# The Battle of Bismarck Sea Exercise

In February 1943, during the critical phase of the struggle in the south-western Pacific, the Allies received intelligence reports indicating that the Japanese were planning a troop and supply convoy to reinforce their army in New Guinea. The convoy could sail either north of the island of New Britain where rain and poor visibility were almost certain, or south of the island, where the weather would probably be fair. By either route, the trip would take three days. General George C. Kenney, commander of Allied forces in the South Pacific, was ordered by his supreme commander, General MacArthur, to attack the convoy with the objective of inflicting maximum destruction. General Kenney had to decide whether to concentrate the bulk of his reconnaissance aircraft on the northern or the southern route. Once the convoy was sighted, it would be bombed continuously until its arrival in New Guinea.

Kenney’s staff estimated that if the reconnaissance aircraft were concentrated mainly on the northern route, then the convoy would probably be sighted after one day, whether it sailed north or south, and would therefore be subjected to two days of bombing in either case. If the aircraft were concentrated mainly on the southern route, on the other hand, then either one or three days of bombing would result depending on whether the Japanese sailed north or south, respectively. The number of days of bombing may be interpreted as Kenney’s gains and the Japanese commander’s losses.[[1]](#endnote-1)

**Q1: Without knowing which route the Japanese commander will choose, should Kenney concentrate his recon to the north or to the south of the island? Why?**

1. Colman, Andrew M. (2003). *Game Theory and its Applications*. New York: Routledge.  [↑](#endnote-ref-1)