ahead to the mid-game section of this guide, starting on page 26.

When you start the game, you will be inundated with a bunch of alerts at the top of your screen demanding your attention. If you have many hours in the game, it will take you little time to dispose of these and get to work. But if you sometimes struggle with these choices, then there are some things to consider before you jump forward.



WHAT IS YOUR PLAN? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH IN THIS GAME?

You want to win the war, obviously, but let's break that down.

The early game of *Hearts of Iron IV* has very little true action unless you are playing Italy (starting at war in Ethiopia) or Japan (who will very quickly find itself in war in China). But, even here, the early game will be about setting the table for fighting the war on your terms.

Since war is inevitable, you need to think about how you will choose to fight it. There are the grand strategic considerations of where you want to fight and, if you can control it, when. But there are also the small strategic choices about what types of research to pursue and what types of production lines to focus on to get you to your larger strategic vision into place.

For example, **GERMANY** starts the game with very few dockyards compared to France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Since odds are that the Royal Navy will be a great obstacle to any successful conquest of Great Britain or dominance in the Mediterranean, the German player will have to make early decisions about how to use those dockyards until more can be built or conquered.

Germany also has to import rubber and oil, so some of these precious dockyard slots will have to produce convoys to keep the resources flowing in case of a blockade. Challenging the Royal Navy with battleships or cruisers will take a lot of time, carrier research starts far behind other powers, and submarines are only moderately effective against large surface fleets.

But you cannot invade the United Kingdom across the English Channel without clearing some sort of a path for your armies.

Of course, if you follow the historical path of Germany and plan to strike out for Romania's oil fields, or are able to invest in synthetics factories then maybe you won't need as many convoys and can use those dockyards for something else.

Every decision connects to another decision, and many choices won't bear fruit for months or years down the line. Therefore, you need to spend the early game thinking about what you want your situation to be when the world war starts.

The key questions are:

- ★ **Who are my likely enemies and who are my likely friends?** If you expect to go to war with the Soviet Union, and plan to bring along Italy, then you have to consider the timing.
- ★ **Where will I attack and where will I defend?** If you expect a two front war, then you may need to prioritize where your focus will be. Will you need forts or anti-air guns in one location more than another?
- ★ **What are my military priorities?** You can't perfect research in every technology, so you will have to decide whether superior air power will be more useful in your war plan than better marines.
- ★ **How quickly will I need to turn my industrial power into a war machine?** At some point, building more civilian factories is a waste of time. But when is that time?
- ★ **How many ships will I need?** Since amphibious invasions require visibility along the sea lanes, as well as a secure supply line, the decision on how to defend your shores or when to project power overseas is important.
- ★ **Do I want advanced weapons?** Atomic weapons, jet aircraft and advanced rockets take a lot of time to research, but can change the course of the war. Can you afford to push for these technologies?

The rest of this section will go through some major concepts and guide you to making the right decisions for you. There is no "one-size fits all" strategy in *Hearts of Iron IV*, but there are general rules that will make you better immediately.

SETTING EARLY RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Most nations in *Hearts of Iron IV* start with three research slots – four if they are lucky. This means that in the early going, you will need to focus your research on capability multipliers, i.e., things that will let you accomplish your goals more quickly.

When we get to the National Focus section, we will talk about opening up new research slots, which should be a very high priority for every nation. But let's assume you are starting with only three research slots, like the USSR or Italy.

1. Industrial production should be your number one focus. In the early months, you should be researching technologies that let you build factories faster, open up new factory slots or make your current factories more productive or efficient.



On the research tree, the Industry tab is the farthest to the right. You should focus your early energies on the Construction and Production trees. Construction will let you build factories more quickly, and Production will increase the efficiency of your military factories.

Production has a secondary tree that lets you choose between concentrated and dispersed industry; this will allow you to build more factories in your territories.

Industrial production is a capability multiplier since building factories more quickly will allow you to use those new factories to build more factories more quickly. It's a self-reinforcing loop, especially for the vital construction of civilian factories in the early game. And, the more efficiently and productively your factories can make weapons and vehicles the more quickly you can keep your divisions at an appropriate strength level.

2. Research things that speed your research. Right beside the industrial research tab you will find the electronics tab. This is where you can research computing, radar, atomic weapons and rockets. Computing is crucial for speeding up the rate of your research. And the more research you can complete, the more quickly you can unlock better weapons and better tactics for your armies. Radar and decryption are also very important, but the computing branch is most important capability multiplier on this screen.

3. Choose political/military advisors that will speed production and production research. We will talk more about this when we get to the Political Power section of this guide, but focusing your early political choices on people that compliment research or production instead of military abilities is a good use of early Political Power if there are no pressing political or industrial goals on the Political Focus tree.



4. Do not forget to research support companies and doctrines. When the time comes to edit and expand your division templates, attaching support companies will help your troops last longer in the field. Military doctrines take a long time to research, so do not neglect making progress in this area.

Other early research questions:

- ★ Should I research advanced technologies even though there is a research penalty for moving too quickly? If you have a research bonus attached to a national focus or military/political advisor that will reduce the research penalty for looking at 1940 tech in 1937, then it does not hurt to take a chance so long as this is a technology you will be using while the advantage matters. Do not try this on more than one research slot at a time.
- ★ What about atomic or rocket weapons? Can I look at that early? Atomic research is tempting, but also requires a lot of time and infrastructure to produce first the science and then the weapons. Probably only the USA, the USSR and Germany have the room for beginning this research in the 1930s.
- ★ Should I research modified vehicles like tank destroyers or carrier aircraft? Japan and the United States will rely heavily on aircraft carriers to project power and so will have to have carrier versions of their warplanes. You will not need carrier versions of every upgrade, however. It might be OK to skip a generation. As for tank modifications, they are best seen as a mid-game research problem once you have an idea of what you are fighting against and **ONLY AFTER** you have your standard division templates in place.
- ★ Is it ever good to change military doctrines? The major powers start with a military doctrine chosen for them based on their historical tendencies. If you do decide to change this, do it immediately – do not start research on one doctrine path and then change your mind.
- ★ Should I research synthetic oil? Japan, Germany and, to some extent, the USSR and Italy, will have to invest in synthetic oil research and the Axis must make this a priority early to prevent being cut off from rubber too soon.



EARLY PRODUCTION PRIORITIES

Maintaining the idea of capability multipliers, early civilian production should feed back into more civilian production. The Allied powers, especially, will find their construction of new factories held back by the fact that their civilian population will require consumer goods.

Construction speed is relative to the infrastructure in a state or province.

In the early game, these should be your priorities.

