That's a great versus match-up—both characters are brilliant, manipulative, and mad in their own way. Let's break it down by intelligence type and achievements:

🔬 Edward Richtofen (Call of Duty: Zombies)

Strengths:

- **Scientific Genius**: Richtofen is a brilliant Nazi scientist, specializing in teleportation, mind control, Element 115 manipulation, and quantum physics.
- **Multiverse Awareness**: He's aware of and manipulates alternate timelines and dimensions.
- **Long-Term Planning**: In the later iterations of the Zombies storyline, he demonstrates extremely complex long-term planning involving alternate versions of himself and others.
- **Madness/Insanity**: His madness gives him unpredictability but doesn't undermine his intelligence—in fact, it sometimes enhances his creativity.

Achievements:

- Built and used teleporters, DG-2 weapons, and brainwashing devices.
- Manipulated events across multiple universes.
- Orchestrated complex timelines to try to "set things right" (even if his motivations were selfish or unclear).

🧠 Emperor Palpatine (Darth Sidious, Star Wars)

Strengths:

- **Political Mastermind**: Orchestrated the fall of the Galactic Republic from within as a senator and later Chancellor.
- **Force Mastery**: Unparalleled Sith knowledge, including manipulation of the Force, Sith alchemy, immortality pursuits.

- **Strategic Genius**: Manipulated both sides of a galaxy-wide war (Clone Wars), turning a republic into an empire.
- **Legacy Manipulator**: His influence lasted beyond death (e.g., contingency plans, "Operation: Cinder", resurrection in the sequel trilogy).

Achievements:

- Overthrew a republic that lasted for millennia.
- Trained multiple Sith and dark-side users, all while hiding in plain sight.
- Outmaneuvered the Jedi Order and wiped them out.
- Nearly returned from death using forbidden Sith techniques.

🧠 Verdict: Who is Smarter?

It depends on the type of intelligence you're evaluating:

Category	Winner
Scientific/Technological	Richtofen
Strategic/Political	Palpatine
Multiverse Complexity	Richtofen
Long-Term Power & Control	Palpatine
Madness-Centric Ingenuity	Richtofen
Force Philosophy/Manipulation	Palpatine

Overall Intelligence Winner: **Emperor Palpatine**, by a slight margin.

Why? While Richtofen is a scientific genius and multiverse manipulator, Palpatine controls people and entire galactic systems on a scale that's simply larger. His intelligence is strategic, manipulative, and far more sustainable over time—even beyond death. Richtofen tends to unravel or get caught in his own schemes, whereas Palpatine's plans usually work until the very end.