

# Baltic IV: The UnBaltic Opening

**Perhaps the Baltic is best defended by not being there...**



[http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/Caspian\\_Sub/](http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/Caspian_Sub/)

---

## Paper Topic

This analysis shows a method for utilizing the Baltic fleet by moving the fleet rather than buying more boats.

---

## Paper Summary

Germany does not want to spend money in the water if it can be avoided (see Policy Paper 11 - Baltic I). This opening buys no boats but does buy one plane. Here is the rough sketch of the UnBaltic:

**Bid:** Assume 1 unit in Libya, 1 in Belarus

**German Purchase:** 1bmr 2tnk 5inf

**Combat:**

To Amphibious Gibraltar: 1inf 1tra 1btl 3ftr

To Anglo: 1inf 1tnk 1bid 1ftr 1bmr

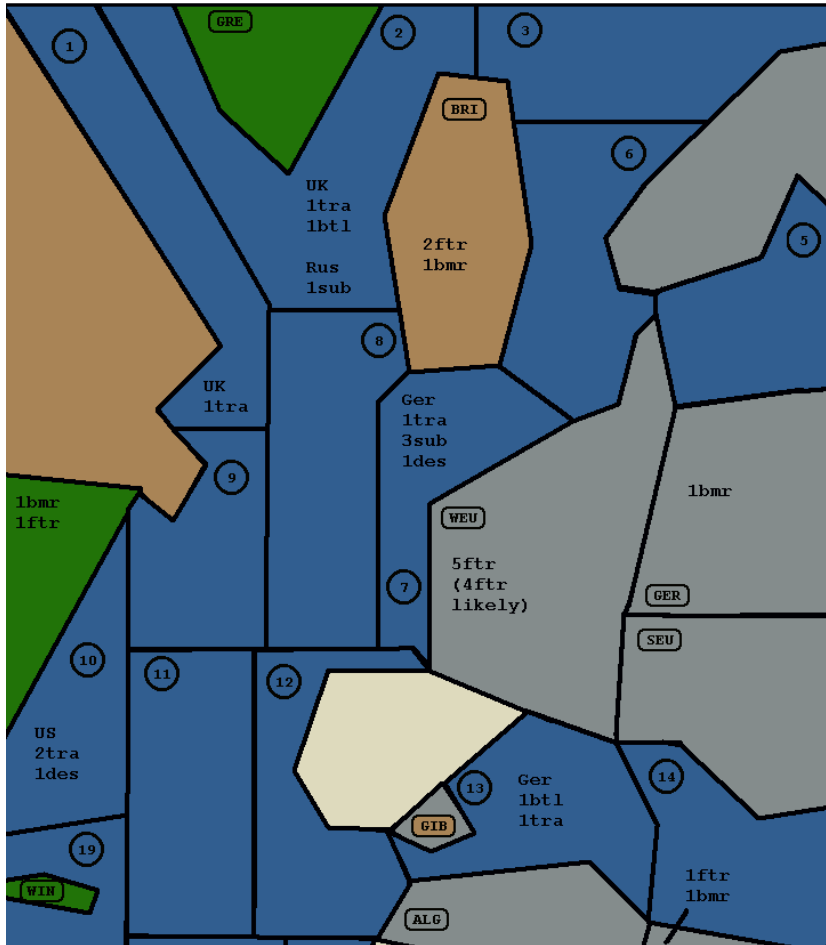
In Europe: Attack whatever the Russians expose

**Non-Combat:**

To Z07: 1sub from Z08, 2sub 1tra 1des from Z05

Keep 3inf **2TNK** 4ftr in W. Europe.

The theater will look like this:  
Only units of naval significance are shown.



"But", says you, "what about the UK fleet in the North Atlantic? What about the Mediterranean destroyer? What about Anglo? If I do this, I don't **FEEL** strong. Am I strong?"

Stop asking whiny questions and read the details.

---

## Details

As we covered in the first Baltic Policy Paper, the Germans can't spend a lot of money in the water and keep up with the Russians for very long. Previous analyses have looked at options to put a minimal investment in the water without diverting too much attention from the Russians. The UnBaltic is the logical extension of that concept. The option covered in this paper attempts to solve the problem of naval/Russian balance by buying a dual-use item that first serves in the water and then serves on land.

The key concepts of this move are:  
Cascade dice failure risk (CDFR)

A German United Fleet (GUF) -- Covered in previous Policy Papers  
A Western Europe air base

Let's go through the details.