CIVILIAN FACTORIES: A maximum of 15 civilian factories can work on any single construction project. A good target for a major power is to have three complete construction lines going in peace time, so, 45 civilian factories devoted to building the military industrial power and infrastructure. This means your earliest civilian production lines should be focused on building more civilian factories until you get close to this point.

Note, 45 factories is a bit of a reach for Italy. If you are playing a smaller power, it is a completely unreasonable target. And, of course, once the United States gets out of isolationism and the Great Depression, 45 is a puny figure. But it is not a bad target to keep in the back of your mind.



REMEMBER.

This will not necessarily hamper your military productivity when the war comes because you can – and should – convert a bulk of civilian factories to military ones soon after the war starts.

ALSO.

You only have limited factory construction slots in your states and provinces. So don't go crazy filling up those places with just civilian factories if you want to also add more military factories or synthetic factories. Keep in mind that some industrial technologies and National Focus ideas will increase available factory slots.

MILITARY FACTORIES: It is important to build some military factories in the early phase so you have the equipment reserves to fill your divisions. There is debate over the point at which you should move heavy into military focus. The more civilian factories you have, after all, the more quickly you can get the military factories going. If you plan on going an early offensive, in fact, it might be better to focus on military factories, since you can steal civilian power from your conquered areas. Here your strategic situation should guide you. American splendid isolation and industrial might means it can wait until it has its civilian factory situation all sorted.

There is also no firm guide on how many military factories you should have since, generally speaking, more is always better. Military factories should be as far from your threatened borders as possible.

INFRASTRUCTURE VS DOCKYARDS: It is most important to build infrastructure in underdeveloped territories with a lot of free building slots. Higher infrastructure allows you to build factories more quickly, so, as your war machine gets moving into the mid-game, having faster construction will be a useful bonus, but only where you can plan a lot of construction. There is diminishing returns for improving infrastructure in already highly developed territories unless you have a crippling supply problem in a crowded region.

Germany, and the USSR have the greatest need for supply related infrastructure. Germany and the USSR will have the greatest distances to send their new divisions – in most cases – and will usually field very large armies, sometimes in tight spaces.

Since these two nations will also have the least interest in building major naval forces, dockyards are a minor issue. The United Kingdom and the United States should probably build as many dockyards as they are able, and Italy and Japan should also focus on dockyards more than infrastructure in the homeland but their narrow shape means that some space must be reserved for traditional factories.

Forts, Radar and Anti-Air: Placement of these structures will be highly dependent on the war you fight and with whom you are fighting. Radar and AA will make it easier to intercept enemy planes, but it's not like you need to build them in Nebraska. Similarly, forts are for protecting only those regions where you can expect an attack. (Note that for Germany and the USSR, there are National Focuses that will automatically give you forts in strategic areas, further decreasing the need to build them on your own.)



Early Arms Production and Division Design

The one thing you can be sure of is that you will need to make the manufacture of infantry equipment your priority throughout the war and you can't start too soon on this. Likewise, support equipment will prove to be essential as you expand your divisions. Work towards having the maximum 15 factories dedicated to infantry equipment by 1938. By the time the war is in full swing, you should have a second group of factories working on this, as well.

What you choose to build in your military factories will be highly dependent on the types of divisions you choose to recruit as you fill your army.

REMEMBER:

You can only edit or design divisions (or modify planes and ships) by spending Experience, and, unless you are in an early war, you will not gain Experience by just sitting around. You will need to exercise your troops (click on an army and choose the exercise option at the upper right of the army detail menu) or recruit a military advisor with Political Points who will add experience to your forces. Fascist nations (Germany and Italy) can send volunteers to the Spanish Civil War for easy experience, and Italy, of course, starts at war. Armies that are exercising will incur attrition, so it will cost you equipment.

INFANTRY DIVISIONS: Ideally, you will want to be building two or three infantry divisions simultaneously, since this will be the backbone of your military force. However, your divisions will most likely start either under-strength (less than ten combat battalions) or with zero or one support companies. Research signal and medical support companies since these will be useful add-ons to any infantry division – radio will speed up execution of battle plans and medical will maintain your manpower.



Busting through enemy lines is a huge priority, so consider attaching a couple of artillery battalions – not just support companies – to add that extra firepower. If you have nine battalions in an infantry division, at least one should be an artillery battalion – two if you can support that production.

Add on additional infantry or motorized battalions when you can, especially if you have a large surplus of small arms.

ARMOR DIVISIONS: There is no need for most nations to be building cavalry divisions, so once you are able to build tanks, you should. Armor divisions can be tricky since you usually begin with only light tanks, and may want to upgrade these divisions as you unlock heavier armor. Also, armor divisions will definitely require mechanic support companies and, since they rely heavily on supply, a logistics support company to reduce supply based attrition.

Even once you have a lot of medium and heavy tanks, it might be worthwhile to keep a division template for light armor for those skirmishes against infantry focused minor nations. Producing light armor is also a much smaller drain on your resources than heavy armor. By the start of the war, however, your core armor division template should be mostly medium armor with appropriate support companies, a few heavy armor and maybe a tank destroyer if you have researched this.

WHAT TO DO WITH ARTILLERY: Artillery research is one of the things that is most easy to forget or neglect, but you should be attaching artillery to your motorized and infantry divisions. It is usually not worth making entire divisions for artillery, though you may want to create artillery battalions (not as support) for those types of divisions – especially since you are limited in the number of support companies you can attach to a division template.

KEY VALUES FOR DIVISIONS: You can see a full breakdown of the *Hearts of Iron IV* division statistics at the official wiki here: http://www.hoi4wiki.com/Land_warfare. The following values are probably the ones you should know about when you are building a division.

ORGANIZATION: This is a catch-all term for how combat ready your unit is and how long it can stay in the field before being forced to retreat. Organization is reduced during combat, and once it reaches zero, what remains of the unit must retreat.

- ★ **HP:** Hit Points, i.e., the number of “hits” a unit can take before it is destroyed. Each battalion contributes to the HP in a given division. Hit points correspond to lost manpower and equipment, and can only be replenished from supplies of each.



- ★ **Reconnaissance:** The unit with the recon edge in a battle is more likely to choose suitable tactics during the engagement.
- ★ **Supply Use:** How many supplies a unit consumes in a day. The larger a division, the more supplies it will eat up. Divisions that cannot be fully supplied will be less effective.
- ★ **Soft attack:** The number of attacks per round made on an enemy’s “soft parts”, like infantry and support units.
- ★ **Hard attack:** The number of attacks per round made on an enemy’s “hard parts”, like tanks or forts.
- ★ **Combat Width:** The greater the combat width, the more attacks you can make against enemy divisions in a round of battle.

FIRE POWER OR STAYING POWER?

