

IGA-677 / RusNatSecPol / Lecture 15

Barbarossa to Moscow

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Today's objectives

1. *Probe*: what explains the Soviets' great intelligence failure
2. *Consider*: how ideology affects the way states fight
(and how their enemies respond)
3. *Analyze*: whether Germany could have captured Moscow

Bigest. War. Ever.
Plan Barbarossa Meets Reality

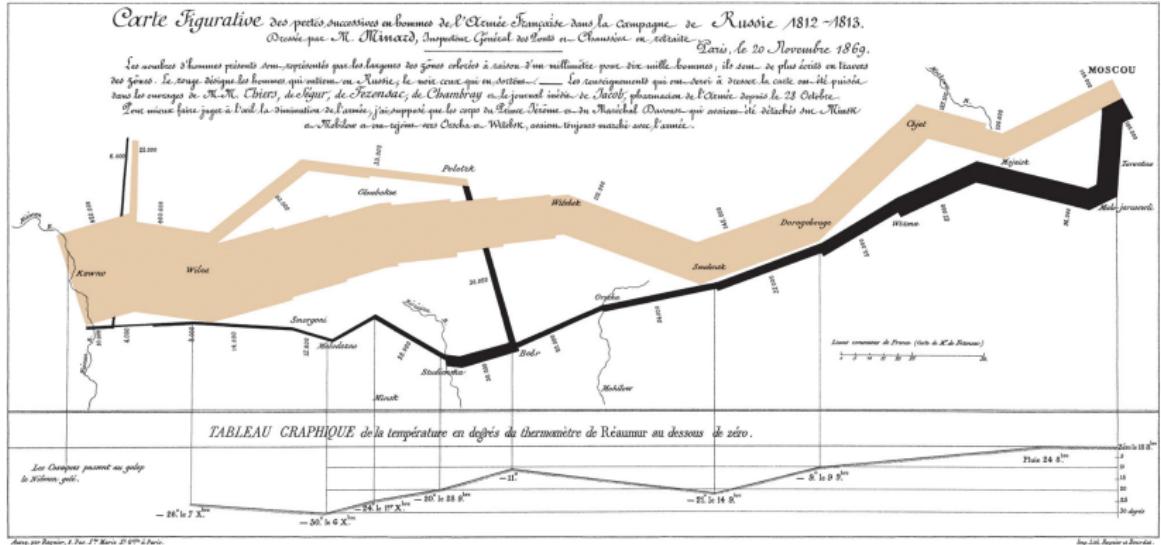


Figure 1: What is this?

Operation Barbarossa, 22 June 1941

Assumptions

1. Quick victory is possible
2. After 1941:
Victory still possible in long war



Figure 2: Into the dark

Early German successes

Balance of power	Force employment	Geography	Information	Chance
numbers	doctrine	distance	surprise	weather
replacement of losses	strategy	terrain	intelligence	timing
industry/production	training	climate	analysis	luck
logistics	officer quality	roads	communication	
natural resources	technology	fortifications		

Germans lose momentum

Balance of power	Force employment	Geography	Information	Chance
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Bigest. War. Ever.

World War II in Europe

Country	Casualties
USSR	28 million
Germany	9 million
Poland	5.8 million
France	550,000
Italy	454,000
UK	450,000
USA	214,000



Figure 3: Hard won

Great Patriotic War (Eastern Front)

1. 93% of European casualties in WWII
2. 80% of German casualties in WWII
3. 18 of 25 costliest battles of all time
4. almost every concentration camp,
Jewish ghetto

Sizing Up the Titans

Order of Battle, June 1941

Germany

1. Numbers
 - a) 3.8-4.9M troops
 - b) 3,500-4,617 tanks
 - c) 2,500-4,873 aircraft
 - d) 600,000 vehicles
2. Force structure (157 divisions)
 - a) 12 armored divisions
 - b) 6 airborne divisions
 - c) 12 mechanized divisions
 - d) 7 cavalry divisions
 - e) 120 infantry divisions
 - f) org. into 3 Army Groups:
 - North (→ Leningrad)
 - Center (→ Moscow)
 - South (→ Ukraine)

