

AD-A279 709



1

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R. I.

BARBAROSSA: PLANNING FOR OPERATIONAL FAILURE

by

JOHN D. SNIVELY  
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy

**S** DTIC  
ELECTE  
MAY 23 1994  
**G** **D**

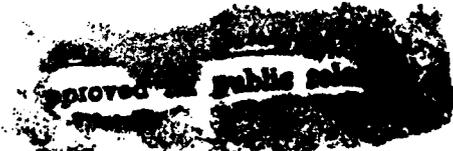
A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

*John D. Snively*

8 March 1994

Paper directed by  
H. Ward Clark  
Captain, U.S. Navy  
Chairman, Department of Military Operations



*Milan Vego* 8 Feb 94  
Milan Vego Date  
Professor, Operations Department  
Faculty Research Advisor

94-15354



DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 1

94 5 20 130

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE~~

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED		1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS			
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY		3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT			
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE		DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.			
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) C	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) NAVAL WAR COLLEGE NEWPORT, RI 02841		7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS			
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO	PROJECT NO	TASK NO	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) BARBAROSSA: PLANNING FOR OPERATIONAL FAILURE (U)					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JOHN D. SNIVELY					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT FINAL		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____	14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1994 FEB 28		15. PAGE COUNT 35
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	Operation Barbarossa; World War II		
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) The German planning process for the 1941 invasion of Soviet Russia is analyzed through the presentation of the major plans developed from 1940 until June 1941. The final plan is then critiqued within the context of the applicable principles of war. A set of conclusions is presented which argues that the planning process was faulty due to a number of assumptions which were generally held by the officers who were involved in the process.					
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION unclassified		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL CHAIRMAN, OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT		22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (401) 841-3414		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL C	

DD Form 1473, JUN 86

Previous editions are obsolete.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

S/N 0102-LF-014-6603

Abstract of  
BARBAROSSA: PLANNING FOR OPERATIONAL FAILURE

The German planning process for the 1941 invasion of Soviet Russia is analyzed through the presentation of the major plans developed from July 1940 until June 1941. The final plan is then critiqued within the context of the applicable Principles of War. The planning process was characterized by significant disagreements between Hitler, the German High Command and the Army High Command. The major points of contention relate to the selection of primary objectives and force deployment patterns. A set of conclusions is presented which argues that the planning process was faulty due to a number of assumptions which were generally held by the officers who were involved in the process.

Accession For	
NTIS CRA&I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unannounced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Justification .....	
By .....	
Distribution /	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	

## PREFACE

It is essential for students of operational art to examine the planning process of Operation Barbarossa. The lessons involved have not lost their relevancy through the years. Although the literature varies on why the Germans failed to achieve their goals, there is a general consensus regarding the incorrect assumptions held by the planners as they progressed through the process.

The reader should be aware that not all of the Principles of War are discussed during the critique portion of the study. Only the most relevant principles are discussed in order to provide proper analysis. The campaign planners utilized a number of these principles to their benefit, and others they chose to ignore (or so it seems).

It should also be pointed out that scholars disagree on the exact personal interactions which took place during the planning and execution phases of the campaign. It is at times difficult to ascertain how much influence a particular actor had upon Hitler during the process. There is also disagreement on the motives which resulted in Hitler deciding to carry out the invasion. Explanations include racism and economic motivations. Whatever the reasons were, the decision to invade Soviet Russia in 1941, initiated a sequence of events which finally resulted in the destruction of the Third Reich.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
ABSTRACT .....	ii
PREFACE .....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES IN APPENDIX I .....	v
I INTRODUCTION .....	1
II HITLER'S STRATEGIC CHOICES .....	3
III PLANNING THE BARBAROSSA CAMPAIGN .....	6
The Marcks' Plan .....	8
The Lossberg Study .....	9
The Paulus Study .....	10
The Halder Plan .....	11
Order 21: Directive Barbarossa .....	12
The Final Plan .....	13
IV BARBAROSSA, REALITY, AND PRINCIPLES OF WAR .....	16
V CONCLUSIONS: FALSE ASSUMPTIONS .....	22
APPENDIX I--FIGURES .....	25
VI ENDNOTES .....	32
VII BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	34

LIST OF FIGURES IN APPENDIX I

FIGURE		PAGE
1	GERMAN COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS .....	26
2	THE MARCKS' PLAN .....	27
3	THE LOSSBERG STUDY .....	28
4	THE HALDER PLAN .....	29
5	DIRECTIVE BARBAROSSA .....	30
6	THE EXECUTION OF BARBAROSSA .....	31

# BARBAROSSA: PLANNING FOR OPERATIONAL FAILURE

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union was a military undertaking of immense proportions. Perhaps the greatest assembly of men, machines and supplies for a singular purpose that the world had ever seen. The elaborate and detailed planning process, which was required for such a massive operation, was characterized by both intense military and diplomatic maneuvers.

While there can be no question that Hitler was aware of the historical dangers of involving Germany in a two front war, his confidence of certain victory against the Soviets is well documented: "We have only to kick in the front door," he once exclaimed, "and the whole rotten Russian edifice will come tumbling down!" <1> Hitler's confidence was based upon a number of observations and perceptions. The German army had experienced spectacular successes against Poland and France. Blitzkrieg warfare had proven to be effective in each instance, and there was no reason to doubt that an offensive against Soviet Russia would not yield the same results.

In addition, Hitler took into account the purges of the Soviet military leadership during the late 1930s, and the poor performance of Russian troops during their war with Finland from 1939-1940. These factors,

when combined with the exceedingly poor German net assessment of Soviet strength and fighting capability, led Hitler to believe that success could most certainly be accomplished in a short time. It was under these perceived circumstances, that Hitler directed the planning for the invasion of Soviet Russia in the summer of 1940.

The purpose of this study is to examine the planning phases of Operation Barbarossa from July 1940 until the campaign was begun in June 1941. The planning process will then be analyzed within the framework of a number of the Principles of War. A set of conclusions will then be presented which will emphasize the reasons for the failure of the planning process.

*In a general sense, it can be maintained that the failure of this campaign was the result of the misapplication of operational art during the planning phase, and later during the execution phase of the campaign. Barbarossa is also the story of conflict, disagreement and struggles for power inside the military leadership circles of the Third Reich. It is important to understand that the option to invade Soviet Russia was not the only one available to Hitler during 1940. The strategic background, and a brief discussion of these options shall first be presented.*

## CHAPTER II

### HITLER'S STRATEGIC CHOICES

By the summer of 1940, Nazi Germany was clearly in a dominant position vis a vis the European continent. Hitler and his military had enjoyed overwhelming victory in every conflict: "No conqueror since Napoleon had enjoyed similar hegemony in Europe" <2> Despite the successes however, Hitler had been unable to force Great Britain to capitulate. Although all three German services had been deeply involved in the planning for the land invasion of Great Britain (codenamed SEALION), Hitler had lost interest in the actual execution of this plan by December of 1940. While scholars differ on Hitler's reasoning for this decision, there is no question that his attention was turning toward Soviet Russia as early as the summer of 1940.