When you design your divisions, you will often be facing a trade off between a division's firepower (how quickly and how effectively it can deliver damage) versus a division's staying power (how long a division can sustain or resist damage).

It is relatively obvious that your primary attacking units – your armor or mechanized divisions – should be emphasize their firepower, and that your defensive units – mountain troops especially – should emphasize staying power. But this leaves aside that fact that the bulk of your units will be standard infantry divisions, tasked to both fill out the attack and defend the homeland.

Again, the decision on what to emphasize in your divisions goes back to what your long term plan is. Let's again use the example of Germany.

In the early game, Germany needs to have a strong attack, filling infantry divisions with mechanics, logistics experts and artillery. Unlike the real war, France and Great Britain are unlikely to just sit back and let the Germans gobble up Poland, but, historically, the Germans could not have anticipated the sitzkrieg, so the logic still applies. Divisions with strong firepower can easily overwhelm less advanced enemy divisions, like those you will find in Poland, making the conquest relatively quick. A quick offensive victory in the east will allow you to turn those units around to face whatever is coming at you from the west, using their superior firepower in a counterattack.

If the war starts going badly, Germany might want to edit its infantry division template to emphasize engineers, medics and other support battalions that will give it the ability to dig in and sustain more damage as it fights a defensive war.

Now let's look at the Soviet Union planning against Germany. A wide front and the crippling effects of The Great Purge will make serious offensive operations against an equal power difficult until much later in the war. So its division priorities are the inverse of Germany's. Staying power should be the priority until research and National Focuses allow the USSR to use its manpower to overwhelm the enemy and not just fill the ranks of failing units.

Units that have good speed and firepower are especially useful for encircling the enemy; surrounding enemy divisions and cutting them off from supply and reinforcements. Being able to burst through enemy lines and outflank the enemies you pass is a huge advantage, especially on the plains of Poland and Ukraine. Divisions for encirclement purposes should probably eschew artillery (which slow it down) in favor of tank and motorized units.

You could, theoretically, fine tune your division designs so that you have specialized defensive infantry, offensive infantry, blitzing armor units and more standard armor divisions.

How many divisions should I be building? Never have only a single line of infantry going at once. At minimum, a great power should have three or four infantry divisions training. The Allies will find this harder than the Comintern or Axis since they start with serious manpower shortages. Still, work toward this goal.

In the early game, a tank division and a mobile/mechanized division should be priorities, more than one of each for the Germans and Soviet Union. The Americans and Japanese will likely want to quickly research and produce marine units.

Planes and ships aren't in divisions, but cannot be ignored in the production process. Close Air Support and Fighters will be the best use of aircraft production for the Germans and Soviets. The Americans and Japanese must research and produce naval attack and carrier deck planes to prepare for their almost inevitable battle.

National Focus

One of the most important recurring tasks throughout a game of *Hearts of Iron IV* is choosing the National Focus of your country. Each National Focus (chosen by clicking on the wide bronze banner beside your leader portrait) will take 70 days to unlock, and consume one of your default two daily Political Points.

If you are not familiar with a country's National Focus options, take time to study what is in front of you before choosing anything.

Generally, a nation's National Focus trees are divided into four or five categories. (Be sure to scroll right to be sure you see everything – some of these trees are very large.). Early in the game, your National Focus decisions will be based on two things:

1. **Capability multipliers:** National Focuses that will increase my industrial output, my research speed or other important statistics.
2. **Political/Diplomatic Decisions:** National Focuses that reform or redirect your domestic politics or foreign policy down particular paths. Many of these choices will be mutually exclusive with other National Focuses.

CAPABILITY MULTIPLIERS

As stated earlier, in the early game, your top priority should be increasing your capability by researching or choosing options that assist you at low cost. National Focuses are a great way to increase your various capabilities because they are faster than researching new scientific or industrial technology, or constructing new factories.

As you scan your National Focus tree, look for a few easy capability multipliers.

EXTRA RESEARCH SLOT: National Focuses that unlock an extra research slot can be identified by their flask icon. In some cases, getting to this decision is not easy – it will require unlocking dangerous or advanced focuses that are best suited for the mid and late game. However, you should be aware of where these research slots are so you can beeline for them when the time is right.



FREE FACTORIES: Most nations will have a National Focus branch that will have choices that make available free civilian factories, free military factories, free dockyards or even free infrastructure or free forts. For minor powers and weaker great powers (like Italy or Japan), the National Focus branches that directly increase your industrial power are very important and should be your priority – especially since Italy starts at war and Japan should push for the Chinese War as soon as is practicable.

BONUS:

Some nations will have the ability to choose a focus that dramatically increases the production of strategic resources, usually steel or oil. Get to this upgrade as quickly as possible. These bonus resources will free up civilian factories that have been traded for access to resources, or will give you more resources to either ratchet up military production or trade for extra industrial capacity.



RESEARCH ACCELERATION: Most National Focus trees will have branches devoted to the three major arms of the military – army, navy and air force. Within these branches there will often be Focuses that will improve the pace of research for doctrines or unit types. For example, there may be a National Focus option for your army that will speed up how quickly you can research Battlefield Doctrines and another that will help you research fighter planes. If you can't get to an Extra Research Slot easily, then the ability to accelerate the research you can already could be a valuable boost.

IMPORTANT:

Though you might eventually want to unlock every one of the research boost focuses, it is not recommended that you go for all of them in the early game, even though this is when their effect is the most useful. You will have a lot of other National Focus priorities, so choose a line or two that are consistent with your larger grand strategy (submarine research boosts for Germany, or tank research for the USSR). Land Doctrine and Industrial Research bonuses should always be a priority.

INDUSTRIAL ACCELERATION: Though the ability to build factories or other structures more quickly is a capability multiplier, it is probably the lowest priority for a National Focus in the early game. First, it is more important to get the free factories or upgrades, and, second, it is better to choose advisors that can help here than to spend over a month on this Focus. Do not bypass these if they lead to something you better, but don't go out of your way to choose these focuses.

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC DECISIONS

Many National Focus trees will have two or three branches that are policy oriented. These will affect major variables attached to your nation or hasten certain game events, moving history along a familiar (or alternate) path.



DOMESTIC POLITICS: Some countries, for example, have starting situations that handicap them in significant ways. France has a divided population that weakens its National Unity and keeps it from mobilizing a lot of its population for war. It is often vital for a hobbled nation to get any starting penalties removed as quickly as possible. There may be multiple ways to do this, however, so you

will have to carefully analyze how you want to stop the problem. For example, is it worth preserving national harmony if you end up fighting a civil war to get there? Does pacifying a minority faction weaken your industrial capacity?

