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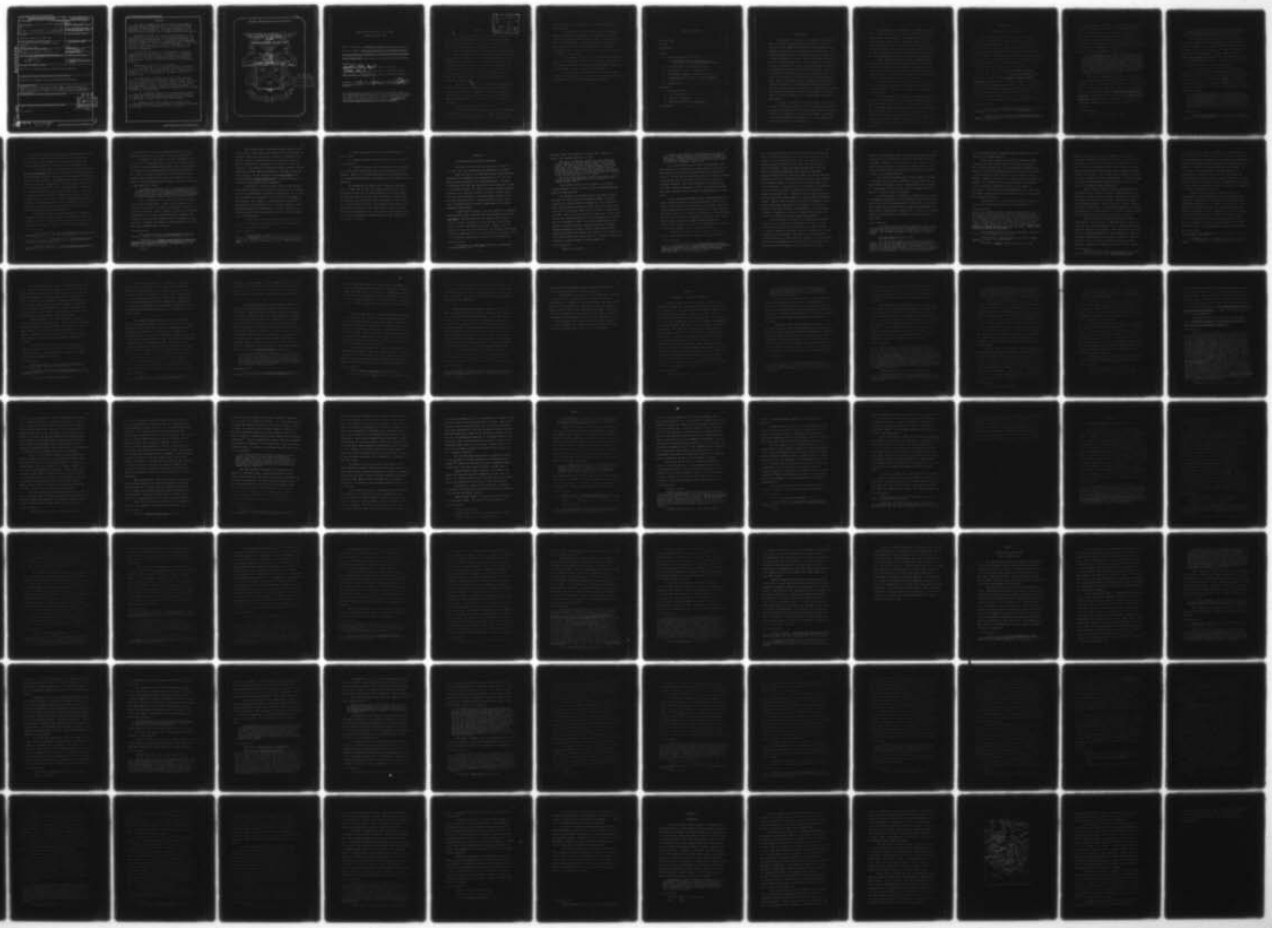

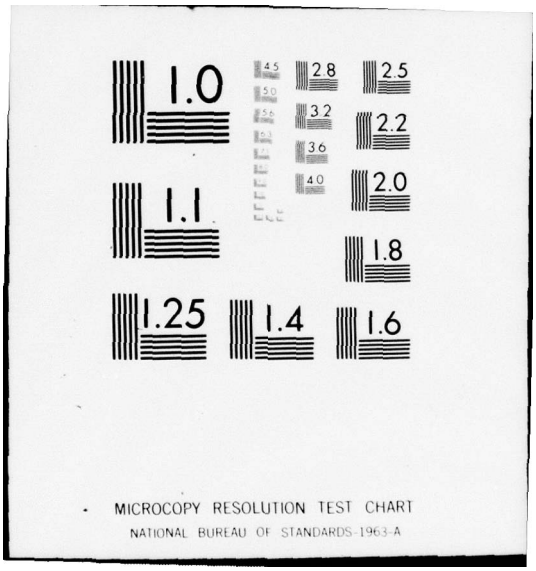
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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the German failure to decisively conclude Operation Barbarossa by capturing Moscow, asking whether this failure was the result of disregard for the principle of the objective. The failure at Moscow was the first significant setback for the German Army in World War II.

The role played by the notion of the objective in the pre-World War II German Army is investigated along with the backgrounds and personalities of the principal military and civilian leaders involved in the campaign. These background chapters provide the insight needed to understand the relationship that existed between the tactical commander and his superiors during the detailed planning and execution of Operation Barbarossa.

The question of whether the German Army of 1940-1941 subscribed to the principle of the objective and properly applied the principle is examined in detail in the study. Extensive use is made of personal diaries and memoirs of German general officers directly involved in the campaign in Russia.

Conclusions reached in the study are:

1. The principle of the objective evolved differently in the German Army than in the United States Army but both schools of thought were basically the same. The notion of the objective was well established in the German Army prior to World War II.

2. Moscow was a decisive objective in the campaign because it required the Red Army to stand and fight rather than withdraw deeper into the Soviet Union. Rather than risk serious confrontations, the military leaders of the German Army acquiesced to Hitler and complied with his orders knowingly risking strategic defeat by disregarding the military principle of the objective.

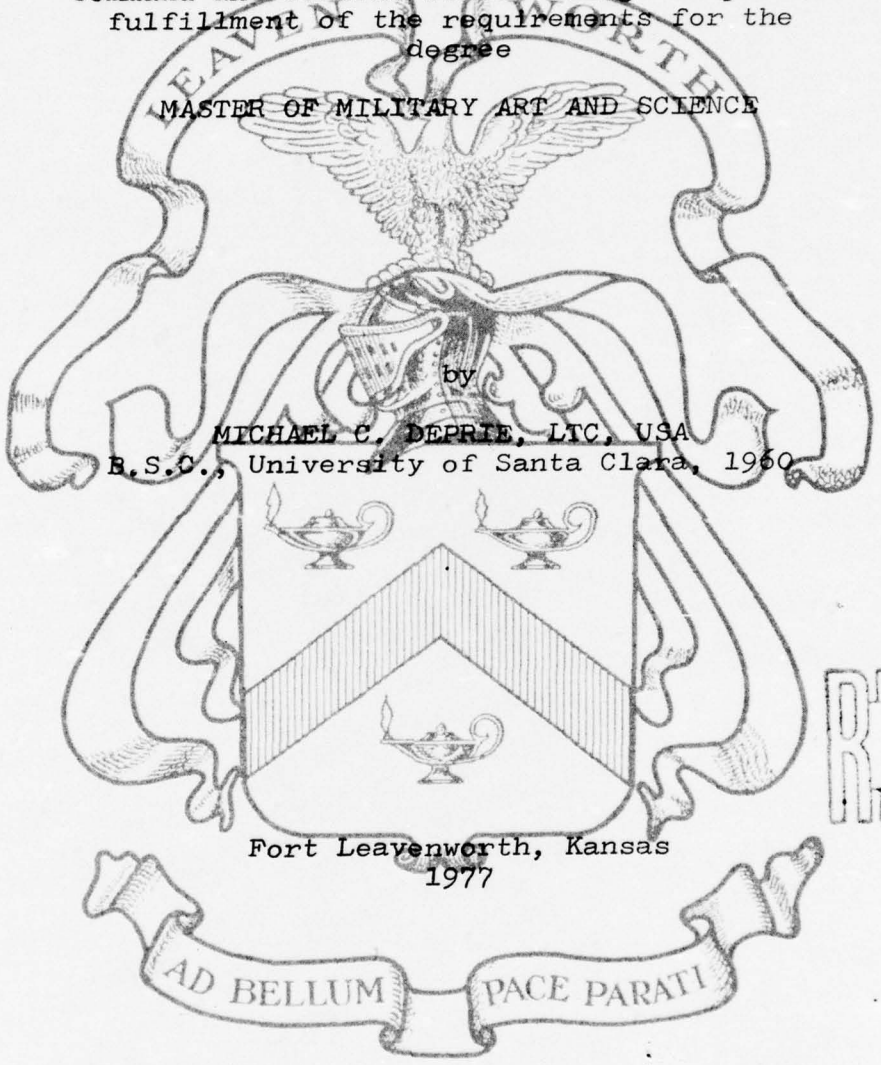
3. The leadership element of the German Army of 1940 and 1941 understood and attempted to apply the principle of the objective throughout Operation Barbarossa and at Moscow in particular. Hitler did not share their views.

4. Political and economic goals were placed ahead of military objectives at the expense of the ultimate objective-destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle.

MOSCOW, THE PRINCIPLE OF THE OBJECTIVE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE



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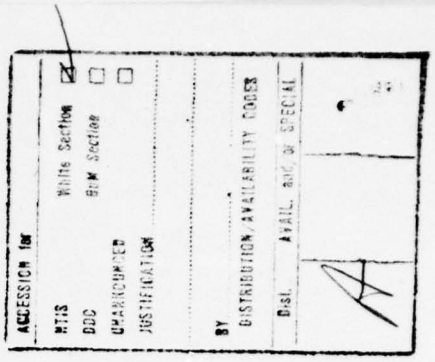

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3. The leadership element of the German Army of 1940 and 1941 understood and attempted to apply the principle of the objective throughout Operation Barbarossa and at Moscow in particular. Hitler did not share their views.

4. Political and economic goals were placed ahead of military objectives at the expense of the ultimate objective-destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE OBJECTIVE	3
THE PRE-WORLD WAR II PRINCIPLE OF THE OBJECTIVE IN THE GERMAN AND AMERICAN ARMIES	6
II. THE MISSION AND PRINCIPAL INDIVIDUALS	12
III. THE PLANNING - JULY TO DECEMBER 1940	28
IV. OPERATIONAL PLANNING, JANUARY TO JUNE 1941	46
V. THE EXECUTION OF THE PLAN - JUNE TO DECEMBER 1941	59
VI. CONCLUSIONS	84
APPENDIXES	
1. THE MARCKS PLAN	91
2. THE LOSSBERG STUDY	99
3. OPERATION BARBAROSSA	112
4. DEPLOYMENT DIRECTIVE 'BARBAROSSA'	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	132

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine German operations in Russia through the Battle of Moscow in order to determine if the German Army adhered to the principle of war commonly referred to as the principle of the objective. The examination includes both the planning phase and execution of Operation Barbarossa, the code name of the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. The principle of the objective has long been accepted by the United States Army as one of the cornerstones around which all successful military campaigns are directed. A chapter is devoted to investigating the role played by the notion of the objective in the German Army of 1940. This is necessary because it would be inappropriate to examine the actions of the German Army using a principle or doctrine to which it did not subscribe. Investigation reveals that although the concept evolved differently in the German Army it was well established as an operational principle before World War II.

In order to understand the relationship that existed between the tactical commander and his military and civilian superiors, an excursion into the backgrounds and, to a limited degree, the personalities of these individuals is included. These factors played an important role in the planning and execution of Operation Barbarossa.

The failure of the German Army to defeat the Soviet forces defending Moscow in the fall of 1941 has been examined by historians, tacticians, and strategists in great detail during the past thirty years. Numerous reasons for the German failure have been put forward. These reasons include the harsh Russian winter; the late starting date of the invasion; the mistake of attempting to fight a two-front war, and the underestimation of Soviet strength and resources.

While these often-stated causes of German failure may well have contributed to the end result at Moscow they will not be examined in any detail in this treatise. The question of whether the German Army of 1940-1941 subscribed to the notion of the principle of the objective and properly applied this principle are the issues at hand.

The thesis problem statement to be examined is, "Was the German failure to decisively conclude their campaign by capturing Moscow a result of a disregard of the principle of the objective."

The methodology to be followed in examining the thesis problem statement includes a comparison of German and United States doctrine relating to the principle of the objective, its historical origins in the nineteenth century, and development up to World War II. An extensive examination of the planning and conduct of German operations in the Soviet Union through early December 1941 is conducted. This results in an examination of these actions in light of the notion of the objective.

CHAPTER I

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE OBJECTIVE

In the United States twentieth century military thought and doctrine, without question, have been based on what the United States Army refers to as principles of war. The United States Army had adopted and refined a specific listing of these principles of war long before the beginning of World War II. Even prior to the American Civil War students at West Point were thoroughly schooled in principles of war as found in the thoughts of Baron Antoine Jomini.[1] Jomini spent the greater portion of his life writing about war. His most celebrated work is probably Precis de l'Art de la Guerre (Paris, 1838), translated as the Summary of the Art of War. In one of his earlier works, Treatise on Grand Military Operations, published in eight volumes between 1804 and 1816 Jomini clearly includes his principles of war. In this first work he stated, "The fundamental principles upon which rest all good combinations of war have always existed, . . . these principles are unchangeable; they are independent of the nature of the arms employed, of times and places."[2] He goes

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[1] Joseph L. Harsh, "Battlesword and Rapier: Clausewitz, Jomini, and the American Civil War," Military Affairs, 38 (December 1974): 133.

[2] Antoine H. Jomini, Treatise on Grand Military Operations, 2 vols., trans. Col. S. B. Holabird (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1865), 2:445.

on to discuss what may be called his basic theory that, "the fundamental principle upon which every military combination rests, is to operate with the greatest mass of our forces, a combined effort, upon a decisive point."[3] In Jomini's enumeration of rules for execution of this principle, the reader begins to see most of the U.S. Army's present principles of war emerge. For example, one can see the principle of the objective emerge from Jomini's second measure.

> The second measure is to direct our movements against the most advantageous feeble part. The choice of that feeble part depends upon the position of the enemy. The most important point will always be that one, the occupation of which will insure us the most favorable chances and procure us the most favorable results. For example, such will be those positions that tend to give us control of the enemy's communications with his base of operations, and to throw him back upon an insurmountable obstacle; such as a sea; a great river, without a bridge; or the territory of a strong neutral power.[4]

From further examination of Jomini's early writings one also finds the principles of mass, offensive, surprise and economy of force. While Jomini's principles are not necessarily phrased as we see them today, the essence of our principles of war are contained in Jomini's Treatise on Grand Military Operations. An examination of Jomini's later Summary of the Art of War reveals that the principle of the objective was phrased in somewhat different terms but still very visible. He wrote,

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[3]Ibid., p. 448. [4]Ibid., p. 449.

> To throw by strategic movements the mass of an Army, successively, upon the decisive points of a theater of war, and also upon the communications of the enemy as much as possible without compromising one's own.[5]

While Baron Jomini was writing on the theory of war in France a Prussian, Carl von Clausewitz, was similarly engaged in Berlin. It is doubtful that the thoughts of Carl von Clausewitz became well known in the United States until well after those of Jomini. In recent years, however, Clausewitz's On War has come to be the best known work in the field of military art and theory. The works of Jomini have been almost forgotten, but the heritage remains.

While the operational notion of objective that is taught in U.S. Army schools is Jominian rather than Clausewitzian it is possible to find similar (Clausewitzian) thoughts on the principle of the objective in On War. For example, examination of Chapter II, Book VIII leaves one with the concept of the "objective." In writing on Absolute and Real War, Clausewitz stated,

> The plan of war comprehends the whole military act; through it that act becomes a whole, which must have one final determinate object, in which all particular objects must become absorbed. No war is commenced, or, at least, no war should be commenced, if people acted wisely, without first seeking a reply to the question, "What is to be attained by and in the same?" The first is the final object; the other is the intermediate aim. By this chief

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[5]Jomini, The Art of War, trans. W. P. Craighill and G. H. Mendell (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1862), p. 70.

> consideration the whole course of the war is prescribed, the extent of the means and the measure of energy are determined; its influence manifests itself down to the smallest organ of action.[6]

Reading further into Book VIII, On War, one finds Clausewitz writing:

> To reduce the weight of the enemy's power to as few centres of gravity as possible, into one if it can be done; again to confine the attack against these centres of force to as few principal undertakings as possible, to one if possible; lastly, to keep all secondary undertakings as subordinate as possible.[7]

Without question, Clausewitz has as his main theme here the principle of concentration (mass) but the purpose of this concentration is to attack against a single "center of gravity"--the notion of objective. While the principle of objective does not appear in On War in a completely clear manner it is certainly an underlying thought in many paragraphs throughout the work.

THE PRE-WORLD WAR II PRINCIPLE OF THE OBJECTIVE IN THE GERMAN AND AMERICAN ARMIES

In the United States Army the general principles for the conduct of war were well established prior to World War II. Joseph L. Harsh, in a recent article in Military

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[6]Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. J. J. Graham, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner and Company, Ltd., 1911), p. 79. Clausewitz's On War was published after his death in 1831. Book VIII was in the form of notes rather than a completed manuscript. How closely the thoughts in Book VIII, as published, parallel those of Clausewitz as opposed to an editor cannot be determined.

[7]Ibid., p. 141.

Affairs, pointed out that one of the U.S. military academy's texts prior to the Civil War was Jomini's Summary of the Art of War. Harsh went on to write, "Many prominent graduates of the academy indicated at one time or another the debt they owed the Swiss theorist."[8] This dependence on Jomini's articulation of principles continued to operate in the U.S. Army of the twentieth century. In 1959, the principles of war guiding the U.S. Army were outlined in Field Manual 100-5, Operations in a style clearly reminiscent of Jomini's Summary of the Art of War.

> The ultimate objective of all military operations is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle. Decisive defeat in battle breaks the enemy's will to war and forces him to sue for peace which is the national aim. To attain this ultimate objective one or more intermediate objectives may have to be determined. These objectives must be well defined and must contribute toward the attainment of the ultimate objective.[9]

The discussion of the objective here reveals the continuing influence of Jomini's thoughts.

Prior to World War II German military theory and doctrine was based upon the thoughts of Carl von Clausewitz found in On War. German conceptual notion of the principle of the objective was that of Clausewitz. Examination of the writings of well known German general officers from the time of Clausewitz's death until World War II shows very clearly

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[8] Harsh, "Battlesword and Rapier," p. 133.

[9] U.S. War Department, Tentative Field Service Regulation, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 27.

the influence of Clausewitzian thought. General Jakob Meckel, for example, wrote in the early years of the 20th Century, "I, like every other German officer, have, consciously or unconsciously, instructed in the spirit of Clausewitz."[10]

B. H. Liddell Hart, in the foreward to Gerhard Ritter's, The Schlieffen Plan, outlines the reasoning behind Count Alfred von Schlieffen's plan for the conduct of war against France and Russia in 1905 and 1906. In Liddell Hart's words, Schlieffen's concept of war "was dominated by the theoretical absolutes of Clausewitzian doctrine."[11] Count von Schlieffen, as Chief of the German General Staff from 1891 to 1905, was in a position to influence German military thinking when a number of high ranking officers of World War II were beginning their military careers. For example, General Gerd von Rundstedt and General Ludwig Beck entered military service during this period and rose to high rank prior to World War II.

