

BEYOND MANIFEST DESTINY

American Play in PAX BRITANNICA

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PAX BRITANNICA is essentially a game of European competition for dominance of the vast uncolonized areas of Africa and Asia. Yet the United States can become a leading power, especially if the American player relies on the resources of his own hemisphere. If the American player establishes his state as the predominate power on the western map section, he will accumulate military power and use prudent investment, expansion and diplomacy to end the game in a vastly improved position.

The United States player must systematically implement a coherent strategy that takes advantage of the country's unique advantages and recognizes its long-term disadvantages. Its most important advantages are an early access to Latin America that can be challenged by only the most determined European power, a steadily growing merchant marine service that will carry American investment and expansion throughout the New World and across the Pacific, and the possibility that American "yellow press" journalism will allow it to wage an unprovoked war to add Spain's colonial possessions to the ascendant American empire. Its principle disadvantages are a small initial overseas empire, the need to expand the American military from a pathetic size to adequacy, and a relatively low colonial office income.

American investment and expansion must be centered on the Western Hemisphere. Because European attention will be almost always concentrated on Africa and Asia, particularly in the early game turns, the United States will have relatively little competition on the western map. Furthermore, rules presenting the United States with a *casus belli* against any other power expanding into the Western Hemisphere increase the chances that the only new control markers placed there will bear the Stars and Stripes.

Early American Investment and Expansion, 1880-1892

The placement of markers in *PAX BRITANNICA* represents two distinct but related efforts—investment and expansion. The establishment of interest and influence markers represents investment, as their primary purpose is to gain new revenues. Though protectorates, possessions and states/dominions sometimes produce impressive income, their most important function is to extend the power's sovereignty, gaining new territories and overseas military bases, thus representing expansion.

The United States has to engage in constant investment and opportunistic expansion. Its first investments should be an influence marker in Mexico and interests in Central America, Colombia and Venezuela. The first reinforcing merchant fleets are best placed in the South Pacific, then the South Atlantic, allowing the introduction of influences to Argentina and Brazil with interests in every other coastal area. The American Latin America investments will provide economic power to fuel expansion, military construction and further investment. Without a web of interest and influence on its own map, the United States is doomed to poverty, weakness and unimportance in this game.

Early American expansion is necessarily restricted by a low initial income, a weak army and navy, and rules limiting expansion in independent areas to those in unrest or beset by some political crisis (mostly, relevant South American war). Because of these factors, the United States is seldom able to expand in more than one or two areas before 1896.

It is imperative that the United States makes Hawaii a possession in 1880. In that year only, the United States has a merchant fleet prepositioned to provide a supply line back to a major power. Control of Hawaii is vital to the American player, and he has to insure that his control of the islands is indisputable as early as possible. Even if the American player has to spend every available treasury point to take control of Hawaii, the expenditure and neglect of other investments are worth it. Because Hawaii borders both the North and South Pacific, naval units maintained there can safeguard the sea-lanes to Latin America as well as those to Alaska and Asia. Strategically, Hawaii is as vital to the United States as the Cape Colony is to Great Britain. Later in the game, the American player should concentrate most of the units of his navy based in the Pacific basin at Hawaii. At that time, statehood will become necessary. Income will be reduced, but the ability to base large military forces in Hawaii will make the upgrading cost-effective.

If the United States is to expand anywhere else in the early period, it must be against "targets of opportunity" created in the Western Hemisphere by unrest or South American war. Such opportunities must be exploited with extreme care, as the early American army is a small and brittle instrument. Panama and Central America, especially the former, are attractive areas because they are the possible locations for the Caribbean-South Pacific canal. The least attractive areas are Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. Though their high economic values would make their control highly desirable, they possess high combat strengths as well that make them unwise sites for colonial combat.

Should the player feel tempted to engage in questionable expansion and flag-waving, he should remember that at no time is expansion on the New World's mainland imperative. The only area that *must* fall under American control is Hawaii.

Middle American Investment and Expansion, 1896-1904

During the middle period of *PAX BRITANNICA*, the United States investment effect in Latin America is one of consolidation. Interests in Brazil and Argentina are upgraded to influences, and interests are played in any as yet empty areas on the western map. Thus the great Latin American money machine is completed.

American investment should reach the Asian mainland in 1896. Siam and the coastal areas of the Chinese Empire are the most probable entry points for American investment. Interests in these areas pay for their costs of placement in two turns or less, and influences have the additional benefit of frustrating others' colonial ambitions. In this region of multi-lateral imperial competition, investment can have some heavily political connotations.