REMEMBER:

The key value that the Western Allies will need to boost is available manpower. The experience of the Great War limits both the French and the British, and waiting for the World Tension meter to increase enough to change your conscription laws may mean you lag behind your aggressive neighbors.

LOOKING EAST:

For the USSR, the timing of the Great Purge is the biggest domestic National Focus challenge. It is a vital chain of events to go through, since it reduces the risk of fighting a civil war or facing a surprise revolution against Stalinist Russia. It will also – eventually – rebuild your national unity. But, the Purge itself will force you to choose between potential advisors, and cripple your military in important ways. It is advisable that you get this National Focus chain out of the way relatively quickly. Try not to be mid-Purge when the war starts in earnest.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: Many countries have major National Focus branches that trigger historical events. Germany has National Focuses that activate well-known landmarks like the Anschluss of Austria or territorial demands on its neighbors.

When considering your diplomatic National Focuses, it is very important to read ahead. Take some time to examine your National Focus tree, deciding which general path you will want to follow. You will often find that diplomatic paths are mutually exclusive – you cannot suck up to the Fascists and the Communists at the same time.

You will also notice that many aggressive National Focus choices will have military requirements that must be met before they can be chosen. Your country will have to have enough divisions in the field in order for the threat to be viable. (You can check your division strength by clicking on the Army information icon in the upper right, and then the Equipment Details button on the upper right of that menu.) Use your knowledge of the prerequisites for certain focuses to guide your production schedule.

SPENDING POLITICAL POWER

The Political Power you don't spend on advancing your National Focuses will be added to the Political Power pool visible at the top left of the screen. Note that your country may start with or accrue bonuses or penalties that will adjust the rate at which you gain Political Power.

Political Power is spent on changing your national laws (Conscription, Trade and Economy), on appointing civilian and military advisors, and on choosing industrial leaders to advance military research or production. Most of these decisions will cost 150 Political Power points, but there are a few localized exceptions.

Law & Government

LAWS

In order to change your national laws, you will usually have to meet certain prerequisites. Democracies are especially limited in how they can change their conscription or economic laws. Generally speaking, you should track these prerequisites closely and advance yourself towards a war footing as quickly as possible. Hover your mouse over a law to see a tooltip describing its effects.

You will want to recruit as much of your population as possible, with fewer factories devoted to consumer goods. Your trade law should aspire to put as few strategic resources on the international market as possible, but if you play a country with a huge surplus in one good or another but a weak civilian factory base, you may want to hold off on changing this until war is on your doorstep.

ADVISORS

In the early game, as with other mechanics, you should spend Political Power on capability multipliers. advisors that help you build factories or research technologies more quickly will be especially useful. Some advisors will also increase the rate at which you gather Political Power (or simply give you a bunch of free PP points in a lump sum). Hover your mouse over an advisor portrait to see a tooltip describing their effects.

If you are playing a game where you want to change the political attitude of your nation (make France a Communist country, for example), it is very important to choose a political advisor that can push your population to support the new ideology.

NOTE:

As your priorities change during the game, you can change which advisor

Research and Production

DESIGNERS AND INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES

Most of the major powers can choose between multiple equipment designers or industrial companies. When choosing a tank, ship, aircraft or equipment designer, your decision will boil down to playing up an existing or planned National Focus, or balancing that Focus.

For example, if you've chosen to emphasize the production or research of fighter planes as a National Focus, you can accentuate that by hiring an Aircraft Designer that also helps with fighter planes or you can balance your research/production by recruiting a firm that helps with bombers or naval aircraft.

Which way should you go? This depends on your long term strategy. In the short term, military research bonuses are more important than division production bonuses, but, in general, choosing your equipment companies is a lower priority than getting your laws and government sorted.

NOTE:

The final slot in the Research and Production row is for a Theorist. This is a catch-all category for personalities that can help with research in Land, Naval and Air Doctrines as well as atomic, jet or rocket research. For most nations, the choice of a Land Doctrine researcher is an obvious one but there is the general temptation to choose an atomic scientist to unlock the most powerful bombs in the game. Given the heavy early game penalties on researching atomic weapons, it is not advised that you use an atomic theorist or even jet researcher until the mid-game, if at all.

— MID GAME —
FIGHTING THE WAR



This section of the guide assumes that you have division templates in place, have built a number of divisions, and have organized them into armies. Some of the early advice in this section should be considered early game advice, since you can organize your fronts and battle plans at any time. However, since it is intimately involved with the actual war fighting, it made more sense to go through that part of the game here.

ORGANIZING AN ARMY

Well before the war starts, you should have organized your divisions into armies. An army can hold as many divisions as you like, but most generals will suffer command penalties if they try to manage an army larger than 24 divisions.

Once you have an army assembled, you should place it on the border of a nation you will want to invade or from where you expect an attack.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

1. **Border terrain:** Armies with significant tank divisions will be more effective invading into plains. Mountain divisions are more effective fighting in mountains and hills. Make the most of your combat ability by using suitable units for the borders.



2. **Line width:** The longer the border you ask an army to attack or defend, the thinner the general effectiveness. Yes, a 60 division army will probably be just fine along most borders, but tasking a 12 division army to stretch itself along the Soviet/Polish border just makes it harder for that specific army to reach its goals. There are no hard and fast rules here, especially since so much depends on your opponent's strength. But you are better off asking two armies to push along parts of a single wide front, each with distinct objectives.
3. **Skills of your General:** Your generals have a skill rating, and many will have traits that will give them advantages in certain situations. Your most skilled generals should be placed where you expect the hardest fighting. If a particular operation calls for speed (like an armored thrust), then consider using a general with a good speed or supply rating trait.
4. **Offensive Lines and Spearheads:** You will usually rely on drawing offensive lines for your armies. Most of the time it makes sense to set the offensive line just beyond a major city or victory point location. (You can set how aggressively an army will pursue its objectives in the upper right of the selected army profile). Spearheads are best used for highly mobile armies, like tank or mechanized divisions. Point the Spearhead in the direction you want the army to push towards.
5. **Multiple Orders:** You can set multiple offensive orders that your army will follow in sequence. Note that your army will sometimes pause between executing two plans, since it will need to reorganize and catch its breath.



While in battle, your units will draw on your existing supplies of manpower and equipment to keep at full strength, including upgrading their existing equipment to the latest models. If you would rather have the equipment and manpower used for new units, be sure to set the priorities as Low at the top of the division construction template.