According to General Guenther Blumentritt, "Rundstedt belonged to the old German General Staff School of Moltke and Schlieffen . . ."[12] Ludwig Beck was another disciple of Count von Schlieffen, "Deeply rooted in the traditions of Moltke

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[10] Stewart L. Murray, The Reality of War, An Introduction to Clausewitz (London: Hugh Rees Ltd, 1909), p. 7.

[11] B. H. Liddell Hart, Foreword to The Schlieffen Plan, by Gerhard Ritter, trans. Andrew and Eva Wilson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), p. 5.

[12] Guenther Blumentritt, von Rundstedt, The Soldier and The Man (London: Odhams Press Limited, 1952), p. 120.

and Schlieffen, he strived persistently to pass on to the generation entrusted to him their spiritual heritage."[13]

An example of how deeply ingrained Clausewitz was in the minds of the general officer corps can be found in the writings of Field Marshal Wilhelm List. List, writing about the training of the German General Staff Corps, enumerated what might be termed a partial list of principles of war. Reading List's manuscript one finds him using what can be called a definite Clausewitzian concept--a center of gravity. In particular List wrote,

> In training for battle, i.e., in strategy and tactics, the main principle was the idea of annihilation in the classic sense, that is the demand for the destruction and elimination of the enemy combat forces and the utilization of even the smallest success toward this final goal.[14]

List continued with the notion of surprise, concentration (mass), employment of arms and "the demand for the formation of a center of gravity in strategic as well as in tactical actions."[15] List's thoughts on the destruction and elimination of the enemy combat forces are certainly very similar to the U.S. Army pre-World War II principle of the objective. Clearly, the German military leadership of World War II was Clausewitzian in thought.

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[13] Siegfried Westphal, The German Army in The West (London: Cassell and Company Limited, 1951), p. 29.

[14] Wilhelm List, German General Staff, Training and Development of the German General Staff Officer, Manuscript #P-0316, Historical Division, U.S. European Command, unpublished and undated, pp. 49-50.

[15] Ibid.

Since Adolph Hitler eventually assumed complete control over the armed forces some examination of his thoughts on military theory and doctrine are warranted. Although he saw military service during World War I as an enlisted man, it would be inaccurate to attribute his theories to those experiences. From Hitler's writings and public speeches one may glean some notions about his thoughts on military theory and their origins. On two occasions in both Mein Kampf and a volume entitled Hitler's Secret Book[16] he made reference to Clausewitz and included short quotations.

Examination of Hitler's public speeches made between April 1922 and August 1939 coupled with his writings indicates that he was undoubtedly a follower of Clausewitz. On at least four occasions he incorporated direct quotes from On War in his speeches. For example, in a November 1938 speech on the anniversary of the "Putsch" of 1923, Hitler included a very lengthy quotation from Clausewitz. On other occasions the quotations were brief and presented some of the better known lines from Clausewitz.

At this point, several conclusions may be drawn concerning the principle of the objective and the American and German view of this principle:

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[16] Hitler's Secret Book is essentially a reiteration of Volume 2 of Mein Kampf. It was begun in 1928 and published in English and German in 1961. Adolph Hitler, Hitler's Secret Book, trans. Salvator Attanasino (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1961).

a. American thought was based on the writings of Baron Jomini.

b. German military thought was based on the writings of Clausewitz.

c. Jomini's writings were very clear on the principles of the objective while Clausewitz was less specific on this subject. However, the operational notion of the objective as it is currently understood is contained in the writings of both theorists.

An examination of German Army regulations published prior to World War II fails to reveal a single brief list of principles of war such as those published by the U.S. Army. The fact that such a list was never published certainly does not indicate that the German Army of 1936-1941 did not adhere to certain principles of war. The notion of the principle of the objective existed and was understood by German leaders. One is thus justified in using the notion of the objective as a test of the adequacy of German plans for their World War II operations in Russia.

CHAPTER II

THE MISSION AND PRINCIPAL INDIVIDUALS

"The sword is then the plow, and from the tears of war grows [sic] the daily bread for generations to come."[1]

While doctrine is an important factor in any military operation, the background and personalities of the men who conduct those operations are equally important. As Hitler consolidated his power and demonstrated what appeared to many to be military genius, two groups of policy planners emerged. Hitler and his immediate circle of military advisors along with the senior generals in the Army became central to the military planning process. Representatives of both groups must be analyzed before detailed discussions of the plans themselves can proceed.

In 1924 while serving a five year sentence in Landsberg Prison, Adolph Hitler finished the first volume of his work, Mein Kampf. Careful study of this lengthy work provides a view of Hitler's thoughts on a wide variety of political, social, economic and military subjects. While it is not accurate to say that these ideas were the driving force behind everything Adolph Hitler did from 1924 until his death in 1945, it is certainly appropriate to state that they played an

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[1] Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941), p. 3.

important role. For example, in Chapter XIV, Volume II, dealing with "eastern policy" he wrote:

> With this, we National Socialists consciously draw a line through the foreign policy trend of our pre-War period. We take up at the halting place of six hundred years ago. We terminate the endless German drive to the south and west of Europe, and direct our gaze towards the lands in the east. We finally terminate the colonial period and trade policy of the pre-War period, and proceed to the territorial policy of the future.
>
> But if we talk about new soil and territory in Europe today, we can think primarily only of Russia and its vassal border states.[2]

These words, written in the middle of the 1920's, certainly appear to be a preface to later pronouncements and action in 1940 and 1941.

The document containing Hitler's decision to invade the Union of Soviet Scoialist Republics (USSR) is usually referred to as Fuhrer Directive Number 21, dated 18 December 1940. This document outlines in some detail the mission and objectives of the German armed forces in their attack against the USSR. While it contains Hitler's directives to the armed forces, his original planning for the operation can be traced back to the summer of 1940. On 31 July 1940 during a conference at Berghof (Hitler's mountain retreat in southern Bavaria) attended by Hitler, General Franz Halder, Grand Admiral Eric Raeder and others, the subject of the invasion of Great Britain was under consideration. During the discussion, according to General Halder, Hitler stated that:

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[2]Ibid., pp. 950-951.

> Russia is the factor on which Britain is relying the most. With Russia smashed, Britain's last hope would be shattered. Germany then will be the master of Europe and the Balkans. Russia's destruction must therefore be made a part of this struggle. Spring 41.[3]

It is interesting to note that the German Army had just completed its operations in France and the low countries. Even though the Air Force (Luftwaffe) was still heavily involved in the air war over Great Britain and a seaborne invasion of England was under consideration Hitler was turning his attention eastward. The defeat suffered by Germany during World War I while attempting to fight a two front war should have been a matter of great concern to Adolph Hitler at this point.

On the German side Adolph Hitler, Wilhelm Keitel and Fedor von Bock were the three individuals most directly involved in the conduct of the invasion of the USSR. Two additional general officers deserve mention due to their positions that placed them in the roles of intermediaries between Hitler/Keitel at the top level of command and von Bock in the field. These general officers were Field Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch, Commander in Chief of the Army (OKH), and Colonel General Franz Halder, Chief of Staff of the Army.

Adolph Hitler rose to power in Germany from rather humble surroundings. Born in Austria in 1889 and spending

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[3]Franz Halder, The Private War Journal of General Oberst Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the Supreme Command of the German Army (OKH), 14 August 1939 to 24 September 1942, ed. Arnold Lissance, 9 vols. (Washington: U.S. Department of the Army, n.d.), 4:144.

his early years pursuing an undistinguished school record and later, an attempt at becoming an artist, he arrived in Germany in 1913. At the outbreak of World War I he enlisted in the German Army and served until the end of the war, rising to the rank of corporal. During the 1920's Hitler rose to be the leader of the German Workers Party (later the National Socialist (Nazi) Party), spent nine months in prison, and consolidated his base of political power to a degree that allowed him to capture almost 37 percent of votes in the 1932 presidential election. From this point he continued to consolidate his position and was named Chancellor by the President of Germany in January 1933. Through a series of political maneuvers over the next several months he obtained full dictatorial powers. When he came to power he had firmly developed certain traits that would characterize the remainder of his life: hatred of the Jews and other "non-Germans"; a tendency toward outbursts; a tendency to live in a fantasy world; great difficulty in establishing normal human relationships.

After assuming the position of Chancellor of Germany Hitler was in a position to consolidate his power. He had full authority to direct the nation and the military after the death of Paul von Hindenburg in 1934. However, the German military and in particular, the Army, constituted a rather significant base of power within the country. It was necessary for Hitler to establish his own control over the Army. After making himself the commander of the armed forces Hitler

demanded that all members take a new loyalty oath--not an oath of loyalty to the constitution and the nation but to himself personally. Members of the armed forces were required to pledge unconditional obedience and loyalty to Adolph Hitler. This placed the armed forces in a position of breaking their oath if they were to oppose Hitler.[4]

Over the next several years Hitler undertook a series of maneuvers which not only established his control over the armed forces but Europe itself. These actions can be viewed chronologically but for the most part are dependent upon one another in Hitler's plan for Germany.

A second measure undertaken on 16 March 1935 by Hitler to establish control and win over members of the officer corps may be seen in the reestablishment of conscription in Germany.[5] This measure not only had domestic military implications but had definite international implications in that it was in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles that ended the First World War.[6]

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[4]Initially, this oath may have imposed a forced obedience upon the armed forces but the plots of the mid-war years indicate that a number of officers followed their own conscience. The 20 July 1944 plot to kill Hitler is a case in point.

[5]New York Times, March 17, 1935.

[6]In general, the terms of the Treaty of Versailles dealing with the German military, limited the post-World War I nation to an army of 100,000, placed severe limits on the quantity of weapons and munitions, and prohibited the continuance of the general staff. Additionally, the Treaty prohibited Germany from maintaining an air force and restricted both

This successful venture undoubtedly helped establish his position with the German military.

Hitler waited almost a year before taking any additional actions that might provoke his European neighbors. Having been successful with his rebuilding of the Army to an announced strength of 500,000 men and reestablishing universal military training he was ready for his next move to return Germany to what he considered its rightful place among European nations. On 7 March 1936 in a speech before the Reichstag[7] Hitler officially repudiated portions of the Treaty of Versailles.[8] This action was a proclamation to the world that the German state would no longer honor the terms of the agreement ending World War I.

Concurrently with the Reichstag speech of 7 March elements of the German Army reoccupied the Rhineland.[9] This

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quantity and quality of naval vessels. Additional terms of the Treaty dealt with territorial dispositions and other items. For example, the Rhineland was to remain a demilitarized zone. No troops were to be garrisoned west of a north-south line running 50 kilometers east of the Rhine River. Other portions of German territory were ceded to France, Belgium, Denmark, and Poland. Violation of the Treaty could be considered a "hostile action" by the signatories. See: Fred L. Israel, Major Peace Treaties of Modern History, 1648-1967 (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1967), pp. 1265-1533.

[7]The Reichstag was the elective legislative assembly of Germany in the pre-World War II period.

[8]Adolph Hitler, "Europe--A Restricted House," Vital Speeches: 2 (March 23, 1936): 400-08.

[9]"Germany," Newsweek, March 14, 1936, pp. 7-10.

action, the first of a series of military ventures which established Hitler's reputation as a strategist, was a direct violation of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Rather than enforce the provisions of the Treaty, France, Britain, Italy and other signatories limited their responses to mere verbal protestations. Thus, Hitler won a diplomatic victory which had tremendous military implications. At the same time, this victory fundamentally enhanced Hitler's status in the eyes of the German military leadership.

These actions, conscription and reoccupation of the Rhineland, and the lack of effective response against them obviously provided Hitler with clear indications of the lack of resolve on the part of the Treaty signatories to take action against Germany. For the most part, Hitler correctly predicted the reactions of his European neighbors. In effect, the absence of a strong reaction to his moves provided Hitler with an opportunity for further actions in the future.

With two successful maneuvers behind him, Hitler began another series of moves in November 1937. During a conference at the Reichschancellery on 5 November Hitler outlined his thoughts for conquest. Only the Minister for War, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Commanders in Chief of the Army, Navy and Air Force attended. Minutes of the conferences were kept by one of Hitler's adjutants, Colonel Hossbach. According to Hossbach's notes,[10] Hitler outlined

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[10]Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, comp., Nazi Conspiracy and

his thoughts on the conquest of Austria and Czechoslovakia. During and after the conference Hitler's views were unsuccessfully challenged by the Minister of War (Werner von Blomberg), Minister of Foreign Affairs (Constantine von Neurath) and the Commander in Chief of the Army (Freiherr von Fritsch). The end result of the conference is well documented. The Anschluss[11] of Austria in March 1938 and the invasion of Czechoslovakia six months later in October 1938 were a direct result of Hitler's decisions at the 5 November 1937 conference. These two German successes can also be considered as diplomatic and military victories for Hitler.

Having met with a lack of complete success in establishing a good relationship with the German military leadership, Hitler took stern measures to remove the most influential opposition to his plans for 1938. On the 4th of February 1938 Hitler dismissed his Minister of War, Field Marshal von Blomberg and the Commander in Chief of the Army, General Fritsch on what later proved to be false charges. "The 4th of February 1938 was the second black day for the Army high command, the first having been the 30th of June 1934 (the date of the assassination of numerous individuals

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Aggression, 8 vols., (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 1:376-383.

[11] Anschluss can be translated as union or annexation. I prefer the connotation of annexation when used in this case.

who had opposed Hitler)."[12] The events of 4 February indicate a removal of opposition to Hitler's plans for aggressive action in Austria and Czechoslovakia.[13] This "purge" only temporarily removed opposition to Hitler and his plans.

The conquests of Austria and Czechoslovakia did involve the military forces of Germany but in no way could the operations be described as tests of operational doctrine and combat effectiveness. For the most part, the operations provided the army an opportunity to test its logistics concepts and improve planning for large troop movements.

Hitler's objectives in both Austria and Czechoslovakia have been discussed at length by numerous historians. While the view may be taken that his goal was to provide Lebensraum (living space) for the German nation, as Hitler outlined in Mein Kampf and discussed at great length (over 4 hours) during the 5 November 1937 conference, the actual objectives went much further. While he definitely desired to expand Germany's border, careful reading of the notes of the 5 November conference will allow one to find as a minimum military and economic objectives.[14] Control over these two countries provided him with a large pool of ethnic German manpower for his army, access to raw materials and industrial areas,

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[12] Heinz Guderian, Panzer Leader (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1952), p. 48.

[13] The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Neurath) was also replaced by a more compliant supporter of Hitler.

[14] Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, p. 380.

increased availability of foodstuffs, and more security on the eastern and southeastern frontiers of Germany.

The first operational test of the German Army came during the Polish Campaign, 1 September to 5 October 1939. The Army was, for the first time since rebuilding, to put its new formations, tactics and techniques to the test. The invasion pitted the German Army against a force that was supposedly a first-rate European military power. "In 20 days of fighting the new German military machine annihilated the Polish armies; Warsaw capitulated after 27 days; and the last point of resistance was subdued in 35 days."[15]

Hitler's objectives in the conquest of Poland were basically twofold. The first and probably most pressing was to eliminate Poland as a military threat to the eastern frontier of Germany. This in itself reduced the possibility of a two front war when Germany became involved with France in the west and provided security for German industry. The second objective was to settle once and for all the question of Danzig. The city of Danzig and the "Danzig Corridor" had been a thorn in the side of Germany since the Treaty of Versailles caused Germany to cede this territory to Poland at the end of World War I.[16]

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[15]U.S. War Department, The German Campaign in Poland (Washington: U.S. War Department, 1942), pp. 1-2.

[16]Norman Rich, Hitler's War Aims (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 122-125.

The final decision by Hitler to invade Poland was made under a cloud of threats from England and France. Hitler was well aware that an invasion of Poland would result in war with France and England. On 3 September 1939 both England and France declared war on Germany.[17] Winston S. Churchill has described the period between September 1939 and 10 May 1940 as "The Twilight War."[18] During this period the world saw the course of the war limited to primarily a series of naval battles and the occupation of Norway and Denmark.

German expansion into Scandinavia can be termed as another action to provide security. Had the British and French established bases in southern Norway and Denmark they would have been able to effectively block German access to the Atlantic Ocean and to launch air attacks against Germany from that flank.[19] Such action would have been disastrous for Germany.

Between 10 May and 5 June 1940 the German Army defeated the French and drove the British forces from the continent of Europe. Strategically and tactically the German Army had been extremely successful.

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[17] Walter Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 1939-45 (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 569.

[18] Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War. Vol. 4: The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948-53), p. 405.

[19] Norman Rich, Hitler's War Aims, p. 135.

When Hitler announced his intentions to invade the Soviet Union in July 1940 he was without a doubt master of Western and Central Europe. His armies had met and defeated the finest armies the nations of Europe could throw against him. The new tactical doctrine of blitzkrieg, developed by the Army and encouraged by Hitler himself, had overwhelmed everything it encountered. The soundness of Hitler's strategic decisions had been proven not only to his generals but to the entire world.

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Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, Chief of the Armed Forces High Command (OKW), from 1938 on was Hitler's principal military advisor prior to, as well as throughout, the Battle of Moscow. He began his military career in 1901 as an artillery officer. By the time World War I began he had risen to the rank of captain and spent most of the war as a general staff officer in the Ministry of War. After the war he occupied a variety of general staff and instructor positions until promoted to major general after Hitler came to power. For a period in 1934 and 1935 he served as the commander of the 4th Infantry Division in Bremen. From 1935 until his appointment as Chief of the Armed Forces High Command he served as Chief of the Administration Department in the War Ministry.[20] He was never considered to be a great tactical

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[20]Maxine Block, ed., Current Biography, 1940 (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1940), pp. 448-450.

commander. He was always extremely loyal to Hitler and would not tolerate those whose loyalty wavered. Many historians have often referred to him as a weak officer and nothing more than a conduit through which information and orders flowed.

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Field Marshal Fedor von Bock was almost exactly the opposite of Keitel not only in military experience but as an individual. While both Keitel and von Bock served as staff officers in World War I (von Bock also commanded a battalion for several months), von Bock had succeeded in high command prior to the Russian invasion. He successfully commanded Army Group North in the 1939 Polish Campaign and Army Group B on the Western Front in 1940. He is best described as having been ruthless and careless of human life. He was known to his soldiers and officers as "Der Sterber" (the One Who Preaches Death). Von Bock was truly a Prussian officer in traits of character, taste and action. For example, Andrew Turney in his book, Disaster at Moscow, alleged that

> . . . in 1938, at an official reception at the Reich Chancellory, Herman Goring, who along with Bock held the Pour le Merite, approached Bock, saying that as coholders of Germany's highest military honor they could well be good friends. Bock gave Goring a cold stare and told him in no uncertain terms that the medals on their collars did not make them social equals.[21]

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[21] Alfred W. Turney, Disaster At Moscow (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1970), p. 5.

Whereas Keitel was primarily a staff officer throughout his career, von Bock was almost exactly the opposite. During the 1920's and early 30's, he served as the commander of several tactical units from cavalry regiment to Army group. He also served a tour as commander of a military district. Fedor von Bock was a skilled, demanding and ruthless tactical commander.

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Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch began his military career much like Keitel, serving as artillery officer in his early years and as general staff officer throughout World War I seeing no combat action. He apparently was a protege of General Hans von Seeckt, post-war Chief of Staff. His rise to major general in 1931 was quite rapid considering the size of the Germany Army at that time. The years between the wars were spent mastering his specialty of artillery and the theoretical aspects of warfare.[22]

Until the Polish Campaign in 1939 he was almost unknown outside Germany. "His rise to the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Army had been due to his willingness to back Adolph Hitler where more experienced generals would not."[23] Although he was not as experienced a tactical commander as von

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[22] Block, Current Biography, 1940, pp. 103-105.