As the American army expands, the risks of exploiting Latin American unrest or war in South America decrease. By 1900, every Latin American area but Brazil and Mexico should be regarded as a potential target for expansion. However, influence markers established by competitors may prove to restrict United States expansion more stringently than the area's intrinsic combat strengths.

The American player should also seriously consider expansion into any heretofore uncontrolled area of Oceania. These tend to be unprofitable, but are very easily controlled. Furthermore, American expansion here in the middle turns may inhibit

Japanese investment and expansion south of China later in the game.

Late American Investment and Expansion, 1908-1916

The late game turns are those in which the American player uses his assets to insure his country's status as one of the premier colonial powers. In the New World, interests are converted to influences. Often this means sacrificing income, but it always results in doubling the victory points extracted at game's end from areas in which the investment was interest.

American investments should be in every coastal Chinese Empire zone not controlled by an imperial power. Also, the American player should be ready to place investments in any accessible areas in the Indian Ocean. Almost always, British-Russian competition will keep Persia independent and thus open to American investment.

By this time, the prudent American player will have expanded his military forces to the point that he has an extremely impressive ability to wage colonial combat. Yet his opportunities to do so in the Western Hemisphere will diminish sharply, often disappearing. As the formerly empty spaces of Africa and Asia become saturated with European status markers, every power except Russia will have the treasure to invest heavily in Latin America and the merchant fleets to maintain their investments. Though the United States will have more extensive investments than ever in its own hemisphere, the New World will cease to be its exclusive economic preserve.

But the American player finds new opportunities to expand in the Chinese Empire, particularly during the inevitable Chinese rebellion. Perhaps the American player will have to settle for a co-dominion with one or more competitors in China, but American expansion in some form should reach China. Also, it is occasionally possible for the United States to seize an Oceania area, or an African area on the Indian Ocean. "American New Guinea" or "American East Africa" might sound strange but they can and do happen in *PAX BRITANNICA*.

Military Construction

Military construction can present a profound problem in this game. Military units are needed to take and hold controlled areas, protect supply lines, deter major powers from war against your power, and prosecute when it does occur, and they usually contribute to the country's desirability as an ally and its undesirability as a member of an opposing alliance.

Yet expenditures on military power can be wasted money if excessively large forces are built and maintained overseas. Often players construct large armies that they cannot afford to maintain beyond the home country, and thus are unuseable for empire-building and of limited usefulness in deterring war. Such bloated forces reach their full level of usefulness in war—an unpredictable, destructive, and destabilizing phenomenon that even the strongest powers do well to avoid. Players on the course of such self-defeating policies do far better to scale back their military construction and devote the freed treasury points to investment and expansion. Status markers ultimately win *PAX BRITANNICA*, not armies and navies.

It is very easy for Britain, France or Germany to make this mistake. The historical example of

Kaiser Wilhelm II's attempt to build the world's greatest navy can be viewed by game player's as military construction at its most wasteful, destabilizing and ultimately counterproductive worst. The temptation to build inflated military establishments tends to be the most pronounced among powers with the greatest disposable income and the most extensive empires, and those with fewer holdings who feel that their most ambitious imperial designs are about to be realized.

However, this is hardly a problem for the American player. The initial forces of the United States are so inadequate that throughout most of the game, practically any military construction can be justified if it does not divert treasure from necessary investment and expansion. In terms of military power, the United States has nowhere to go but up; and the basic question of whether to build or not to build has less relevance to the American player than on any other.

The most important question to the American player is whether to build army or naval units. Only army units can defeat an area's inherent combat strength. The arguments of Alfred Thayer Mahan that large navies are necessary to gain and hold overseas territories against competitors largely hold true in *PAX BRITANNICA*, but naval units are useless in colonial combat. Massive navies do not automatically equate into empire.

Yet his navy is vital to the American player. The United States can seldom hope to gain naval parity with Britain, but can deter naval-centered hostilities by even the strongest major power. The United States player should strive for local naval supremacy on the western map, with roughly equal fleets based on the Caribbean-North Atlantic coast and on the North Pacific and adjacent sea zones, with flexibility enhanced by control of a Caribbean-Pacific canal. The navy should grow to its maximum size as the United States reaches its final form as a colonial and commercial empire.

Thus the United States needs both a large army and a large navy. Just how large is a subjective judgement to be made by the American player in light of his investment, expansion, ambitions and the military power of his competitors.