During July of 1940, Hitler informed his generals of his intentions regarding the Soviets. According to General Halder's war diary of 22 July 1940, Hitler's intention was: "...the defeat of the Russian Army, or the capture of at least as much Russian territory as necessary to prevent enemy attacks against Berlin and the Silesian industrial areas." <3> At that point in time however, and taking into account the strategic situation, an invasion of Soviet Russia was not the only option available to the Fuhrer.

A strategic alternative was presented to Hitler by Grand Admiral Erich Raeder in September of 1940. Raeder was concerned that Britain, supported by America and the Free French, would attack Italy from positions in North Africa. Germany's top priority therefore should be the sealing of the Mediterranean. This could be accomplished by the seizure of Gibraltar and Suez, a relatively simple operation. In order to accomplish this however, Hitler needed the cooperation of the Spanish dictator General Francisco Franco. Despite face to face meetings and the offer of territory in exchange for Spanish assistance, Franco refused to cooperate with Hitler. <4>

Franco maintained that Spain was too weak from the effects of civil war, and therefore ill-prepared to enter an armed struggle against Britain. As a result, the operation (codenamed FELIX), was postponed indefinitely in December of 1940. While some may argue that Raeder's recommendations were somewhat parochial in the sense that he was looking for future employment for the German Navy, his vision of the future proved to be all too accurate.

Another series of events began in the fall of 1940 which forced Hitler to make some strategic choices and in some ways, may have caused delays in the execution of Barbarossa. In September of 1940 Mussolini invaded Egypt from Libya. A short time later in October, the Italians also invaded

Greece. Neither campaign went well, and by November Hitler was trying to decide whether to assist Mussolini in North Africa or in Greece. <5>

The result was that Hitler decided to assist Mussolini by invading Greece. In addition, Germany entered into a number of operations in the Balkans and Crete which continued through the spring of 1941 which included units that were required for Barbarossa. Although there is evidence that these operations may have delayed the final deployment of units in preparation for the upcoming Russian campaign, the German leadership did not seem exceedingly concerned. The expectation was for a rapid military success against Soviet Russia.

The aforementioned circumstances provide a brief background regarding the major events which took place during the planning process for Barbarossa. Hitler most certainly had a variety of strategic choices available to him. Although he opted to become involved in Greece and Crete, there is no doubt that his top priority during this time was the planning and execution of the plan to destroy Soviet Russia. The planning process for Operation Barbarossa shall now be discussed.

## CHAPTER III

### PLANNING THE BARBAROSSA CAMPAIGN

Much has been written on the subject of Hitler's rationale for directing the planning and execution of the invasion of Soviet Russia. Some scholars maintain that Hitler's intentions were clear in his mind long before the conclusion of the non-aggression pact which was signed by the two governments in August of 1939. Hitler believed that the development of communism was simply another facet of the worldwide Jewish conspiracy. Therefore communism must be crushed in order to ensure the survival of the Third Reich. Additionally, Hitler was convinced that the resources which were within Soviet territory would be required to support the growing German population. It has also been said of Hitler that he believed that nations should behave like animals in a jungle: the strong should subjugate the weak. <6>

Whatever the thought process, on July 21, 1940 Hitler directed Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch (Commander-in-Chief of the Army) to develop a plan for the invasion of Soviet Russia to begin in the fall of that year. The staff was able to dissuade Hitler regarding that time frame, and then began to plan for an invasion which would take place during 1941. On 29 July, Halder informed Major General Erich Marcks, Chief of Staff of the Eighteenth Army in East Prussia, that he had been selected to provide a plan for an eastern campaign. This plan was to be completed without

reliance on any department of the Army General Staff (in order for Halder to maintain control) <7>. Thus the process was begun in earnest.

Throughout the entire Barbarossa planning process, three major assumptions/problems characterized, and undermined German attempts to create a fundamentally campaign plan. The first problem was that the German planners were basically unfamiliar with the terrain in which they would be fighting. While major features such as the Pripyat Marshes were dealt with, the general time/space scenario as it would relate to blitzkrieg was not properly considered.

This problem can be related to the second which is a general assumption maintained by most of the German military leadership. Due to the Nazis' inherent belief in their military superiority, and dismally inadequate intelligence regarding Soviet military capabilities, the leadership assumed the war would be short and decisive. After all however, success breeds confidence.

These two phenomena were further complicated by the relationship between the OKW (German High Command), and the OKH (Army General Staff). While it has been well documented that there was a rivalry between these two organizations, this explanation is too simplistic regarding the planning process for Barbarossa (see Figure 1 for a diagram of command relationships). In a sense, the planning (and execution) of this campaign is a composite story of egos in conflict, characterized by power

plays which resulted in a compromise plan.

### THE MARCK'S PLAN

As the planning process continued, General Marcks presented his concept of operations on 5 August 1940 (see Figure 2). Although sources vary on the subject, it can be assumed, that Marcks made Moscow the primary objective (with Halder's approval) of a two pronged operation. This plan divided German forces into two operational theaters, one north of the Pripyat Marshes and one to the south. The northern wing would strike toward Moscow through White Russia, while the southern would take Kiev, cross the Dnepr and then turn to the northeast to protect the northern wing's southern flank if required. <8> It should be noted here, that the protection of both flanks of the White Russia operational axis group would become an imperative issue as the process advanced.