[23] "Polish Theater," Time, September 25, 1939, pp. 25-26.

Bock, he did hold a number of very responsible positions during his career--Chief of Army Training, Inspector of Artillery, and Commander of a Division in East Prussia, and the 4th Army Group in 1937.[24] His support for Hitler, at least initially, placed him in his position.

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Colonel General Franz Halder, Chief of Staff of the Army from November 1938 to September 1942 began his military career in 1901 as an artillery officer. During World War I he took part in the battles in the Argonne, at Verdun and on the Somme as a general staff officer of the 6th Bavarian Infantry Division. From 1919 until 1935 when he assumed command of the 7th Division he served in a variety of general staff positions and artillery commands. After being appointed Chief of Staff of the Army, he was responsible for the operational planning of all campaigns from the invasion of Poland to the Battle of Moscow. He was unusually intelligent and endowed with a broad understanding of military matters. His dismissal in 1942 was a direct result of numerous conflicts with Hitler over the course of the war in Russia.[25] During his tenure as Chief of Staff he was involved in a great number

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[24] U.S. War Department, Military Intelligence Service, Biographical Sketch of High Ranking German & Russian Officers of the Second World War (Washington: U.S. War Department, 1946), pp. 11-13.

[25] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

of strategic and tactical planning conferences along with Hitler and the chiefs of the other services.

General Halder emerged as the individual most directly involved with the responsibility for planning Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. Attention should now be directed toward the planning that took place between August 1940 and the actual invasion in June 1941. The German Army was victorious in every operation from Poland, through Scandanavia and in France and the low countries--all of these operations planned under the supervision of Franz Halder. He then was responsible for planning Barbarossa and the actions that led the German Army to the outskirts of Moscow.

CHAPTER III

THE PLANNING - JULY TO DECEMBER 1940

July 31, 1940, during the conference at Berghof, is generally regarded as the date Hitler announced his decision to invade Russia. The Armed Forces High Command (OKW) and the Army (OKH) had been aware, at least for a short period of time, that the subject was under consideration. The evidence indicates that as early as 21 July Field Marshal von Brauchitsch discussed a possible invasion of the Soviet Union with Hitler. A conference the next morning between von Brauchitsch and General Halder resulted in a lengthy entry in Halder's personal diary. While not describing the conference in detail, the diary entry does provide insight into what took place. Halder began his entry as follows: "Our attention must be turned to tackling the Russian problem and prepare planning."[1] The entry went on to include information which had been given to Hitler on assembly of troops, political aims, strength required, operations and objectives. The paragraph Halder titled "object" provides concrete evidence of initial thoughts concerning the campaign. He wrote,

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[1]Halder Diary, Vol. IV, p. 128, 22 July 1940.

> To crush Russian Army or slice as much Russian territory as is necessary to bar enemy airraids on Berlin and Silesian industries. It is desirable to penetrate far enough to enable our Air Force to smash Russia's strategic areas.[2]

While it is not completely clear from this diary entry whether the thoughts were Hitler's, von Brauchitsch's or Halder's, it is obvious that even at this early stage consideration was being given to campaign objectives. Thus, ten days prior to Hitler's announcement of his decision to invade the Soviet Union the Army High Command was discussing the operation.

Undoubtedly Field Marshal Keitel was present at the 21 July conference along with von Brauchitsch. However, the Armed Forces High Command or OKW (Ober Kommando der Wehrmacht) moved much slower than the Army in reacting to what would eventually be a major undertaking for the armed forces. On the afternoon of 29 July General Jodl, Chief of the Armed Forces Operations Staff, briefed his staff on the possibility of an invasion of the Soviet Union in the spring of 1941.[3]

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Helmuth Greiner, Operation Barbarossa (Historical Division, U.S. European Command, unpublished and undated) Manuscript #C-065i, p. 1. Greiner was in charge of keeping the Armed Forces High Command War Diary from August 1939 to April 1943.

Jodl assigned his staff the task of preparing an OKW directive to each of the branches of the armed forces on the subject. On 9 August 1940 it was signed by Keitel and distributed to the branches of the armed forces and to other top level agencies.[4]

While OKW required approximately a week to even begin thinking and taking limited action regarding the Soviet Union, the Army staff under Halder's direction began immediately. Halder's diary entries of 24 July contain a brief indication that the Army was beginning to consider Russia. One entry for that day reads, "Preparations for East. Military topography and maps."[5] By the 26th of July, still five days prior to Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union, Halder, after a discussion with a member of his intelligence staff (Col. Kinzel),[6] recorded the following in his war diary:

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[4]Ibid., p. 8. An interesting point here is that Admiral Raeder, Commander in Chief of the Navy, wrote in his autobiography that he did not learn of Hitler's intentions vis-a-vis the Soviet Union until the middle of September 1940. See: Erich Raeder. My Life, trans. by H. W. Drexel (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1960), p. 335. In light of other evidence it is difficult to see how Raeder could have remained uninformed. For example, a naval representative was present for Jodl's 29 July briefing, and the Navy was included in the distribution of the 9 August directive. Either Raeder's memory failed him or he allowed the ongoing planning for the invasion of England to dominate his thoughts.

[5]Halder Diary, Vol. IV, p. 130, 24 July 1940.

[6]Colonel Eberhard Kinzel served as Chief of the Foreign Armies East Section of the General Staff until 1 April 1942 when Halder relieved him. He was the General Staff expert on the USSR.

> Reviews enemy intelligence relating to an operation against Russia. The best chances of success lie in an operation in the direction of Moscow with flank on Baltic Sea, which subsequently, by a drive from the north, compels the Russian concentrations in the Ukraine and at the Black Sea to accept battle with inverted front.[7]

Colonel Kinzel, an intelligence officer, not only provided General Halder with a briefing on the intelligence situation but provided what may have been the first concept of operations for the forthcoming campaign. His very brief analysis provided a single initial objective (Moscow), a high degree of security for the flank resting on the Baltic Sea, and a subsequent objective where the enemy would have had to reorient his defenses 90 degrees or present an exposed flank to the attacking German Armies. His concept was certainly based on a sound understanding of tactics and principles of war. While his concept for the Russian campaign was not followed, it may have had some impact on the thinking of General Halder.

The next day, 27 July, Halder discussed "operational possibilities" in the Russian Campaign with several officers from the Army High Command or OKH (Oberkommando des Heeres) Operations Section. The Operations Section, OKH, proposed a concept that involved a main attack in the southern portion of the Soviet Union and estimated that 100 divisions would be required for the operation. Halder made no particular comment on the size of the force required but made it known that he preferred a main attack in the north.

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[7]Ibid., p. 132, 26 July 1940.

> For my part I would rather have a strong northern group and then orient the campaign with a view to forcing the undoubtedly strong enemy grouping in the South to accept battle with an inverted front, by quickly striking down from Moscow.[8]

In the space of one day Halder had analyzed a brief concept of operations for a huge undertaking and found it to his liking. By simply restating the concept outlined by Colonel Kinzel he issued what might be termed a simple form of "planning guidance" to his operations staff to orient them to his way of viewing the campaign.

By the 29th of July Halder had arranged for General Erich Marcks, Chief of Staff (designate) of the 18th Army in Poland, to postpone his departure from France in order to undertake a special assignment for OKH.[9] The "special assignment" Halder had in mind for General Marcks was to prepare the Army plan for the coming campaign in Russia. Two days prior to Hitler's final decision General Marcks began preparing a plan to invade the Soviet Union--a plan that ultimately destroyed Germany.

During the 31 July conference at Berghof after discussing in detail the proposed cross-channel invasion of

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[8]Halder Diary, Vol. IV, p. 134, 27 July 1940.

[9]Halder Diary, Vol. IV, p. 136, 29 July 1940.

England (Operation Seeloewe)[10] with Admiral Raeder, Hitler turned his attention to the other attendees and began discussing Russia. After discussing at some length his views on England, Russia, the United States, Japan and the relationships existing between them at that time or possibly existing in the future, Hitler stated, "With Russia smashed, Britain's last hope would be shattered. Germany then will be master of Europe and the Balkans."[11]

Immediately after this entry in his diary, Halder added, "DECISION: Russia's destruction must therefore be made a part of this struggle. Spring 41."

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[10]Operation Seeloewe (Sea Lion), the planned invasion of England in the fall of 1940, has been considered nothing more than a deception plan by a number of military writers. This is not completely correct. The evidence points very strongly to the fact that Hitler did in fact plan to invade England in the fall of 1940. He held this position until 12 October 1940 when he finally postponed the operation until the spring of 1941. From October 1940 until the Russian invasion in June 1941 Operation Seeloewe continued to exist but only as a deception plan. During this period the purpose of the Operation was to deceive both England and the Soviet Union of Germany's strategic intentions. After the invasion of the Soviet Union the plan eventually faded away. For additional discussion on OPERATION SEELOEWE see: Halder Diary Vol. 4, numerous entries for Jul-Oct 40; Ronald Wheatley, Operation Sea Lion (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 86-98; Halder Diary, p. 230, Vol. 4, 13 Oct 40; "Operation Seeloewe" German Plan for Invasion, (U.S. European Command, May 1949 & unpublished). Manuscript #C-059. The manuscript consists of a series of questions relating to Hitler's intentions regarding "Seeloewe" and the responses of General Halder, General Walter Warlimont, General Hasso von Wedel and Colonel Rolf Kratzer; and H. G. Thursfield, ed., Brassey's Naval Annual 1948 (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1948), p. 139. This issue of Brassey's contains documents known as "Fuehrer Conferences on Naval Matters, 1939-45."

[11]Halder Diary, Vol. IV, p. 144, 31 July 1940.

It appears as though General Halder considered Hitler's decision at this point to be of great significance. He departed somewhat from his normal practice of short, cryptic entries in his personal diary to record this event. This entry, which covers Hitler's initial concept of the Russian campaign, is of sufficient importance that it is included in its entirety.

> The sooner Russia is crushed, the better. Attack achieves its purpose only if Russian State can be shattered to its roots with one blow. Holding part of the country alone will not do. Standing still for the following winter would be perilous. So it is better to wait a little longer, but with the resolute determination to eliminate Russia. This is necessary also because of contiguity on the Baltic. It would be awkward to have another major power there. If we start in May 41, we would have five months to finish the job in. Tackling it this year still would have been the best, but unified action would be impossible at this time.
>
> Object is destruction of Russian manpower. Operation will be divided into three actions:
>
> First thrust: Kiev and securing flank protection on Dnieper. Air Force will destroy river crossings. Odessa.
>
> Second thrust: Baltic States and drive on Moscow.
>
> Finally: Link-up of northern and southern prongs.
>
> Successively: Limited drive on Baku oil fields.
>
> It will be seen later to what extent Finland and Turkey should be brought in.
>
> Ultimately: Ukraine, White Russia, Baltic States to us. Finland extended to the White Sea.
>
> 7 Divs. will stay in Norway (must be made self-sufficient).
> Ammunition
> 50 Divs. in France.
> 3 Divs. in Holland and Belgium.
> 60 Divs.
> 120 Divs, for the East.
> 180 Divs.

> The greater the number of Divs. we have at the start, the better. We have 120 Divs. plus 20 Furlough Divs. Activations of new Divs. by withdrawal of three Bns. from existing Divs., in three stages, at intervals of several months, (in all 1/3 of every Div.).
>
> Spread rumors: Spain, North Africa, Britain. Activations in areas safe from aerial incursions. In Eastern area: Forty Divs., with battle-seasoned troops.
>
> Projected Balkans settlement. Proposed arrangement between Hungary and Romania, to be followed by guaranty for Romania.[12]

There are several key points that must be underscored in this initial guidance to the Army. First, the objective of the campaign, as outlined by Hitler, was the "destruction of Russian manpower;" virtually identical to the U.S. Army concept of the objective in 1939-1940. Secondly, he proposed to accomplish this objective through two deep penetrations, one north through the Baltic States and a drive on Moscow and the second in the south toward Kiev. After achieving these objectives a great, sweeping envelopment was to link up the two armies. Coupled with this he proposed a limited drive on the Baku oil fields--an objective that lends nothing militarily to the main objective. In order to accomplish this he felt that a total of 180 divisions would be required by the German Army--120 for the East and Russia and 60 for the occupied countries of Europe. At that time the greatest strength the Army could muster was 140 divisions of which 20 were furlough divisions (basically deactivated). The outlined method of

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[12]Halder Diary, Vol. IV, p. 145, 31 July 1940.

activating the additional 40 required divisions may well have been a blow from which the German Army would never recover. Such a reduction in combat power produced tank and infantry divisions much weaker than those that were so successful in Poland, France and the low countries. At this point there appear to be only two serious weaknesses in Hitler's plan: the reduction in divisional combat power and the excursion toward Baku, a questionable economic objective but not an important military objective that would further the successful accomplishment of the overall objective, as outlined.

As part of the ongoing planning by General Marcks, Halder provided an update of the situation for Marcks after the former's return to OKH at Fontainebleau. It appears as though Halder took some liberties in outlining Hitler's concept to his subordinates at this point. Rather than stress a thrust into the Baltic States and then a drive on Moscow he simply reversed the priorities. He told Marcks "that the extension of the operations of the Moscow Group into the Baltic States should be treated as a subsidiary action that must not detract from the main thrust on Moscow.[13]

From this guidance, General Marcks refined his planning and by the early part of August completed a draft plan for the Russian campaign (See Appendix 1, The Marcks Plan). General Marcks identified two strategic objectives in his plan:

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[13]Halder Diary, Vol. IV, p. 146, 1 August 1940.

initially to destroy the Russian armed forces and then to protect Germany from Russian air attack by occupying a line from Archangel to Gorki to Rostov. The principal operational objective of the Marcks Plan was Moscow--the political, economic and spiritual center of the Soviet Union. He believed that the fall of Moscow would destroy the communist state. While the Marcks Plan disregarded Halder's concept of a "single thrust" toward Moscow, it was not too different from the concept that Hitler had outlined on 31 July. Apparently, Halder accepted the plan--at least outwardly. This acceptance may have been based on the fact that he knew that it was similar to Hitler's. For all practical purposes this plan was to remain the basic draft concept prepared by OKH for the invasion until early September 1940, when General Friedrich Paulus was assigned to OKH as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations.

When General Paulus reported for duty on 3 September General Halder gave him the task of refining the OKH plan. He was instructed to investigate all attack possibilities and to assume that 130-140 divisions would be available for the operation. He was also instructed to consider using Rumania as a staging area for the German southern wing.[14]

While the OKH staff was busy with the original Marcks Plan and the subsequent revisions that took place under

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[14] Griener, Operation Barbarossa, pp. 8-9.

General Paulus, the OKW staff was also engaged in producing its own plan for the Russian Campaign. The task fell primarily on Lieutenant Colonel Bernhard von Lossberg. During the month of August and through early September Lossberg drafted a plan which was probably designed to provide General Jodl with a basis on which to develop his own ideas concerning the planned operation.[15] Lossberg completed his study, dated 15 September, and apparently presented it to General Jodl. (See Appendix 2, Lossberg Plan). In essence, the Lossberg Plan had four strategic objectives:

> To destroy the mass of the Soviet Army in western Russia, to prevent the withdrawal of battleworthy elements into the depth of Russia, and then, having cut western Russia off from the seas, to advance to a line which will place the most important part of Russia in our hands and on which it will be easy to form a shield against Asiatic Russia.[16]

The plan developed by Lossberg was actually quite similar to the Marcks Plan. Lossberg envisioned a three pronged attack with the army group in the center concentrating on Moscow via Smolensk. The Ukraine and the Baltic States were secondary objectives as they were in the Marcks Plan. Both Lossberg and Marcks viewed Moscow as the principal objective for the campaign. Both officers made similar estimates based on the terrain in the Soviet Union. It was undoubtedly obvious to both that the best road network in

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[15] Ibid., p. 9.

[16] Barry A. Leach, German Strategy Against Russia, 1939-1941 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 255.

Russia extended from Warsaw and East Prussia to Moscow via Minsk and Smolensk. This provided the most direct approach to their main objective but would limit maneuver. The forces would, in essence, be roadbound in this area. Another significant point that may have influenced these plans was that a main thrust north of the Pripet Marshes would result in the necessity to cross only one major river--the Dvina. A main attack south of the Pripet Marshes would have required crossing three major water obstacles--the Dniester, Bug and Dnieper Rivers. However, the terrain south of the Pripet Marshes would have provided better maneuver space and direct access to the agricultural potential of the Ukraine and eventually the Baku oil fields.

A comparison of the areas north and south of the Pripet Marshes indicates that the northern area provided the most direct access to Moscow and areas of military importance. The area to the south offered primarily economic advantages. Since the Army valued military victory above to economic advantages, the northern axis naturally became the main area of interest.

Within OKH, the months of September and October 1940 were consumed by a period of strategic planning for the Russian Campaign. General Paulus and his operations staff began to expand the Marcks Plan and produce a completed plan for the campaign. The concept envisioned by Paulus was identical to Marcks Plan as far as objectives were concerned.

The primary difference lay in the disposition of troops between Army Groups and the tactical maneuvers involved. Where Marcks planned a virtual frontal attack with deep penetrations and subsequent envelopment of the Russian Armies, Paulus considered that each Army Group should be of sufficient strength to conduct its own envelopment maneuvers in the early stages of the campaigns. Where Marcks allocated as much as a third of his available combat power to his reserve, Paulus reduced the size of the planned reserves and allocated these forces to the attacking echelons.[17]

Once the OKH plan was prepared in sufficient detail it was presented to General Halder for his approval on 29 October.[18] While the plan was still not a completed operational plan it was what might be termed a "final draft."

General Halder's diary indicates that General von Brauchitsch may not have been completely at ease with the plan. On 4 November Halder noted that von Brauchitsch "wants to put off presenting our plan until 18/20 November."[19]

Possibly as a result of this attitude or simply in the course of normal staff procedures, the plan was subjected to a detailed war gaming session.

Under General Paulus' direction the plan was tested by a war game at OKH. The purpose of the exercise was

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[17] Ibid., pp. 102-103.

[18] Halder Diary, Vol. IV, p. 252, 29 October 1940.

[19] Ibid., Vol. V, p. 8, 4 November 1940.

> The formulation of the basic idea and an exchange of views regarding the plan, to serve as a basis for the working out of the real plan for the consideration of forces by the Operations Branch.[20]

During the course of the war game only questions of strategy were considered. Other considerations dealing with the campaign were ignored.[21] It appears as though some thought was given, however, to logistics aspects since the question of the supply situation vis-a-vis the timetable for the campaign was given some consideration.[22] The first objective selected during the exercise was the line between the Upper Dnieper and the Dvina Rivers--Lake Peipus. It was felt that this line could be reached in about three weeks of combat. This line was chosen,

> . . . partly for reasons of the terrain and partly because it was recognized that the troops would require a breathing space and the opportunity to organize a defensive line, before embarking on the presumably imminent and decisive battle before them.[23]

This pause would last for about three weeks before resuming the advance on Moscow.[24] During the course of the war game the date for resuming the advance on Moscow was referred to as "X+day."[25] Several conclusions were drawn from the

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[20]Walter Goerlitz, Paulus and Stalingrad, trans. by R. H. Stevens (New York: The Citadel Press, 1963), p. 100.

[21]Ibid. [22]Ibid., p. 101. [23]Ibid., p. 103.