- ★ **Is it worth making specialized armies for specific tasks?** Sometimes you will want to create an army that is specially designed for one clear purpose – punching through enemy lines, quickly getting to Moscow, doing amphibious landings or airdrops, etc.
- ★ **When should I use the Fallback line command?** A fallback line is the location your army will retreat to in order to set up a more vigorous defence. This is especially important for minor powers that will likely be unable to withstand an opening invasion without heavy casualties. Set up your fallback line behind a river or in mountains/hills. Fallback lines should be set up behind any front line you have little confidence in, and, once things start going sour, should be activated. (Select the army you want to use the line and CTRL-Click on the fallback line you've drawn on the map.)
- ★ **How aggressive should I be in choosing my offensive objective?** Against a much weaker power, you can trust your generals to execute a fairly coherent plan deep into enemy territory. The German army can set a plan to capture Warsaw from the start of the war and reasonably expect it to come to pass, especially if it overlaps the objectives of both the Eastern Prussian army and the armies along the western Polish border. Sometimes you will want to have more modest objectives – no more than two or three provinces away from your starting point.

Do not forget to update your army objectives during a war. A single plan will rarely be enough.

Building and deploying divisions

Do not forget to regularly edit your land divisions as you unlock new research and accumulate experience from combat. Your experience pool is capped at 500 points, so it makes no sense to save it. There is a huge difference between an infantry division that has six battalions with engineers and a division with ten battalions, supporting artillery and radio men.

Your tank divisions, especially, should be edited to include medium and maybe heavy tanks, anti-tank support and, if possible, tank destroyers.

There may be circumstances when your country is under great pressure and the training time for new units could mean that your men are busy at the military academy when you need them in the field. If you need bodies to stop the German or Soviet advance, set the deployment option for your units so that they are deployed as soon as they equipped. These green troops will not be as effective as fully trained units will be, but they will be more effective than nothing.





If you have adjusted your conscription law to either Extensive Conscription or Service by Requirement, then manpower will probably not be an issue in the near term, so have multiple lines of infantry, motorized/mechanized and tank divisions under construction simultaneously. A major power should be able to have **six to eight infantry divisions** being assembled alongside **two to three tank divisions** and **two to three motorized/mechanized divisions**.

You probably do not need to have an infinite stream of mountain or marine units, so set limited production runs for these if you didn't build enough in the pre-game. A dozen mountain divisions should be enough in most instances, and only Japan and the United States will need more than 20 marine divisions.

★ **I am facing a line of forts. Help!?:** Ideally, you go around them, but this is not always possible. If your attack line means you have to deal with enemy forts, your attacks will be more successful if they are accompanied by engineer support units, artillery, heavy tanks and anti-tank support battalions.

If you're daring, drop paratroopers behind the enemy fort line to surround the fort defenders and hit them from both sides. Be careful to not let your paratroopers get squeezed by enemies on the other side.

★ **How do attrition and supply work?** Attrition is the loss of equipment through combat or just general use. You recall that as you train units that have been deployed, they suffer attrition and need to have weapons restored from your equipment supply. This happens in battle, too, of course, and at a faster rate.

Divisions suffer attrition when they are out of supply, in certain harsh terrains or in winter environments. You can reduce the effects of attrition by attaching a maintenance support battalion to your division. This is especially important for tank and motorized/mechanized units.

Supply is the basic matter of feeding and fueling your army and it is a little more complicated. You can get a good summary at the official wiki article on logistics. But here is a short rundown of the things to think about.

The supply available to your army is connected to the capacity of designated Supply Areas. The greater a region's infrastructure is, the better able it is to support large concentrations of troops.



Supply to an army in the field is traced from your capital along overland routes (if possible) or sea lanes. Overland routes that pass through high infrastructure areas will have a greater supply value than routes traced through desert, jungle or underdeveloped land. Armies that are encircled are considered out of supply range.

Overseas routes depend on convoys and control of the sea lane. Supply lines are traced from one naval base to another. The more highly developed the naval base, the more supply it will be able to provide. If there is no valid overseas route for an army that requires one, it will be considered out of supply range.

You can improve a unit's consumption of supplies by attaching a logistics support battalion. You can improve supply routes by improving your infrastructure and naval bases along likely invasion routes.

USING AIR POWER

The map is divided into air zones, and your planes will operate in these zones and intervene in battles that happen in that air zone. However, each plane also has a radius of operation from an airfield that limits just how far they can have an effect.

There are five basic types of planes in *Hearts of Iron IV*, each best suited to particular missions.

FIGHTERS: The two key missions for fighters are Air Superiority and Interception. You can think of these as offensive and defensive uses of fighters. Air Superiority, as implied, is about establishing dominance in an air zone, destroying all enemy aircraft and clearing the way for your bombers to do damage to enemy armies. Interception missions are when the air wing launches to intercept bombers that have been detected in the range of your airfield.

Interception missions will have fewer planes shot down than air superiority missions.



There are two types of fighters – light and heavy. Heavy fighters have greater operational range than light fighters, and can sustain more damage. However, they are vulnerable to lighter, more agile fighter planes. Heavy fighters are best used to escort strategic bombers (in air superiority role) into distant enemy territory, but make effective interceptors since their heavier guns work better against enemy bombers.

CLOSE AIR SUPPORT: Close attack aircraft are light bombers used to support armies that are in combat. They will attack enemy troops directly. They perform Close Air Support missions. Because of their limited range, they will need to operate from airfields relatively close to the battle. CAS planes can also attack ships and ports that are in their operational radius through Naval Strikes and Port Strikes.

CAS planes will probably make up the bulk of your bombing wings.

TACTICAL BOMBERS: Tactical Bombers are midway between Close attack support and Strategic bombers. Tactical bombers can perform Close Air Support, Port Strikes or Strategic bombing. Tactical bombers have greater range than CAS planes, but cannot be used to attack ships at sea.

If you have air superiority and a lot of CAS planes, your tactical bombers should be used for strategic bombing close to the front. They can disrupt radar and infrastructure that are vital to enemy operations in the immediate area, as well as weakening enemy industry.

STRATEGIC BOMBERS: These behemoths are best used for their historic purpose – destruction of the enemy's industrial base and infrastructure through strategic bombing.

Not every nation will need strategic bombers; if most of your military needs are close to your homeland, then you might be able to make do with just a tactical bomber force. Strategic bombers, however, have a very long range and high survivability, make them a wise investment for the United Kingdom and the United States.

Ideally, they will be escorted by fighters on air superiority missions to clear lanes for attacks.

NAVAL BOMBERS: Naval bombers specialize in naval strikes and port strikes. These planes will be crucial for Japan and Italy, since they have a high risk of amphibious and naval attack from strong naval powers.

Generally speaking, you will need fewer naval bombers than the other types of planes, since they are so specialized in their purpose. Japan and the United States should always develop the carrier variant of these planes to stock their aircraft carriers with an effective strike force.

