

## A STRATEGY GUIDE FOR PRIDE OF NATIONS

### General Remarks

Pride of Nations divides the world into two basic camps, the “haves” (the UK, USA, and France, to some extent) and the “have-nots” (everyone else). Both are fun and interesting to play, but for different reasons. If you play as one of the “haves,” then there is a real chance to emerge at the end of the game as the world’s premier superpower with tons of prestige. If you play as one of the “other” powers, as Japan or Sardinia-Piedmont, for example, then your ambitions must be more modest.

Interestingly, however, whatever country you choose to play, in the beginning much of your attention must be devoted to balancing your economy and insuring that it generates sufficient state revenues (aka “money”) and private capital (aka “capital”) to accomplish your goals. In general terms, when you want to build a factory or a farm, or undertake certain colonial ventures, you need to spend private capital to do so. On the other hand, the construction of military units and infrastructure improvements (roads, telegraph, etc) require that you spend state funds. (Railroads are an exception, because they are paid for by private capital).

When approaching the problem of first balancing and then growing your economy, keep in mind that Pride of Nations will not be won or lost in a single turn. In a game consisting of nearly 1700 turns, it is inevitable that some will be more action-packed than others. Therefore, don’t worry that in many turns there might be only one action you can take, or even none, if you are trying to accumulate the funds and resources needed to build a new factory or unit.

In general, your first task is to make sure that you have a sufficient number of resources and industrial goods (collectively known as “merchandise”) to run your economy, and for this you need to check your resource balance screen, known as the “B” screen (because it is accessed by pushing the eponymous button). This is by far the most important information screen in the game, displaying each resource and a little graph showing whether you are running a daily surplus in the resource or a deficit. If you hover your mouse over each merchandise icon, you can see numbers describing the daily balance, including what have on offer for sale and assuming that everything is bought. If you hover your mouse over the graph, you can see those trade areas in the world where the merchandise available for sale, and a calculation of supply and demand in each trade area.

Another useful thing to know about the B screen is that it updates its information instantly. So, for example, if you want to increase the amount you sell of a particular merchandise to stop accumulating it from turn to turn, you can offer more of it for sale on your trade screen and then the B screen will reflect the change. In this way you can, if you choose, set a perfect balance for every one of your merchandises. Keep in mind, however, that the orders you place for buying and selling merchandises in different trade areas may not go as you wish when the turn is played out. It depends on whether you succeed in buying what you have asked for in other trade areas, where other countries may compete to buy the same thing, and whether customers have shown up to buy what you have to sell.

Surplus merchandise can be accumulated for use later when buying a factory or a new military unit, but even if you plan to sell your surplus, you need to retain enough merchandise in the stockpile to fully support factory production. The game engine appears to subtract all factory inputs before any other actions are taken, so if you are short in those inputs you will see your factories shut down.

In planning your regional infrastructure, you should certainly put railroads at the top of your “to-do” list. Although they cost a lot to build, their benefits are tremendous indeed, raising the region’s transportation level from 60% to 100%. By contrast, a road network only increases the transportation level from 50% to 60%. All increases to transportation level provide an increase in factory and farm output, so they are well worth the cost. Railroads serve other useful purposes as well in particular contexts, such as raising the development level in colonies or underdeveloped parts of your home country.

### General Comments on PON

1) This isn't EUIII, Vic2 or HOI3. It isn't Civ4 or Civ5 either. This is one long, long, long game. Don't try to do everything on turn 1. If you do, you'll have some serious economic and military issues.

2) Economy. Focus on one thing at a time. If you are short of Manufactured Goods, save up and build a Goods factory. Your capitalists will do a fine job of letting you know what you need and don't need by turning factories off that either do not have sufficient supplies (raw or finished materials or cash) to function and make a profit. Let them turn them off for a bit, and make good use of the B key (budget mini screen) to see how much stuff you have and how much you are using.

Beta Hint on the B Screen--once you put in a buy order, the only way to cancel is to find the merchant fleet, etc. and physically cancel the order. I don't recommend that, it is a serious pain. Instead, know that when you click the graph box, you are doing a buy order and only do it then. If you mess up, don't worry about...most of the time, it actually helps to have extra stuff on hand (the eco engine will sell goods/products to your populace, raising their happiness and making you cash).

3) Military. This isn't a 'stacks of doom' game. You need one good leader and one relatively fast unit, for example, to fight the Indians as the USA. If you add in artillery units, engineers, signal, field hospitals, et al, you are just going to burn up supply fast and never catch irregulars. Instead, build a couple of small, cheap units. For the USA and other countries as well--defend depots and forts. The AI will do slashing raids, and burn them to the ground. Most countries have cheap, but nearly immobile, fortress and garrison regiments. Use them to guard key locations, not infantry, cav and arty brigades.