[24]Ibid., p. 116.

[25]Ibid., p. 120. If 22 June 1941 was X+day then the final advance on Moscow should have begun on 30 July 1941 and not eight weeks later as actually occurred.

study; the most important of which was the "German forces were barely sufficient for the purpose."[26] While both Generals Halder and Paulus were aware of the conclusions reached in the war game, neither made a serious attempt, at least at this time, to seek a change in the task given the German Army.[27] While the war game was still in progress von Brauchitsch and Halder briefed Hitler on the OKH plan on 5 December. The war game was not concluded until at least the 7th of December, two days after briefing Hitler.[28] Here, Halder and von Brauchitsch may be accused of what soldiers the world over refer to as "incomplete staff work" by presenting Hitler with a plan that was not completely thought out and examined for flaws.

During the course of the 5 December briefing for Hitler on the OKH plan for the invasion Halder discussed the geographical aspects of the Soviet Union and pointed out the locations of the major armaments centers. He then outlined the Army concept of the three-pronged attack directed at Leningrad in the north, Moscow in the center and Kiev in the

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[26] Ibid., p. 106.

[27] Paulus admitted after the war that the final objective was "far beyond anything that the German forces available could hope to achieve." See: Goerlitz, Paulus and Stalingrad, p. 196. After over ten years as a POW in the Soviet Union Paulus appears to have adopted a somewhat different outlook. Since he never returned to the West prior to his death in 1957 some of his opinions may have been influenced by his circumstances.

[28] Halder Diary, Vol. V, p. 59, 7 December 1940.

south. In general, Hitler expressed his approval of the concept.

Hitler's stated objective for the campaign was again driven home to the Army; "to prevent the Russians from withdrawing in a body, to prevent the Russian Air Force from attacking Germany and place the German Air Force in a position where they could attack the Russian armaments industry.[29]

The end result of the 5 December conference was the preparation of a new "Fuehrer Directive" by the OKW Operation Staff. The first drafts of the directive that was to become Fuehrer Directive Number 21 were in keeping with the overall Army concept for the campaign. The final OKW draft was prepared by General Walter Warlimont and his staff. According to Warlimont the Operations Staffs at OKW and OKH were usually in agreement concerning the planning for the eastern campaign.[30] "When Jodl presented the draft of the directive to him on 17 December he [Hitler] ordered a considerable alteration."[31]

This alteration shifted the main attack from the direction of Moscow to Leningrad. All along it had been the

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[29]Griener, Operation Barbarossa, p. 49.

[30]Walter Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 1939-45, trans. R. H. Barry (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), p. 138.

[31]Ibid.

Army's contention that the main attack directed at Moscow was the best method of forcing the main body of the Russian Army to stand and fight so it could be defeated. The directive was again revised and presented for Hitler's signature on 18 December 1940.[32] The code name selected by Hitler for the operation was Barbarossa.

Thus, with the mere stroke of the pen, Hitler changed considerably the concept of the operation. It appears that he gave little thought to the fact that the OKH plan was the product of the best military minds in Germany and had been carefully checked and was gamed by the general staff. This major change seems to have been quietly accepted by the Army. For example, between 18 December 1940 and 15 January 1941 General Halder does not make note of this change in his diary or even enter the codeword "Barbarossa" until 16 January 1941.[33]

At the end of 1940, after some five months of planning for a campaign of major importance, the Army was faced with reorienting its main objective in the coming Russian campaign. The target date for the invasion was still planned for May 1941, only five months in the future. The time remaining was

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[32]See Appendix 3 for the text of Fuehrer Directive Number 21, Operation Barbarossa.

[33]The fact that Halder was on leave from his duties between 25 December 1940 and 15 January 1941 may account, in part at least, for the lack of any comment during this period.

growing short, much remained to be accomplished. Hitler had disapproved an important portion of the Army plans for Russia while at the same time the staff had to continue to plan for the projected incursions in Gibralter (Operation Felix) and Greece (Operation Marita). The OKH staff was placed in a rather difficult position, one from which it had to quickly extricate itself if it was to continue to function properly.

CHAPTER IV

OPERATIONAL PLANNING, JANUARY TO JUNE 1941

After the Fuehrer Directive of December 1940 was issued, the armed forces were faced with preparing operational plans to implement the directive. Each of the services set about preparing its own directives and operational plans in accordance with the guidance contained in Directive Number 21. Since the invasion of the Soviet Union was scheduled to take place in May 1941 there was little time to be wasted. The Army had the most difficult task of all the services in that it was also required to plan the redeployment of hundreds of thousands of troops from Western Europe to staging areas in East Prussia and Central Poland while concurrently developing the ground tactical plan for the invasion. Even though the invasion was still five months in the future, this did not mean that the OKH had that much time available.[1] Sufficient time had to be

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[1] As a comparison, planning for the Allied invasion of France in 1944 began as early as 1942 with initial U.S. War Department studies. The joint U.S./British planning staff met officially for the first time on 17 April 1943. Final planning for the cross-channel invasion did not begin until December 1943 when Dwight Eisenhower was named Supreme Allied Commander. See: Gordon A. Harrison, The European Theater of Operations, Cross-Channel Attack (Washington: U.S. Department of the Army, 1951), p. 47, and Forrest C. Pogue, D-Day 1944 (Lawrence, KS.: The University Press of Kansas, 1971), pp. 12-13.

allocated to subordinate commanders to study the overall plan and develop their own supporting studies and operational plans.

General Friedrich Paulus had the primary responsibility for preparing the Army plan for Operation Barbarossa under the supervision and guidance of General Halder. On his return from leave on 16 January General Halder noted that "work on assembly orders" was in progress.[2] By 23 January Paulus had completed the draft deployment directive and presented it to Halder. On 29 January Halder briefed Field Marshal von Brauchitsch on the contents of the proposed directive. Field Marshal von Brauchitsch concurred with the deployment directive.[3] The deployment directive included also a plan for the allocation of general headquarters troops and a transportation plan to assemble the entire force in the East. While von Brauchitsch agreed with the deployment directive he did not sign the directive until 3 February. This delay in signing the directive was necessitated by a requirement for Hitler to personally approve the Army plan.[4] The presentation of the OKH plan for Hitler's approval required almost six hours from start to finish.[5] There can be no question that the plan

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[2]Halder Diary, Vol. V., p. 86, 16 January 1941.

[3]Ibid., Vol. V., p. 99, 29 January 1941.

[4]Fuehrer Directive No. 21 required that the Army submit its plan to Hitler for approval whereas the Navy and Air Force were not required to do so. This seems to indicate that Hitler had a lack of confidence in the Army Commander in Chief and the General Staff.

[5]Halder Diary, Vol. V, p. 103, 3 February 1941.

was examined in great detail in such a long period of time. Hitler approved the OKH plan as presented to him. It is interesting to note that the OKH Deployment Directive (See Appendix 4) addressed operations for the campaign only up to a north-south line Leningrad-Smolensk-Kiev. Army Group "Center," commanded by Field Marshal Fedor von Bock, was tasked to:

> *Commit strong mobile forces from the Warsaw-Sulwalki area to force a breakthrough towards Smolensk. This will permit the turning of strong formations to the north in order to cooperate with Army Group 'North.'*[6]

The OKH Deployment Directive of January 1941 followed the guidance provided by Hitler in his December 1940 directive except it outlined a three-pronged attack vice a two-pronged operation. The objectives to be attained were identical. Perhaps this change was an attempt by the Army to lay the ground work for eventually securing Hitler's approval for a main thrust toward Moscow with supporting attacks on each flank; especially when one considers that Moscow had always been considered to be the main objective by the Army. The three-pronged attack facilitated control over the numerous divisions involved and reduced the number of divisions controlled by an Army Group. This was crucial, given the vast expanses of terrain over which the units were to operate.

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[6]Leach, German Strategy, p. 264.

While the OKH operations department was preparing the "deployment directive" other activities were already in progress. As early as 23 January the shift of divisions from the occupied countries of Western Europe to the East was under way. The Army Group Commanders (Field Marshals von Leeb, von Bock, and von Rundstedt) for Operation Barbarossa had been briefed on the invasion and had initiated map studies within their individual staffs for detailed study of the campaign.[7] The map exercises lasted approximately a month and provided the basis for detailed operational planning within the Army Groups.

Planning for Operation Barbarossa progressed satisfactorily at all levels of command within the Army during February and most of March. Problems that were encountered were, for the most part, resolved internally. Questions of how armor and infantry units were to be used within Army Groups was a matter of some concern within OKH. For example, Army Group Center proposed to employ heavy armor forces on the flanks of its attack without infantry support, the infantry being employed only in the center. A situation such as this, while leading to dangerous gaps where the infantry failed to maintain its progress, would have allowed the highly mobile armored units to strike deep in the Russian rear areas.

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[7] Halder Diary, Vol. V, p. 92, 23 January 1941.

Other areas examined by OKH during this period included updated estimates of Soviet strength, both ground and air force units, availability of engineer bridging assets, and the ability of the logistics system to meet the demands that would be placed upon it. No major problems in planning the invasion occurred until the middle of March.

On 17 March Field Marshal von Brauchitsch had a rather long conversation with Hitler concerning certain problems regarding the pending operations in Greece. The end result being that Hitler diverted units to the planned Greek invasion previously assigned to Army Group South for the Russian invasion. Hitler also directed modifications to the approved OKH deployment directive changing the direction of Army Group South's main attack.[8] While this change did not have any major impact upon the plan as a whole, it was an example of Hitler personally directing the internal affairs of the Army--a situation that progressively worsened as time passed.

Some nine days later, the Yugoslav coup d'etat of 26 March produced a series of actions by Hitler that many historians and generals have credited with resulting in the eventual failure of Operation Barbarossa.[9] At 1200 hours on

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[8]Griener, Operation Barbarossa, pp. 94-95.

[9]See: B. H. Liddell Hart, History of the Second World War (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), p. 131; Vincent J. Esposito, A Concise History of World War II (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), pp. 131-132; Harold MacMillan, The Blast of War 1939-1945 (New York: Harper &

26 March,[10] Hitler summoned his military leaders to him and demanded the "earliest possible march into Yugoslavia."[11] While the order to invade Yugoslavia may have surprised the Army, they were not completely unprepared for operations in the Balkans.

Since the fall of 1940 OKH had been planning the invasion of Greece (Operation Marita) for the spring of 1941. Marita was planned to begin as soon as weather conditions allowed. By late January the forces to take part in the operation were scheduled to complete their final assembly in Romania on 26 March. The target date for Operation Marita was to be on or about 1 April.[12] OKH was faced with expanding not only the area of operations but adding combat units and headquarters elements to control the larger undertaking. This task was quickly accomplished by OKH and the expanded operation began on 6 April.

Row, 1967), p. 111; Heinz Guderian, Panzer Leader (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1952), p. 145; and Walter Goerlitz, Paulus and Stalingrad (New York: The Citadel Press, 1963), p. 126.

[10]Halder's Diary indicates that he was called the Reichschancellory at 1200 hours for a conference to begin at 1300 hours, 26 March, concerning the Yugoslav coup d'etat. Numerous other sources indicate that the coup d'etat did not take place until the night of 26-27 March 1941. Halder made no diary entries whatsoever on 27 March so it is likely that he dated the entry incorrectly.

[11]Halder Diary, Vol. VI, p. 37, 26 March 1941.

[12]U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, The German Campaign In The Balkans (Washington: U.S. Department of the Army, 1953), pp. 13, 15.

At approximately the same time that the Balkan campaign was begun it became necessary to postpone the start of Operation Barbarossa.[13] The rationale for the postponement being that the additional units allocated to the Balkans were needed for Russia. Time had to be provided for the conduct of the Balkan Campaign and subsequent reassembly of the units involved prior to their deployment to Russia. On 28 March General Halder, in a conversation with one of his subordinates stated, "make the best use of the postponement of Barbarossa which gives us at least four weeks."[14] No new date was officially set at this time for beginning Barbarossa but it can be assumed that a four week delay from 15 May would place the date somewhere around the middle of June. Due to the rapid success of the German Army the Yugoslavs capitulated on 17 April and the Greek campaign ended by 30 April. As a result of the rapid victories Hitler, on 30 April, selected 22 June as the date that Operation Barbarossa would begin.[15]

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[13] Greiner, Operation Barbarossa, p. 113.

[14] Halder Diary, Vol. VI, p. 39, 28 March 1941.

[15] Numerous historians have claimed that the delay of Barbarossa from 15 May to 22 June resulted in the German failure to capture Moscow in the fall of 1941. This claim is not valid. The operation could not have begun under any circumstances on 15 May because of the late spring thaws in Russia and Eastern Poland. Even as late as the middle of June there was still heavy flooding along many Russian and Polish rivers. See: Herman Mueller-Hillebrand, The German Campaign In The Balkans (Washington: U.S. Department of the Army, 1950), MS #P-030, p. 69. Martin L. Van Creveld, in his Hitler's Strategy 1940-1941 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973),

Undoubtedly, Hitler was convinced that his plan for the defeat of the Soviet Union would be successful. Even within the Army there was little, if any, serious doubt concerning a relatively quick victory over the Soviet Union. Even before Barbarossa was launched Hitler was already looking ahead to future conquest after the fall of Russia.

Fuehrer Directive Number 32 concerning the period after Barbarossa was drafted on 11 June and forwarded (unsigned) to the Armed Services Chiefs on 19 June.[16] In general terms it dealt with driving the British from North Africa and the Mediterranean along with a drive into the Middle East and an eventual landing in the British Isles. Such ambitious goals were certainly based on a belief that Operation Barbarossa would be not only successful but speedy, otherwise there was no reason to issue such a directive before its need could be foreseen.

While the tacticians were busily preparing detailed plans for the invasion and Hitler was occupied with thoughts of where he would direct his armies after Russia, the

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pp. 170-176 maintains that the diversion of units from Barbarossa to the Balkans had little, if any effect, on the Russian Campaign. He states rather clearly that "irrespective of the Balkan campaign, the offensive against Russia could not have started much earlier than it did."

[16] H. R. Trevor-Roper, ed., Blitzkrieg to Defeat, Hitler's War Directives, 1939-1945 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 78-82.

intelligence officers of the OKH were attempting to refine their estimates of Soviet strength. As early in the planning sequence as August 1940 the first intelligence estimates dealing with Soviet combat power appeared in General Marcks' initial plan. Marcks estimated that the Soviet Union had a total of 151 infantry divisions, 32 cavalry divisions and 38 motorized/mechanized brigades. Of this number only 96 infantry divisions, 23 cavalry divisions and 28 motorized/mechanized brigades could be deployed in the West against Germany. The remaining units were committed elsewhere. (See Appendix 1.) By 4 April 1941 the intelligence estimate of Soviet strength had been increased to a total of 171 infantry divisions, 36 cavalry divisions and 40 motorized-mechanized brigades[17]--approximately a 10 percent increase in strength. On 21 June, the eve of the invasion, Halder's diary contains another revised estimate of Soviet combat power that could be employed against Germany. The number of Soviet divisions at this time was estimated to be 216 or 69 more division size formations than intelligence estimates indicated some 10 months previously. This lack of accurate intelligence concerning Soviet combat power raises questions about the reliability of the German intelligence services. Thus hours before Operation Barbarossa began the German Army

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[17]Halder Diary, Vol. VI, p. 49, 4 April 1941.

was faced with a considerably larger number of Soviet divisions than originally believed.[18]

While estimates of Russian strength were being prepared, estimates of German combat power needed to defeat the Russians were likewise being developed. General Marcks originally estimated that the German Army should have available in the spring of 1941 a total of 147 combat divisions of various types. (See Appendix 1.) This figure did not include the divisions performing occupation duties in Scandinavia and the West. It is interesting to note that while intelligence estimates of Soviet divisions continued to rise no increase was made in the number of German divisions allocated to Operation Barbarossa. On June 22d, 148 German divisions of various types were committed to the three Army Groups that attacked the Soviet Union.[19]

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[18]German intelligence activities were severely restricted by the nature of the Soviet society. The most reliable information obtained by German intelligence came from radio intercepts. See: George E. Blau, The German Campaign In Russia--Planning and Operations (1940-1942) (Washington: U.S. Department of the Army, 1955) Pamphlet No. 20-261a, p. 42. For more detailed information concerning German radio intercepts see: Albert Praun, German Radio Intelligence (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Department of the Army, undated) Manuscript No. P-038, CONFIDENTIAL. The poor Soviet showing in the Russo-Finnish War (November 1939-March 1940) undoubtedly caused many German leaders, both military and civilian, to underrate Soviet military strength and capabilities. While there were some increases in the size of the Soviet Army during the period August 1940 to June 1941 they were not significant. The Germans were simply able to identify the existence of more formations during this period. There was no massive Soviet buildup. See: Albert Seaton, The Russo-German War 1941-45 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), pp. 17-18.

[19]Blau, The German Campaign In Russia, pp. 38-39.

While the number of German divisions allocated to Operation Barbarossa is of interest, particularly since it placed Germany in the position of attacking without the ratio of combat power in her favor--at least strategically, the assignment of these divisions to the three Army Groups conducting the attack is of great significance. The 148 German divisions[20] were allocated as follows: Army Group North-43; Army Group Center-51; Army Group South-30; and 24 divisions in the OKH general reserve.[21]

If one reads both Fuehrer Directive No. 21 (See Appendix 3) and the OKH Deployment Directive (See Appendix 4) critically and examines in detail the concept for the operation as outlined by Hitler and the Army General Staff it is very clear that the main effort of the attack was to be directed toward Leningrad (Army Group North) and Kiev (Army Group South). The task of Army Group Center was limited to the seizure of Smolensk and then to be prepared to assist Army

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[20]The exact number of German divisions committed to Barbarossa varies according to the source examined. Guderian (p. 151) indicates 145 divisions; Leach (p. 272) claims 148 plus 14 Rumanian; Blau (p. 38) contains a figure of 148 divisions. Halder (p. 160) indicates 141 divisions. All of these sources agree on the number of infantry, armored, motorized, and cavalry divisions. Difficulty in ascribing equivalent combat weight to "Special divisions" such as Security Divisions and Mountain Divisions appears to be the reason for the differences. When the totals for the number of divisions assigned to the three Army Groups are added to the general reserve the sum is 148. This figure is probably reasonably accurate.

[21]Blau, German Campaign, pp. 38 and 40.

Group North in the capture of the Baltic States and Leningrad. This being the case, the allocation of combat divisions to the Army Groups certainly raises the question of exactly where the main attack was to take place. If the main effort was to be made by the Army Groups in the North and South then it would appear reasonable that these Army Groups would have been individually more heavily weighted with combat power than Army Group Center.

Another example of allocation of combat power that causes one to further question where the OKH placed the main emphasis in Operation Barbarossa can be found in the Air Force assets. Each Army Group was allocated an entire Air Fleet for air support during the invasion and subsequent operations. Of importance is the fact that the Air Fleets were not of equal strength in combat aircraft. There were approximately 1940 combat aircraft of various types allocated to the three Air Fleets for Barbarossa. The Second Air Fleet supporting Army Group Center had a strength of 910 combat aircraft or about 47 percent of those available.[22] Similar allocations to Army Group Center were made for antiaircraft railway units and other Air Force assets.[23]

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[22]Herman Plocher, The German Air Force Versus Russia, 1941 (Montgomery, Alabama: U.S. Air Force, Air University, 1965), U.S. Air Force Historical Study No. 153, pp. 33-34.

[23]A possible explanation for the allocation of anti-aircraft railway units may lie in the fact that the more developed rail net was in Army Group Center's area of operations.