Soviet Union

1. Numbers
 - a) 2.9-3.4M troops
 - b) 13,981-15,000 tanks
 - c) 7,758-9,000 aircraft
 - d) 272,600 vehicles
2. Force structure (174 divisions)
 - a) 40 armored divisions
 - b) 12 airborne divisions
 - c) 18 mechanized divisions
 - d) 7 cavalry divisions
 - e) 97 infantry divisions
 - f) organized into 5 Fronts
 - North (Murmansk)
 - Northwest (Leningrad)
 - West (Belarus)
 - Southwest (Ukraine)
 - South (Ukraine)

Command & control

1. Germany

- a) commanding officers well trained
- b) mission-oriented command system
(*Auftragstaktik*)
- c) operational experience
- d) decentralized C2

2. Soviet Union

- a) Stalin's officer purges
- b) unstable command structure
- c) lack of command experience
- d) limited freedom of action on
battlefield
- e) centralized C2



Figure 4: Lonely at the top

Military doctrine

1. Offensive

- a) combined-arms offensive
- b) “deep battle” concept
- c) mismatch between doctrine & capability

2. Defensive

- a) political constraints on defensive planning, doctrine
- b) further complications due to border expansion
- c) Stalin Line → Molotov Line

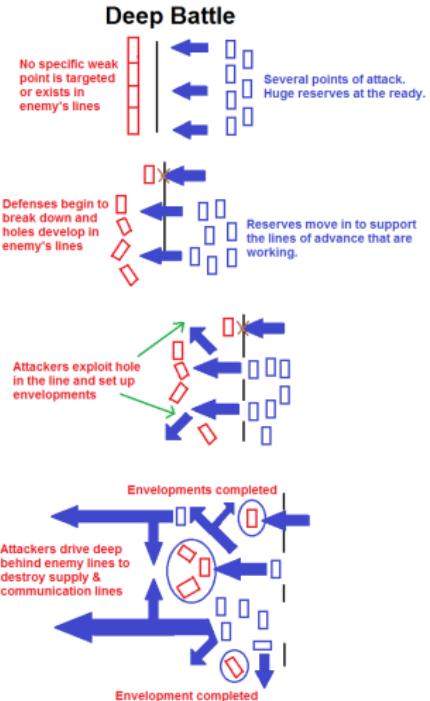


Figure 5: Deep battle

Ideology:

total war against “Judeo-Bolshevism”

Hitler to Reichstag, 30 January 1939:

*If international finance Jewry should succeed once more in plunging the peoples into a world war, then the consequences will not be the Bolshevization of the world, and therewith the victory of Jewry, but the **destruction of the Jewish race in Europe**.*



Figure 6: Dead serious

German directives to troops

1. Commissar Order
 - a) 'one cannot count on the enemy acting in accordance with principles of humanity or international law'
2. Severity Order
 - a) 'severe but just revenge on subhuman Jewry'
3. Guidelines to German Troops
 - a) 'ruthless and radical measures against Bolsheviks, agitators, guerrillas, saboteurs, Jews'
4. Hunger Plan
 - a) feed Germany by starving USSR
 - b) 'extinction of industry, good part of population in deficit regions'



Figure 7: Following orders

Information

1. Many signals
 - a) largest foreign intelligence network on planet
 - b) warnings on impending attack from Soviet agents, British intelligence, German defectors →
2. Signals missed
 - a) Soviet forces not on alert
 - b) aircraft not dispersed or camouflaged
 - c) supply dumps in vulnerable forward positions
 - d) defensive fortifications in midst of re-location

Discussion

- Why did Stalin ignore warnings of buildup?

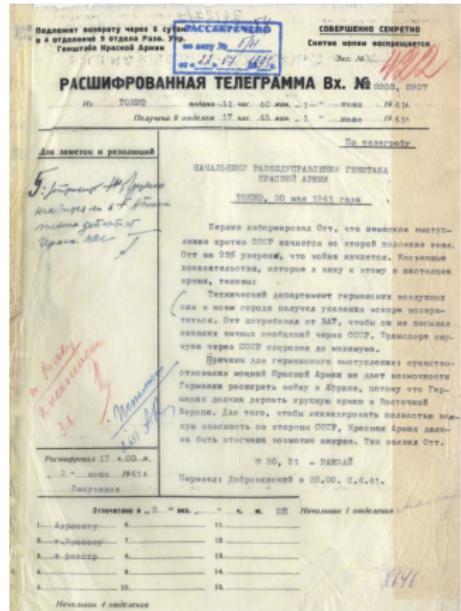


Figure 8: Ramzay/Cassandra

Bigest. Operation. Ever.

