

Mapping the Invasion of America, 1942

JF Ptak Science Books LLC Post 873

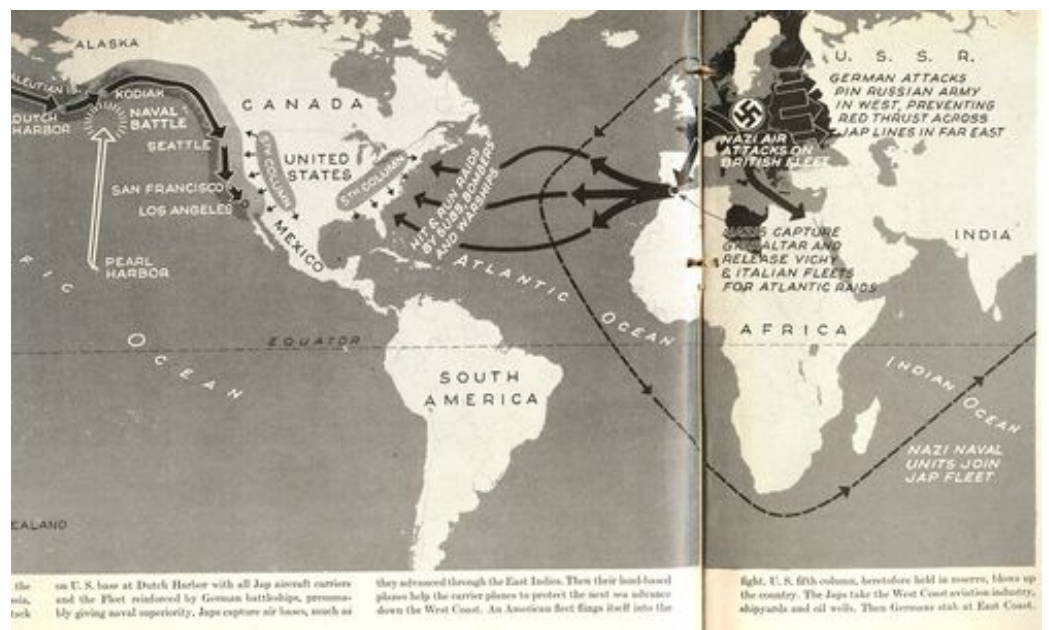
[See also Part II of this post, [here](#); and consider a related post on the Nazi sub-orbital [Amerika Bomber](#)]

LIFE Magazine issued a wake-up call of sorts to its readership in their 2 March 1942 issue. I say “of sorts” because even though this hard article (entitled “Now the U.S. Must Fight for Its Life”) must have sorely sobered some of its readers, it started on page 15, following big ads for Listerine, Matrix (women’s shoes, Bell Telephone, Modess, Clapp’s Baby Food, Dot Snap Fasteners, Goodrich Tires, White Horse Scotch, Pompeian Massage (for shaving), Jack Benny/Carole Lombard’s “To Be or Not To Be”, Colgate, Yardley powder and Mimeograph, and a few interspersed puff pieces—and a Ginger Rogers cover photo. But once LIFE paid its bills¹, the article got right to business, responding to a February article by sci-fi/novelist Philip Wylie² on the possibilities of the U.S. losing the war.