Once the OKH had finalized the troop lists for Operation Barbarossa the significant problem remaining was that of the assembly of units and supplies in the vicinity of the Soviet frontier. Unquestionably, this had to be accomplished with great secrecy if the attack was to make maximum use of the principle of surprise. A considerable number of historians have examined in detail whether or not the Soviet Union had been forewarned of the German attack thus eliminating the possibility of achieving strategic surprise. In determining the adequacy of German operational planning it matters not whether the leadership of the Soviet Union was aware of German intentions. If the Kremlin was forewarned, Soviet frontline commanders certainly appear not to have been. Thus at first light on 22 June 1941 the German Army launched its attack against the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER V

THE EXECUTION OF THE PLAN
JUNE TO DECEMBER 1941

The early morning hours of 22 June 1941 found Army Group Center deployed along a front extending almost 500 kilometers from north to south. Promptly at 0315 hours on 22 June the German Army launched its attack against the Russians. Army Group Center, under the command of Field Marshal Fedor von Bock, was by far the strongest of the three Army Groups taking part in the invasion.

Although von Bock expected to be successful in his attack, achievements during the early hours of the operation undoubtedly exceeded his expectations. The bridges over the Bug River were unguarded and were seized intact, many Russian troops were found in their quarters, and Russian aircraft were destroyed on their airfields. The troops of Army Group Center met little organized resistance during the first two days of the campaign. By evening on 23 June von Bock noted that his subordinate commanders were reporting increasing Russian resistance all along the front. Field Marshal von Bock noted in his diary that, "They will resort to anything to stop our progress."[1]

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[1]Fedor von Bock, General Feldmarshall von Bock Kriegstagebuch: Mai 1939-Mai 1945 (Washington: U.S. National Archives, n.d.), Microfilm No. T-84, 23 June 1941.

The specific objective of Army Group Center during the initial phases of Operation Barbarossa was to seize the Belorussian capital of Minsk, about 400 kilometers from the Soviet border. The Army Group operational plan envisioned accomplishing this mission by driving two deep armor wedges to encircle Minsk while maintaining direct pressure on the Russian formations with infantry units. After completing the encirclement, the enemy forces within it were to be destroyed prior to the Army Group continuing its drive east to Smolensk. After securing Smolensk the Army Group was to halt and release its armored units and motorized infantry to Army Group North for use against Leningrad.

After meeting with almost overwhelming success during the first two days of the campaign, Army Group Center found Soviet resistance becoming stronger although still quite disorganized. True to his character, von Bock drove his tank and infantry divisions relentlessly eastward toward Minsk. By 8 July, only 17 days after launching the attack, Army Group Center had completed the encirclement of Minsk and the destruction of the trapped Soviet units. Even though a rather significant number of Russian soldiers were able to successfully break out of the encirclement before Army Group Center could reinforce and tighten the ring, the victory attained by von Bock's forces was reminiscent of the victories achieved in Poland and France. Army Group Center estimates of the battle concluded that,

> Its opponents were four Russian armies comprising 32 rifle divisions, 8 armored divisions and 6 motorized brigades and cavalry divisions. Out of this total it has destroyed 22 rifle divisions, 7 armored divisions, 6 motorized brigades and 3 cavalry divisions. The remaining divisions were severely crippled by very high bloody losses. Figures counted up to 8 July: 289,874 prisoners (including several corps and division commanders); 2,585 captured and destroyed tanks (including heaviest types); 1,449 guns; 246 airplanes. Also large quantities of small arms, ammunition, and vehicles.[2]

German morale was high at this point in the campaign. Not only was von Bock's Army Group successful in the center; the commanders of the flanking Army Groups were finding their attacks moving with great speed. Optimism expressed by German leaders was justifiable. From all indications the mission of destroying the Russian Army west of the Dvina and Dnieper Rivers had been accomplished. For example, General Halder noted in his diary,

> It is thus probably no understatement to say that the Russian Campaign has been won in the space of two weeks. Of course, this does not yet mean that it is closed.[3]

While the victory at Minsk was being won, detailed plans were being developed at OKH for the next phase of the campaign.

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[2]Halder Diary, Vol. VI, p. 215, 9 July 1940. Also see von Bock Diary, 8 July 1940.

[3]Halder Diary, Vol. VI, p. 196, 3 July 1940. After the war, Halder edited his diary for use at the Nuremberg Tribunal and added numerous explanatory footnotes. To this entry he added, "This sentence meant only that the forces of the first Russian mobilization wave had been destroyed within two weeks from the opening of the war." This added footnote may have been strongly influenced by hindsight.

The OKH Deployment Directive of January 1941 envisioned operations by Army Group Center as far east as Smolensk. After the encirclement of Minsk, von Bock's forces were in a position to undertake operations directed at Smolensk, the last major objective before Moscow. Soon after launching Operation Barbarossa, von Bock saw Smolensk as an important objective in the campaign. He was of the opinion that Minsk itself could be bypassed and a much greater encirclement undertaken by extending the cordon to Smolensk.[4]

Both Hitler and the OKH were opposed to von Bock extending his operations as deep as Smolensk without first destroying the enemy units encircled between the border and Minsk. Based on the number of divisions available to von Bock and the distances involved, his concept was probably over ambitious. Army Group Center had difficulty tightening the encirclement at Minsk and holding the trapped Soviet units as it was. Extending the encirclement to include Smolensk would have only magnified the problem.

On 8 July Field Marshal von Brauchitsch and General Halder met with Hitler to secure approval for future operations. Both von Brauchitsch and Halder supported the continuation of Army Group Center's attack eastward toward Smolensk with the objective of destroying the Russian Armies in a battle at Smolensk. Hitler approved this concept but

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[4] von Bock Diary, 24 June 1941.

launched into a discussion of diverting to the adjacent Army Groups both of von Bock's armor groups after the battle of Smolensk.[5] This was not a new idea of Hitler's at all; it was outlined earlier by Hitler and in the OKH Deployment Directive. Hitler's discussion of diverting mobile units to the north and south was significant in that it indicated his desire to adhere to the original plan. Throughout the planning and execution phases Halder and von Brauchitsch both considered Moscow to be the prime objective in Barbarossa. No evidence is available to indicate that they ever felt differently. It appears that von Brauchitsch and Halder followed Hitler's guidance even though they believed it to be incorrect.

When Army Group Center was given the authority to strike towards Smolensk, von Bock was ready and eager to move his forces. Again advancing with fast moving armor and motorized infantry on the flanks of his infantry, he successfully completed another great encirclement. Units from Army Group Center entered Smolensk on 16 July. Due to the number of Russian units trapped in the encirclement, the pocket was not reduced until 5 August. The Soviet Union lost another 309,110 prisoners, 3,205 tanks captured or destroyed, and some 3,000 guns.[6] At this point in the campaign Army Group Center had accomplished the mission assigned with considerable

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[5] Halder Diary, Vol. VI, pp. 210-211, 8 July 1941.

[6] von Bock Diary, 5 August 1951.

distinction. In only 45 days von Bock had fought his units approximately two-thirds of the distance to Moscow. This was an average of about 18 kilometers per day--not a small feat for the dismounted infantry units and their horsedrawn supply wagons.

Throughout the period of Army Group Center's victory at Smolensk a number of important decisions were being made at Hitler's headquarters and within the OKH. On 19 July Hitler issued Fuehrer Directive Number 33 which stripped away both of von Bock's armor groups effective after the Smolensk pocket was reduced. One was to assist Army Group North and one to aid Army Group South. Army Group Center was directed to continue its advance toward Moscow with foot infantry.[7] Directive No. 33 was actually quite similar in nature to the verbal discussions that took place 8 July between Hitler, von Brauchitsch, and Halder.

On 23 July two significant events took place. First, Hitler issued a supplement to Directive No. 33 with the intention of insuring that his earlier wishes were to be executed. The objective in the south was now to be, not only Kiev, but Kharkov and the Crimea. The directive also stated that OKH would plan further operations so that large parts of Army Group North and some of the infantry units of Army Group South could be moved back to Germany as soon as feasible.[8]

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[7] Trevor-Roper, Blitzkrieg to Defeat, pp. 85-88.

[8] Ibid., pp. 89-90.

This supplement was a radical change from Hitler's previous positions.

The second event of 23 July was Halder's evening briefing for Hitler. After providing Hitler with a summary of the enemy situation Halder raised the question of the ultimate objectives of Operation Barbarossa. The net result of Halder's question was a lengthy tirade by Hitler concerning Army Group North's operations, the unimportance of Moscow versus the importance of Leningrad, and the projected drive toward the Crimea. Halder began his diary summary of the briefing as follows:

> He has settled in his mind the objectives specified in yesterdays OKW directive and sticks to them enemy or no enemy, or any other consideration.[9]

Halder ended his diary entry with, "Let's hope he is right . . . but all one can say is that time spent in such a conference is a sad waste."[10]

Halder's attempt to clarify the situation and possibly change Hitler's guidance obviously fell on deaf ears. Field Marshal von Brauchitsch also attempted to change Hitler's

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[9]Halder Diary, Vol. VI, p. 267, 23 July 1941.

[10]Ibid. At this point in the campaign both Halder and von Brauchitsch were attempting to influence Hitler and cause him to adopt Moscow as the main objective. When Hitler overruled them, they complied with the final decision but not necessarily willingly. The tone of Halder's diary entries for this period indicate that he believed that the OKH position was the correct one and that Hitler was wrong--nevertheless the order of his superior (Hitler) would be carried out.

mind in this instance. Upon von Brauchitsch's return to OKH from an inspection tour of the front he telephoned Field Marshal Keitel and protested that Hitler's instructions could not be carried out in the immediate future; maintenance and resupply being the main problems.[11] This action failed also.

By the end of July the German Army began to meet stiffer resistance all along the front and especially opposite Army Group Center. These events required Hitler to postpone for the moment the tasks and objectives laid down in Directive No. 33 and its supplement. On 30 July Fuehrer Directive Number 34 was issued. The introduction to this directive read:

> The development of the situation in the last few days, the appearance of strong enemy forces on the front and to the flanks of Army Group Centre, the supply position, and the need to give 2nd and 3rd Armoured Groups about ten days to rehabilitate their units, make it necessary to postpone for the moment the further tasks and objectives laid down in Directive 33 of 19th July and in the supplement of 23rd July.[12]

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[11] Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, p. 184.

[12] Trevor-Roper, Blitzkrieg to Defeat, p. 91. The wargaming conducted by the OKH Operations Section in December 1940 included a halt in offensive operations after about three weeks of combat to rest the troops and repair equipment. It was envisioned in the wargame that the attack would resume on the fortieth day of the campaign. Fuehrer Directive No. 34 was issued on the fortieth day of Barbarossa which would indicate that the campaign was about 10 days behind the original planning dates of December 1940. The six week postponement of the start of Barbarossa from May 15 to 22 June seems to have been overcome, for the most part, at this point. All Army Groups had essentially obtained the objectives selected in the OKH wargame for the early stages of the operation.

The remainder of the Directive instructed Army Groups North and South to continue operations with their assigned units; Army Group Center, while retaining both armor groups, was directed to halt its offensive and assume the defense except that attacks with limited objectives could be conducted.

Upon being informed that Hitler had changed his mind, General Halder wrote,

> This decision frees every thinking soldier of the horrible vision obsessing us these last few days, when the Fuehrer's obstinacy made the final bogging down of the eastern campaign appear imminent. At long last we get a break.[13]

It appears that this change of mind on Hitler's part was based completely on the situation in Russia as he saw it rather than any advice and counsel of his military advisers. The tactical and logistical situation required this change. This directive prevented, at least temporarily, the dispersion of combat power from von Bock to what was clearly, to the military, not the main objective.

On 4 August Hitler flew to Army Group Center Headquarters at Borisov for what von Bock expected to be a conference between the Fuehrer, himself and his two tank group commanders (Generals Heinz Guderian and Hermann Hoth). Rather than a conference, Hitler spoke individually to each of his generals concerning operations within the Army Group. Additionally he queried his armor commanders as to when they

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[13]Halder Diary, Vol. VI, p. 284, 30 July 1941.

would be ready for offensive operations again and promised to make available a number of replacement tank engines. During Hitler's discussion with von Bock, he asked von Bock when Army Group Center would reach Moscow. The response from von Bock was "by the end of August."[14] After the private discussions were concluded Hitler assembled all three officers and informed them of his objectives.

> He designated the industrial area around Leningrad as his primary objective. He had not yet decided whether Moscow or the Ukraine would come next. He seemed to incline towards the latter target for a number of reasons: first, Army Group South seemed to be laying the groundwork for a victory in that area; secondly, he believed that the raw materials and agricultural produce of the Ukraine were necessary to Germany for the further prosecution of the war; and finally he thought it essential that the Crimea, 'that Soviet aircraft carrier operating against the Rumanian oilfields,' be neutralized. He hoped to be in possession of Moscow and Kharkov by the time winter began. No decisions were reached on this day concerning those problems of strategy which we regarded as most important.[15]

The fourth of August was a very important day to von Bock and the Army. An opportunity presented itself for von Bock to possibly influence the outcome of the campaign and

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[14] von Bock Diary, 4 August 1941. Again von Bock may have been a little over ambitious in stating that he would reach Moscow by the end of the month. The planning directive for Barbarossa did not include Moscow as a primary objective and von Bock knew he was to have at least some of his mobile units taken away to assist Army Group North. von Bock seems to have assumed that with his existing task organization and rate of advance he could seize Moscow by the end of the month. The attitude was completely in keeping with von Bock's character.

[15] Guderian, Panzer Leader, pp. 189-90.

impress upon Hitler the need to continue toward Moscow without being diverted to other less important objectives. Guderian, Hoth, and von Bock all felt that Moscow was the primary objective of the entire campaign and its seizure would have great impact upon the course of the war.[16]

To date in the campaign von Bock had been the most successful of the three Army Group commanders. He had driven his units hard in difficult battles, captured hundreds of thousands of prisoners, destroyed thousands of enemy tanks and guns, and clearly had opened the road to Moscow. Fedor von Bock had reached the point where he could visualize sweeping away the ghost of Napoleon and see history recording success rather than failure. Not only did von Bock miss an opportunity to influence the campaign; the Army leadership, von Brauchitsch and Halder also failed completely to do so. The only representative from OKH present at Borisov on 4 August was Colonel Adolf Heusinger of the Operations Department.

For almost 12 months, from the early planning stages of Operation Barbarossa to the Battle of Smolensk, von Brauchitsch and Halder had considered Moscow to be the main objective of the campaign. It appears to be a serious error on their part for at least one of them not to have been present at Borisov to press the case for allowing Army Group Center

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[16]Ibid., p. 189.

to concentrate on Moscow. The reasons for their lack of involvement cannot be reconstructed but the importance of the day was too great to have placed their faith in the actions of the tactical commanders and a headquarters staff officer.[17]

On 7 August in what must have been an attempt to secure additional support for OKH plans, Halder had a private discussion with General Alfred Jodl, Chief of the OKW Operations Section. Halder began the discussion with a question: "What do we want, beat the enemy or pursue economic goals (Ukraine, Caucasus)?"[18] Jodl replied that, "The Fuehrer probably thinks that both could be achieved at the same time."[19] Halder went on to state that, "We must aim at complete victory by keeping our forces together for distant, decisive objectives, and by crippling blows, and must not fritter ourselves away on trivial objectives."[20] The meeting

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[17]The evidence that OKH, Halder in particular, was very concerned about Army Group Center continuing toward Moscow without delay or dispersion of forces is clear. On 6 August 1941 when Hitler visited Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, Commander, Army Group South, von Rundstedt emphasized to Hitler the importance of Moscow. Such an action is not commonplace among military commanders. Halder requested (directed?) that von Rundstedt intercede with Hitler on this occasion. See: Halder Diary, Vol. VII, p. 23, 6 August 1941.

[18]Halder Diary, Vol. VII, p. 25, 7 August 1941.

[19]Ibid., p. 25. See also Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, pp. 186-87.

[20]Ibid., p. 25.

ended with Halder feeling that Jodl accepted the validity of the OKH arguments and that he would assist by attempting to influence Hitler in that direction.

From a review of subsequent developments it seems as though Halder's impressions of Jodl were correct. On 10 August Jodl submitted to Hitler an analysis of the situation which asserted that the enemy was strongest opposite Army Group Center and, therefore, the most important objective was the destruction of this enemy force followed by the seizure of Moscow. Jodl went on to point out that while operations in the North and South might appear important they must not interfere with operations directed against Moscow. He recommended that an attack against the enemy forces facing Army Group Center be launched at the end of August with infantry holding the enemy in the center and armored forces driving deep on the flanks--a classic double envelopment.[21]

In Jodl's analysis of the situation one finds a very thorough understanding of the principle of the objective. He understood completely that the ultimate objective was the destruction of the enemy and that every other goal was at best only secondary.

On 12 August a supplement to Fuehrer Directive Number 34 was issued by the OKW under Keitel's signature. From all

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[21] Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, p. 187. Warlimont was Jodl's principal assistant in the OKW Operations Section throughout this period.

appearances some progress had been made in directing Hitler's attention toward what the Army considered the primary objective of the entire campaign--Moscow. In general the supplement assigned specific objectives to all Army Groups. The task of Army Group South was to prevent the establishment of a continuous defense along the Dnieper River, occupy the Crimean Peninsula, and seize the Donets-Kharkov area. Army Group Center was to reduce several Soviet salients into its flanks, complete rehabilitation of its armor groups, and prepare to attack Moscow on a wide front. Army Group North was to encircle Leningrad prior to the Moscow offensive. No mention was made of diverting any units from Army Group Center to assist at Leningrad or in the Ukraine. The fact that Army Group Center did not lose any of its units to the other Army Groups and that Moscow was clearly stated as an objective was the key point of the supplement. This notion was further reinforced by a concluding sentence in the tasking for Army Group Center:

> The object of operations must then be to deprive the enemy, before the coming of winter, of his government, armament, and traffic center around Moscow, and thus prevent the rebuilding of his defeated forces and the orderly working of government control.[22]

At this point von Bock and his Army Group were approximately 260 kilometers from Moscow--and at the current average rate of advance only 15 days away.

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[22]Trevor-Roper, Blitzkrieg to Defeat, p. 94.

The apparent success by Jodl and Halder in their efforts with Hitler was quite shortlived. As a result of some local setbacks in Army Group North, which both Halder and the Army Group Commander felt could be contained with available forces, Hitler ordered that an armored corps (1 tank and 2 motorized infantry divisions) be taken from Army Group Center and sent north to assist. Field Marshal von Brauchitsch returned to OKH from Hitler's headquarters on 15 August and ordered General Halder to complete the transfer of the armor group to Army Group North. This move was only the first step; soon Army Group Center was to be completely without armor and motorized infantry units.

While Halder was drafting the necessary orders to comply with Hitler's latest directive, von Bock called on the telephone. After discussing the tactical situation in general terms, Halder informed von Bock of the impending transfer of units to the north. von Bock became furious. He claimed that it was impossible to comply with the order as his armor divisions had already begun overhauling their tanks and couldn't move. He also protested that the loss of an armor group would weaken his force to such a degree that it would be ineffective.[23] Nevertheless, he agreed to comply.

In what might be termed one last, concerted effort to force Operation Barbarossa back to its planned course, Halder

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[23]Halder Diary, Vol. VII, p. 47, 15 August 1941.

directed his operations staff to prepare an aide-memoire dealing with the conduct of future operations by Army Group Center. On 18 August Halder submitted the document to his immediate superior, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch.[24] The same day under General Warlimont's direction the operations staff of OKW prepared a similar document for Jodl.[25] Both documents stressed again the arguments for keeping Moscow as the main objective and asserted that Army Groups South and North had sufficient combat power already assigned to accomplish their missions.