3b--Military Supply. Build depots every three regions. Like clockwork. Build railroads to the depots or build them along coasts and have merchant or transports in the regional sea trade box to move supply. Supply moves by both 'push and pull'--push (e.g., factories produce it and stockpile in depots) and pull (units demand supply from depots). Supply wagons allow you to move without supply problems, but units outside of the range of a depot (1 province in general is my rule) will start to burn up what is in the wagons. If you want to sustain an army, you need two Supply Wagons--one with the army, one in the nearest depot filled (or being filled). You can then swap them out when needed. Hint: ALWAYS escort your supply wagons with at least one combat unit. Same with artillery. They can both be captured (says the guy who had to fight the Cherokee after they suddenly captured an artillery brigade...not fun...).

4) Naval. Many of the large countries start with warships overseas doing anti-pirate duty. Simply put, unless you have a colony in the region (FRA, UK), bring the navy home. It will take damage and happily attrit. If Queen Vicky wants to be the Global Nanny, let her

5) Crises. They can start over just about anything. Think hard about your goals and options, and understand if they get out of control, you can end up in a war you don't want (ah, the glories of the Prussian-American War of 1851 (e.g., The Samoa War)). In general, unless you are itching for a fight, focus on gaining Just Cause. It makes it harder for the AI to come after you if you have the superior cause.

6) Colonization. It is SLOW. Don't expect to gain a colony, ala Vic2, in a matter of a year or two. Build military outposts first, carefully read what the resource requirements are (ex: some only require goods and capital funds; others require state funds and goods--if you are short of one but good on the other, look at alternate ways to increase your CP). Make your first province your base to spread out--get immigrants in, defend the place, build a depot and a modern fort when you can. Colonies are VALUABLE. You are going to pour a lot of resources into them; the last thing you want is another great power waltzing in and taking it in a peace deal.

7) The Crisis Module. Given that you only play a few turns of the game, you might not get to see it work. So, this is more aimed toward those who have either had it happen, or those looking forward to the

release! First, your main goal in a crisis is simple--get your Stake (what you are wanting) and as much prestige as possible without going to war. This isn't simple, as the AI or your human opponent can choose multiple 'cards' to play each phase of the crisis (from delay to threatening war). The pre-selected options on the right hand side of the Crisis table are pretty good; in general, if I don't want to go to war (example: the USA in 1850 in a crisis with Prussia over Samoa), I'll focus on trying to get Just Cause (how the world sees your argument; are you the victim or the perp?), as it gives you a better standing later if the crisis starts up again. In one game, as the USA, I had the Samoa crisis in 1852 or so with Prussia. Prussia got a mixed result the first time (I won, but we both got prestige and nothing was solved). So...AI Prussia tries to ambush me over Samoa a second time. This time, however, I had Just Cause and he did not. The result was about 800 prestige points for me, plus all of Prussia's colonial development in Samoa (my CP went from 5% there to 10%, having gained Prussia's 5% development). Consequently, no more Samoa crisis, and the Prussians left me alone after that. However, I have seen some brutal AI wars (the UK-FRA war over Tahiti) that didn't stop for a year or so. By that point, both of them had ravaged each other's merchant fleets and their main navies had fought several large battles (I could see them in some sea zones as I had merchant ships there).

The crisis module is pretty cool, in summation.

8) Industrialization. Don't expect to do this overnight. Each factory/farm takes time to build. Carefully look at the first turn results. What are your merchants buying (steel? goods? or raw materials?). Then go build your own farms, etc. based on what you need. It is not abnormal for the world to be short of Minerals. They are used for steel and many industrial items. So, if you have the resources, exploit them. Also, watch carefully the small window to the right of the industrial build screen (bottom of page). When you move your mouse over it, it will tell you how many people you need to make the farm/factory run. You may have a whole bunch of Minerals as the USA, for example, but they are all sitting in Nevada, and there are no workers to work the mines. So, you have to develop the region first--build a fort, drive off the natives, take the colonial 'immigration' action, etc. and get people in there to work the mines.

It will not happen overnight. Expect most of the first year being focused on critical issues (mines, farms, etc. to drive the economy). And remember that every time you build a new factory, you will necessarily be driven to either trade or build new raw materials sources. Suddenly, it makes a lot of sense as the USA to build a cotton farms in the South--cotton is a base material for textiles, etc., is valuable, and you can make a lot of cash off of it without necessarily building your own textile mills. Be warned, however, that this means you end up like the real American South did in 1861--lot of cotton bales sitting on the docks while the Yankee fleet prevents them from being traded to the UK and France, and no military industrial base.