## **CDFR**

Managing CDFR is the skill of identifying the small percentage outcomes which can have a large impact on the game and either avoiding those situations or forcing your opponent into those situations. When you are looking at the impact of luck, you have to keep in mind that the value of the battle is not just the value of the pieces involved. Sometimes a win or loss has a much greater strategic value than its tactical value. A simple example would be when you are trying to take territory to stop a tank blitz to your capital. Suppose the Russian player needs to simply kill one tank in West Russia and take the land to prevent an overwhelming column of tanks from attacking Moscow. If the Russian player sends 1inf and 1art to kill the lone tank, the Russian player is assuming a risk that goes well beyond the value of the units sent into combat.

From a tactical point of view, the Russian player is risking \$7 of gear and the German player is risking \$5 of gear. But if the Russian player loses the battle, or simply fails to take the land, then the value of the battle is much greater than the cost of the gear because the Russian player now has to defend Moscow.

In this instance of a battle in West Russia, the Russian player has a scenario that leads to disaster based on the outcome of just a couple of dice. The German player, on the other hand, really doesn't have much at stake. So unlikely outcome can lead to a very costly Russian remedy while no outcome can lead to a German disaster. The idea that a small failure of dice can lead to a major strategic problem is called Cascade Dice Failure Risk. **Managing CDFR means positioning yourself such that your opponent owns significant risk while you own minimal risk.**

If you consistently put your opponent in a position where he is vulnerable to CDFR, then in the long run it will win you games. Let's go apply that to the water.

As stated in the paper summary, the purchase for this move includes 1bmr. The naval moves are taking the Med Fleet to Gibraltar, and sending the Z08 sub as well as the Baltic Fleet to Z07. Z07 now has 1tra 3sub 1des, and the Brits have several options:

- 1) Ignore the fleet
- 2) Attack the fleet with air power only
- 3) Attack the fleet with air power and their own fleet.

If the Brits ignore the fleet then they are exposed to a fairly impressive naval attack. There are two boats off the coast of Gibraltar and there are five boats off the coast of France. Almost anything the Allies put in Z08 will be attacked by all the boats that can reach as well as all the planes. Since a second bomber was purchased, the maximum power would be seven boats and seven planes (assume a fighter used in Anglo could not attack Z08 the next round). Figure that the UK would buy 1car 1tra 2inf, that the US would move up 2tra 1des, and that the Russian sub

would block the Med Fleet, and you're left with this:

Att: 1tra 3sub 1des 5ftr 2bmr = oPunch:32 oCount:12

Def: 5tra 1des 1car 2ftr 1btl = dPunch:23 dCount:11

The median outcome of that battle is four German planes flying away. The average economic benefit of that attack is \$30 for the Germans, and most of the German losses were units of little to no value to the Germans. So ignoring the fleet with a defensive build is a bad move.

Your other option for ignoring the fleet is to build your fleet in Z02. There is no risk in this move, but it does mean that the German fleet can slip into the Med. At that point the Med Fleet will become essentially unsinkable, and two transports will perpetually threaten Africa and the Caucasus. In addition, the Germans will have the option of pulling the fleet back out of the Med for a strike on Allied shipping.

So ignoring the fleet is bad, how about attacking the boats with everything? The UK could send 2tra 1btl 2ftr 1bmr against 1tra 3sub 1des. Clearly that is a good fight for the UK, but it has some interesting risks. First off, if the UK gets two hits on the first round, the Germans will lose the transport and the destroyer and submerge the subs. Because you can't retreat from submerged subs, the UK fleet will be pulled out of range of the American reinforcements. Assuming the Med Fleet is blocked, the UK fleet can now be hit by a max of 3subs 6ftr 2bmr. That means that if the UK wants to attack the Z07 fleet with its own fleet, the UK has to plan on buying a carrier the first round to reinforce the survivors of the naval attack. The Germans would have successfully forced a defensive naval purchase without buying any boats of their own.

Now look at the CDFR implications. Suppose the UK attacks the Z07 fleet and takes three or more hits (this will happen a little more than 20% of the time). Now the German counterattack may be able to wipe out all of the British boats at very little cost to themselves, and the Germans will still have the Med Fleet. As far as risk to the Germans, they aren't buying any navy, and they don't particularly care about their starting boats. They are putting much more risk on the British than they are assuming for themselves. The Germans gain the advantage with this move in that they force a defensive naval purchase for the UK and they push the risk onto the British.

What about the third option of an air-force-only attack on the boats? That is not a great fight for the UK. In the first place, in a fight to the death UK wins less than 51% of the battles. The attack is inherently risky. In second place, the normal attacker advantage of being able to call off the attack is largely negated by the presence of subs. If the battle is going well for the UK, the subs will submerge and could slip into the Med on the next round. Worse yet, if the UK bricks on the first round, suddenly the Germans could be in a dominant naval position (that happens 8.33% of the time). Notice the mounting CDFR opportunities in this battle. The UK would be unhappy both if they hit very heavy or if they hit very light.