Whether or not Jodl put to use the analysis prepared by his staff is unknown.[26] On the other hand, von Brauchitsch passed the aide-memoire prepared by the OKH on to Hitler, undoubtedly with the hope that it would influence Hitler to change his mind. During the morning hours of 21 August Keitel informed Halder that Hitler had not yet reached a decision on the next steps in the campaign but that Hitler was still insisting that Leningrad and the Ukraine were of prime importance.[27]

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[24] Halder Diary, Vol. VII, p. 52, 18 August 1941.

[25] Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, p. 188.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Halder Diary, Vol. VII, p. 58, 21 August 1941.

General Halder did not have long to wait for Hitler's response to the OKH aide-memoire. He received a written reply from Hitler on 22 August in the form of new orders. Hitler's reply began: "The proposals of OKH for the continuance of this campaign in the East, dated 18 August, do not conform with my intentions."[28]

The memorandum continued with a reiteration that Moscow was not the most important objective but that the occupation of the Crimea and the Russian oil supplies in the Caucasus in the South and in the North the encirclement of Leningrad and a linkup with the Finns were the main objectives. All of these tasks were to be accomplished before the onset of winter. These tasks were not altogether new to OKH. Hitler did add a new requirement to encircle the Soviet Fifth Army in the vicinity of Kiev. He also directed that Army Group Center remain on the defensive with what troops were left to it until all the missions outlined in the supplement to Fuehrer Directive Number 34 had been accomplished. Halder's reaction to the memorandum, with the benefit of hindsight, was quite an understatement. Referring to the memorandum, he wrote, "it is decisive for the outcome of this campaign."[29]

Hitler was not content with simply forcing his own views on tactics and strategy on the Army. Hitler seized the opportunity provided by his rejection of the Army concepts

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[28]Ibid., p. 59, 22 August 1941. [29]Ibid.

for the campaign to add "insult to injury" by sending a memorandum to Field Marshal von Brauchitsch reproaching him for failure to conduct Barbarossa along the lines directed and accusing von Brauchitsch of a lack of leadership in that he allowed himself to be easily influenced by his subordinates. Hitler further accused the Army of not being able to "generally grasp these ideas and act upon them without further ado."[30]

Halder and von Brauchitsch discussed both memoranda in some detail. Needless to say, the impact on both officers was quite serious. Halder's diary entry for 22 August gives one a clear view of the result of Hitler's action:

> In my view the situation resulting from the Fuhrer's interference is intolerable for the Army. These individual instructions by the Fuehrer produce a situation of order, counter-order and disorder and no one can be held responsible but he himself personally; OKH as now constituted is engaged on its fourth victorious campaign and its reputation should not be sullied by the instructions now received. In addition the way the Commander-in-Chief has been treated is a scandal. I have accordingly suggested to the Commander-in-Chief that he should ask to be relieved of his office and propose that I should also be relieved at the same time. Commander-in-Chief refuses because he considers that in practice he would not be relieved and there would therefore be no change.[31]

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[30] Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, p. 191. Also see: Halder Diary, Vol. VII, p. 61, 22 August 1941.

[31] Halder Diary, Vol. VII, p. 61. 22 August 1941. Halder's suggestion that he and von Brauchitsch request relief from their duties indicates the seriousness with which he viewed Hitler's actions. Such a move on the part of a general officer is not made lightly. The attitude of von Brauchitsch is quite different. He appears to have resigned himself to simply obeying the oath he gave to Hitler, no matter what the consequences were.

From the available evidence it appears that Halder made one last effort to salvage the situation. On 23 August he flew to von Bock's headquarters for a meeting with the Army Group commander and General Guderian to inform them of Hitler's latest decisions. All three officers were in agreement that any diversion from the main objective (Moscow) would be a serious error.[32] At the suggestion of von Bock, it was agreed that Guderian would accompany Halder to Hitler's headquarters where he could, "lay the relevant facts immediately before Hitler and thus support a last attempt on the part of OKH to make him agree to their plan."[33]

Upon Guderian's arrival at Hitler's headquarters he reported to Field Marshal von Brauchitsch who, according to Guderian, informed him that the decision had been made and it was not open to further discussion. The Field Marshal even went so far as to say, "I forbid you to mention the question of Moscow to the Fuehrer."[34] Nevertheless, Guderian spoke with Hitler in the presence of several others, possibly Keitel and Jodl. After Hitler broached the general subject of Moscow and asked Guderian's opinion, Guderian proceeded to elaborate on his views of Moscow being the key to success--

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[32]Guderian, Panzer Leader, p. 198. [33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., p. 199. This statement seems to be further evidence indicating that von Brauchitsch had resigned himself to the fact that Hitler's will would be done and that Halder, by bringing Guderian to the headquarters, had yet to give up the fight..

all to no avail.[35]

The final result of Hitler's 21 August memorandum was to strip away all of Army Group Center's mobile units. These tank and motorized units were assigned to both Army Group North and South to assist in accomplishing the priority missions assigned by Hitler. The results of the diversion of these divisions is history. Army Group North completed its encirclement of Leningrad on 8 September but failed to linkup with the Finns. In the south, the Battle of Kiev was brought to a close on 26 September. Not only did Army Group South encircle and destroy the Soviet Fifth Army as envisioned by Hitler, it also trapped the major portions of several other armies.

The assertion that the Battle of Kiev was a tactical success is unchallengeable. The Red Army suffered an enormous defeat at the hands of the Germans. According to German statistics the battle netted 665,000 prisoners, 884 tanks and 3,718 guns captured or destroyed.[36] The victory allowed Army Group South to occupy the Ukraine, most of the Crimea, and the Donets Basin. The important point here is that although

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[35]Guderian was the only representative of the OKH present. On such an important subject, one wonders why von Bock, Halder, or von Brauchitsch did not at least accompany Guderian to the meeting. Two possible explanations exist: (1) von Brauchitsch's demonstrated attitude would not allow it; or (2) according to Warlimont, Guderian was considered by OKH as the most likely to be successful since he was well-liked by Hitler and it would be better if he were not hampered by those not in favor at the moment. See: Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters, p. 191.

[36]Leach, German Strategy, p. 222.

the victory at Kiev was a huge one, it lent nothing to the success of operations directed toward Moscow, with one possible exception: The destruction of the Soviet forces in the south did provide a much more secure right flank for Army Group Center. Had this not been the case and Army Group Center continued toward Moscow it could have been faced with strong counterattacks from the south.

Based almost entirely on the relatively swift accomplishment of the Army Group South and North missions, Hitler issued Fuehrer Directive Number 35 on 6 September. In essence, the directive ordered a continuation of operation in the north and south along with a transfer of armor and motorized infantry units back to Army Group Center. Army Group Center was tasked to destroy, by envelopment, the Soviet armies between Smolensk and Moscow and then advance on Moscow itself. The end of September was mentioned in the directive as a planning date for Army Group Center to launch its attack since time was needed to move the tank and motorized infantry units back under its control.[37] Thus, Army Group Center, after having its mobile units diverted for approximately 45 days, would again be attacking toward Moscow.

Field Marshal von Bock launched his attack on 30 September in accordance with Directive Number 35. Within a few days his units had successfully enveloped many Soviet

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[37]Trevor-Roper, Blitzkrieg to Defeat, pp. 96-98.

divisions in the vicinity of Vyasma and Bryansk, west and southwest of Moscow respectively. While the reduction of these pockets proved to be time consuming they yielded another 673,098 prisoners, 1,277 tanks and 4,378 heavy artillery pieces destroyed or captured.[38] While the encirclements at Vyazma and Bryansk were being reduced, advance elements from the Fourth Panzer Army pushed to the banks of the Moscow River near Naro Fominsk approximately 65 kilometers southwest of Moscow.

While the Russians had prepared numerous defensive positions between Smolensk and Moscow to halt Army Group Center, they were, for the most part, unsuccessful. The Soviet Army defended every inch of ground with great courage and tenacity but nothing they did had as much bearing on the course of the battle as did the change in weather. The early days of October brought with it periods of rain and snow. This adverse weather soon turned the few available roads into almost bottomless pits of mud. Army Group Center's rate of advance was reduced almost completely to the speed of men marching in a quagmire.

Until the ground became suitable again for vehicular movement the lack of sufficient fuel, ammunition and rations moving forward to frontline units determined to a large degree the pace of the battle. The trafficability did not improve

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[38] von Bock Diary, 19 October 1941.

to any significant degree until the first week of November when freezing temperatures arrived. Although the frozen ground aided mobility, it caused other problems such as difficulty starting vehicle engines, frozen lubricants on weapons of all caliber and cold-related injuries among the troops.[39]

The month of November saw Army Group Center continue to attack in the direction of Moscow. While progress toward the Soviet capital continued to be made it was very, very slow. All along the front Soviet resistance was stronger than ever before. The situation of Army Group Center on 22 November is perhaps illustrative of the entire month. According to Halder, von Bock himself had personally taken charge of the battle for Moscow from an advanced command post. "von Bock compares the situation with that of the Marne, where the last battalion that could be thrown in turned the balance."[40] Several days earlier von Brauchitsch and Halder both exhibited concern about the prospects of seizing Moscow. "He [von Brauchitsch] is very impatient because our chances of getting

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[39]The impact of the Russian winter upon the men and machines was more a result of the failure of the logistics system to move required material to the front as opposed to a failure to plan for such items. When the transport system faced difficulties in October only high priority items such as petroleum products, ammunition, and rations were moved forward for the most part. For example, Halder's Diary is replete with entries dealing with the question of winter clothing during the months of August-October 1941. Also Heinz Guderian, Panzer Leader, p. 252 makes reference to the breakdown in the supply system.

[40]Halder Diary, Vol. VII, p. 176, 22 November 1941.

closer to Moscow are growing less and less. A question of will power!"[41]

The concern of OKH for the battle before Moscow was further exhibited at the Orsha conference on 13 November. The conference was called by Halder. The three army groups and the subordinate armies sent their chiefs of staff. The purpose of the conference was to determine whether offensive operations should continue or be halted until spring.[42] The general feeling was that the attack should continue. In Army Group Center, the prospect of continuing the fight was far better than spending the remainder of the winter in the open so near Moscow.[43]

Continue the offensive throughout Russia they did. While it may be speculated that it would have been better to withdraw to defensible positions, shorten supply lines and rebuild reduced-strength combat units. This would mean that the same ground would have to be retaken in the spring--a prospect not looked upon favorably by soldiers. There was still the possibility that the "last battalion" would break-through to Moscow.

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[41]Ibid., p. 168, 18 November 1941.

[42]Ibid., p. 162, 13 November 1941.

[43]Turney, Disaster at Moscow, p. 139.

On 27 November the Chief Supply and Administrative Officer of OKH reported to General Halder, "We are at the end of our resources in both personnel and material. . . . Situation particularily difficult north of Moscow."[44]

The last few days of November and early December saw Army Group Center simply grind to a halt. Units were to the point of being combat ineffective as a result of casualties and equipment losses. Temperatures were as low as -40 degrees Fahrenheit. Casulaties from frostbite were becoming more numerous than those resulting from enemy action.

On 6 December Soviet units facing von Bock's Army Group launched an attack. Although it was not of sufficient size or force to drive the Germans from the battlefield it was capable of preventing any further serious attempts by von Bock to capture Moscow during the winter of 1941-1942. The Soviets had managed to stem the tide and halt Army Group Center in the suburbs of Moscow.

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[44]Halder Diary, Vol. VII, p. 183, 27 November 1941.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

After the Russian counterattack of 6 December halted Army Group Center, Field Marshal von Bock conducted a lengthy analysis of his failure to capture Moscow. His diary records, in his own words, "that three factors have led to the present difficult crisis."[1] This entry in von Bock's diary is very significant in that while stating there were three reasons for his failure he actually included a fourth reason at the end of the entry. According to von Bock, the three causes of the defeat were, (1) the autumn muddy season that prevented movement of troops and supplies; (2) the poor highway and rail network led to a complete breakdown of the supply system; and (3) a serious underestimation of Russian strength--not only men but material as well.[2] After discussing the above factors von Bock, in what appears to be an afterthought, added his fourth reason for failure. He wrote,

> Last August, the road to Moscow was clear; we could have entered the capital in summer weather and triumphantly. The military leadership of the Fatherland made a grave mistake when it required my Army Group to adopt a position of defense last August. Now all of us must pay for that error.[3]

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[1] von Bock Diary, 8 December 1941.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

While it appears that von Bock's first three reasons for failure are valid, based on the manner in which he was required to conduct the campaign, the main cause of the failure to capture Moscow rests in the fourth factor mentioned by von Bock--not pressing the attack during August 1941.

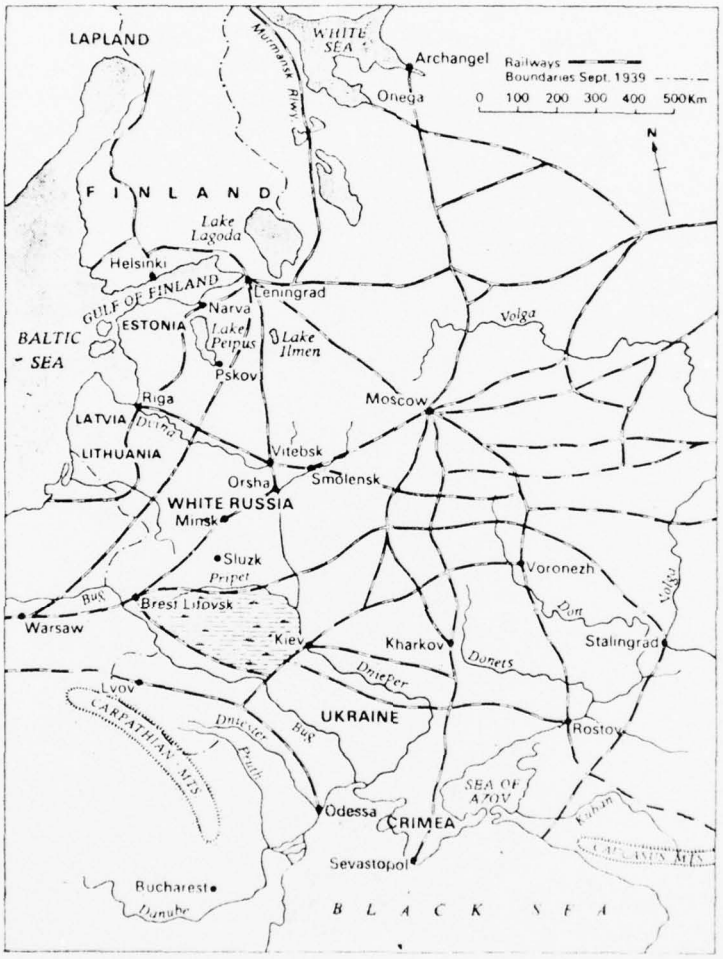
From the earliest days of the planning for Operation Barbarossa the leadership element of the Army, von Brauchitsch and Halder, identified Moscow as an objective in the campaign and considered it to be key to the success of the entire Russian operation. Numerous actions were taken within the OKH to insure that Army Group Center would be instrument of success for the German Army. Several examples of these actions were the selection of the zone of operation for von Bock that provided him with the best road and rail networks for resupply purposes and maneuver, the assignment of ground and air combat units to Army Group Center was greater than to either of the flanking Army groups individually, and finally, the actions of Halder and von Brauchitsch during July and August to influence Hitler to allow von Bock to continue attacking toward Moscow rather than diverting major portions of Army Group Center to other missions.

While the military leadership element of the German Army viewed Operation Barbarossa and Moscow in light of military objectives, Adolph Hitler looked at Russia in a different manner. Hitler sought political and economic objectives in his plan for the conquest of the Soviet Union. He

wanted to quickly join forces with the Finns in the north and seize control of the agricultural and industrial area in the south. The primary concern of the OKH and OKW along with the tactical commander (von Bock) was to destroy the military forces of the Soviet Union as quickly as possible. This military objective certainly could have been realized at Moscow. Everyplace else in the Soviet Union the enemy could have retreated before the German Army. It was only at Moscow that the Russians had to stand and fight.

One only needs to examine a 1940 map (see Map 1) of the Soviet rail network to ascertain that Moscow was the hub of the entire system in European Russia. In addition to being an important industrial center it was the seat of all governmental power in the Soviet Union. It was at Moscow that the Soviet Army would have to fight and the German military leaders saw the opportunity to destroy the bulk of those forces--the ultimate objective in military operations.

While it may be argued that the political and economic objectives held by Hitler were of importance to Germany, one must consider, in this instance, that the military objective was of greater significance. Had the military objective been accomplished it is reasonable to state that the objectives in the political and economic areas would have been achieved also. The fall of Moscow along with the decisive defeat of the defending Red Army would have resulted in the political and economic objectives being secured shortly thereafter.



Map 1. The Main Russian Railways, 1939.

Whether the objectives, military, political, and economic, could have been held and developed by Germany is another matter and subject to considerable speculation.

The principle of the objective, as outlined earlier, stresses that the ultimate objective in military campaigns is to destroy the enemy forces in battle and that decisive defeat breaks the enemy's will to resist. The end result is that the enemy is forced to seek peace on the terms of the victor. This the German military leadership understood and attempted to apply. The problem in applying the principle of the objective lay in Hitler's refusal to allow the Army to control operations on the battlefield. Hitler failed to follow the advice presented by his senior military advisors and required Army Group Center to engage in operations that did not directly contribute to attainment of the ultimate objective--the Battle of Kiev, for example.

The military leadership acquiesced to Hitler knowing that his orders were not likely to produce the desired victory. The attempts by von Brauchitsch, Halder, von Bock and Guderian in July and August 1941 to persuade Hitler to continue the drive on Moscow are striking examples. Had these general officers adopted a stronger stand instead of resigning themselves to carrying out Hitler's orders the ultimate objective might have been obtained.

In conclusion, the German failure to capture Moscow during World War II was a failure to properly apply the

principle of the objective. Had the military been allowed to pursue the objectives determined in war games and staff exercises, the outcome of the Battle of Moscow may well have been different.

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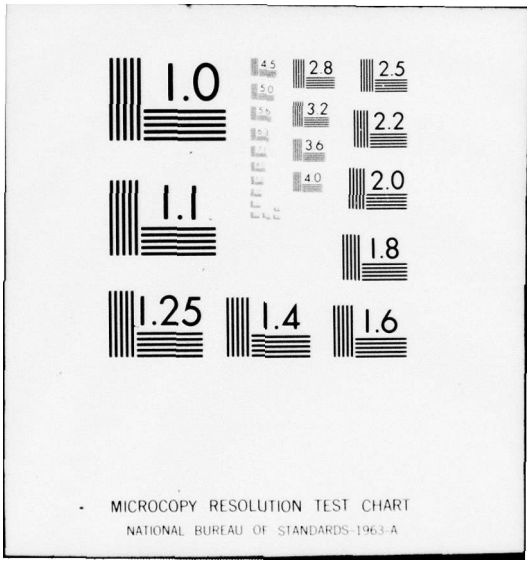
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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

THE MARCKS PLAN

Prepared by Major General Erich Marcks, August 1940

Source: Barry A. Leach, The German Strategy Against Russia (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 249-54.