9) Colonization. As noted before, a long term and expensive racket. My main experience is playing the USA, but this applies to others (esp. UK and France) just as much. If you have province you are trying to colonize, protect it. Build the Military Outpost (will help your military control) and build a fort as fast as you can. Get troops in there and forget about them until any possible threat is gone. If you build a lot of military things in a region, and you also push for rapid colonization, the natives will revolt. It will happen, and they will burn down every unmanned fort, trade post and missionary station they can get their hands on. It does you little good to have a cavalry division in the next region. It will be too late by the time they get there.

10) Technology. This isn't Civilization. Tech is SLOW. However, some techs give you some massive improvements, such as ironclading of wooden ships, and the muzzle loaded rifle. Both give you more units for your force pool. It is nearly impossible in this game to tech rush. Two reasons. First, you can only put 250\$ into the improvement of the tech, and then it is only slightly increases the time to get it. Secondly, tech SPREADS. If you discover the Dreyse Needle Gun, expect your adversary to have the same technology within a year or two. This is fairly accurate; most nations quickly obtained a technology as soon as another nation fielded it--it was (in the USA's case, for example) only a political decision that prevented the Union Army in 1861 having breech loading rifles as the basic weapon. The tech was there, but the USA decided

not to pursue it (build more cheap muzzle loading rifle units than a smaller number of more expensive breechloaders, etc.). There is no "golden tech" that gives you a game winning edge--no Knights like in Civilization (first to Knights could dominate the game). It is a compilation of technologies, tied to your industrial base, the experience of your armies/navies, supply and good leaders that wins the game.

11) Wars. The Powell Doctrine of overwhelming force is based on one key assumption--that you have the logistical capabilities of the US military in the 1990s to support it. You won't have that sort of riches in PoN, at least not at first. Use the bare minimum to win--too many units just add mouths to feed and will drain your supplies. Leave your support units, except wagons, at home until you fight another Power. Signal and MP brigades are little help against the Apaches. Most countries have small colonial/expeditionary units available in the force pool. If you can afford them in lieu of large field forces (regular cav, marine and inf units), build them. They are fairly cheap, fairly mobile and can often survive in a region without a supply wagon (if it has not been pillaged). At the minimum, they are great for manning the scattered Military Outposts so natives will not get a free raiding on the area. Think of the old US Army Regulars on the American Frontier, or French Foreign Legionnaires in North Africa. Small detachments. An Infantry Corps in North Africa or a Cavalry Corps in Kansas, while effective if they can catch the natives, is a waste of resources.

Hope that helps. PoN is such a massive game that it is hard to give specific strategies (e.g., "the US has to build an Infantry Corps first turn or you are lost!!" sort of thing). For some, a focus on internal improvements and a booming economy will take priority over having the largest navy. It is up to you.

#### Edits/Additions:

As noted above, this is a work in progress from the Betas, to give everyone a taste in play style. Some players prefer a more historical game as the USA, for example--no 'expecting' the ACW, et al. That is, of course, up to the individual player to decide; luckily PON supports numerous strategies--all of which can lead to victory!

#### Hints/Tips:

--As the devs have noted, industrialization and colonization (in non-sandbox mode) follows general historical pattern. Railroads are the central great technological achievement of the era. Many of us in the modern era have no idea how much the Railroad changed everything, from industrial production to labor unions to mass media. It changed everything it touched. In game terms, you aren't really industrialized until you have a rail network. In military game terms, it is critical for troop movement, supply and sustainment. Build them early and build them often.

--Use the B key screen (assets). It will show you everything you need to know; the right hand score #, for example, has an awesome tooltip. It will tell you what you lack and give suggestions on where to build farms, etc. to make up the lack.

--Don't be surprised to see your units increase in experience over time, even without combat. PON, unlike many games, accurately reflects troop training. Your MIL battalions will slowly train, as will your fortress troops and field armies.

--Use your leaders in their proper roles. If you have a leader with Colonial traits (you can get all the traits by clicking on his unit icon in the Order of Battle mini-screen when you click on a unit (it will be on the right, with NATO unit symbols; look for the stars/anchors for your leader and double click). Some leaders, for example, will raise regional loyalty over time if they are the ranking officer in the region. Very important if you are trying to pacify or colonize an area. Others are Militia leaders, hard fighters, raiders, Indian hunters, and so on. It is one of the great strengths of the game. Keep in mind as well that when officers are promoted some actually get worse (historical examples in the US include leaders like Fighting

Joe Hooker and John B. Hood--great divisional commanders, poor army leaders). Not all traits are good ones!