The Marcks' plan contained several characteristics which were to seen again. First, the emphasis on Moscow was a principle which Halder would maintain well into the initial execution phase. Second; the plan took for granted the optimism for a relatively quick victory which was shared by the majority of the German military leadership. Finally, the 170 or so anticipated combat ready divisions of the Red Army would accept battle west of the Dnepr River, thereby ensuring their vulnerability to blitzkrieg warfare . The entire operation would require only "9 to 17 weeks." <9>

## THE LOSSBERG STUDY

During this time, General Alfred Jodl, the OKW Operations officer and his staff were actively involved in the planning process as well. The initial product which they produced became known as the "Lossberg Study." This study differed from the OKH plan in several areas. One primary difference was the requirement for three army groups vice the two envisioned by the Marcks plan. The plan allowed for the development of three operational axis into Soviet Russia, with Army Group Center being the strongest. In addition, the German armies would utilize Finland as a "jumping off" point for Army Group North (see Figure 3). This plan also required the formation of Army Group South, to ensure the protection (as had the Marck's plan) of the Rumanian oil fields. <10>

Another vital characteristic included the execution of a double envelopment maneuver by Army Group South between the Black Sea and the Pripyat Marshes. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the study included a turn north by the Army Group Center upon reaching Smolensk in order to prevent the withdrawal of the Red Army to the east. This turn would also have included an operational pause to replenish the army. <11>

Although Hitler never saw the Lossberg plan, there are indications that he may have been influenced by it through Hermann Goering (Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe). Goering had previously commissioned a report in November of 1940 from the OKW Economic and Armaments Section. This

report (the Harding Report), advocated a rapid occupation of the Ukraine for economic reasons. The Lossberg plan, in conjunction with the Harding Report, may have motivated Goering to dissuade Hitler regarding the status of Moscow as the primary objective of the invasion. <12> In a general sense, two approaches to the problem had taken shape: Halder and the OKH approach that Moscow, as the command and control center of Soviet Russia, should be the primary objective, and the OKW (and Hitler) approach which stressed economic factors and the protection of Army Group Center's flanks as the primary concerns. It should be noted here that scholars vary on the personal interactions and influences upon Hitler which resulted in the final decision.

#### THE PAULUS STUDY

In September of 1940 Major General Friedrich Paulus was appointed as Head Quartermaster I of the Army General Staff. His first tasking by Halder was to conduct a study of the Soviet problem independent of the Greiffenberg-Feyerabend (an earlier OKH study), and the Marcks' plan. The Paulus plan (and subsequent wargames conducted in December) brought several issues to the forefront. The initial thrusts should be conducted to the Dneper-Smolensk-Leningrad line. At that point, an operational pause was required in order to determine the status of the supply situation, and then to subsequently replenish the armies. <13>

Paulus was also deeply concerned about the prospect of the Red Army retreating further into Russia and thereby severely complicating the Nazi time-space problem. Wargames conducted in December reinforced concerns about logistic lines, but they also demonstrated that the available German forces would be barely able to meet the operational objectives. Indeed, one game demonstrated that the army would arrive at the gates of Moscow depleted of reserves, and in addition, resupply would be almost impossible. Therefore in December 1940, it had been demonstrated that time and space would exact a frightening toll. <14>

#### THE HALDER PLAN

Halder presented his plan to Hitler on 5 December, prior to the completion of Paulus' wargaming sequence. This conference was to prove decisive. Halder proposed the deployment of three army groups, two north of the Pripyat Marshes and one to the south. The operational goals of these groups were to be Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev (see Figure 4). The final objective of the operation encompassed a line drawn from the Volga to Archangel. Total order of battle requirements would be "a force of 105 infantry and 32 armored and mobile divisions, with two armies held in reserve for the beginning phase." <15>

In a general sense, Hitler agreed with the basic plan, but emphasized his concern for the protection of the Central Army Group's flanks. This

approach relegated Moscow to a secondary strategic objective. Hitler fully agreed however with the utilization of penetrating armoured spearheads and envelopment maneuvers in order to destroy the Red Army. The overall belief in German military superiority was never in question.

#### ORDER 21: DIRECTIVE BARBAROSSA

On 18 December 1940, Hitler issued Order 21 (Directive Barbarossa). Some scholars have termed Hitler's plan a compromise between the OKW and the OKH (see Figure 5). Hitler maintained his concern for protection of the flanks in this directive by stating that after the Red Army forces were crushed in White Russia, that Army Group Center would turn north (Lossberg plan), in order to clear the Baltic area and occupy Leningrad. Only after these objectives were secured, or in the event of a massive Soviet military collapse, was the thrust to continue to Moscow. <16>

The respective missions of the Luftwaffe and the Navy were also discussed in this directive. The Luftwaffe was to gain air superiority and to provide close air support for the ground forces. The Navy was directed to seal off the Baltic Sea in order to prevent the Soviet Navy from escaping. Hitler thought that once Leningrad was taken, the Soviet Navy would be rendered ineffective due to the lack of a logistical base. <17>

Hitler also directed that in order to ensure the security of the

campaign, that the only officers to be informed of this directive, had an absolute need to know. Security was imperative in order to maintain the element of surprise, and in order to allow Hitler the option of canceling Barbarossa if he so desired. Officers engaged in planning the details of the campaign were to report their progress through the OKW. <18>

In summary then, Directive 21 was a compromise regarding objectives more than any other issue. In the north, Leningrad must be taken prior to any efforts being made towards Moscow, and Army Group Center would provide whatever assistance was required in order to ensure the fall of Leningrad. In the south, Kiev and the economically significant Donets Basin were the primary objectives. The most important objective however, was the destruction of the Red Army, west of the Dnepr River. The final plan will now be examined.

#### THE FINAL PLAN

Although the general structure of the plan did not change much between December 1940, and the actual execution in June 1941, the German command structure was made aware through intelligence, that the Red Army was building up its forces south of the Pripyat Marshes. Despite these reports, Hitler did not change his mind regarding deployment of forces, and therefore Army Group Center, located north of the marshes was the most powerful. <19>

The German Order of Battle for the final plan did divide the forces into three separate groups. The smallest was Army Group north under the command of Field Marshal Wilhelm von Leeb. This group consisted of twenty nine divisions which included one panzer group (eight divisions). The primary objectives included absolute control of the Baltic States and the seizure of Leningrad.

Army Group Center, commanded by Field Marshal Fedor von Bock, was the strongest of the three forces and consisted of fifty divisions and included two panzer groups (twenty six divisions). This group was to break through the Soviet lines in a drive towards Smolensk, and then swing north, if required, to assist Army Group North in the seizure of their objectives. <20>

Army Group South, under the command of Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, consisted of forty one divisions and one panzer group (fourteen divisions). This army group was to proceed through Kiev, to a bend in the lower Dnepr, and await further orders. <21> All three groups were directed to breakthrough and destroy the opposing Red Army units, thus precluding their retreat to the east.

In all Nazi Germany committed 3,050,000 men (including reserves) to this campaign. Although this was only fifteen more divisions (150 vice 135) than Hitler had utilized in the assault on France, the deployment and

execution plan for Barbarossa encompassed an area twenty times larger than the French campaign. <22> Due to the size and depth of the battlefield, victory must be achieved early in order to preclude extensive supply and reinforcement problems.

Although Barbarossa was delayed by about six weeks due to the Balkan operations, German forces were in position by the middle of June 1940. The planning process had lasted almost one year, and a myriad of views and ideas had been presented. The underlying assumption of German military superiority however, was never doubted by the planners. The Soviets were weak, and victory was simply a matter of fundamental execution. A critique of the planning process within the context of the relevant Principles of War shall now be presented.