If they are attacking an enemy carrier group or port, Naval Bombers should be escorted by fighters.

Basing your aircraft

Each airfield has a cap on the number of planes it can effectively manage. If you base more planes at an airfield than it has capacity for, the operations out of that airfield will be hampered. If you expand your airfield (by building more, using civilian factories) you can increase the capacity.

Planes should fly their missions from bases as close to the front as they safely can. Build radar stations around your forward air bases to assist your interceptors in detecting approaching aircraft.

Launch attacks on a region from more than one airfield, preferably from multiple directions so you can cover most of the attack area. Also, weather is less likely to ground planes at all of your airfields.



USING NAVAL POWER

Navies have only a small effect on land combat. The primary role of your navy is controlling sea lanes, to keep them clear for friendly overseas military action, and to escort or intercept trade convoys.

Fleets can be assigned to perform missions in up to three contiguous sea zones.

PATROL: Patrol missions spread your fleet out in a search for enemy ships. There is a good chance of finding enemy vessels, but the scattered fleet will not be able to act in a unified way. Fleets with fast ships or aircraft carriers will be more effective for patrol missions.

SEARCH AND DESTROY: The fleet is kept close together to maximize its killing power if it finds an enemy. Because the fleet is not spread out, there is a greater chance that enemy ships will slip by. This is a mission effectively done by cruiser heavy fleets.

CONVOY RAIDING: Your fleet will be spread out to seek convoy vessels. Though other types of ships might be engaged in combat, the priority is to find convoys. This is a mission suitable for submarine fleets.

CONVOY ESCORT: A counter to raiders, fleets on escort duty will not seek out combat with the enemy, but will protect the trade ships. Escort fleets can be engaged by enemies on Patrol or Search and Destroy missions, but this is a general defensive tactic. Destroyers are good for this mission.



HOLD: This mission stops a fleet in its current sea zone, usually to assist ground operations. Battleships and cruisers on Hold missions by a coast will support land combat in coastal provinces by bombarding the enemy, and carrier air wings can intervene in land battles.

Beyond small fleets designed for special convoy raiding/escort missions, a naval power should have multiple battle fleets to dominate the sea lanes.

Carrier groups should never have more than four aircraft carriers; every carrier beyond this adds a penalty to air combat when they are engaged. A fleet should have a few battleships or heavy cruisers, some light cruisers for greater detection and a larger destroyer component for anti-submarine warfare. A good rule of thumb is to have three light cruisers or destroyers for each capital ship (carrier, battleship or heavy cruiser). These smaller ships are cheap and act as “screens” for the larger vessels, taking the first hits and allowing the big guns to get in range and avoid torpedos.

Naval experience

As your navy fights, it will earn experience you can spend on upgrading and improving your vessels. Consider creating specialized ships for certain tasks. Improve the armor on cruisers and battleships for your combat fleets, or increase the speed of your ships so that they can engage or escape combat more quickly. A heavy gun battleship can be designed to specialize in shore bombardment.

MID-GAME RESEARCH

After a few years into the game, your research priorities should shift. Where the early game was mostly about getting your science and industry into shape, the mid and late-game are about getting more advanced weapons and tactics onto the field.

If you have not already unlocked any extra research slots in your National Focus tree before the war starts, this should be your number one priority for Focus. A nation that can research five technologies at once will have a distinct advantage over any enemy that is still making do with three or four research slots.

YOUR PRIORITIES SHOULD BE:

- ★ **Industrial efficiency:** The most important industrial research path at this point is the industrial efficiency path on the far left of the screen. Since you will sometimes be changing your production models, anything that saves you the efficiency loss or gets divisions equipped faster is a great help.
- ★ **Infantry equipment:** Since the humble foot soldier is going to be the backbone of your army, you should be moving ahead steadily in researching new equipment.
- ★ **Doctrines:** Consider devoting at least one of your research slots just to military doctrines. Ideally, you will be at least halfway down the army doctrine tree before war breaks out; complete this tree and also make quick progress through a naval and air doctrine.



- ★ **Support:** Logistics, radio corps and medics should be your top priorities here. Adding logistics corps to your divisions will be especially important as your armies advance into territory where supply is an issue.
- ★ **Close Air Support Planes:** If you are in an offensive war, research along this aircraft line will probably give you the biggest bang for your buck.
- ★ **Fighter Planes:** There are the backbone of your air force and should be a major research priority. It is especially important if you are fighting a defensive war and need to take out enemy bombers.
- ★ **Artillery:** As noted in the first section, artillery is a huge advantage in infantry combat. Research the anti-tank artillery for defense against armor and heavily mechanized forces.
- ★ **License Production:** This diplomatic feature can be used to subsidize your research agenda, especially if you are a middle or minor power. Since you will never be able to keep up with advanced nations science wise, you should purchase advanced plane or tank designs from other nations. This allows you to focus on researching technologies that will play to your strengths in advisors and geography instead of scattering your limited research slots across too many areas.

MID-GAME PRODUCTION

By the time the war starts, you will likely have less pressure from your population for consumer goods (adjust this by changing the economic laws with Political Power points.) This means that, for now, you can change the bulk of your civilian factories into military factories on the industrial production menu.

You should certainly not change all of your civilian factories; they will be needed for other late game construction like more military factories, rocket bases, nuclear plants and general repair. But you might be able to double your military production capacity by taking this action.

The precise items you choose to produce will depend heavily on the types of divisions you have fielded.

- ★ **Infantry equipment** will be the most important production priority, and you should probably have two production lines running at maximum capacity (15 factories).



It may be hard to balance your **tank production** since, in the best circumstances, you will be building light tanks, medium tanks and heavy tanks – each draining precious reserves of strategic metals. A pre-war surplus of light tanks can alleviate this situation if you wait to update your division template until you have a few hundred heavier tanks in your garages, since this means you won't be slowly doing them out to divisions. But, for the most part **medium tanks** should be your production focus once they are available. They are the most flexible for most of the war, with light and heavy tanks filling more specialized roles in a division.

- ★ **Convoys** will be the single essential naval production during the war. Convoys are not only essential for trade, they are required for oversea movement into friendly ports and for amphibious attacks. Convoys are defenseless and can present an easy target for enemy navies. At the very least, have five drydocks working on convoys.
- ★ **Destroyers** are not sexy, but you can build a lot of them. As noted above, these screening ships are the first line of defense for your capital ships and can detect submarines, so your convoys will need them even if you don't decide to invest in a large navy.

If you neglect to build **Carrier Aircraft**, you will be given a reminder alert at the top of the screen. You generally will not need to devote a lot of factories to carrier fighters and bombers unless, for some reason, you have decided that you need twenty aircraft carriers fighting all the time.