--On this business of building factories and mines and so forth: One of the unique features of the game is that you can, if you choose, build a structure in a another country and reap the benefits of doing so. Yes, you read me correctly. Playing as the UK, you can essentially "invest" in building a mine, factory, or farm in the USA, for example. Such things happened historically, as you probably know, so here the game is mimicking reality. When the structure is completed, you will need to park a merchant fleet in the appropriate trade box to collect the resource and export it back home, or you can just set it up for sale there at the source.

--Overseas Investment: Yes, you can invest in Chilean guano mines (nitrates) and help the Yanks build the transcontinental railroad. And make money, and get some Colonial Penetration into a region at the same time. IF you can afford it, and you most likely will after a decade or so of the game, seriously look at overseas investments. Rare materials--gems, rubber, gold--need to be developed (think Cecil Rhodes!) to be used on the global market. Yes, you are sacrificing yourselves for the greater good (hat tip to Mr. Kipling), but you are also ensuring that these materials are available to be used, bought and sold on the market. Plus, you get that sweet, sweet Capital into your coffers.

#### Playing the Game as Sardinia-Piedmont

Anyone playing as Sardinia-Piedmont has to place the unification of Italy at the top of the priority list. The events that set Italy on the course to unification are scheduled to begin in the last several years of the 1850s, and the wisest course is probably to bide your time until that sequence begins. If you look around at your neighbors when the game begins, it may seem that Parma and the Duchy of Tuscany are ripe for conquest, and they are, but with one big catch – if you start laying DOW's on your neighbors, there is a chance that the Austrians or the French will intervene. And needless to say, a war against either of those powers will not turn out well.

When the game begins, S-P has both significant advantages and significant problems. On the plus side of the ledger, S-P has some valuable merchandise for export – mainly wine at the start, but then also steel and textiles when the railroads that are under construction at the beginning of the game are finished. When the railroad in Piedmont is completed, Italy can even export some luxury goods, which are also very lucrative. The problem is, Italy also has a lot of shortages. It needs to import mechanical parts, wood, iron, dye, coal, and several other merchandises. The cost of these imports, together with occasional worldwide shortages in one or more of them, suggests that someone playing as S-P would be well advised to build farms and mines to improve the basic resource situation.

As you will soon discover, what S-P most desperately needs at the start is manufactured goods, which are demanded for just about everything imaginable. S-P's surplus production of steel allows you to build manufactured goods factories without significantly increasing your imports in operating them, but these factories are expensive (£830 in private capital), and they consume a lot of manufactured goods (31) just to build the factory. Another choice is to build a canned goods factory, which helps eat up what will be a very large surplus in preserved food with few customers on the world market. The disadvantage of canned goods factories is that their yield in manufactured goods is comparatively low. So perhaps the best strategy is to build a manufactured goods factory first, and then a canned goods factory when you next have a chance to do so. Keep in mind that another way to make more manufactured goods available for your purposes is to reduce the percentage of them that you sell to your population (you do this on the F4 screen). This reduces your income in private capital and will potentially displease the population to a limited extent, but especially in the early part of the game the cost is well worth the benefit, because manufactured goods are by far the limiting factor in your growth.

Finally, a word about colonization. The most obvious target for your efforts is Tunisia. It's an independent country and is part of S-P's sphere of influence. But it also lays within France's sphere, and should you begin expanding your colonial penetration there you are likely to be the recipient of a crisis play from France. It is possible to win a crisis with France and even expel them entirely from Tunisia, but the more likely outcome is that you lose – either in terms of prestige or being booted out of the country. A more uncontested, although also more distant, target for colonizing is the Somali coast on the Red Sea.

Before rushing off to plant your flag on distant shores right from turn 1, however, you might pause to ask yourself whether it's worth the trouble in the first stage of the game. S-P has lots of things to do during the first three or four years of the game to make its economy vibrant. Anything you spend on colonization at that point will only get in the way of achieving this goal. To be sure, colonization is important for the rewards it brings in prestige – the question is, when are those rewards most profitably pursued?

#### Playing the Game as the United States of America

At first glance, the USA seems destined to rule the world. Two gigantic oceans protecting the homeland, a small swath of British Canada to the north, and the newly defeated Mexico to the south. In many ways, the USA is the easiest Great Power to play; when added to the USA's ample resources and technical advancement, it is conceivable that the Americans will be the strongest power by 1920.