## CHAPTER IV

### BARBAROSSA, REALITY AND PRICIPLES OF WAR

"No plan of operations can be projected with confidence much beyond the first encounter with the enemy's main force..." FM 100-5 U. S. A.

What military condition did Germany need to produce in this conflict to achieve its strategic goals? This question immediately brings to mind the need for clear objectives and a visualization of Soviet centers of gravity. The question of OBJECTIVE is most certainly one of the major problems which contributed to the defeat of Germany. From the beginning of the planning phase, and well into the execution phase, the campaign was characterized by a lack of agreement in this area.

What was the decisive center of gravity; Leningrad, the Ukraine, the Red Army, the Soviet people or Moscow itself? What objective would result in the surrender of Soviet Russia? Even Hitler himself changed his mind several times during the execution phase. In August 1941, Hitler directed the panzer groups from Army Group Center to turn south and assist the southern group in the Ukraine (the plan called for a turn to the north). Additionally, he directed an all out advance on Moscow in October (codenamed TYPHOON), which failed just outside the city in December.

<23> The lack of clear objectives resulted in an incoherent and ineffective campaign strategy.

Another problem which severely hampered German ability to conduct a successful campaign was the obvious lack of UNITY OF COMMAND. Grand Admiral Raeder was convinced that Germany should concentrate on the Mediterranean area instead of Russia. <24> When the decision was made to invade Russia, the leadership within the OKW and the OKH disagreed on many issues. This phenomena resulted in unclear decisions regarding the proper sequence of required actions in order to achieve their strategic goals. Many scholars have maintained that this "personal agenda leadership style," resulted in some generals withholding vital information from Hitler during the decision process.

Another related problem deals with the principle of SIMPLICITY. The deployment of three army groups resulted in the creation of three distinct operational axes. Although this in itself may not be a problem, it created immense difficulties. A major problem was that of synchronization. How fast should one army group advance vis a vis the other two? Additionally, it was inherently difficult to plan for phasing, the next phase of the campaign depended upon the progress of each individual army group. Indeed, as discussed above in the final plan, after Army Group South reached the Dnepr River, its next phase depended upon the progress of the other two groups.

Synchronization and phasing are also related to another question. How

effective were the Germans in allocating their forces vis a vis the enemy in order to achieve their strategic goals? The answer here goes back to early in the planning process and is related to ECONOMY OF FORCE issues. As we have seen, the deployment of three army groups resulted in complex coordination problems. The German planners were never able to properly analyze the Pripyat Marsh problem. Even early plans divided the forces into at least two groups. As the process matured, the indecision regarding objectives made the issue more complex.

The United States Army defines economy of force as the capability to: "Employ all combat power available in the most effective way possible; allocate minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts." <25> The problem here is that the Germans planned for too many primary objectives. As the operation progressed, Hitler found himself peeling off panzer groups to assist other army groups. It seems that he wanted to go everywhere at once. This problem was further complicated by the fact that by the summer of 1941, Germany was unable to properly replenish its divisions due to low reserves and a high attrition rate.

Despite the historical failure of the campaign, the planners did utilize a number of the principles in an effective manner. The initial portion of the execution phase did result in some spectacular successes for Germany. Some of this success can be directly attributed to German efforts to

ensure operational SURPRISE. The reason for this may have been that Stalin chose to ignore the intelligence reports which were available to him. The Soviet leader may have not believed that Hitler would actually attack him until after the commencement of the campaign. Most assuredly, the Soviets were not expecting a three pronged campaign which included such a massive amount of firepower.

Another key to early German success was their ability to maintain OFFENSIVE action immediately from the onset of the campaign. The United States Army maintains that: "Offensive action is the most effective and decisive way to attain a clearly defined common objective."<26> Although the Germans were certainly on the offensive during the opening phases of the campaign, their failure to maintain a focus on a clear objective, finally depleted their offensive capability in December 1941.

The German leadership placed much confidence in their ability to conduct MANEUVER warfare against the Russians. There is no question that they were the masters of this type of warfare during this time. Lessons learned from Poland and France resulted in a finely tuned capability. German confidence appeared well placed early on. The utilization of maneuver warfare certainly resulted in decisive breakthroughs and envelopements during the summer and fall of 1941. The problem was however, as discussed earlier, that the German forces were conducting

maneuver in an area which was twenty times larger than the French battlefield. In this respect, the time/space problem negated maneuver effectiveness.

The above discussion of the German use of some of the relevant Principles of War discloses several issues. First, the lack of unity of command in conjunction with unclear objectives, resulted in an ineffectual campaign plan. As Barbarossa developed over the summer and fall of 1941, these shortcomings became obvious and resulted in a series of reevaluations which resulted in a revision of the initial plan (see Figure 6 for a graphic presentation of the campaign from June to December 1941).

While the revision of an extensive plan such as Barbarossa is not necessarily improper, the "Hitler factor" should be considered. As the campaign progressed, he became more and more involved in the daily planning process. This resulted in frustration on the part of his generals, and added a considerable amount of confusion to the process. The result was stagnation by December of 1941, and complete defeat by 1945.

On the other hand, the Germans planned for and utilized some of the principles such as surprise and maneuver very successfully. They were tactically superior to the Red Army and had better leadership. In other areas however, such as supply and their reserve capability however, they were at a distinct disadvantage. If it can be argued that the Germans did

plan for and execute many portions of the campaign in a successful manner, than why were they stopped at the gates of the Moscow? One of the most accepted answers is of course, the time/space problem: Too much territory with not enough forces. But it is more complex than that. A set of conclusions based upon German assumptions which were deeply ingrained prior to the planning process shall now be presented.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS: FALSE ASSUMPTIONS

Previously, the campaign planning process and a critique of the plan utilizing the relevant Principles of War have been discussed. This leads to another question regarding Barbarossa: What factors, not considered by the planners, contributed to the failure of the campaign? It is not so much that some mysterious factors were not considered by the planners, but that a number of factors were considered to be irrelevant at the time.

By the time Barbarossa was executed, Hitler had not mobilized the German economy for total war. Although he may have wanted to minimize the impact of the war upon the general population, the results of this mistake are obvious in the negative impact upon material replacement during the campaign. There is however, a different explanation. It was assumed throughout the planning process that the campaign would be favorably resolved within a relatively short period of time. This assumption can be labeled the "overconfidence factor."

This widely held assumption was the result of earlier blitzkrieg success, and poor intelligence gathering on the part of the Germans. It was compounded by the poor performance of the Red Army during their war with Finland and observation of the Soviet military purges which were directed by Stalin. This belief in the prospects for a quick victory resulted

in the following problems for Germany:

- A. Lack of sufficient logistical and reserve/replacement planning (i.e. the Paulus study).
- B. The belief that the Red Army could be crushed west of the Dnepr River.
- C. The insufficient outfitting of the German Army to fight a winter campaign.
- D. An underestimation regarding the spirit of the Russian population to resist (i.e. the partisan problem).