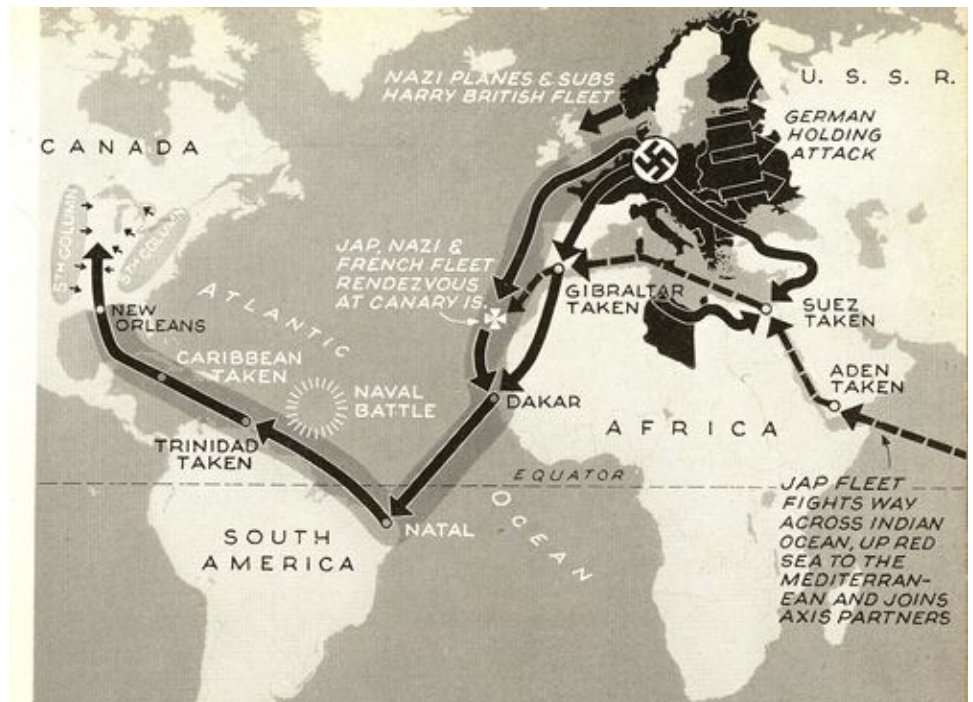
Losing looked like something that could actually happen in pre-war-ready America³. The war in

Europe had been on in earnest since the very end of 1939 (since 1933 in Asia), and the Axis had reached just about the fullest extent of their victories (though there would be more gains in the Pacific to come). By March of '42, we had Bataan, MacArthur leaving the Philippines and the fall of rape of Manila, the siege of Leningrad, Corregidor, Java Sea, the Brits leaving Singapore,

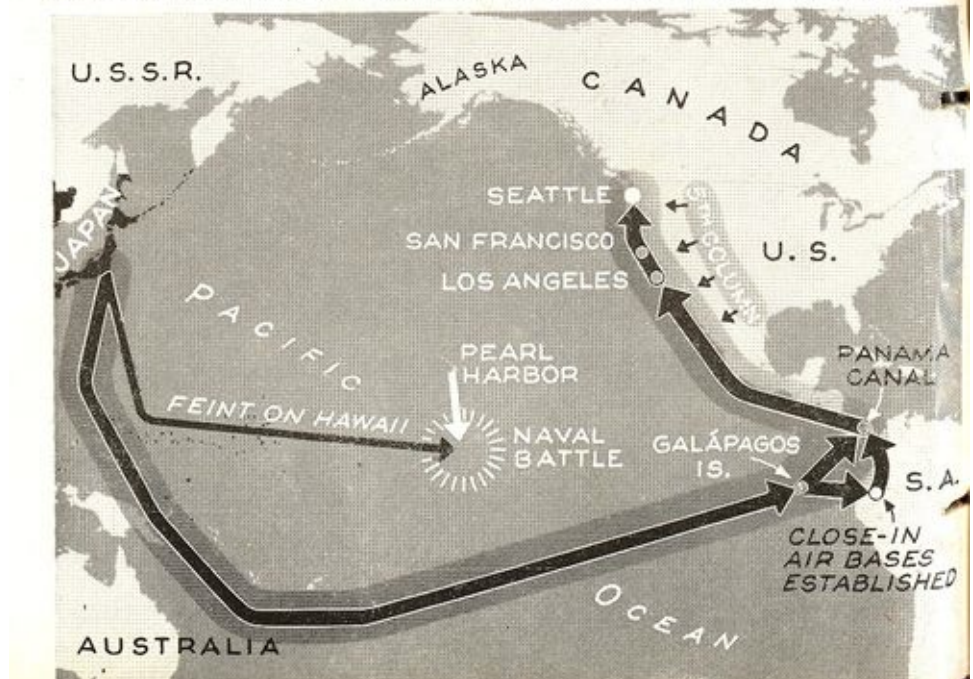


Malaya, and so much more. The Axis powers in Europe were now in control of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Norway, Yugoslavia, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and parts of the Soviet Union (Ukraine, Bylorussia, Crimea), and parts of North Africa; plus the allies of Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. There was also Italy, of course, controlling Sicily, Ethiopia and Libya., and of course the Japanese controlled large swaths of China, South East Asia, Indonesia and points in-between. The overall situation did not look very good.