Don't bet on it. The USA has several things going against it at the start. First, the original owners still are not too pleased the Euro-Americans showed up at Plymouth Rock. At the start of the game, the Cherokee and Sioux are openly hostile and will happily destroy forts, trade posts, missions, and so on unless they are stopped. The USA's relatively small army is either tied to coastal fortifications, or is fairly slow infantry (and under strength to boot). Build, as fast as possible, three highly mobile and effective cavalry divisions; the combination of heavy/light cavalry and horse artillery is the doom of the native raiders. One column should be based in the north (Minnesota), one in the center (Osage/Ft Leavenworth, Kansas) and one in the south (Ft El Paso, Texas). In the first year, aggressively pursue and destroy the Cherokee. If they are given time to spawn more raiders, you may find yourself trying to stop raids on St. Louis and Memphis. Secondary to this western expansion effort, in the 1852-1853 timeframe, build a small mobile force on the west coast (California). Apache raiders and rebels will attempt to do as the Cherokee/Sioux, but with less aggression at the start.

The second issue with the USA is the lack of advanced industry, specifically Mechanical Goods factories. These are critical to the building of Goods, which are in turn needed for units, colonization and industrial expansion. Focus on the first year or two of the game in becoming independent of overseas trade for basic needs, such as minerals, nitrates and iron. Beginning in 1853-54, focus on building up your Mechanical and Manufactured Goods, along with the backbone of your military supply system (depots, forts and their railroads). The only way you can secure the West is by rail and depot. Protect both, along with colonial and commercial buildings.

The third issue is the most important one for the USA. On the horizon is the most devastating conflict in American history--the Civil War. As the USA, you only have 10 years to secure the West, build up a standing force to hold off the Confederacy, and secure the Union. You will need riverine forces (gunboats) to secure the Mississippi & Ohio Rivers. Build a fortress and man it with guns and men in southern Illinois. It should be your springboard for reconquest of your nation. Massively strengthen Washington DC. IF IT IS LOST YOU WILL MOST LIKELY LOSE THE WAR (and the game). It is an important industrial and logistical hub, and worth massive amounts of Prestige. Upgrade the fortifications, put in a fortress division (or two), engineers and artillery, along with a good defensive general. Then begin the war in earnest--push a column down the Mississippi, another through Kentucky-Tennessee, and the third in Virginia. PON does a great job of replicating the strategic issues of the war--you will be canalized along the DC-Richmond and Nashville-Chattanooga-Atlanta routes. The war will be costly, and it will set you back on your road to

building a nation. Expect casualties and destruction at historical levels. It will take you 5-10 years, in some areas, to fully recover.

Colonization. There is a good reason the USA did not have colonies in Africa. You have an entire continent to colonize. Most of the American West is partially colonized at start, but it is going to be expensive and time consuming. First priority (after defeating the natives) is to build the transcontinental railroad. Get a series of linked provinces to high enough development and CP to build a single line to the west (the southern route, starting in Kansas and winding through New Mexico and Arizona is probably the fastest). You will need it to move troops, leaders and supplies; you start with a country effectively split in two at the start of the game. Build all the Expeditionary Brigades you can. Use them to occupy regions you want to colonize BEFORE you put colonization buildings in place ("business follows the Flag"). If you don't you will have uprisings that will destroy both existing colonial buildings and interfere with ongoing efforts. Nothing is more frustrating than being one turn from having that Military Outpost built and having a raider show up and destroy everything. Back up these occupation troops with a mobile column (I prefer a Cavalry Division with a good Hussar leader), railroad supply lines, and depots. I like to fortify Osage Prairie (Ft Leavenworth, Kansas) with a pre-Industrial fortress and a Fortress Artillery unit. Both are expensive, but that ensures their safety from raiders.

Expansion. Potential areas of expansion (and conflict!) are to the north (British, and hopefully American, Canada) and Mexico. Of the two, Mexico is easier to beat in a war (where you might get concessions) but Canada offers the chance to rapidly colonize/gain influence before the British can solidify their hold. Much like the USA, the British Empire has finite resources--every State Fund pound that goes to India is one less going to Canada. From there, Alaska is a potential further expansion. You will get objectives throughout the game (Cuba, Samoa, Hawaii, Guam, Puerto Rico, are standard) that may push you in different directions; it is up to the player to decide.

General Thoughts: You will need to build a Mechanical Goods (aka, "machine parts") factory as soon as possible. The world doesn't have enough, and it is one of those items that basically drives everything else. For example, 1 Mech Goods is required to make 6 Manufactured Goods. You don't need piles of them (unless you want to export--not a bad idea, BTW, as it will energize the global economy), but you do need them.

The USA has the potential to be the Great Power at the end of the game, but only careful industrial expansion, planned and focused colonization, and a successful conclusion to the Civil War will lead to victory.