Another assumption made by the leadership regarded the objective situation. Halder and his supporters were absolutely dogmatic in the belief that Moscow was the key to a Soviet collapse. Hitler and some members of the OKW were just as determined in their belief that Leningrad and the protection of Army Group Center's flanks provided the key to victory. These assumptions created an unclear strategy from the beginning. It could also be argued that these assumptions regarding the Soviet center of gravity were simply outgrowths from the overconfidence factor. After all, the campaign would be short as a result of the quality of the opposition.

This assumption of superiority also resulted in the neglect of several other phenomena which affected the outcome of the campaign. First, Barbarossa was delayed six weeks to operations in the Balkans; Second, the time/space problem was considered, but due to German expertise in

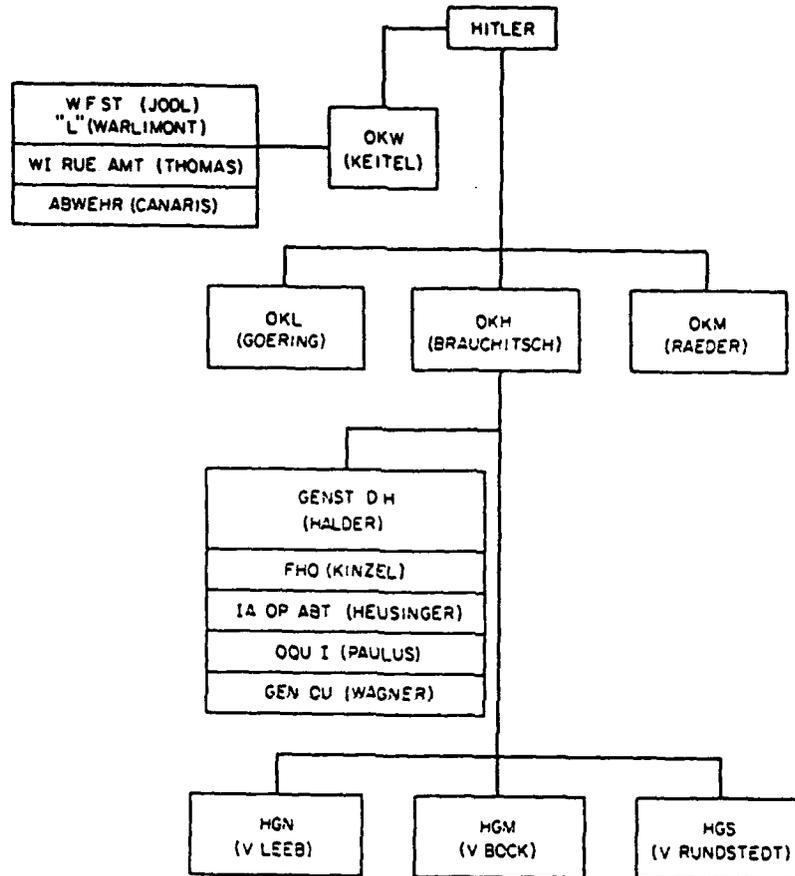
the area of maneuver warfare, it was not considered to be the dominant variable. Last, although Hitler was aware of Napoleon's mistakes, he expected the campaign to be completed prior to the beginning of winter.

In summary, it was not the plans which were defective, but the ASSUMPTIONS which were maintained by the planners which resulted in the failure of the process. Most certainly there were other factors such as disunity among the command organizations, but German beliefs about themselves and their enemy were the primary factors which resulted in their demise. This is an extraordinary example of how inherent beliefs and assumptions can affect the thought processes of military planners. A close look at the major plans which were discussed earlier, reveals that although objectives and force deployment projections differed, the underlying assumptions remained similar. Therefore it can be concluded that the misapplication of the Principles of War, was directly related to the maintenance of faulty assumptions. In this instance we are afforded the luxury of historical analysis. It is imperative for future planners to clear their minds of inherent prejudices and attitudes while they go about their task.

APPENDIX I: FIGURES

FIGURE 1

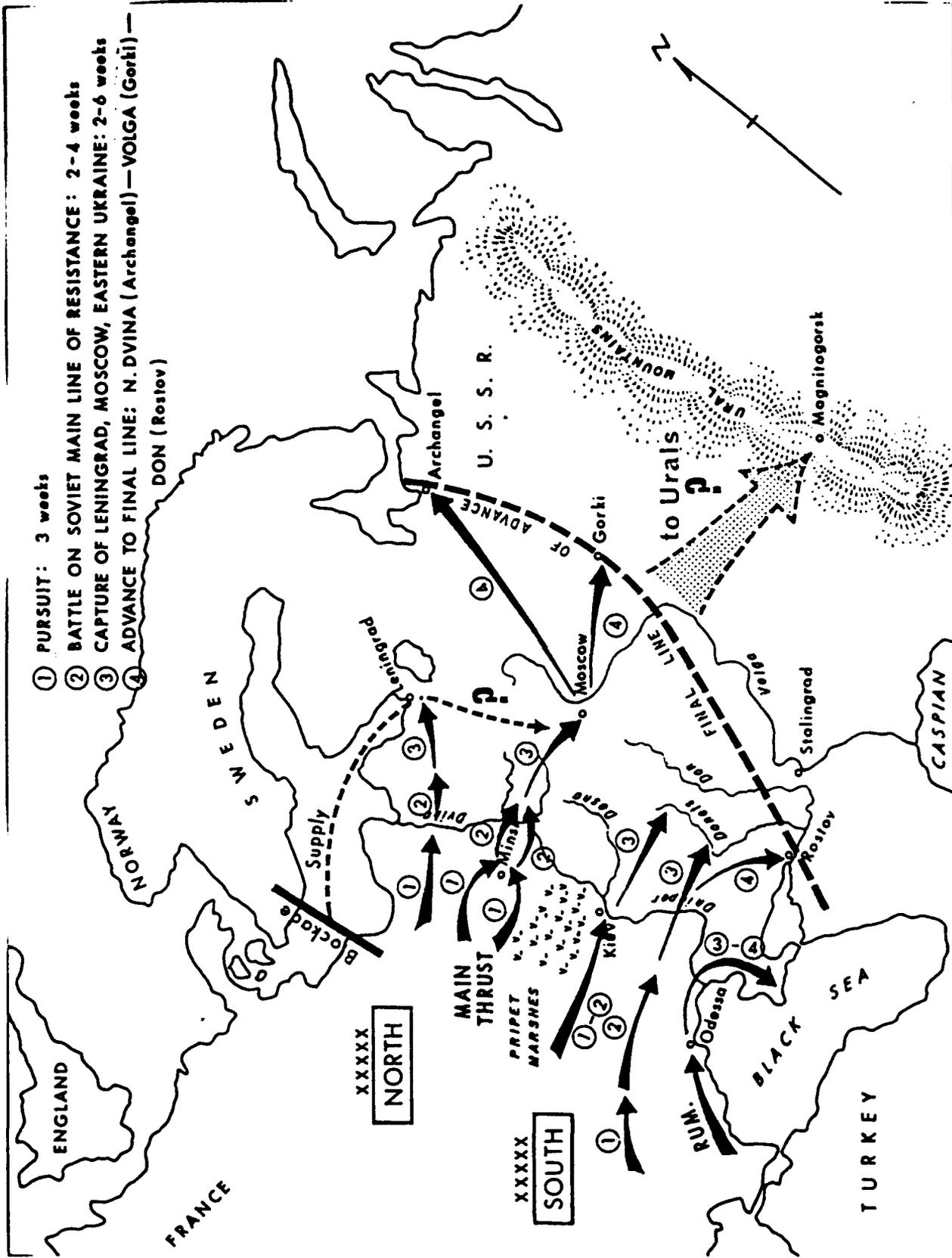
GERMAN COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS



- LEGEND
- ABWEHR = OKW INTELLIGENCE/COUNTER INTELLIGENCE
  - FHO = GENERAL STAFF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT
  - GEN QU = QUARTERMASTER GENERAL
  - GENST D H. = GENERAL STAFF OF THE ARMY
  - HGM = ARMY GROUP CENTER
  - HGN = ARMY GROUP NORTH
  - HGS = ARMY GROUP SOUTH
  - IA OP ABT = CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, OPERATIONS STAFF
  - OKH = ARMY HIGH COMMAND
  - OKL = AIR FORCE HIGH COMMAND
  - OKM = NAVY HIGH COMMAND
  - OKW = ARMED FORCES HIGH COMMAND
  - OQU I = CHIEF QUARTERMASTER
  - W. F. ST. = OKW OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT
  - W. F. ST. "L" = DEPUTY CHIEF OKW OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT
  - WI RUE AMT = OKW ECONOMICS AND ARMAMENTS OFFICE

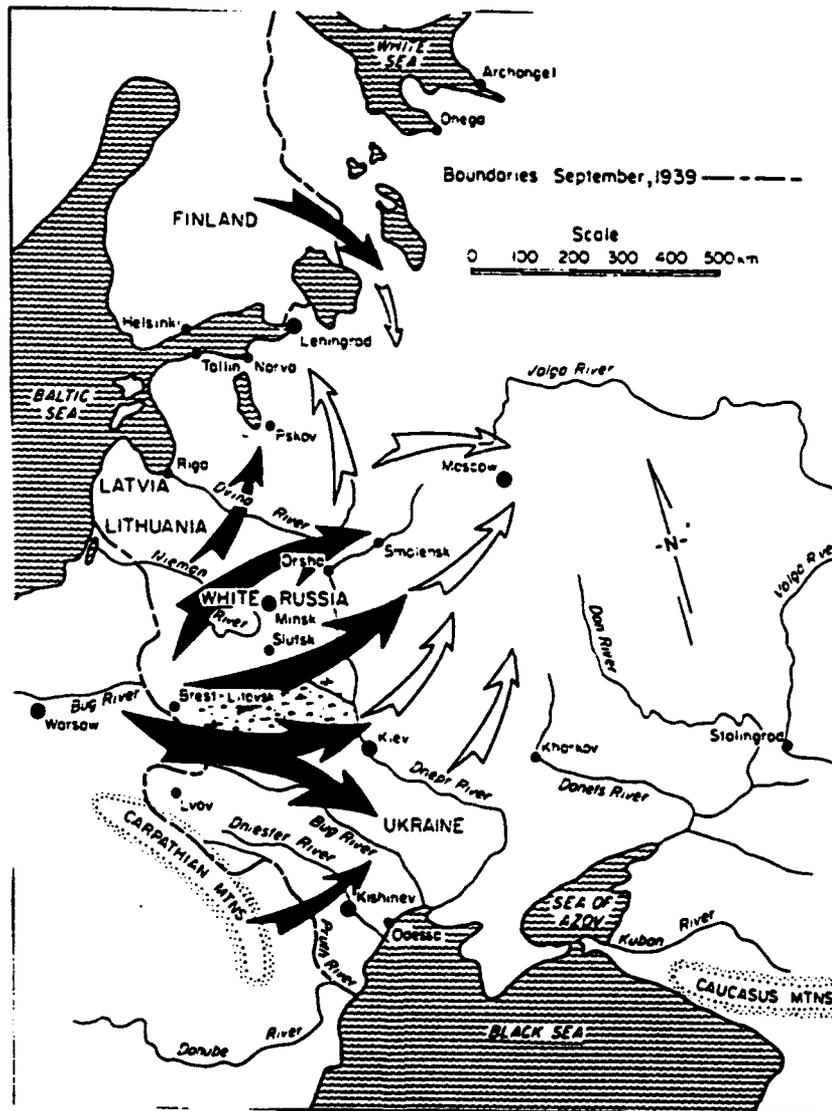
Source: Bryan Fugate, *Operation Barbarossa* (Novato California: Presidio Press, 1984), p. 345.