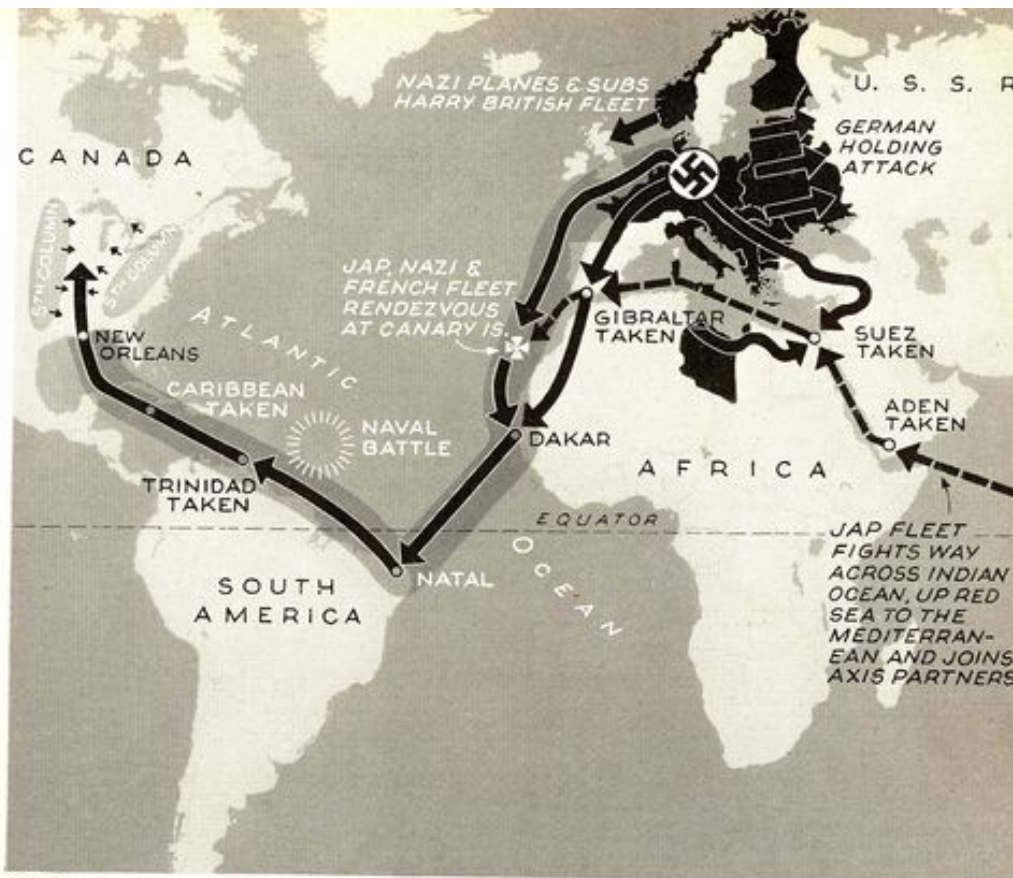
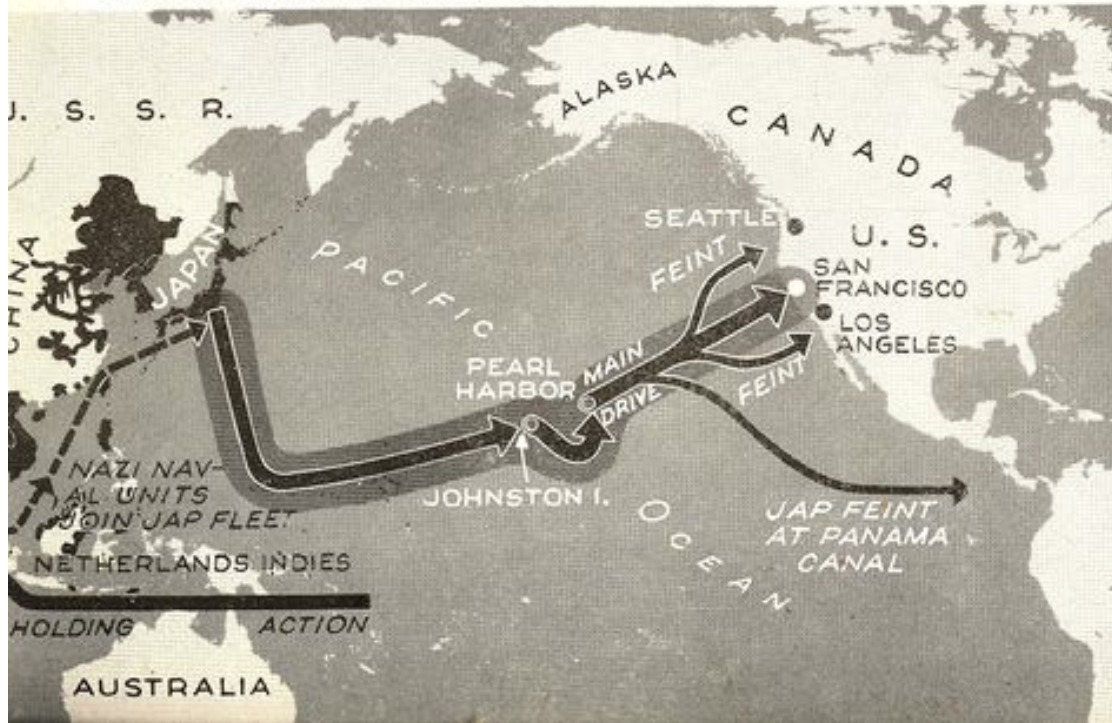
These maps appeared in a two-page spread, detailing ways in which the Axis powers could combine their efforts, focus on America, and take over the country. Maps such as these with arrows being drawn towards America were absolutely uncommon during this time.