### Playing as the British Empire

The British Empire is the hyperpower of the era. Few countries can dominate colonization, naval warfare and economics as the UK. Having said that, in PoN, it is a difficult and challenging power to play. You are not all powerful; there are limits to where/when you can do things. You can't colonize everyone at once. Africa or Canada? Southeast Asia or India? There are literally dozens of potential strategies as the British. Consequently, Ebbingford's hints below are of more of a general nature than a specific turn-by-turn directive on how to win as the UK.

--Half the fun of playing as Britain is working out what needs to be done and when.

--You need to keep an eye on the colonial map, F8, and the different areas it shows, + and - SOI (Spheres of influence), or have a good grasp of British Empire history

--What you build and when is dictated by what you need in each game. If you can't import it, build it, if you can't build it, import it.

--You need to get a good income of taxes as quickly as you can, you need lots of state funds for the navy, colonial actions, and building some structures (shipbuilding for example). Taxes are raised by what you

sell to your population so I always set the sliders for this straight to the 80%, apart from the things that are needed elsewhere like wood and manufactured goods. If your population will use it there is no need to sell it abroad, that is lost tax.

--You need to change colonial areas into colonies as quickly as you can. Once it is a colony you can then sell more goods in that region.

--Manufactured goods is what the British Empire is built on, you need lots and lots of these. Lots of colonial decisions need them as well as ships and armies.

--You don't want to get involved in any major wars, colonial actions against natives are fine though

--If you can keep out of wars and keep trading then you should get your prestige high enough to win as long as you can keep the whole empire growing, working and moving forward.

### Playing Pride of Nations as Russia

It will come as no surprise to you that Russia's most important requirement at the start of the game is economic development. Manufactured goods are what makes the world go round in PON, and in this respect Russia actually starts the game in a fairly good shape, with factories that make manufactured goods in St Petersburg, Kiev, Riga, Moskva, and Smolensk. Additionally, there is a factory that makes canned goods in Tzaritsyn (which appears in the game as manufactured goods), located on the Don River east of Rostov. The problem is that to make manufactured goods you require mechanical parts as an input, and Russia has no mechanical parts factories at the start of the game. So the Russians should start off by importing as many mechanical parts as they can, wherever they can. The worldwide supply of mechanical goods is bound to dry up pretty quickly, so do not delay doing this and get in ahead of your a.i. competitors. Don't worry about the costs of doing so. The size of the Russian internal market makes it comparatively easy for the Russians to raise private capital by selling to that market, so if some of your capital is bled off buying expensive but crucial imports like mechanical parts, it won't cripple growth over the long term.

The other pressing economic need at the start for the Russians is to improve their infrastructure. You will note that the Moskva-St Petersburg railway is under construction at the start of the game. At no cost to you, this will eventually place railroad improvements in your two most important cities, along with other comparatively well populated provinces where you will be able to build factories. Unfortunately, the company building that railroad appears to work at half speed, because it won't be completed for about two-thirds of the first year. But there are plenty of other places where railroads are needed as well. Smolensk and Kiev must be two of your highest priorities, because they have manufactured goods factories, the efficiency of which can be raised dramatically by building railroads there. (Railroads increase the transportation efficiency of a region by 40%). Also, don't overlook Perm, a region located in the Urals, well to the east of Moskva. Perm is the site of the two Russian steel factories and two iron mines. By placing a railroad there, you will get a dramatic economic boost in one improvement, which is all the more useful because steel is the one valuable merchandise that Russia produces in sufficient quantities to export at the start of the game.

A second important infrastructure improvement is roads. When the road building national decision becomes available to you (usually in the first few turns), you should adopt it and then look around for where to build roads. Riga is an obvious first choice, because of its manufactured goods factory, located in a region that lacks both roads and a railroad. Other good regions to choose for road building are the coal-rich provinces in the south in the general vicinity of Rostov. By boosting their output, Russia can reduce the amount of coal it has to import, which is pretty considerable at the start of the game. Pay particular attention to the province of Kharkov in the same area. Apart from Perm, Kharkov is one of the few Russian provinces from which iron can be mined, and developing it as a source of iron will be advantageous over the long term. There are no iron mines in Kharkov at the start, so there's a little bit of a "chicken-and-egg" problem about whether to build the mine first and then the infrastructure, or the other way around. In the case of a resource structure like a mine, it's probably best to build the mine first, and then improve the infrastructure to make it more efficient.

In terms of factory construction, as noted above, Russia must aim to build mechanical parts factories. Two will be needed to keep all of Russia's manufactured goods factories fully operating. The new mechanical parts factories must be placed in fairly well populated regions with fully developed infrastructure (that is, roads + railroads). It might seem that the obvious choice would be to place them in cities such as Moskva or St Petersburg, but it is probably more advisable to try to start spreading development more widely. This where the other regions along the Moskva-St Petersburg railroad, such as Tver, Kaluga, or Novgorod, make sense as building sites.