THE LATE GAME

THE FINAL VICTORY



The rest of this guide will concern itself with issues that are likely to crop up in the mid- to late-game, once the war is well underway and you have to manage a front that is quickly evolving and a territory that is not entirely pleased to be under new leadership.

You will learn how best to use specialized units, how to conduct amphibious assaults and how to garrison occupied lands and reduce resistance to your rule. We'll wrap up with a look at the peace treaty system and how to make the most of ending the game.

NAVAL INVASIONS

You launch a naval invasion by following the instructions you are given after you click on the Naval Invasion button the army interface at the bottom of your screen. Launching a naval invasion in *Hearts of Iron IV* requires five things:

1. an army you are capable of launching across the ocean,
 2. enough convoys to carry that army,
 3. a starting point,
 4. an ending point (or more than one), and,
 5. information about the sea zones between those two points.
1. The size of your invasion force is limited by your naval technology research into landing craft and the launching point for your invasion. Larger ports can support larger naval invasions.
 2. If you do not have enough convoys available to undertake an invasion, then it will not happen. You may still see the invasion plan marked on the map, but it will show zero divisions attached. Build more convoys (or stop the destruction of the ones you have, or stop trade deals to free up existing ones) and Shift-click to attach the desired army to that invasion plan.

3. As noted above, the starting point helps determine how large the invading army can be. However, the further the origin point is from the destination, the greater chance your invasion fleet has of being intercepted.



4. The destination point(s) should ideally be places that are not heavily defended, **BUT KEEP IN MIND** that a poorly defended beach will likely also be low in supply. Therefore, try to land beside a port (or on both sides!) and try to seize it immediately after landing. Amphibious attacks directly on ports or cities are harder, but, if successful, your army can probably sustain itself until help can arrive.
5. If you do not have moderate superiority in or information about the sea zones between your origin point and destination point, then the naval invasion will not happen. This, again, privileges shorter routes over longer ones; you can try to invade from Los Angeles to Tokyo, but that is a lot of sea to cover. You get information about sea zones by having fleets operate in them.

Ensuring Success

A successful landing in a naval invasion is not very difficult; the trick is keeping that foothold.

1. **Co-ordinate landings:** When you can, do multiple landings in a region – not so close that they exhaust all the supply, but close enough that they can support each other in a breakout to a major center. Alternatively, consider two major invasions at different points (Normandy and the Baltic, Sicily and Apulia, China and Japan) to divide enemy attention.
2. **Bring ships:** Use battleships and heavy cruisers in a Hold order in neighboring sea zones to bombard enemy armies that you encounter in coastal provinces.
3. **Marines:** Amphibious landings should be led by Marine divisions outfitted with engineer, artillery and logistics support battalions. The engineers and artillery will help with any coastal forts or other hard targets, while the logistics battalions help with supply.
4. **Get to a naval base or a city:** If you don't land at a naval base or city, it is important to get to one as soon as you can so you can support a larger army. Immediately give your landing force offensive orders to seize strategic targets. If you have a carrier group nearby to give air support, this is a good use of its power. If you have the port, but cannot get to a city, use your civilian factories to maximize the port's capabilities (set this as a high priority construction order).
5. **Follow up with friendly landings as soon as you can:** If you have control of a port (not even a naval base), you can begin moving troops to your landing site as a friendly naval crossing without having to use the naval invasion interface. Simply move the army to a port province and right click on the destination. As always, be careful not to exhaust supply.
6. **Get to an airfield:** As soon as you can, seize an enemy airport and stock it with as many planes as you can spare from either your reserves or nearby friendly bases. Use these planes to begin fighting for control of the air space.
7. **Convoys, convoys, convoys:** The supply needs of a large army in enemy territory are immense. Protect the convoy routes to your invading army.

SPECIALIZED UNITS

Hearts of Iron IV has some units that are best used for specific purposes or have limited utility beyond specific instances. We have mentioned some of them in passing, but it is worth elaborating on them and how they can boost your chances of success.

- ★ **SPECIAL FORCES** are researched at the bottom of the Infantry research screen. There are three types – Marines, Mountain Infantry and Paratroopers. Researching each unlocks a new division template for you to build and edit. Each step in their research increases the division's organization, but the second research step also increases soft attack power.

Marines get bonuses to fighting across rivers, in marshes and in amphibious landings, and are especially powerful when paired with engineers. Use marines to lead naval invasions, especially wherever the fighting will be hardest.

Mountain infantry get bonuses for movement and fighting in mountains and hills, with no penalties for fighting in ordinary terrain. Placed with mountain forts on defense, these divisions can be almost impossible to remove without concentrated effort and the loss of a lot of manpower. On offense, they have an advantage against any equivalent sized standard infantry or motorized unit. Consider giving them anti-tank weapons for extra fortress busting power on the offense.



Paratroopers can be airdropped behind enemy lines using transport planes. Each paratrooper battalion has a weight of 0.5 and each support battalion has a weight of 0.1 – this weight determines how many transports will be required for the mission. If necessary, the transports will make multiple flights to carry each paratroop division.



Remember that paratroopers need to be in the same province as an airfield that contains transport planes in order for an airdrop to happen. Transport planes do not have a huge range, but it is long enough for you to keep them safely distant from the front.

Like amphibious assaults, airborne assaults from paratroopers run the risk of low supply, so if these divisions are use in paradrops, the priority should be grabbing a supply point like a major city or port as soon as possible. They also risk interception from enemy fighters, so it is dangerous to send airborne teams into regions where you have not already established air superiority.

- ★ **ELITE DIVISIONS** are designated with three chevrons pointing upward. These units will be given priority for upgrades and reinforcements. Please note! These are not necessarily stronger units! The elite designation simply means that this division template will be preferred before others. This means that these divisions will have greater staying power in the field.
- ★ **RESERVE DIVISIONS**, designated with three chevrons pointing downwards, are, then, given the lowest priority in upgrades and reinforcements. These units are best used for garrison duty, which will be described below.

You make Elite and Reserve designations in the Division Recruitment and Design menu. Most of the time you will not need to use these designations.

UPGRADES AND REINFORCEMENTS

As the war drags on, you may find yourself faced with a quandary. You have researched high quality weapons, but how should they be deployed? What should you do with the new batch of recruits available because you've passed a new conscription law? What is taking so long to get the finest Panzers into action?

At the top of the Recruitment and Design menu, there are two subheadings – one for reinforcements and one for upgrades. Both start in a balanced position, meaning that newly produced equipment and newly produced men will be balanced between supplying the divisions you recruiting and getting the divisions you have in the field up to full strength.