In the early stages of the game, American military construction should be modest, in line with the country's economic resources. Normally, the American player does best by constructing army and navy units in roughly equal strength and quantity at this time. Most new naval units should be deployed on the North Pacific coast or in Hawaii. Almost always the Pacific sealanes are far more vital to the United States than the sea zones of the Atlantic.

During the middle turns, the player can likely build his first ten-point counters. Construction should continue to be balanced between naval and land units, with the largest naval commitment still in the Pacific. American military construction reaches its zenith in the latest game turns. Most new units will be corps or fleets. Also, at this time, construction should be imbalanced in favor of naval units. The construction of a transoceanic canal makes deployment a less critical decision than in prior turns.

Special Problems

United States strategy and foreign policy must take advantage of special opportunities inherent in a war with Spain, construction of the transoceanic canal, and the partition of China. All three are important to the growth of American power and the emergence of the United States as a leading colonial empire.

In most cases, a war is the result of adroit foreign policy by a player who views war as in his interest, inept play by one for whom war will only erode his country's power, or a freak of fate in which a non-player minor power becomes unnaturally aggres-

sive. But a Spanish-American war is far different. Though the game is almost exclusively concerned with the rational accumulation and use of quantifiable national power, the "yellow journalism" random event allows the American player to expand on the basis of a *casus belli* derived from irrational domestic hysteria. No player is better served than the American by randomly occurring domestic illogic.

Spain's overseas empire is weakly garrisoned, overextended, and ultimately indefensible. Yet the United States is so weak at the outset of that any declaration of war against Spain in the early turns must be made cautiously. Often, the best option is to use the extra income derived from yellow journalism for investment and military construction, foregoing the declaration of war, and hope that yellow journalism reasserts itself when the United States is better prepared.

By the middle period, the United States should be able to seize Cuba, Puerto Rico and eventually the Philippines with little or no trouble. Spanish naval units in Cuba and the Philippines should be defeated quickly and all three possessions forced to surrender by naval blockade. Ideally, the Spanish navy will be defeated in detail and the Spanish army neutralized without the engagement of large American army units, before reinforcements from Spain can complicate local decisions. Proper preparation and careful planning always results in a quick and decisive American victory.

If the American player has built up his military forces at even a moderate rate, Spain will literally not have a chance of winning a Spanish-American war; late in the game, it will be hard-pressed even to make the American player momentarily uncomfortable. The American player can consider adding to the fruits of inevitable victory by placing a merchant fleet in the North Atlantic, possibly from the Caribbean, and seizing Rio de Oro as well as the rest of Spain's possessions. In this way, it is possible for the United States to gain a foothold in Africa, albeit an impoverished one.

Of course, there is no guarantee that the United States will ever have a *casus belli* against Spain. An American player with an early *casus belli* has to realize that an excuse for war may not arise later in the game. Yet he cannot declare war if the risk is unacceptable. The growth of the American military should be with a view toward relieving the Spaniards of their colonies. But the American player should never assume that he will have the opportunity to go to war, let alone fight on favorable terms. He must be prepared to end the game without the Philippines and the Spanish Caribbean colonies. The Spanish-American war is a contingency for which the American player should prepare; it is not an entitlement.

If American seizure of the Spanish possessions depends largely on luck, completion of a South Pacific-Caribbean canal is strictly a matter of determination. It is absolutely imperative that the United States build a canal in Panama or Central America. The fifteen special victory points awarded for building the first canal are important. But even if another power builds a canal first, the United States must complete one of its own. By having a canal under its control, the United States gains guaranteed freedom of movement and redeployment for its naval units. In addition, a canal of his own allows the American to foster friendly relations with potential allies who desire insured South Pacific to Caribbean transit.

The United States receives ten victory points if no other power has acquired permanent control of a Chinese Empire area in the course of the game. By no means should the American player make any effort to receive these points. It is in the best interests of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and Japan to strive to establish control throughout China, particularly after the Chinese rebellion that is always

a consequence of substantial major power investment in the Middle Kingdom. For the United States, trying to preserve the political integrity of China is almost as realistic as trying to keep a pack of starving wolves from a bloody side of beef.

Such unrealistic aspirations may have a great bearing on the influence of domestic politics on foreign policy, but they have no place in playing *PAX BRITANNICA*—or at least in playing *PAX BRITANNICA* well. Expansion in the Chinese Empire will normally result in more victory points at the end of the game than the unlikely preservation of China. Furthermore, by becoming a full partner in the partition, the United States can acquire a voice in the Empire's final disposition, and can subtly redirect competitors' energies from the Western Hemisphere. Seriously trying to prevent Chinese subjugation serves neither end, and is a bad investment.