Russia has a distinctive problem to cope with, which is a comparative lack of state funds. The need for such funds arises because Russia is presented with the choice of adopting a lot of those £200 measures in the game (plebiscite, voting laws, draining wetlands, road building, etc.), and many of the regional decisions it needs to use also demand the direct injection of state funds. Some of the decisions that come up early in the game, such as the limitation of child labor and curtailment of noble privileges, should be postponed in favor of the more crucial ones that favor expansion of political rights and economic development. In any case, it is usually wise to lower excise and tariffs a couple of points, because that seems to be what is needed to avoid upsetting the population by taxation. But don't reduce them too far, because you will need every dollar you can squeeze from taxes. I have experimented even with raising the corporate tax by 1% as well, which seems not to upset the mob too much. As noted above, don't be too concerned that you are squeezing your supply of private capital. It will be the lack of manufactured goods, not private capital, that will be the bottleneck to further economic development.

Of course, one way to keep the population happy is to provide them with a diversity of appealing merchandise to choose from, but in this respect Russia is in a bit of a quandary. It has four merchant fleets (in the Baltic Sea, Black Sea, in the Atlantic to the west of the UK, and off the coast of Alaska in the Pacific) which are not well positioned to trade for useful things like tobacco, sugar, and the like, except insofar as major importers such as the UK have them for sale at home. It might seem that they could be positioned to conduct trade in more desirable locations such as the Caribbean, but the Black Sea fleet in particular needs to stay in place as a vital conduit for supplies to the Russian armies that will be operating in the Caucasus when uprisings begin there, as they inevitably will. So perhaps the best thing would be to move the Baltic fleet to the North Sea and shift the fleet located off the coast of Alaska to the Caribbean. It will take some time to arrive, but it seems to be the only one available. Of course, another option would be to buy a new merchant fleet, but that costs scarce manufactured goods.

The Russians' other concern is to police the Caucasus, which tends to be a frequent site of rebellions. These can be quite serious, sometimes numbering more than ten thousand. When a big uprising occurs, for which one of the numerous Cossack cavalry divisions that are scattered round that part of Russia seem inadequate, there is an army corps located in Saratov commanded by Aleksandr Baryatin, who is skilled as a mountaineer and who additionally has the ability to build loyalty in a region. The man was born for this kind of work. Just hope he doesn't die too soon! If you are not already a veteran of AGEOD games, it is all too easy to forget that when you conduct military operations, your troops will not receive replacements if you don't go to the F3 page and individually purchase replacement formations for your army. This is absolutely vital to keep your units fit for combat. Just click one or more times on the appropriate icon to get units of the kind needed. Don't overlook that there is a separate tab to buy Cossack replacements – chances are you will need some of those, too. Unfortunately, these replacement units require the expenditure of precious state funds and manufactured goods.

Finally, there are all sorts of opportunities to expand Russia's empire in the game via colonization. Some opportunities offer Russia a chance to take China on, but this is probably not the best course of action right from the start, when state funds are short and demands for them large. A good target for early expansion is the Khanate of Khiva, located to the east of the Caspian Sea. It lies within the Russian sphere of influence will not be targeted by any other country. So you can expand there in comparative peace.

### Playing the Game as Prussia (from PhilThib)

Prussia, much like the UK, is a country with many options. Consequently, many of the hints below are of a general nature and not specifically aimed at a 'school solution' for play as Prussia.

\* Economy: build up railroads first, don't worry much about the rest. Potential factories and mines include Nitrates and Dyes. Concentrate on key provinces, starting with Nassau first. Also wait for the 'Krupps' event (early in the game) which brings a LOT of industrial bonus

\* Army: nothing much needed. May be a scouting squadron, and a merchant fleet. You start with a powerful and well-trained army.

\* Diplomacy: make friends all-around, especially Austria and Russia. Be very watchful of event, there is a small window of opportunity for a CB with Denmark over Holstein (by event). If this happens, declare war asap...there are very good chances to get a white peace and the 2 Duchies provinces if you manage to hold them free of Danish troops (send your merchant fleet to part if at war, the Danish navy is just too powerful for tiny Prussia)

\* Unification: play them exclusively on Northern German states, don't waste them on Southern Germany. Watch the all-important Zollverein event (increases loyalty all over North Germany too). Unification will work in 2 steps, starting with the creation of the North German Confederation (so no need of Baden, Wurtemberg and Bavaria at start - although keep them friend). Part II is adding in southern Germany into the Greater Reich.