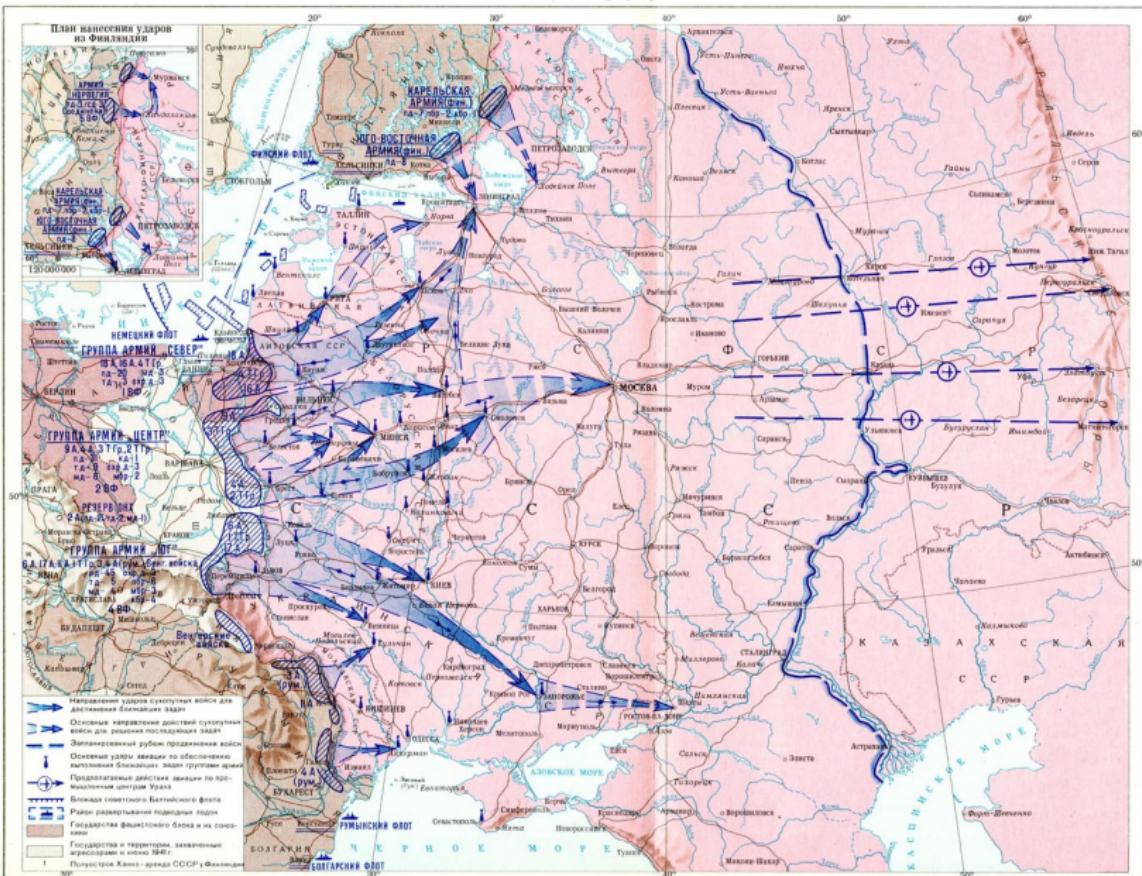
Operation Barbarossa

1. From ocean to sea
 - a) attack over broad front
(750 miles)
 - b) fan out to Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan Line (1800 miles)
 - c) territory: $2,000,000 \text{ mi}^2$
(territory of France $\times 10$)
2. Debate over objectives
 - a) destruction of Red Army ✓
 - b) seize Moscow
 - c) seize Ukraine