Is there any situation where the UK can push the CDFR back onto Germany? Not really. The UK could potentially set up a situation where the Germans are enticed into a naval attack with their air force that causes the Germans to lose many planes. But because the Germans don't

much care about the Baltic Navy in this gambit, it will be hard to push them into a position where they risk something they really care about.

The UK player has a choice to make. He can:

- A) Expose himself to the dice (CDFR)
- B) Plan on making a defensive naval build to start the game or
- C) Allow the Baltic Fleet to slip away.

The German player is probably fine with all three of these options, so the UK player should select the counter that best fits the rest of his opening.

## **UnBaltic and The German bomber**

There are not many instances where Germany gets a second bomber on the board. The typical German player will make land-intensive purchases along with a small investment in the Baltic and perhaps in the Med. Since Germany is usually in a defensive position, an additional gray bomber is an unaffordable luxury. Because this scenario looks to punish sloppy or unlucky play in the water, however, buying a bomber makes sense. Once the water has been resolved one way or the other, the bomber still has a great deal of utility.

Typically WEU becomes an air base for Germany. Swapping land with Russians often involves bouncing many fighters between WEU and KAR, and sending one bomber and ground troops to UKR/BAL/BEL. Having a second bomber means you can push infantry into swap zones with air support for each territory. Fighters still go to Karelia and one bomber can go to each of the other two typical swap zones. This will save logistical problems with fighters and prevents having to use artillery or tanks to take land.

The second bomber also has an interesting impact on Allied shipping lanes. Having two bombers stationed in Western Europe can cause significant havoc for the Allies in setting up their early supply chain. The Germans may never actually attack in the water, but the Allied player will have to be careful with his capital ships to protect the western end of his supply chain. Unprotected transports in Z02 are quite exposed.

Also, as the game reaches mid-to-late stages, the can-opener value of the bombers can be quite useful. The Germans may be able to open up a tank path to Moscow for the Japanese.

Finally, having a second "4" throwing in a large land battle against the Russians is always nice. It's not as nice as having three more tanks, mind you, but remember that **the money you spent on the bomber was taken from the naval budget, not the ground budget**. Instead of building transports or a carrier, you built a dual-use item.

---

## FAQ

### **1. In the case of submerged subs in Z07, how about attacking them with an American bomber and an American fighter that lands on a carrier built in Z08?**

This is the type of move you would consider with a defensive-minded UK plan. It was left out of the main paper for the sake of simplicity because it is a bit more complicated than it looks at first. Consider the implication of three sub hits on the first round of the UK attack (1 in 27 chance). Two of the hits will remove boats, meaning you may not be able to just lose a UK fighter or bomber to absorb those hits. You also have to consider that the American Air Force may miss, and the subs will just re-submerge. And only in rare cases will the American kill more than one sub. CDFR is still significant problem.

### **2. Why not do an UnBaltic opening that builds only ground troops?**

Without building the bomber, the Allies will be into Europe almost immediately. There certainly are variations of the UnBaltic opening that skip the bomber, but you will find that the Allies have a very rapid buildup in Europe. Buying the bomber manages to leverage your navy without spending money in the water. Even if it never attacks boats, the bomber will be useful in land battles, undoubtedly providing value every round.

### **3. In the paper summary you specifically mention that you should have two tanks in Western Europe. Why?**

You have two transports available. If the UK loses their fighters and you keep your transports alive, you want to have the threat of invading London. The odds are very small that you would ever actually get to do the invasion, but you should at least threaten the invasion to force a response. Remember, you could have as much as 2inf 2tnk 5ftr 2bmr 1btl for the invasion. The chances of a viable invasion are small, but the prize is far too large to ignore the trivial setup necessary to maximize this opportunity. Make sure you are in a position to punish any mistakes or to capitalize on any bad dice. If it doesn't cost you much, set up a CDFR possibility!

### **4. Won't the UK bomber and destroyer attack the German Med Fleet?**

Run that battle in the simulator and you'll see that the battle is not very favorable for the UK. It is possible that the UK player would consider trying to battle for one round and then pulling off it goes badly, but under what circumstances is that the best use of the bomber? In almost every set up that bomber will be wanted for either Z07 or Anglo.

### **5. The UnBaltic is essentially a defensive German opening, so why does the recommended buy include 2tnk?**

The full answer is too long to go into in this paper, but the short answer is that it has to do with a counter to the Russians. Buying 1bmr 8inf save \$1 is fine, as is 1bmr 7inf 1art. It depends on your overall strategy for the Germans.

---

## Wrap Up

The UnBaltic is not a crane-kick, but it does force some interesting choices on the British player. In some instances involving CDFR, the German player will gain a decisive early naval advantage

at little cost to the ground game. And who doesn't love having a second bomber?

---

## **Version and Unresolved Issues**

1v0 Date: 1/8/2008

Unresolved issues: NONE!

---