### Playing the Game as Japan

Unlike many of the more developed Great Powers, Japan starts the game emerging from a feudal state. On the good side, only Russia is close by, and they are truly focused on Europe. China, while potentially a threat, lacks order and technological advancement. The Pacific is open to Japan; America is far away, and even Hawaii has not been brought under the USA yet. Britain is in Singapore and Hong Kong, but their focus is India and Africa. France has yet to colonize in the region, but is eyeing Indochina. Other Great Powers are focused in Europe. The Pacific (and the future!) are with the Emperor.

--Japan is not a terribly difficult country to play in PON. Your start is a bit unstable resource-wise but you can build just enough wood, coal and minerals to keep your country running. Once you have stabilized your resources, start the long process of saving for a trade fleet. You cannot build factories for quite a while but you can build trade fleets and sell silk and luxuries to Europe bringing in quite a bit of wealth. This will set the stage for your industrialization and the expansion of the Imperial Army and Navy.

--As a new player you need to adopt a patient attitude to play Japan. Japan is not going to be an active participant in the 'big' things like international wars, colonization, etc. for several decades, but you can maybe grab some control in Korea, colonize some of the nearby islands slowly and generally build yourself up. All of these will gain you Prestige Points, and establish a defensive cordon around the Home Islands. Focus on dominating the areas around Japan--the other Great Powers will have other things to worry about (such as each other!).

--After the Meiji restoration do not try to be self sufficient in everything, you are not Britain or the USA. Concentrate on mechanical parts and steel and you will be golden when you combine that with your luxuries and silk production from earlier in the game.

### Marginoferror's "Getting Started with Japan"

Marginoferror has done a fine job of writing key hints for a new player with Japan. Thanks!

## Getting started as Japan

I have to have something to do while my turns generate (they slowed down from 1:30ish to 3:00ish after a few years), so here's a quick guide on my experience with the first few years as Japan.

Your first task is to get your consumption of industrial materials stabilized so your factories won't shut down. This is quite urgent, since Japan has heavy deficits in coal in particular and, to a lesser extent, minerals and wood.

Simply put, one strategy is to save capital up to buy a merchant fleet and sail it to Europe so you can buy the stuff you need; the other strategy is to build coal mines of your own. In time, you'll have to do both, but pick one or the other for starters.

To tide you over, and to get the materials you need to jump-start your industry, you can use the economic decisions to subsidize your imports of steel, coal and manufactured goods. (The decision to import goods is mislabeled "ban imports" in 1.01, so look at the icon and not the text.) The other economic decisions like building roads and augmenting telecommunications are not very useful to you; Japan is already quite well-developed for a preindustrial nation.

You can augment private capital by selling your surplus goods, to the extent that you have any; switch into economic mode and double-click on any of the resource icons on your territory to open the trade menu and do this. Once you have a merchant ship and it's in the location you desire, do the same to resources on foreign soil adjacent to the shipping location the ship is in, and you can buy goods. Remember that these buy and sell orders repeat every turn until canceled, so don't overdo it.

You can also buy goods by pressing "b" and clicking on the icons there, but that is an interface nightmare - you can only get them in chunks of ten, it's not clear which goods are available in the regions you've chosen and which aren't, and you can't cancel the buy order or reduce it using that screen at all. In practice, all it does is increment the counters on the trade screen that you get by double-clicking on resource icons, so do that yourself, and don't use the "b" screen for anything but information.

To conserve vital goods, you can and should reduce the percentage of your stockpile you make available to the national market. Reduce the amount of coal and manufactured goods to 10% (I don't think you can't lower it any further than that) by control-clicking on the appropriate icons in the F4 economics screen. You might want to do this for wood, too. Don't bother conserving purely consumer goods like coffee - they only exist to be consumed.

Once you have a stable income of coal and other essential materials, your next goal is to 1) increase your income of capital and 2) increase your income of critical manufactured goods.

Increase your income of capital by satisfying your national market to the degree possible, and then after that, by producing goods like silk for export.

Manufactured goods are highly in demand in the early game, so no one will sell them to you -- you need to produce 100% of what you want to consume. Since you are pre-industrial, you can't make any new factories, but thankfully you have a few pre-industrial workshops already constructed. You'll eventually get the technology for railroads (it didn't take too long for me) and at that point you should build a railroad in Osaka as soon as possible. Railroads will double the production capacity of your industries, so a single railroad in Osaka will increase your manufactured goods capacity significantly. After that, save up for railroads in Nagano and Edo, and then some other productive provinces. Keep in mind that Nagano is a mountainous province and railroads (and all other structures) will be extra-expensive there.

There is not much you can do militarily as Japan at this point, but the economic juggling and learning the ropes will hopefully keep you busy until Perry comes at the end of 1853.