Figure 9: Campaign plan

Plan Barbarossa Meets Reality

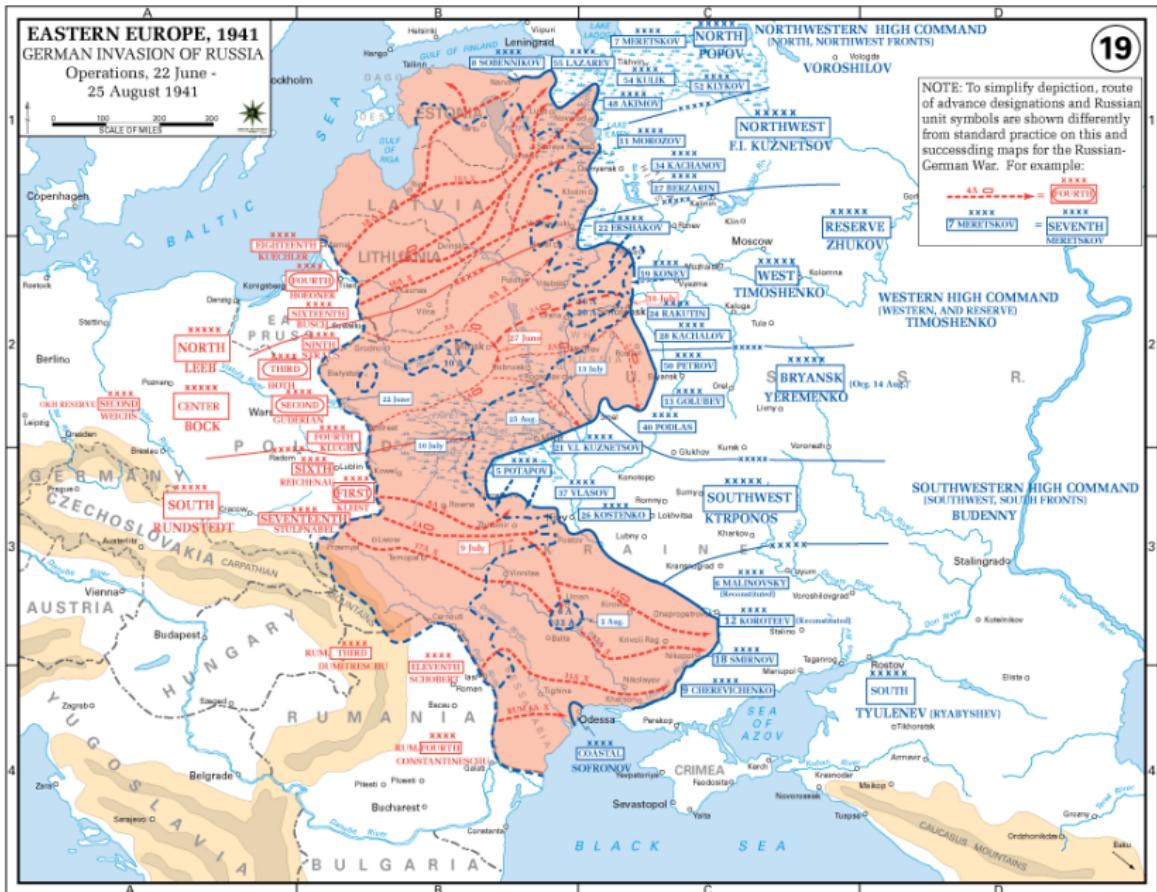


First 60 Days

Biggest. War. Ever.

First 60 Days

Advance on Moscow



Soviet responses

1. Organizational

- a) establishment of High Command (Stavka)
 - b) re-organization of ground forces
 - c) creation of NKVD 'Special Sections' to improve discipline

2. Industrial

- a) evacuation of 1,500 industrial plants to Asia



Figure 12: A giant awakens

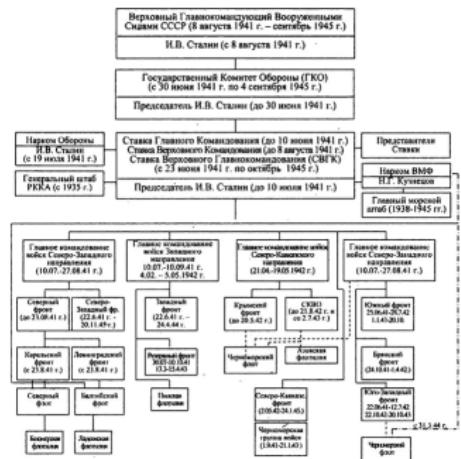


Figure 13: Stavka

German challenges

1. Logistics
 - a) frontline units outrunning supplies
 - b) underdeveloped road infrastructure
2. Behind-the-line attacks
 - a) regular ambushed by partisans, regular Soviet troops
 - b) few incentives for Soviets to surrender



Figure 14: Not yet victorious



Figure 15: Not yet defeated

Fight or fight

in which scenario would you be *least* likely to surrender to the enemy, and why?