Plan Three calls for a southern Pacific crossing by Japan. Again the Jap Fleet, reinforced by the Germans, presumably has naval superiority over the U. S. Fleet. Probably first gun would be surprise bombing of Panama Canal, instantly followed by landings in Ecuador.

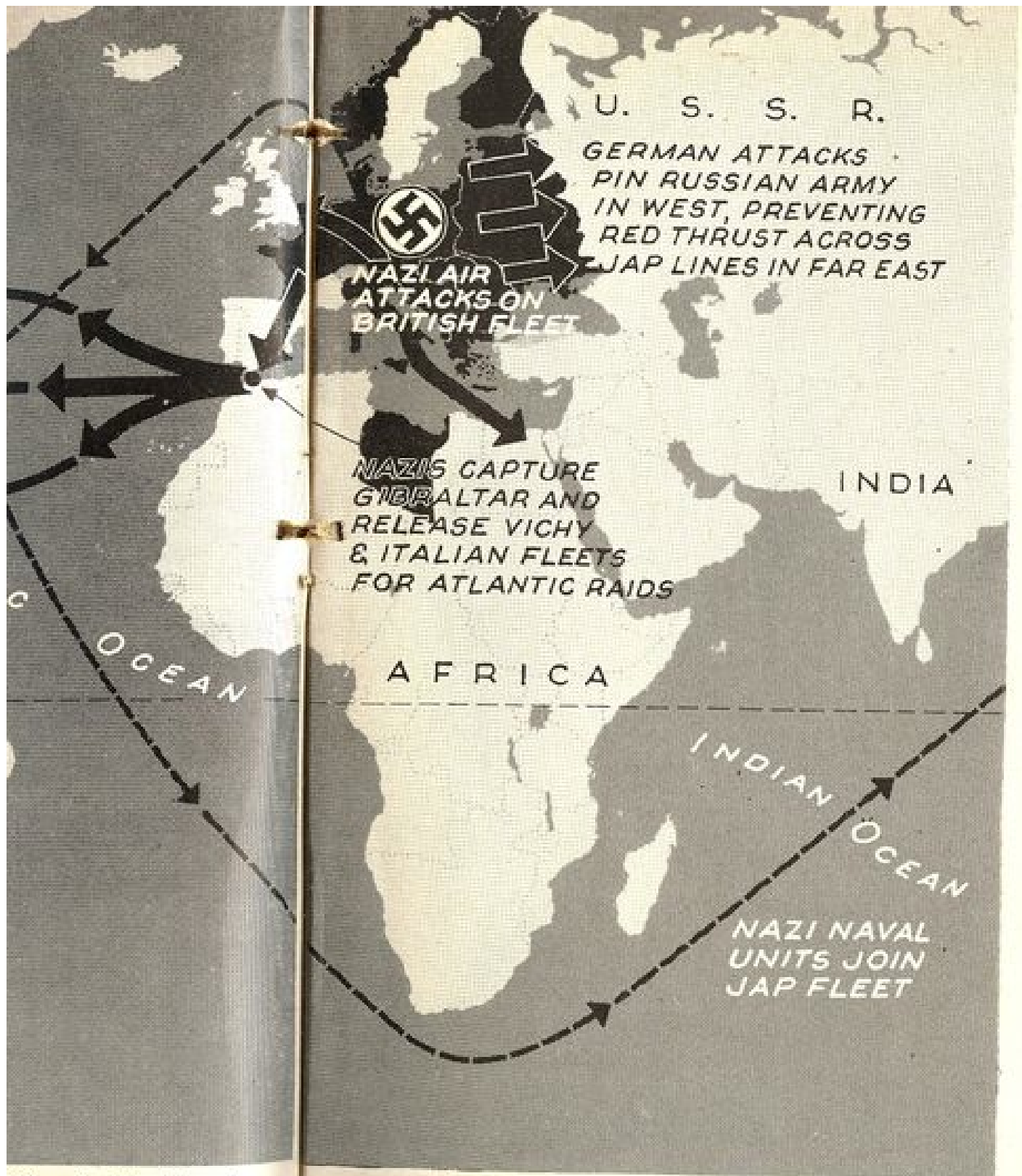


Plan Two calls for a frontal attack on the West Coast via Pearl Harbor. This is the hard way. Japs supported by carriers first land on the outer Hawaiian Islands, set up air bases and close in on Oahu. More difficult is the big water