Foreign Policy

In this game, foreign policy performs the same function that strategy and tactics perform in other, more purely military simulations. For game purposes, foreign policy is the use of previously acquired power and interplayer relations to increase one's objective and subjective power. As defined by Hans Morgenthau, the seminal foreign policy scholar, in his work *Politics Among Nations*, power is the ability of one actor to determine the thoughts and actions of other parties. For the purposes of both Morgenthau and of the *PAX BRITANNICA* player, the most relevant form of power is political power. Objective sources of political power include military force, economic resources, and support assets such as overseas bases and naval coaling rights. Subjective components of political power are less quantifiable character traits and abilities of the player himself, and assets derived from the player's use of power—primarily influence, prestige, energy, determination and applied aptitude.

The concept of power is central to everything that the player does. Use of military force in a war is an obvious manifestation of power, against another player or against a minor power. Colonial combat is also the use of power, in this case against the indigenous peoples or government of an area. Convincing one or more other players to support the player's initiative in a treaty or the restriction of investment and expansion in a region of the world is a primarily subjective example of power.

The American player has to accumulate both objective and subjective power. The program to increase objective power has four components. Aggressive investment, primarily in the Western Hemisphere, is to dramatically increase the United States' income. Using this new revenue, military units are built in increasing strength and quantity. Third, the proceeds of investment and the new military power fuel opportunistic expansion, almost always in the Western Hemisphere and Asia. Fourth the United States builds a transoceanic canal, regardless of whether one is already in place.

Subjective power is related to objective power. Constructing a sizeable military and acquiring a network of investments and colonies contributes toward the nebulous asset of "prestige". Sometimes nothing can earn more respect than a big fleet in the right place. In addition, the player has to act as a willing and eager member of the world imperialist community, staking claims and making deals like the more powerful Europeans. Acting as a New World "King Canute" ordering the major powers' tide from the beaches of China is not the way to build subjective power, and subtly working to turn the other players from China is self-defeating from an objective point of view.

PAX BRITANNICA's system of emerging alliances represents a growing opportunity for the American player to increase his subjective power. Every

European power, at some point in the game, is likely to consider joining an alliance; often this desire leads to the active recruitment of possible allies. If a country has a low level of objective power, the chances of it becoming a leading member of an alliance are small. A weak ally will find itself manipulated by its more powerful partners. As repudiation of the treaty of alliance before its expiration results in a *casus belli* by the other signatories, repudiation is difficult, especially for a weak power. Thus, the weak ally is caught in a dilemma between manipulation and destruction—a dilemma of its own making.

The situation changes if a country has significant objective power, or if its power is rising. It is much harder to manipulate an ally that can and is willing to resist encroachments on its autonomy. The more powerful a country is, the more likely its allies will make decisions affecting all members of the alliance by consensus, or at least by consultation. A strong ally is likely to be a full partner, and a weak one liable to be a pawn.

Despite the likelihood that it will be of a more independent mind, a strong ally is more valuable than a weak one. An alliance's strength is the strength of its members; an ally that brings little power to an alliance does little for that alliance.

Alliances are not associations of sentiment. They are the rationally (even cynically) concluded partnerships between powers with converging interests, primarily the advancement and defense of investments and colonies. In this game, the so-called "traditional friendships" between countries have even less bearing on play than domestic politics. Any major power can find strong reason at one time or another to sign a treaty of alliance with any other major power.

A basic tenet of American foreign policy should be to increase the desirability of the United States as an ally; and to consequently increase the chances that if it did enter into an alliance, the United States will not be a pawn of its partners. The American player should sound open to the concept of any alliance but negotiate towards getting significant, tangible gains as the price of that alliance—preferably concessions out of proportion to the United States' value as an ally. Possible American demands include reduced European investment in the New World, restrictions on non-American naval deployment in the Pacific, and guarantees that the United States has the exclusive right to build a trans-oceanic canal. Of course, any such concession must be written into the treaty of alliance.

The American player has to take great care in concluding alliances. In the early game turns, alliances are generally ill-advised and result in the exploitation of the United States. Even when the United States is at the zenith of its power, alliances are fraught with hazards, and the gains inherent in proffered alliances must be carefully weighed against the dangers.