1. Scenario 1
 - a) Geneva Conventions honored in enemy's POW camps
2. Scenario 2
 - a) Geneva Conventions do not apply in enemy's POW camps
3. Scenario 3
 - a) Geneva Conventions do not apply in enemy's POW camps
 - b) at home: 'surrender = treason'



Figure 16: Your choice

Problems of Germans' own making

1. Conditions in POW camps
 - a) high mortality
 - b) no food, medical care
 - c) human experiments
2. SS Einsatzgruppen
 - a) mass killings of civilians (esp. Jews) behind German lines
3. Reprisals for partisan attacks
 - a) thousands of villages burned to ground
 - b) public executions

→ strong incentives *against* civilians' cooperation & Soviet soldiers' surrender



Figure 17: POW camp



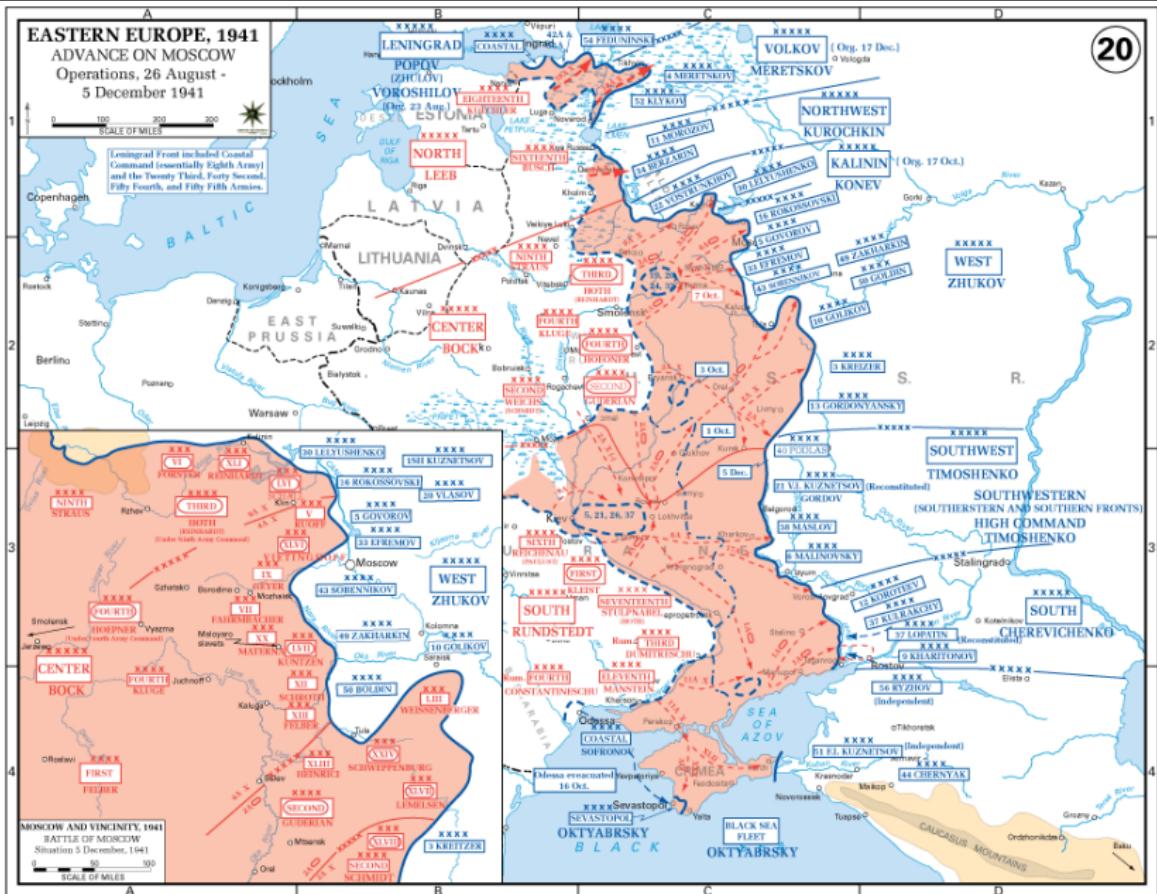
Figure 18: Einsatzgruppe

Advance on Moscow

Bigest. War. Ever.
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First 60 Days
Advance on Moscow