The purpose of the campaign is to strike the Russian Armed Forces and to make Russia incapable of entering the war as an opponent of Germany in the foreseeable future. In order to protect Germany against Russian bombers Russia must be occupied to the line lower Don-central Volga-north Dnieper. The main centers of the Russian war economy lie in the food- and raw-material-producing areas of the Ukraine and Donets Basin and the armament industries of Moscow and Leningrad. The eastern industrial regions are not yet productive enough. Of these areas Moscow constitutes the economic, political, and spiritual centre of the USSR. Its capture would destroy the coordination of the Russian state.

The War Zone:

Moscow will be protected from the north and west by great forest and marsh areas which extend from the White Sea southward past Leningrad, via Vitebsk to the line Kobrin-Lutsk-Kiev. Their southern part, the Pripet Marsh, divides the frontier zone into two separate operational areas. The forest is most extensive between Leningrad and Moscow and in

the Pripet Marsh. Through its narrowest and somewhat broken central region pass the main roads from Warsaw and East Prussia to Moscow via Sluzk, Minsk, and Vitebsk.

South of the Pripet Marsh lies the open country of East Galicia and the Ukraine. The terrain here is favourable for combat but mobility is limited by the lack of roads (only the main road via Kiev in an east-west direction) and by that great obstacle, the Dnieper.

The land north of the Pripet Marsh is more favourable for movement on account of its greater number of good roads, but the Ukraine is more favourable for combat. In the north battle will have to be confined mainly to the lines of the roads.

Enemy:

The Russians will not do us the favour of attacking. We must expect that the Russian Army will remain on the defensive against us and that only the Air Force and the Navy, namely the submarine arm, will attack. Russia will wage war by means of a blockade. For this purpose a Russian breakthrough into Rumania seems probable, in order to deprive us of oil. At the very least, strong air attacks on the Rumanian oilfields must be expected.

On the other hand, the Russians cannot avoid a decision as they did in 1812. Modern armed forces of 100 divisions cannot

abandon their sources of supply. It is to be expected that the Russian Army will stand to do battle in a defensive position protecting greater Russia and in the eastern Ukraine. It will find a good defensive position on the line Dvina as far as Plozk-Beresina-the Pripet Marsh-Zbrutsch-Pruth or Dniester. This line is already partly fortified. A withdrawal to the Dnieper is also possible. In front of this line the Russians will probably fight delaying actions only.

Russia has at present 151 infantry divisions, 32 cavalry divisions, 38 motor-mechanized brigades. In the opinion of the 12th Section it will not be possible to increase this total appreciably by next spring. Of these forces the following are tied down:

34 infantry divs., 8 cavalry divs., 8 mot. mech. bdes. against Japan;

6 infantry divs., 1 cavalry div., against Turkey;

15 infantry divs., 2 mot. mech. bdes. against Finland

55 infantry divs., 9 cavalry divs. 10 mot. mech. bdes. in total.

This leaves against Germany: 96 infantry divs., 23 cavalry divs., 28 mot. mech. bdes.

Distribution of Forces:

At present the concentrations lie on the outer wings in the Ukraine and the Baltic States. The forces are almost evenly divided south and north of the Pripet Marsh, with a reserve

around Moscow. This form of distribution can also be expected in the event of a war with Germany. Whether a concentration is built up north and south depends upon political developments. The strength in the north will probably be kept greater than in the south.

The Russian Army could build up a mobile reserve of tank brigades, motorized divisions, army artillery, and cavalry divisions, which with good leadership could have significant effects. But there is so far no sign of such a force. Because the Russians no longer possess the superiority of numbers they had in the World War, it is more likely that once the long, extended line of their forces has been broken through they will be unable to concentrate or coordinate countermeasures. Fighting in isolated battles they will soon succumb to the superiority of the German troops and leadership.

Own Troops:

Allowing for occupation forces in Norway, Denmark, and the West the following should be available against Russia next spring: 24 Panzer divisions, 110 infantry and mountain divisions, 12 motorized divisions, 1 cavalry division. Total: 147 divisions.

Conduct of the Campaign:

Owing to the size of the combat zone and its division by the Pripet Marsh a decision will not be achieved in a single battle against the Russian Army. Initially, it will be

necessary to divide and advance against the two main parts of the Russian Army separately with the object of uniting later for an operation to reach the other side of the great forest region.

Operational Intentions:

The main force of the German Army will strike that part of the Russian Army in northern Russia and will take Moscow. It will advance from the line Brest-Litovsk-Insterburg towards Rogachev-Vitebsk. South of the Pripet Marsh weaker forces will prevent the advance of the enemy southern group towards Rumania by an attack towards Kiev and the middle Dnieper. They will also prepare for subsequent cooperation with the main forces east of the Dnieper.

The attack on the Russian forces in the Ukraine is made unavoidable by the need to defend the Rumanian oilfields. If the main forces of the German Army could strike from Rumania, with support from northern Hungary, Galicia and south-eastern Poland, they could develop the most decisive, major offensive across the Dnieper to Moscow. But neither the political situation across the Balkans nor the state of the railways and roads in Hungary and Rumania permit the concentration of large German forces in those countries before the outbreak of war. Only an attack from Galicia and south Poland towards Kiev and the middle Dnieper can be carried out with any certainty. This attack cannot be the main operation because the

area is too narrow and the distance to Moscow too great. However, it should be carried out with sufficient forces to achieve the destruction of the enemy in the Ukraine and the crossing of the Dnieper. It should later be extended in close cooperation with the main operation north of the Pripet Marsh either towards Kharkov or north-eastwards. Its main concentration must be in the north; its main objective Kiev. The terrain is generally favourable there, especially for tanks. Three lines of defence will have to be overcome before Kiev.

The attack from Rumania should not, however, be abandoned even though the political situation might prevent a concentration there before the start of the campaign. An army should be made ready in the Reich to move the wheeled elements of its Panzer and motorized divisions and the necessary artillery at the start of the war through Hungary to defend Rumania during the deployment of German attacking forces there. The main attack of the Army will be directed from north Poland and East Prussia towards Moscow. There will be no other decisive operation because prior deployment in Rumania is not possible. An extension to the north would only lengthen the march and finally lead into the forest area north-west of Moscow. The main purpose of the offensive is to strike and destroy the mass of the Russian northern group before, within, and east of the forest area by means of a direct thrust towards Moscow. Then from Moscow and north Russia it will turn southwards and, in cooperation with the German southern group, conquer the

Ukraine and finally reach the line Rostov-Gorki-Archangel. To cover the north flank of this operation a special force will be directed across the lower Dvina towards Pskov and Leningrad.

As in Poland and the West success must be sought by means of surprise and speed. The conduct of operations is so conceived that in all armies mobile formations in the first wave will break through the Russian troops in front of the river and forest defences and, supported by the Luftwaffe, continue the advance to seize corridors through the forests and river crossings. Following close behind some of the infantry divisions will seek to divide and destroy the outflanked enemy, while others making use of all means of transportation will follow the mobile troops in order to secure and extend their successes. Some will also go through the Pripet Marshes making use of available roads and railways (armoured trains with Russian rail gauge!) in order to attack the enemy's rear.

The fact that the width of the combat zone will increase with the continuation of the attack necessitates the bringing up of strong army reserves which will be deployed under new corps headquarters. Part of these reserves will be immediately available to the northern army group, the rest will be allocated to areas with favourable road and rail communications so that they can reinforce both army groups.

Allocation of force: (Summary)

Army Group - 5 Pz., 6 mot., 24 inf. divs.

'South'

Army Group - 15 Pz., 2 mot., 50 inf. 1 cav. div.

'North'*

Army Reserve--4 Pz., 4 mot., 36 inf.

Total - 24 Pz, 12 mot., 110 inf. 1 cav. div.

*The northernmost army--3 Pz., 12 inf. divs.

Signed: Marcks

APPENDIX 2

THE LOSSBERG STUDY

Prepared by LTC Bernhard von Lossberg, 15 September 1940

Source: Barry A. Leach, The German Strategy Against Russia (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 255-62.

Operations Study East

The aim of a campaign against Soviet Russia is to destroy the mass of the Soviet Army in Western Russia, to prevent the withdrawal of battleworthy elements into the depth of Russia, and then, having cut western Russia off from the seas, to advance to a line which will place the most important part of Russia in our hands and on which it will be easy to form a shield against Asiatic Russia. The theatre of operations against Russia will initially be divided by the Pripet Marshes, so that contact between the groups operating north and south of this area will only be established in the course of the subsequent battles.

The purpose of the following Operations Plan is to set out the basic considerations for operations in the northern and southern areas and in particular to establish approximately where the main thrusts will be located on each sector.

In addition to maps, notes on the Russian armed forces and war potential are enclosed as an annex [Missing]. Reports on the

Russian fortifications are omitted as unnecessary. There are only disconnected field fortifications on the old and new (1939) western frontier. Reliable reports are lacking.

The map included in Annexure No. I [missing] gives a survey of the expected distribution of the Russian Army formations. It should be noted that it is especially difficult in Russia to gain reasonably accurate intelligence of the enemy. Fewer assumptions about the Russian order of battle should be based upon the present situation as our own intentions become apparent to the enemy. The present Russian dispositions are still the result of the recent events in Finland, the Baltic States, and Bessarabia. However, the following may be stressed as characteristic of all Russian deployments:

1. There does not seem to be a mobilization in the German manner in which regular divisions are brought up to full establishment and reserve divisions set up. The regular Army is now practically on a war footing. This makes it difficult to assess the degree of readiness and battleworthiness of the different formations.

2. The Russian command structure is so cumbersome and the Russian High Command's use of the railway system is probably so inadequate that any new deployment will lead to major difficulties and will require considerable time.

3. In the case of tension with Germany Russian strength will be pinned down

(a) against Finland, here too because of German forces in Norway;

(b) on the Rumanian border;

(c) in the Caucasus (unreliable population, Turkey, security of the oilfields);

(d) in the Far East.

In a war against Germany, Russia has, broadly speaking, the following three courses open:

I. In order to gain the initiative the Russians might strike at the initial stage of the German deployment.

II. The Russian armies might meet the German attack in the concentration areas near the border in order to hold their newly acquired position on both wings (i.e., on the Baltic and Black Seas).

III. The Russians might use the proved tactic of 1812, fall back into the vastness of the interior in order to impose the strain of long lines of communication and supply upon the invader, and only counter-attack at a later stage of the campaign.

These possibilities are assessed as follows:

Reference I above:

It is unlikely that the Russians will risk a major offensive against East Prussia and the north part of the General Government as long as the bulk of the German Army is not tied down for a long period on another front. Neither the leadership nor the troops are capable of this. Limited operations directed either against Finland or Rumania are more likely.

An attack on Finland during a period of tension with Germany would in no way improve Russia's strategic position. On the contrary the forces committed against Finland would be in increased danger of being cut off by the attack of the German north wing along the Baltic. The circumstances arising from a Russian attack on the Rumanian oilfields would be different. Here the Russians would have an opportunity to strike at the German supply base. Under certain circumstances the employment of Russian Air Force would suffice for this purpose. In case of a ground attack the employment of the comparatively strong and apparently good Russian parachute troops seem likely. It will be the task of the future German Military Mission [in Rumania] to meet such a danger with the German 'training units' and by the organization of the Rumanian Counter-Espionage Service. The Military Mission will at the same time be regarded as the Vanguard of the German south wing [for the attack on Russia].

Reference II above:

This solution seems to be the most likely, because it is improbable that so strong a military power as Russia will abandon its most valuable and in part most recently acquired territories without a fight. A vast withdrawal would also result in the early loss of the ground organization of the Soviet Air Force which, according to available intelligence, has been especially increased west of the Dnieper.

In the case of such a decision the Russian deployment would have a certain resemblance to the present distribution of forces, to which would be added stronger Soviet formations in the Russian-Polish area. In view of the nature of the Russian railway network the central reserve would remain in the Moscow area. Such a decision, in which the enemy commits strong formations to an early battle, would be most favourable for us, because after defeat in the battles near the frontier the Russian leadership will hardly be capable of withdrawing the whole Army in good order.

Reference III above:

The Russians might base their operations plan from the start upon the strategy of meeting the German attack with only part of their strength and concentrating the mass in depth. If so, north of the Pripet Marsh the great barrier of the Dvina and Dnieper Rivers, broken only by a gap of 70 kilometers south of Vitebsk, will facilitate this. Such a decision would be unfavourable to us, but must be taken into account as a possibility. On the other hand, it is highly unlikely the Russians will give up the essential Ukraine region.

Attention is directed to the map of the German and Russian railways available for deployment and the relevant notes enclosed as Annex No. 2 [missing]. These relate to the following proposals for our own operations. The German reports were based upon the completion of the programme 'Otto' [i.e.,

deployment East]. While the Russian reports are hypothetical, they assume the highest possible performance [in the use of railways for deployment].

Account should be taken of the probability that the Russian railways in the newly won Polish areas have already been changed to the Soviet gauge and that this difference in gauge can pose severe [transport] problems for us, especially after we have won large tracts of territory. It will therefore be necessary to cut off and capture sufficient Russian rolling stock, and later to relay specific Russian lines to our gauge.

In all a daily deployment rate of 7 divisions can be expected on the German side and 5 divisions on the Russian side.

Significant features of the Russian railway network are the convergence on Moscow and the inadequate north-south communications, which will make it difficult for the enemy to regroup behind the front. However all German operations must be supported in their later stages by reliable Russian railways, because in the vast spaces a transport system based only on roads will be insufficient.

For Our Own Operations

. . . it is necessary to decide whether the main weight should lie north or south of the Pripet Marsh. The German superiority should leave no doubt that simultaneous operations will be conducted in both areas.

Factors favouring the main weight in the North include the considerably better conditions for deployment (see railway conditions); the need swiftly to destroy the Russian forces in the Baltic area; the comparatively good Russian railways which run in the direction of operations; the possibility of cooperation with Group XXI operating through Finland; the fact that Leningrad and Moscow lie within striking distance.

Factors favouring the main weight in the South include the [Russian] threat to Rumania; the possibility of supplying German motorized units with oil over the comparatively short distance from the Rumanian and, later, the East Galician oil-fields, (however lines of communication are bad after crossing the Russian border); the significance of the Ukraine.

The course recommended is to place the main blow in the North and along the following operational lines:

Attack with two army groups from the general line east of Warsaw-Konigsberg, main weight to be with the southerly army group, deployed in the area of Warsaw and south-east Prussia, which will have most of the Panzer and motorized formations. A supply base for this will be established in the deployment area during the winter (1940-41).

The Southern Army Group will launch its attack towards the gap between the Rivers Dvina and Dnieper to destroy the Russian formations in the Minsk area and to break through in the general direction of Moscow. The fact that the only

completed Russian highway leads from Minsk to Moscow favours the commitment of the main weight, including strong motorized formations, in this direction.

The Northern Army Group will attack from East Prussia and across the lower Dvina River.

To achieve the basic aim (see opening sentence of study), co-operation between the two Army groups will result in a turning of forces from the southern (main thrust) army group to the north depending upon the situation, possibly east of the Dvina, in order to cut off the Russians facing the north wing. The enormous spaces will then necessitate a pause in operations for supply purposes.

Group XXI will form a separate group in the [far] north, together with the army of the Finns, who it is anticipated will be our allies. It will have the task of striking with part of its forces from north-eastern Norway towards Murmansk. The main body of its forces will move on Swedish and Finnish railways and under Finnish protection to southern Finland, where it will pin down Russian forces and attack perhaps north of Lake Ladoga, at the latest when the German north wing (from the Baltic States) is approaching Leningrad. There is a bottleneck in the transportation route at Haparanda-Torneo. This single-tracked stretch has normal gauge in Sweden and broad gauge in Finland. The capacity on the Finnish side is estimated at 12 to 16 trains.

After setting aside a strong reserve for the Commander-in-Chief, one army group comprising about one-third of the entire force, including a proportionate number of mobile formations, will be available for the operational area south of the Pripet Marsh. This army group will have the task of destroying the enemy forces between the Pripet Marsh and the Black Sea in a double envelopment. It will subsequently occupy the Ukraine and, after crossing the Dnieper, establish contact east of the Pripet Marsh with the German forces to the north. The strength employed in this thrust will depend upon the will to resist still shown by the Russians.

The fact that the Russians will soon have internal problems especially in the Ukraine will be of considerable advantage to the operations in the south. With encouragement from our espionage branch (Abwehr II), this could result in damage to the few railways links with the area. Once the Ukraine is occupied a 'Government' responsive to our wishes will probably be formed. This will ease the task of supervising the extensive occupied areas.

The heavy, partly clay, soil of the Ukraine will make the movement of motorized formations difficult in rainy periods.

The nature of later operations involving the cooperation of both main groups east of the Pripet Marsh, and the selection of the final military objective in terms of territory will depend upon whether and when Russia suffers an internal

collapse as a result of the initial German successes. Even if in the industrial area in the Urals . . . is taken into consideration, it seems impossible that Russia can remain capable of resistance after losing her western territories and contact with the seas. The general line Archangel-Gorki-Volga (to Stalingrad)--Don (to the Black Sea) seems feasible as the long-range objective.

. . . It should be noted that in spite of its strength the Russian Air Force is not capable of uniformly directed, major actions. It is more likely that it will commit its fighting formations only to limited, tactical actions. The information supplied to the Russian command by air reconnaissance will be inadequate.

The task of the Luftwaffe, once it has eliminated the Russian Air Force, will be to support the main German operational thrusts towards Minsk, and on both wings of the southern army group. Due to their importance for the [successful conduct of the German] operations the railways will be protected, especially at vulnerable places such as river crossings . . . By their skillful employment and concentration on the most important locations (e.g., railways . . .) parachute and airborne troops will be able to land at far greater depth in Russia than was possible under the conditions prevailing in the West. [Air] attacks on Russian industry will not be possible during the main [land] operations. However, upon the attainment of the final objective it will be possible to bomb the Ural region.

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For the employment of the Navy one must consider the coastal character of the Baltic waters which rules out the employment of major surface forces against the Russian fleet and its bases. The major task of the Navy will be to secure our own coastal waters and to close the exit from the Baltic against an attempt by Russian naval forces to break out.

The transportation of iron ore through the Baltic will probably be reduced by the numerous Russian submarines and motor torpedo boats. The Russian fleet, including submarines, will cease to constitute a threat only when German army operations reach the naval bases, including Leningrad. Then the sea route can also be used for supplying the north wing. Before that lasting and secure sea communications between the Baltic States and Finland cannot be expected.

Finally it remains to be examined whether and to what extent a campaign against Russia really must be prepared during the coming autumn and winter even if England is not yet defeated. It is important that Russia must not be made aware of the threatening danger before the conquest of England and thus provoked into countermeasures (Rumania, stopping of economic deliveries). The forces available to Army Group B from the end of October (35 divisions) are fully adequate to safeguard the eastern territories and to keep Russia under sufficient military-political pressure. Should the forces in the East undergo continual further reinforcement then the Russians will

feel themselves to be threatened and take countermeasures. Militarily there is no reason for us to push a further wave of the deployment to the East until the operation is almost due to begin. The poor accommodation situation in the General Government also discourages such a decision. It would be feasible to station more troops in the German eastern provinces, but this does not yield any advantage. The German railway system is superior to the Russian and so efficient, especially in the interior, that it makes no difference whether the forces earmarked for deployment are in Pomerania-Brandenburg-Silesia or in West Germany. The further we keep our forces from the real concentration area the greater the surprise we will achieve over the Russians with the comparatively swift German deployment. It is, therefore, important to start all preparations which serve the needs of a swift concentration at a later date (use of roads and railways--Programme 'Otto') and of supply (prior assessment, stockpiling of fuel). After a survey of buildings of cultural value on the rail and road routes thought should be given to measures for their protection, i.e., restoration, and in some cases such measures should be carried out. An increase in railway troops should be considered.