jump, protected only by carrier-borne planes, to San Francisco. *Jap Feint* at the Panama Canal, Los Angeles, and Seattle.



Plan Four is the much-discussed invasion by way of Gibraltar-Dakar-Natal-Trinidad, which President Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy has tried to defend against. It is based on com-

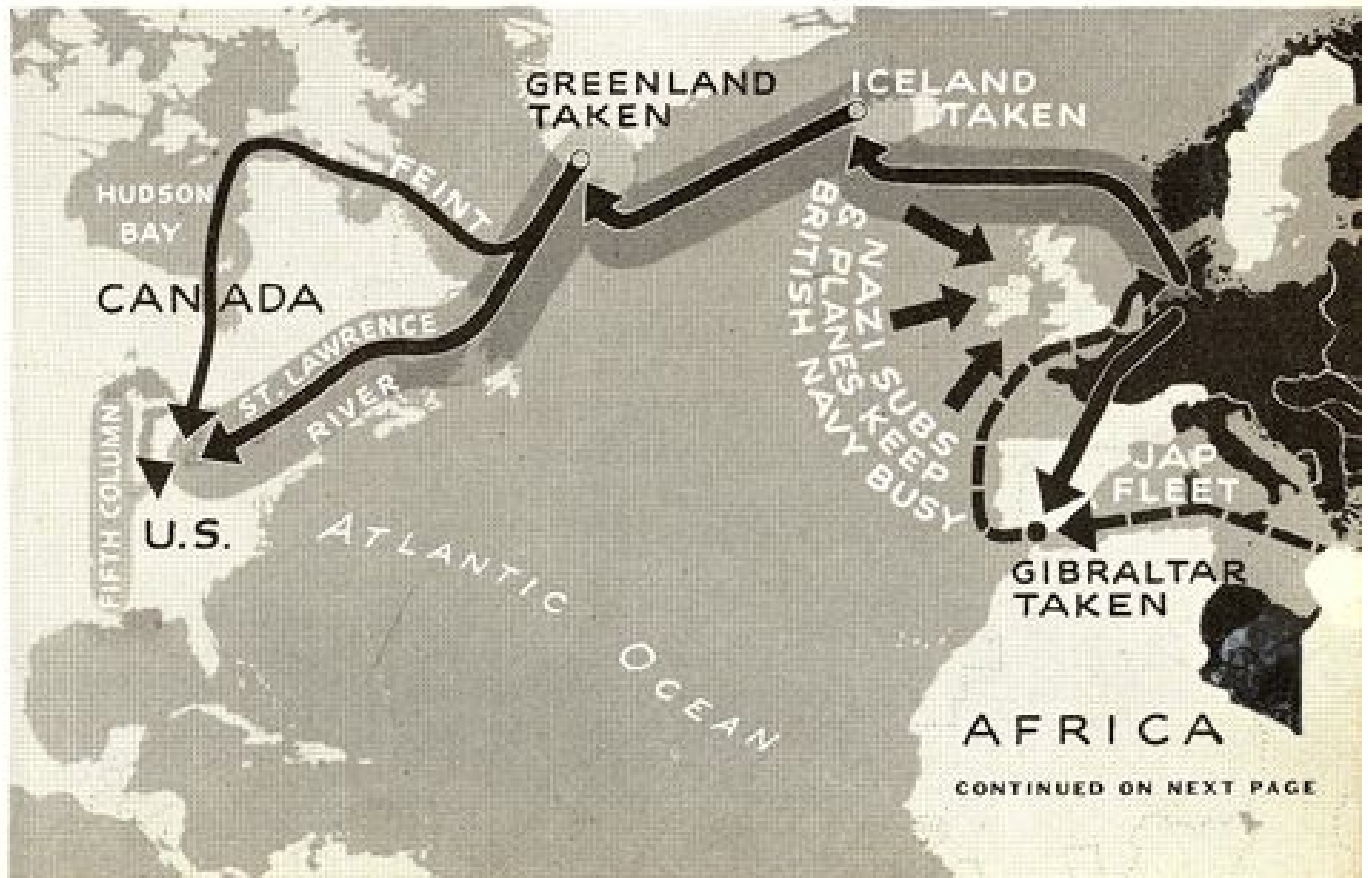
lining the Jap, German, Italian and Vichy navies, freed by the capture of Gibraltar and Suez. They must fight the Allied fleets somewhere. Invasion pours up the Mississippi Valley.