20



More German challenges

1. Mobility

- a) forests, swamps, wooded steppe
- b) limited roads
- c) heavy rains in fall
- d) snow & frost in November
- e) no winter clothing
- f) no antifreeze

2. Soviet defenses

- a) civilians help dig fortifications
- b) reserves arrive from Siberia
- c) Zhukov takes over defense of city,
launches major counter-offensive



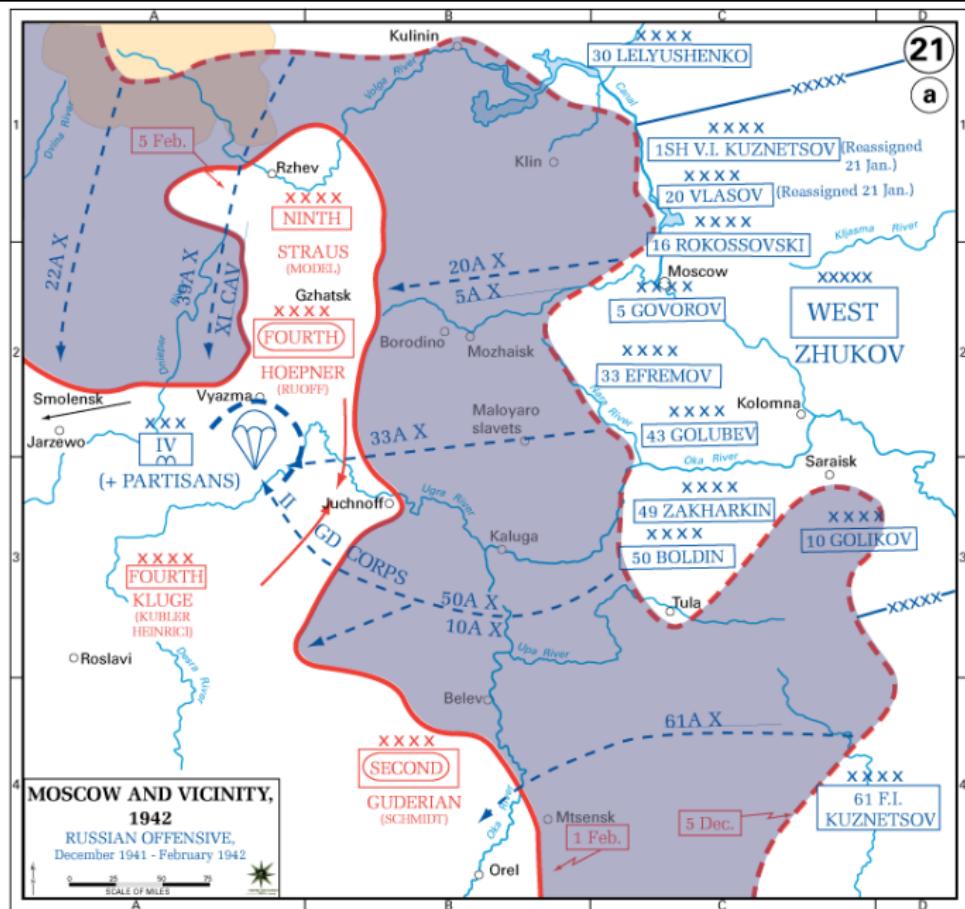
Figure 20: Rasputitsa



Figure 21: All hands on deck

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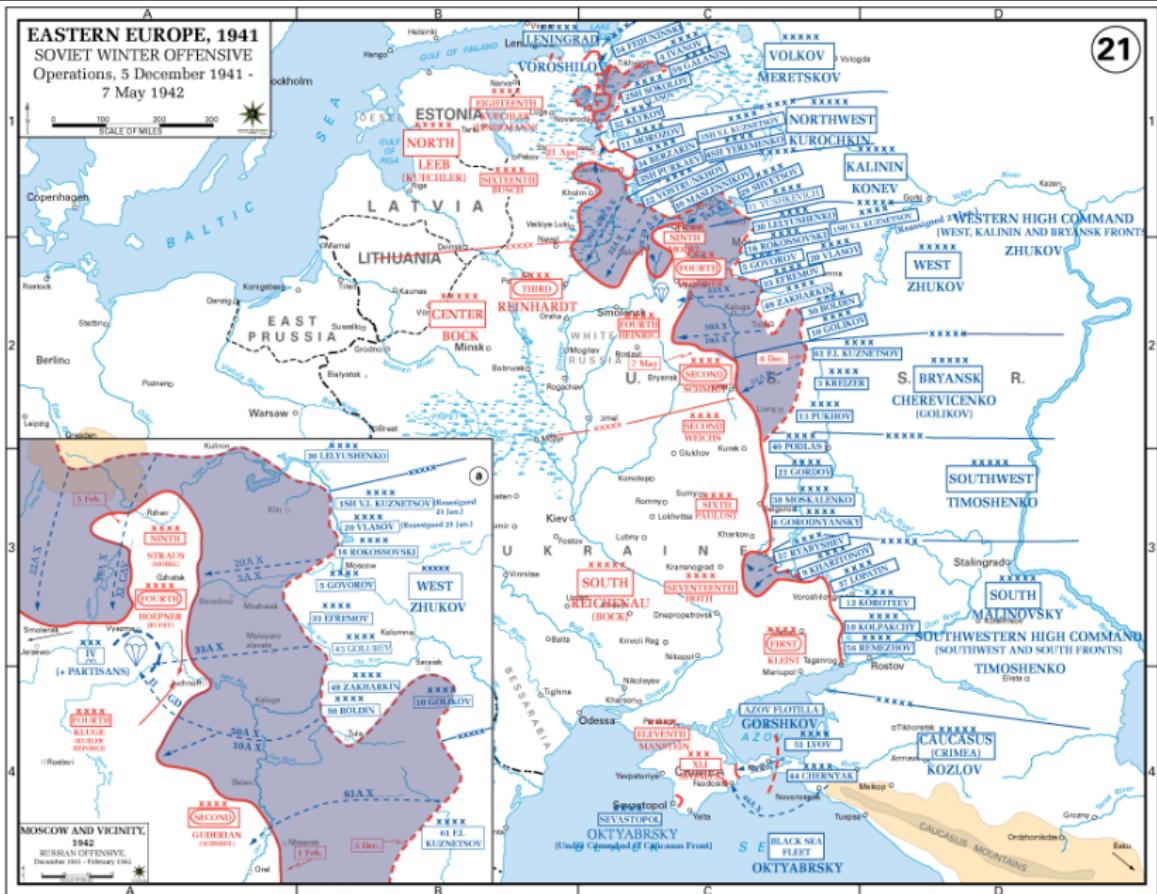
First 60 Days Advance on Moscow



Biggest. War. Ever.
Plan Barbarossa Meets Reality

First 60 Days Advance on Moscow

21



Costs of Barbarossa

1. Killed, wounded, captured
 - a) Germany: 790,000 - 803,000
 - b) USSR: 3,500,000 - 5,000,000
 - c) 4:1 - 6:1 loss-exchange ratio
2. but...
 - a) Red Army not destroyed
 - b) Moscow not seized
 - c) long war not avoided



Figure 24: So close, yet so far

Discussion: Could the Germans have taken Moscow?

Scenarios

1. *Launch offensive in May*, assuming:
 - a) no Greece invasion by Italy
 - b) rainy spring would not slow advance
2. *Not divert Panzer groups from AG Center in August*, assuming:
 - a) Hitler's orders would be countermanded
 - b) no Soviet reserves
 - c) supply difficulties can be overcome
 - d) autumn rains would not slow advance

How realistic are these scenarios?

NEXT MEETING

USSR at War: Stalingrad to Berlin (Th, Oct. 26)

- was Hitler's "southern strategy" fatally flawed?
- was Germany's defeat at Stalingrad avoidable?
- what are Stalingrad's lessons for urban warfare?