FIGURE 2: THE MARCKS' PLAN



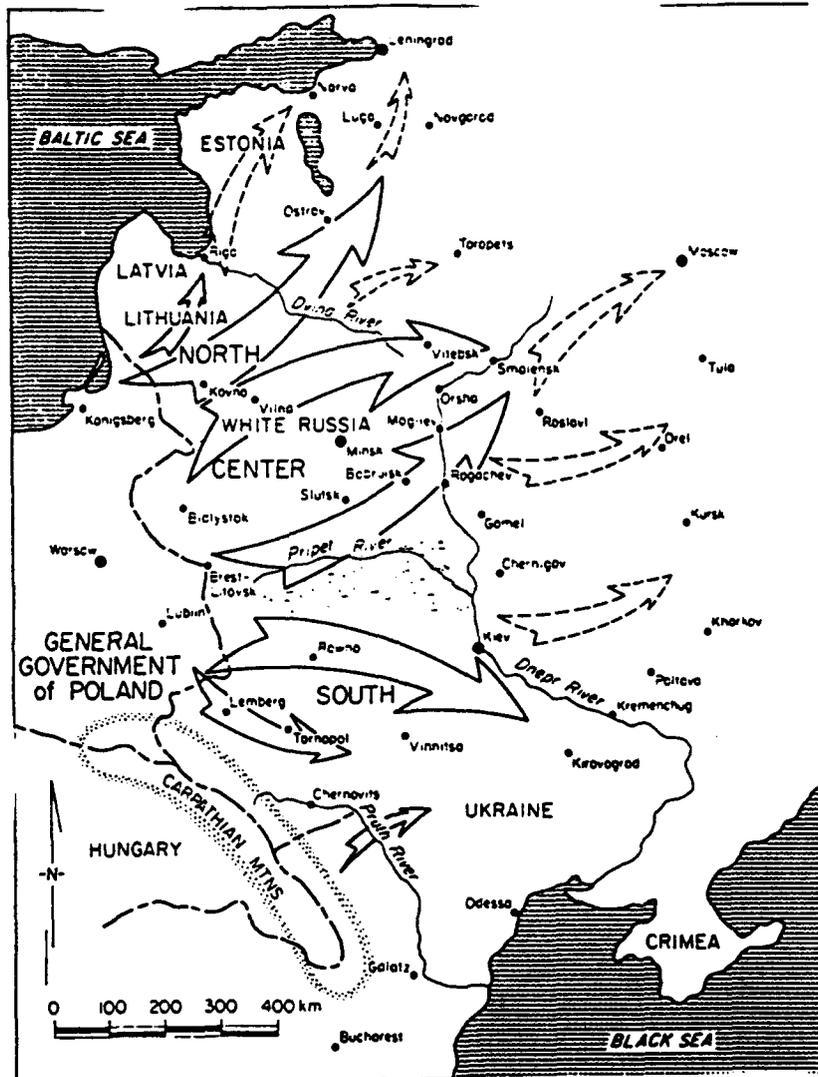
Source: Thomas Griess, ed., *The Second World War Europe and the Mediterranean* (Wayne, New Jersey: Avery Pub. Group, 1984), p. 103

FIGURE 3  
THE LOSSBERG STUDY



Source: Bryan Fugate, Operation Barbarossa (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1984), p. 70.

FIGURE 4  
THE HALDER PLAN

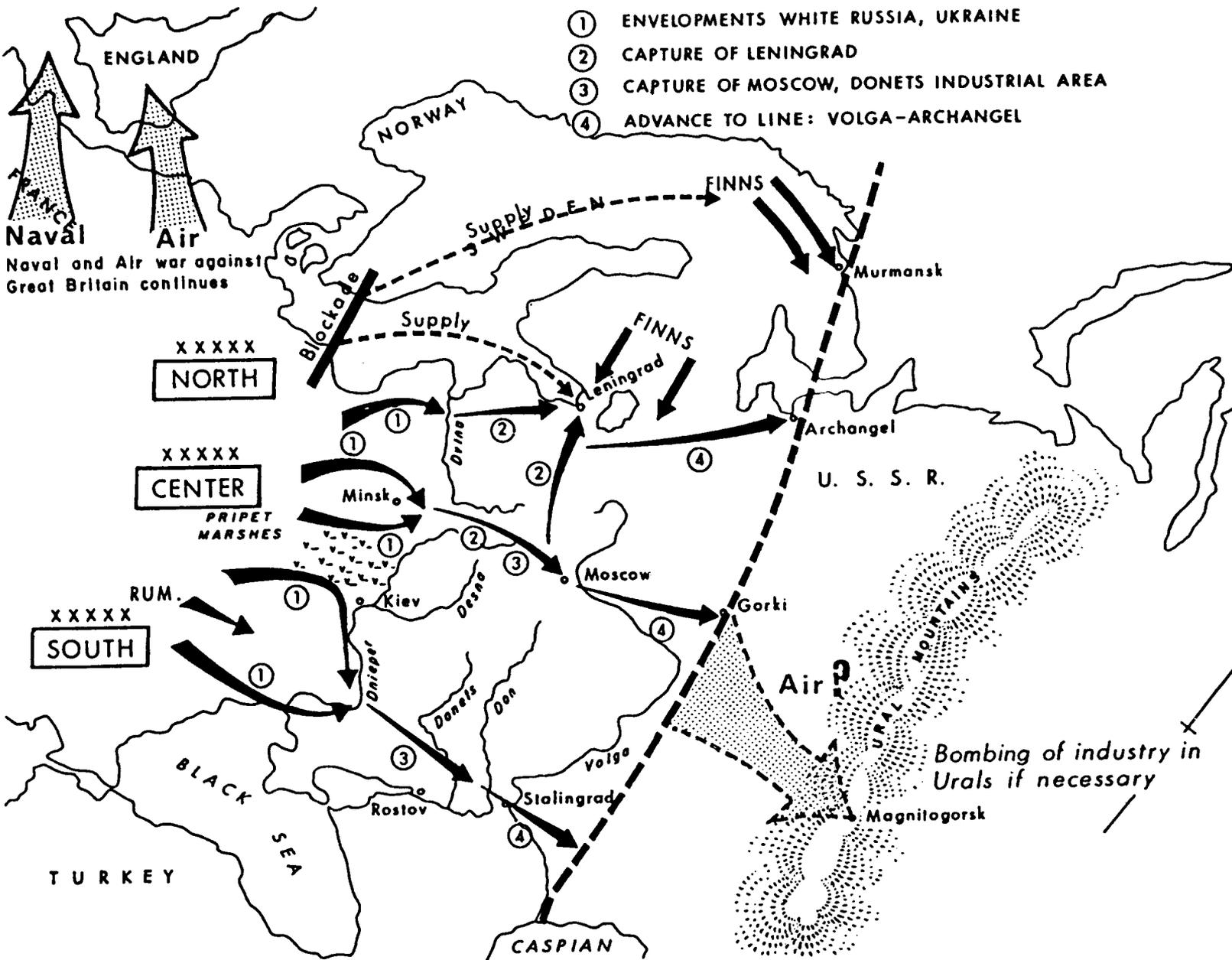


Source: Bryan Fugate, Operation Barbarossa (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1984), p. 77.