. Then their land-based
t the next sea advance
set flings itself into the

fight. U. S. fifth column, heretofore held in reserve, blows up
the country. The Japs take the West Coast aviation industry,
shipyards and oil wells. Then Germans stab at East Coast.

Plan Six is classic invasion down St. Lawrence and Hudson valleys, Germans could readily bomb Chicago, Detroit, Akron and rampage through Midwest. Big catch is getting past British Fleet. On all maps, black arrow alone means a feint; when combined with gray band, it means full invasion.



Plan Five is hard way to cross the Atlantic. Combined Axis navies reduce Atlantic islands, then take big water jumps from Azores to Bermuda to Norfolk. Their biggest headache is reported U. S. superiority in carriers. Twenty-five Nazi ships could transport four divisions.



1. This is almost universal SOP for war reporting for almost all media, and which continues today. *The Illustrated London News* delivered reports of success and disaster sandwiched between ads for socks and trifles, as did the *Illustriete Zeitung* (Leipzig and Berlin), the *New York Times*, and so on. I remember very clearly as a kid hearing the reading of the daily list of American soldiers killed in Vietnam on one of the Big-Three networks, somber and intoned, followed instantly by an ad for Coke or Mister Kleen.

2. Wylie (1902-1971) was an interesting guy with a wide reach. In addition to Hollywood-feeding work, interesting fiction, insightful sci-fi and social commentary, Wylie also provided the inspiration for the creation of Superman ("The Gladiator", 1930) and Flash Gordon (*When Worlds Collide*, 1933).

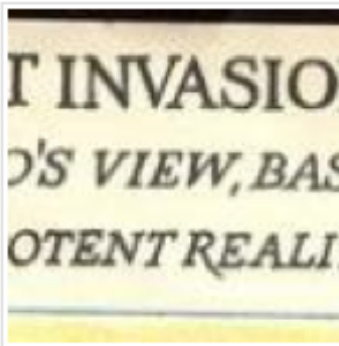
3. Once the war machine in the U.S. got into hyper drive I think that it was impossible for this country to be defeated given its population, workforce, industrial capacity, raw materials, and of course scientific superstructure. Also there was also no other country in the world with the

necessary (and enormous) components needed to construct an atomic bomb. This is a simplified statement that seems pretty homespun and jingoistic, but the fact of the matter is that the U.S. was the seat of overwhelming possibilities and capacities. And yes the Nazis had been slowed down mightily with the expense of dozens of millions of Russian lives and the entire British war machine and on and on—I'm just saying that in the end, the U.S. could not have been beaten.

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