★ **When do I want to have a low priority for upgrades?** If you have a low priority for upgrades, then new equipment will go to your new divisions first. This means that the equipment will take longer to get into the field, but it may also have a greater effect since it will not be passed out piecemeal across your army, one tank here and another tank there. Your divisions in the field will get their upgrades, but divisions that need to be equipped for training will come first.

★ **When do I want to have a high priority for upgrades?** A high priority for upgrades is essential if you are fighting a losing war. You need to get your best weapons out there as soon as you can, and waiting until you have enough to field an entire division may not be the safest course.



- ★ **When do I want to have a low priority for reinforcements?** When you are exercising your armies to gain experience, they will suffer some attrition. Since you are in peace time, it is not necessarily important to keep these exercising armies at full strength at all times. Use your manpower and equipment reserves to build and train new divisions.

- ★ **When do I want to have a high priority for reinforcements?** The further your armies get from your core territories, the more important reinforcing them will be since you cannot deploy new divisions nearby. If you are on the offensive and making good progress, consider prioritizing reinforcements instead of staffing new divisions. **NOTE:** If you expect a second front to open up against you, keep it to balanced, since you will need to have divisions ready to defend yourself.

Also, when you update a division template by adding new battalions, this will affect the reinforcement demands. High prioritizing of reinforcement will get your old divisions up to standard more quickly, but slow down the deployment of new ones.

NUKES AND ROCKETS

Atomic and Rocket research both take a lot of time and are not necessarily the best path for every nation. But they can be important parts of a strategy if used wisely.

Atomic Bombs

Though Atomic research cannot be conducted without penalty until 1940, some nations do have Theorist advisors that will reduce this penalty. Consider paying this cost and starting in 1939 if (and only if) you have at least five research slots active.

Nuclear reactors can only be built with the second atomic technology, best available in 1943, and they consume a factory slot. So if you intend on becoming an atomic player, do not use all of your factory slots on factories, dockyards and synthetic plants.

Once you have built nuclear reactors, and researched the atomic bomb, you will start producing bombs. These are dropped on the Province Menu – click on an enemy province and you will see a little mushroom cloud in the lower left. To drop a bomb, you need a strategic bomber in the vicinity and reasonable air superiority.



Note that in *Hearts of Iron IV*, nuclear bombs are largely intended to be political weapons – they will reduce the political will of the enemy and lower the threshold needed for capitulation. The effect is greater if used on major population centers. However, nukes dropped on enemy armies will destroy a percentage of their equipment.

Rockets

Once you've researched Guided Missiles in the rocket technology tree, you can build rocket bases in territories you can control. The size of the base determines how many rockets will be based at that location. The more advanced the rocket technology you research, the greater the range of your rockets.

Rockets can only perform strategic bombing missions. They will unload a steady stream of guided missiles at an area until the base is depleted of rockets (though it will restock) or until it is conquered by the enemy.

Rockets are less useful than bombers since bombers can be relocated to any airfield, given you greater flexibility. And rockets don't become really useful until you've reached the second level of rocket technology, when the range hits 640 km and can therefore more often reach areas beyond just the neighboring region.

This is a late war technology that will rarely turn the tide of the war, but can enhance an already strong air arm.



RESISTANCE

When you occupy foreign territory during a war, i.e., before the peace treaty is signed, the residents of the occupied territory will resist your rule. This resist will take the form of sabotage. Infrastructure will be ripped up and factories damaged, forcing your own civilian factories to take time off building your defenses to repair the wrecked buildings. The riches of the conquered lands instead become millstones around your neck, distracting your industrial energy.

HOW SHOULD YOU DEAL WITH THIS RESISTANCE?

First, you have to decide whether this resistance is a problem at all. In some cases, you could have such an industrial advantage and strong supply line that the hobbled railways and broken factories aren't a big deal for you. After all, as your armies move through these benighted lands, they will reduce the resistance and make the repairs easier. Great. You're awesome.

This is not a good long term plan to rely on for a tough war. So it's time to think about keeping those partisans under control.

1. By mid-war, you can probably use your National Focus menu for a Continuous Focus bonus (at the lower left of the menu). One of these is **Resistance Suppression**. This slows down the growth rate of resistance, making it one of the more powerful Continuous Focuses for a conquering nation.
2. The **Prince of Terror** political advisors you can choose from your advisor list greatly reduce the impact of both resistance activity and foreign agitation that stirs up partisans. Since you will likely have a large stockpile of political power points at your disposal by mid-war, feel free to spend them by firing ministers that you no longer need and hiring a monster.



3. The most effective way to curtail resistance activity is also the most resource intensive – **garrisoning troops**. You can order an army to garrison designated provinces by selecting an army, choosing the garrison command and then clicking on the provinces you wish that army to watch. (The game will let you know how many divisions you will need to effectively garrison the area you have chosen.)

Now, garrisons are not just for counter-resistance. Garrisons can be used to protect ports, oppose any enemies that enter an area and so on. However, their presence in a region will reduce resistance activity, as troops in a province will, in general, make active opposition to your rule less likely.

The downside is that this takes an army out of active duty. Consider designing specific garrison divisions (National Guard or Colonial Guard) with **MP support battalions** attached, since these support battalions give a bonus to resistance suppression. These divisions do not have to be large to do their garrison duty to suppress resistance, since they are not intended to be front-line fighters.

Once you've taken territories in a peace treaty, resistance will stop since, it appears, the population accepts the verdict of the peace table. Speaking of that...

IS THERE A STRATEGY TO THE PEACE TREATY?

Once every one of your enemies has capitulated, you will be sent to a peace treaty menu where you take turns with your allies making demands of the defeated powers. They can't do anything to you at this point, so is there anything you really to think about? Game over, right?

First, you should think about the next war. If, as happened historically, Communists and Democracies united to beat Fascists, that doesn't mean that everyone will be friends afterwards.

Second, if it was an offensive war, the reasons you used to justify the war (conquest of particular provinces or puppeting a nearby nation) will be cheaper to demand, and should always be a priority for you since they will let you make a few extra demands in your first round of grabbing things.

Third, at a practical level, managing hundreds of divisions can get exhausting, so think about simply forcing a government change on a defeated enemy instead of depriving them of territory. This will get you a valuable ally you can still use for air space and friendly supply if war breaks out again.

Fourth, maybe the Morgenthau Plan was onto something. American Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau suggested that post-war Germany should be deindustrialized; this is easier for you in *Hearts of Iron IV* – simply claim the richest (ideally contiguous) provinces that belonged to your enemy, preventing them from ever threatening world peace again.

So is the game over once we have peace? Maybe? You can play forever if you want, though you will run out of technology to research. The game just continues, and can continue until everyone is united under one ideology.



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