FIGURE 5

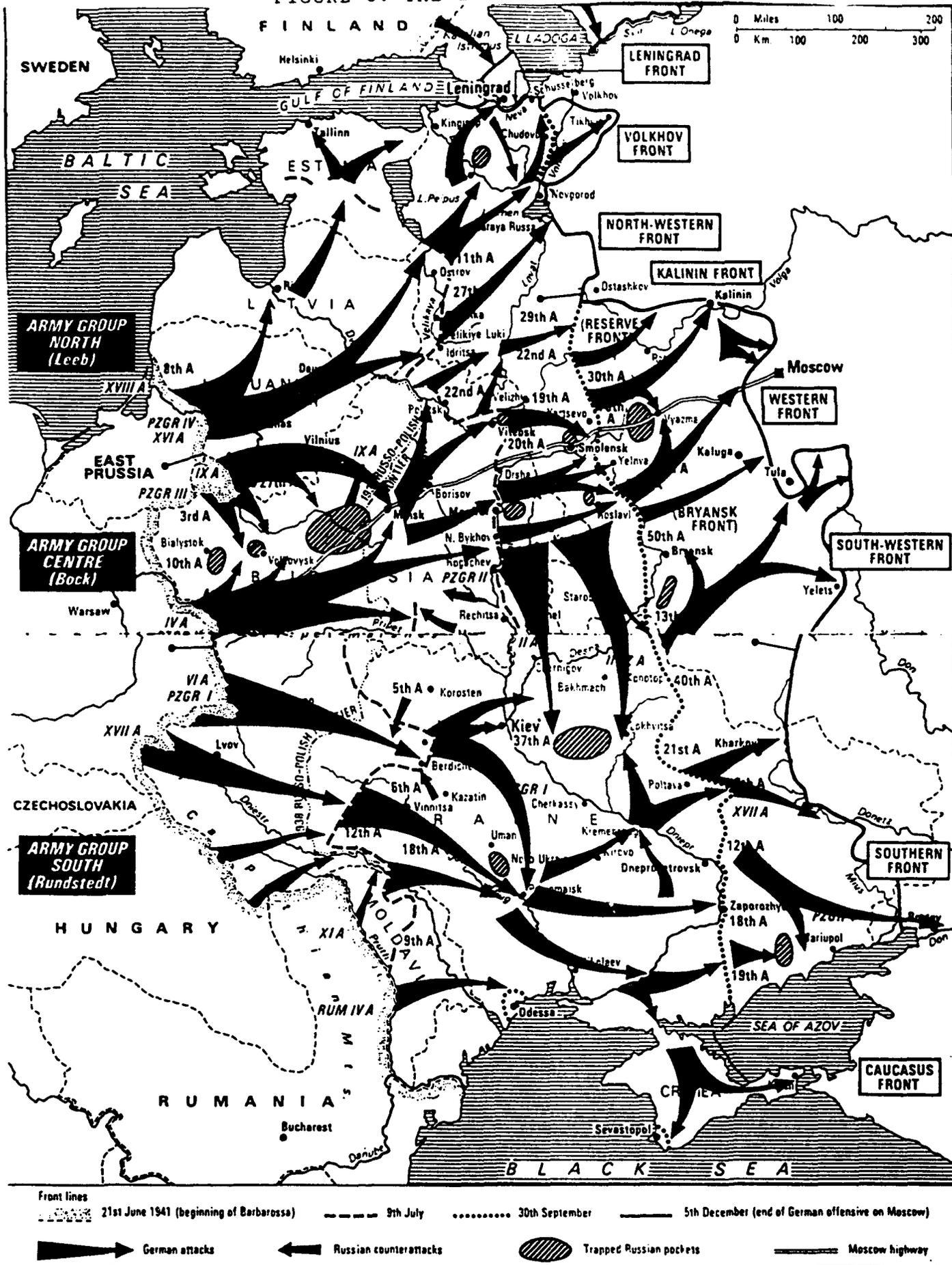
DIRECTIVE BARBAROSSA

- ① ENVELOPMENTS WHITE RUSSIA, UKRAINE
- ② CAPTURE OF LENINGRAD
- ③ CAPTURE OF MOSCOW, DONETS INDUSTRIAL AREA
- ④ ADVANCE TO LINE: VOLGA-ARCHANGEL



Source: Thomas Griess, ed., The Second World War Europe and the Mediterranean (Wayne, New Jersey: Avery Pub. Group, 1984), p. 106.

FIGURE 6: THE EXECUTION OF BARBAROSSA



Source: John Keegan, *Barbarossa*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970), p. 78-79.

## ENDNOTES

<1> John Keegan, Barbarossa: Invasion of Russia 1941 (New York: Ballantine Books Inc., 1970), 8.

<2> Thomas E. Griess, ed., The Second World War: Europe and the Mediterranean (Wayne, New Jersey: Avery Publishing Group, Inc., 1984), 90.

<3> James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front 1941-1945 (London: Jane's Publishing Company, 1979), 3.

<4> Griess, 91.

<5> Ibid., 93.

<6> Ibid., 102.

<7> Bryan I. Fugate, Operation Barbarossa (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1984), 63.

<8> Ibid., 65.

<9> Griess, 102.

<10> Fugate, 71.

<11> Ibid., 69.

<12> Ibid., 70.

<13> Ibid., 72.

<14> Ibid., 73.

<15> Ibid., 76.

<16> Ibid., 84.

<17> U. S. Army, The German Campaign in Russia: Planning and Operations (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1988), 24.

<18> Ibid., 25.

<19> Matthew Cooper, The German Army 1933-1945 (Madison Books, 1978; reprint, Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College, 1993), 268.

<20> Ibid.

<21> Ibid.

<22> Ibid., 270.

<23> Griess, 122.

<24> Ibid., 91.

<25> U. S. Department of Defense, FM 100-5 Operations (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1993), 2-5.

<26> Ibid., 2-4.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bartov, Omer. The Eastern Front 1941-45, German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.
- Carell, Paul. Hitler Moves East, 1941-43. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964.
- Clark, Alan. The Russian-German Conflict 1941-1945. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1965.
- Cooper, Matthew. The German Army 1933-1945. Madison Books, 1978; reprint, Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College, 1993.
- Fugate, Bryan I. Operation Barbarossa. Novato California: Presidio Press, 1984.
- Griess, Thomas E, ed. The Second World War: Europe and the Mediterranean. Wayne, New Jersey: Avery Publishing Group, Inc., 1984.
- Keegan, John. Barbarossa: Invasion of Russia 1941. New York: Ballantine Books Inc., 1970.
- Lucas, James. War on the Eastern Front 1941-1945. London: Jane's Publishing Company, 1979.
- Rich, Norman. Hitler's War Aims: The Establishment of a New Order. London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1974.
- Seth, Ronald. Operation Barbarossa. London: Anthony Blond Limited, 1964.
- U. S. Army. The German Campaign in Russia: Planning and Operations (1940-1942). Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1988.
- U. S. Department of Defense. FM 100-5 Operations. Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1993.
- U. S. Department of Defense. Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces (Joint Publication 1). Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1991.

von Mellenthin, F. W. German Generals of World War II As I Saw Them.  
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977.

von Mellenthin, F. W. Panzer Battles, 1939-1945. London: Cassell and  
Company Limited, 1955.