The maintenance of secrecy will require that all questions associated with a campaign in the East should be restricted to the smallest possible number of persons in the High Command and formation commands.

Annexes:

a. Maps:

1. Distribution of German and Russian armies (August 1940).

2. German and Russian railways available for deployment (Report attached).

3. Sketch map of proposed operations.

4. The Russian armament industry.

5. (a) Range of German and Russian air forces.

(b) German and Russian air forces' ground organizations and Russian distribution of forces.

b. General map of Baltic Sea.

APPENDIX 3

Fuehrer Directive No. 21

Prepared by OKW Operations Staff 18 December 1940

Source: H. R. Trevor-Roper, ed., Blitzkrieg to Defeat (New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1965), pp. 49-52.

OPERATION BARBAROSSA

The armed forces of Germany must be prepared, even before the conclusion of the war with England, to defeat Soviet Russia in one rapid campaign ('Operation Barbarossa.')

The Army must in this case be prepared to commit all available formations, with the proviso that the occupied territories must be secured against surprise attacks.

The Air Force will have to make available for the support of the Army in the Eastern Campaign forces of adequate strength to ensure a rapid termination to the land action and to give the East German territories maximum protection against enemy air raids. This making of the main effort in the East must not be carried to a point at which we can no longer adequately protect the totality of our battle and our armament zones against enemy air attacks, nor must the offensive against England, and in particular against England's supply routes, suffer in consequence.

For the Navy the point of the main effort will remain consistently against England, even while the Eastern Campaign is in progress.

I shall give the order for the assembly of troops, etc., for the proposed operation against Soviet Russia, should the occasion arise, eight weeks before the operation is due to begin.

Preparations that require more time than this shall--so far as they have not already been made--be begun at once and are to be completed by the 15th May, 1941.

Great stress, however, must be laid on disguising any offensive intentions.

Preparations by the high commands are to be based on the following considerations:

1. General Intention

The mass of the army stationed in Western Russia is to be destroyed in bold operations involving deep penetrations by armoured spearheads, and the withdrawal of elements capable of combat into the extensive Russian land spaces is to be prevented.

By means of a rapid pursuit a line is then to be reached from beyond which the Russian air force will no longer be capable of attacking the German home territories. The final objective of the operation is to be the attainment of a line sealing off

Asiatic Russia and running, in general, the Volga-Archangel. From such a line the one remaining Russian industrial area in the Urals can be eliminated by Air Force should the need arise.

In the course of this operation the Russian Baltic Fleet will rapidly be deprived of its bases and thus will no longer be capable of combat.

Effective intervention by the Russian air force is to be prevented from the very beginning of the operation by means of powerful attacks against it.

2. Anticipated Allies and Their Tasks

* * * * * * *

3. The Conduct of the Operations

(A)Army (in approbation of the intentions submitted to me): The area of operations is divided into southern and northern halves by the Pripet Marshes. The point of main effort will be made in the northern half. Here two army groups are to be committed.

The southern of these two army groups--in the centre of the whole front--will have the task of breaking out of the area around and to the north of Warsaw with exceptionally strong armoured and motorized formations and of destroying the enemy forces in White Russia. This will create a situation which

will enable strong formations of mobile troops to swing north; such formations will then cooperate with the northern army group--advancing from East Prussia in the general direction of Leningrad--in destroying the enemy forces in the area of the Baltic states. Only after the accomplishment of these offensive operations, which must be followed by the capture of Leningrad and Kronstadt, are further offensive operations to be initiated with the objective of occupying the important centre of communications and of armaments manufacture, Moscow.

Only a surprisingly rapid collapse of the Russian ability to resist could justify an attempt to achieve both objectives simultaneously.

The primary task of Group XXI, even during the Eastern operations, remains the protection of Norway. Forces available other than those needed for this task (Mountain Corps) will first of all be used to protect the Petsamo area and its mines together with the Arctic road, and will then advance, in conjunction with Finnish forces, against the Murmansk railway and will cut the Murmansk area's land supply route.

Whether an operation of this nature can be carried out by stronger German forces (two to three divisions) coming from the area Rovaniemi and to the south is dependent on Sweden's willingness to make the Swedish railways available for such a move.

The mass of the Finnish army will have the task, in accordance with the advance made by the northern wing of the German armies, of tying up maximum Russian strength by attacking to the west, or on both sides, of Lake Ladoga. The Finns will also capture Hango.

The army group south of the Pripet Marshes will make its point of main effort from the Lublin area in the general direction of Kiev, with the object of driving into the deep flank and rear of the Russian forces with strong armoured formations and of then rolling up the enemy along the Dnieper.

The German-Rumanian group on the right flank will have the task of:

(a) protecting Rumanian territory and thus of covering the southern flank of the whole operation;

(b) in coordination with the attack by the northern wing of Army Group South of typing up the enemy forces on its sector of the front; then, as the situation develops, of launching a second thrust and thus, in conjunction with the air force, of preventing an orderly enemy withdrawal beyond the Dniester.

Once the battles south or north of the Pripet Marshes have been fought, the pursuit is to be undertaken with the following objectives:

In the south the rapid occupation of the economically important Donetz Basin,

In the north the speedy capture of Moscow.

The capture of this city would be a decisive victory both from the political and from the economic point of view; it would involve, moreover, the neutralization of the most vit[illegible] Russian rail centre.

(B)Air Force:

It will be the task of the air force, so far as possible, to damage and destroy the effectiveness of the Russian air force, and to support the operations by the army at the points of main effort, that is to say in the sectors of the central army group and in the area where the southern army group will be making its main effort. The Russian railways will either be destroyed, or, in the case of more important objectives close to hand (i.e., railway bridges), will be captured by the hold use of parachute and airborne troops. In order that maximum forces may be available for operations against the enemy air force and for direct support of the army, the munitions industry will not be attacked while the major operations is in progress. Only after the conclusion of the mobile operations will such attacks, and in particular attacks against the industrial area of the Urals, be considered.

(C)Navy:

* * * * * * *

4.

It is important that all the Commanders-in-Chief make it plain

that the taking of the necessary measures in connection with this directive is being done as a precaution against the possibility of the Russians adopting an attitude towards us other than what it has been up to now. The number of officers engaged in the early stages on these preparations is to be kept as small as possible, and each officer is only to be given such information as is directly essential to him in the performance of his task. Otherwise the danger will arise of our preparations becoming known, when a time for the carrying out of the proposed operation has not even been decided upon. This could cause us the gravest political and military disadvantages.

5.

I anticipate further conferences with the Commanders-in-Chief concerning their intentions as based on this directive.

Reports on the progress made in the proposed preparations by all services of the armed forces will be forwarded to me through the Armed Forces High Command.

signed: ADOLF HITLER.

APPENDIX 4

OKH Deployment Directive of 31 January 1941

Prepared by the OKH Operations Staff

Source: Barry A. Leach, The German Strategy Against Russia (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 263-69.

Deployment Directive 'Barbarossa'

1. Task

In case Russia should change her present attitude towards Germany, all preparations are to be completed, as precautionary measures, to make it possible to defeat Soviet Russia in a quick campaign even before the end of the war against England. The operations should be so conducted that the mass of the Russian Army in Western Russia will be destroyed by deep armoured thrusts. The withdrawal of elements left intact into the depth of Russian space will be prevented.

2. Enemy Situation

It is assumed that the Russians will accept battle west of the Dnieper and Dvina at least with strong parts of their forces. They will make use of the partly strengthened fortifications of the new and old frontiers and of the many waterways which favour the defence. The Russian Command will therefore have to make a particular effort to commit sufficient forces to hold on as long as possible to its air and naval bases in the

Baltic provinces and to the flank protection of the Black Sea. The unfavourable outcome of the battles that may be expected south and north of the Pripet Marshes will force the Russians to attempt to bring the German attack to a standstill on the Dnieper-Dvina line. The offensive commitment of stronger Russian formations employing armour is to be expected not only in countering German breakthroughs, but also in attempts to bring threatened formations back to the Dnieper-Dvina line.

3. Intention

The first intention of the OKH within the task allocated is by means of swift and deep thrusts by strong mobile formations north and south of the Pripet Marsh to tear open the front of the mass of the Russian Army which it is anticipated will be in western Russia. The enemy groups separated by these penetrations will then be destroyed. South of the Pripet Marshes Army Group 'South',--Field Marshall von Rundstedt--will exploit the swift breakthrough by strong armoured forces from the Lublin area in the direction of Kiev, in order to cut the communications across the Dnieper of the enemy in Galicia and the West Ukraine. The Dnieper crossing s at and below Kiev will be taken, thus ensuring the freedom for the subsequent cooperation of Army Group 'South' with the German forces operating in northern Russia or for new tasks in south Russia.

North of the Pripet Marshes Army Group 'Centre'--Field Marshal von Bock--will commit strong mobile forces from the Warsaw-

Sulwalki area to force a breakthrough towards Smolensk. This will permit the turning of strong formations to the north in order to cooperate with Army Group 'North'--Field Marshal von Leeb, attacking from East Prussia in the general direction of Leningrad. Both army groups will destroy the enemy formations in the Baltic area, and, in cooperation with the Finnish Army and possibly German forces from Norway, finally put an end to the enemy's ability to resist in northern Russia, thus ensuring freedom of movement for further tasks--perhaps in cooperation with the German forces in southern Russia. In the event of a sudden unexpected collapse of enemy resistence in northern Russia, the abandonment of the turning movement and an immediate thrust towards Moscow could be considered.

The opening of the attack will be coordinated along the entire front. (B-Day, Y-hour).

The Conduct of Operations will be based upon the principles proved in the Polish campaign. However, it must be noted that, in spite of the clear concentration of force to be achieved at decisive points, the enemy forces on other sectors of the front must also be attacked. Only thus can powerful enemy formations be prevented from withdrawing and evading destruction west of the Dnieper-Dvina line. Furthermore, the effect of the enemy Air Force must be expected to be more strongly felt by the army, because the full strength of the Luftwaffe will not be available for the operation against Russia.

Troops must be prepared for the use by the enemy of chemical weapons from the air.

4. Tasks of the Army Groups and Armies

a. Army Group 'South' will drive its strong left wing-with mobile forces in the lead--towards Kiev, destroy the Russian forces in Galicia and in the West Ukraine while they are still west of the Dnieper, and achieve the early capture of the Dnieper crossings at and below Kiev for the continuation of operations both sides of the river. The operation is to be conducted so that the mobile formations from the Lublin area are concentrated for the breakthrough towards Kiev. Within the framework of this instruction Army Group 'South' headquarters will issue more detailed directives to the armies and the Panzer Group for the following tasks:

The 11th Army will protect the area of Rumania vital to the German war economy against a breakthrough of Russian forces. As part of the attack by Army Group 'South' it will pin down the enemy forces on its sector by giving an exaggerated impression of strength, and subsequently, in cooperation with the Luftwaffe, it will prevent by means of a close pursuit the orderly withdrawal of the Russians across the Dnieper.

The first task of Panzer Group I will be in cooperation with the 17th and 6th Armies to break through the enemy forces near the frontier between Rawa Ruska and Kowel, to advance via Berdishev-Zhitomir, and to reach the Dnieper as soon as possible at and below Kiev. Then, under the direction of Army

Group Headquarters, it will continue the attack in a south-easterly direction along the Dnieper in order to prevent a withdrawal of the enemy in the West Ukraine across the Dnieper and to destroy him by an attack from the rear.

The 17th Army will break through the enemy border defences north-west of Lemberg (Lvov). By means of a vigorous advance on its strong left wing, it must attempt to push the enemy back south-eastwards. In addition, the army will take advantage of the advance of the Panzer Group quickly to reach the area Vinnitsa-Berditchev so that according to the situation it can continue the attack to the south-east or east.

The 6th Army will break through the enemy front both sides of Luck in cooperation with elements of the Panzer Group I. While covering the north flank of the army group against interference from the Pripet Marsh area, it will follow the Panzer Group I to Zhitomir with all possible speed and strength. It must be ready, on the orders of Army Group 'South' headquarters, to turn south-eastwards with strong forces west of the Dnieper, in order to cooperate with Panzer Group I in preventing the enemy in the West Ukraine from withdrawing over the Dnieper.

b. Army Group 'Centre" will break up the enemy in White Russia by driving forward the strong forces on its wings. It will quickly win the area around Smolensk by uniting the mobile troops and Army Group 'North' in the destruction of the enemy forces fighting in the Baltic states and the Leningrad area.

Within the framework of this instruction Army Group 'Centre' headquarters will issue more detailed directives to the Panzer groups and armies for the following tasks:

Panzer Group 2 in cooperation with 4th Army will break through the enemy forces on the frontier at and north of Kobryn. By means of a swift advance to Slutsk and Minsk it will meet Panzer Group 3 advancing from the area north of Minsk and achieve the prerequisites for the destruction of the enemy forces between Bialystok and Minsk. In close contact with Panzer Group 3, it will quickly achieve the further tasks of winning the area around and south of Smolensk, preventing the concentration of enemy forces in the upper Dnieper region and so preserve the army group's freedom in the choice of subsequent tasks.

Panzer Group 3 in cooperation with 9th Army will break through the enemy forces on the frontier. By means of a swift advance in the area north of Minsk, it will meet Panzer Group 2 advancing from the south-west towards Minsk and achieve the prerequisites for the destruction of the enemy forces between Bialystok and Minsk. In close contact with Panzer Group 2 it will quickly achieve the further task of reaching the area around and north of Vitebsk, preventing the concentration of enemy forces in the upper Dvina region and so preserve the army group's freedom in the choice of subsequent tasks.

4th Army will achieve the crossing of the Bug and thereby will open the way to Minsk for Panzer Group 2. It will advance with its main strength across the Shava River south of Slonim, and in cooperation with 9th Army it will take advantage of the advance of the Panzer Groups and destroy the enemy forces between Bialystok and Minsk. It further tasks will be: to follow the advance of Panzer Group 2 and, protecting its south flank against [attacks from] the Pripet Marshes; to seize crossings over the Beresina between Bobruisk and Borysau; and to reach the Dnieper at and north of Mogilev.

9th Army in cooperation with Panzer Group 3 will break through the enemy forces west and north of Grodno. With the main weight on its north wing it will drive towards Lida-Vilna, and, taking advantage of the advance of the Panzer Groups it will establish contact with the 4th Army and destroy the enemy in the area between Bialystok and Mink. The next task of the 9th Army will be to follow Panzer Group 3 and reach the Dvina at and south-east of Polozk.

c. Army Group 'North' will destroy the enemy forces fighting in the Baltic area, and will deprive the Russian fleet of its bases by occupying the Baltic harbours including Leningrad and Kronstadt. At the appropriate time the OKH will order powerful mobile forces from Army Group 'Centre' advancing on Smolnsk to cooperate with Army Group 'North'. Within the framework of this task Army Group 'North' will break through the enemy front with its main effort towards

Dvinsk. It will drive its strong right wing with mobile troops thrusting across the Dvina as quickly as possible to reach the area north-west of Opotschka and so prevent the withdrawal of battleworthy Russian forces eastward from the Baltic region. It will also achieve the conditions for a further swift drive towards Leningrad.

Panzer Group 4 in cooperation with 16th and 18th Armies will break through the enemy front between Wystiter Lake and the Tilsit-Schaulen highway, and will thrust to the Dvina at and below Dvinsk and establish bridgeheads across the river. Furthermore, Panzer Group 4 will be required to reach the area north-east of Opotschka in order to be able to drive on north-eastward or northwards according to the situation.

16th Army in cooperation with Panzer Group 4 will break through the enemy with its main effort on both sides of the road Ebenrode-Kovno, and by rapidly advancing its strong right wing behind the Panzer Corps it will reach the north bank of the Dvina at and below Dvinsk.

The next task of the army will be to follow Panzer Group 4 and to reach the Opotschka area as soon as possible.

18th Army will break through the enemy on its sector with its main concentration on and east of the Tilsit-Riga highway, and will cut off and destroy the enemy forces south-west of Riga by swiftly thrusting most of its forces over the Dvina at and

below Stockmannshof. It will then block the approach of Russian forces south of Lake Peipus by means of a swift advance to the line Ostrov-Pskov, and in accordance with the directive of Army Group 'North'--possibly in cooperation with mobile troops north of Lake Peipus--mop up the enemy in Estonia. Preparations are to be made so that the surprise occupation of the Baltic Islands of Oesel, Dago, and Moon can be carried out as soon as the situation permits.

5. pp. [Spare]

6. Task for the Army of Norway (directly subordinate to the OKW):

a. The most important task remains to ensure the security of the entire Norwegian area not only against raids, but also against the serious attempts at landings by the British which must be expected in the course of this summer. This task requires that:

i. All energeis and means of transport will be used to ensure that the batteries earmarked to strengthen the coastal defences will be installed by mid-May.

ii. Formations at present located in Norway will not be appreciably weakened for the achievement of tasks connect with operation 'Barbarossa'. Indeed, the sector most endangered--Kirkenes-Narvik--will be strengthened. This reinforcement is to be achieved with forces already in Norway.

b. In addition to its defensive role the Army of Norway has the following tasks:

i. Advance into the Petsamo area at the start of the main operations, or if necessary even earlier, and, together with the Finnish forces, defend it against attacks from the land, sea, and air. Particular significance is attached to the safeguarding of the nickel mines which are important to the German war industry (Operation 'Reindeer').

ii. Envelop, and later, when sufficient assault forces are available, capture Murmansk as a base for offensive action by its land, sea, and air forces (Operation 'Silver Fox'). It is to be expected that Sweden will maintain the security of her own north-east frontier with adequate forces.

7. OKH Reserves

At the start of the operation the reserves of the OKH will be allocated to a large group in the area Reichof and east of Warsaw and to small groups in the Zamosc, Suwalki, and Eydtkau areas.

8. Support by the Luftwaffe and Navy

The task of the Luftwaffe is to eliminate as far as possible all interference by the Russian Air Force and to support the main operations of the Army especially those of Army Group 'Centre' and the left wing of Army Group 'South'. During the main operations the Luftwaffe will concentrate all force against the enemy Air Force and in immediate support of the Army. Attacks against the enemy industry will be carried out only after the operational objectives of the Army have been attained.

Air support is allocated as follows:

Air Fleet 4--Army Group 'South'

Air Fleet 2--Army Group ' Centre'

Air Fleet 1--Army Group 'North'

In the course of conducting its main role against Britain and safeguarding our coasts, the Navy will prevent enemy naval forces from breaking out of the Baltic. Until the Russian fleet has been deprived of its last Baltic base at Leningrad, major naval objectives will be avoided. After the elimination of the Russian fleet, the Navy will have the task of safeguarding sea traffic in the Baltic and the supply of the north wing of the Army.

9. The Participation of Other States

The active participation of Rumania and Finland in a war against the Soviet Union is to be anticipated on the flanks of the operation. The form of the cooperation and of the subordination of the forces of both countries under German command will be decided upon at the appropriate time. Rumania's task will be to assist the German forces concentrated there in pinning down the enemy facing them, and also to provide assistance in the rear areas.

Finland's tasks will be to eliminate the Russian base at Hango and to cover the concentration of the German forces in north Finland. By the time Army Group 'North' has crossed the Dvina Finland will also attack the Russian forces on her south-east

front in accordance with the requirements of the OKH, concentrating either east or west of Lake Ladoga, preferably the former. She will then support Army Group 'North' in the destruction of the enemy. The active participation of Sweden is probably not to be expected. It is possible, however, that Sweden will permit the use of her railways for the concentration and supply of the German forces in North Finland.

Signed: von Brauchitsch

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