An historical example of value to the American player is that of England between the reign of Henry VIII and the end of the 19th century. In that long period, England was alternately allied with and against Spain, France, Austria, Prussia, the United States, and Russia though it mainly held itself aloof from alliances. Britain's role was to play the "balancer", entering coalitions at the last moment to decide which alliance would prevail. To its detractors, the "balancer" was "perfidious Albion", but the policy did allow the British to repeatedly decide the outcome of war and other political phenomenon in Europe though the resources at their disposal were often less than those controlled by other major powers. With eventually massive economic power and carefully husbanded military power, especially on the seas, Britain became the premier colonial power in the 19th century. When Britain did enter into an alliance, it was mostly on a temporary basis. It would join forces with other

powers for a time, then slip back in nonalignment at the first opportunity, eventually to join another alliance at the proper time. This is the central principle of relevance to the American player.

The United States is seldom strong enough to effectively play the "balancer". But it can reap many benefits by entering into alliances of short duration rather than those intended for prolonged validity. This will signal that the American player is open to alliance with any major power, gain the aid of allies, and avoid extended entanglements. In addition, if the United States is to be manipulated by its allies, it will not be for long. By avoiding alliances in general while negotiating with a view toward joining one that can offer the most, then signing a treaty of short duration, the American player significantly increases the probability that any agreed-to treaty of alliance will be largely on his own terms.

For *PAX BRITANNICA* players, war is a political phenomenon that can result in massive territorial and economic gains, loss of territory and investments, or the complete destruction of the game's "world order". In the early stages of the game, war is improbable as there are so many accessible areas open to investment and expansion that there are few "flash points" worth a confrontation. In short, there's enough of the world for everybody. Only when the "empty spaces", as Morgenthau called them, are filled and the means of investment and expansion are greater than the opportunities does war become a real danger to major powers. In addition, by the later game turns the players have built many naval units, seen South American and Balkan wars, witnessed domestic agitation by irredentist and expansionist elements within Europe and Japan, and maybe even fought a war or two. Consequently, the European Tensions Index is often high and the "Great War" looms on the horizon.

Throughout the game, the American player must strenuously avoid war with the other major powers. Military units are vital components of power, but when players turn them against each other, imperial futures are gambled. Going to war against a European major power, even with the help of a powerful ally can be suicide for the United States. Even declaring war against a weak major power can result in the loss of carefully accumulated military units for debatable gains. It is best for the American player if he leaves war to the less wise.

Conclusions

Despite entering the game with negligible power and only one overseas possession, the United States goes into 1916 with a potent army and navy and possessions on three continents. A canal allows the navy to quickly shift from ocean to ocean, and in most of its own hemisphere what the United States does not control outright it has significant investment in. It is an active participant in the world order. By the early 20th century, the United States is respected as much for its prudently fluid and activist foreign policy as for its far-flung and amply defended empire.

This is the goal of the American player. He must increase the assets at his disposal and use them to further his standing in the global community. Though his efforts concentrate initially on the New World, they carry him to China and the rest of East Asia.

In the seven-player game, it is extremely difficult for the United States to amass more victory points than Great Britain, France or Germany/Austria. All enjoy generous colonial office incomes, and Britain starts the game with an already sizeable empire. Early access to the "empty spaces" of Africa and Asia allow them to expand and invest quickly and profitably.

But the United States should be able to surpass Italy, Russia and Japan. These countries share

relatively low, and sometimes downright poor, colonial office incomes. Italy is perennially weak and easily tempted in the race to divide Africa. Japan poses the greatest problem of the three, for it shares with the United States a need for substantial Asiatic investments and colonies. In fact, whereas Asia is the site of the American empire's completion, it is the core of *dai-Nippon's* future. If the United States has any natural antagonist, it is Japan. But because Japan's merchant fleets multiply less rapidly than those of the United States, the American player may be able to preempt much of Japan's planned investment and expansion.

The goal of the American player is to finish ahead of Japan, Russia and Italy, with such a gap in victory points between the United States and its closest competitor that it can finish with a rank no lower than fourth. This increases the chances that because of the players' relative skills or fate either Britain, France or Germany/AH finishes marginally lower than the United States, raising the American finishing rank to third.

PAX BRITANNICA is unusual in that a player should be gratified to finish third or fourth out of seven. But when playing the United States, one's concern lies not in building the "Empire to End All Empires", but in making something out of nothing. In the end, the American player should have something indeed, including mastery of his own hemisphere.

