

Strategic overview

Turn 10: Strategic Considerations

This turn, I have lost 200.000 Ivans since my last turn for no more than 25.000 Axis troops. The losses also include 720 AFV against the Axis losses of 207. I also have 15 units encircled, for a total of 111.000 more Ivans in trouble. Most of these Ivans are forces that were already hopelessly encircled by last turn, and of the few "fresh" divisions encircled, I will be able to break out with most.

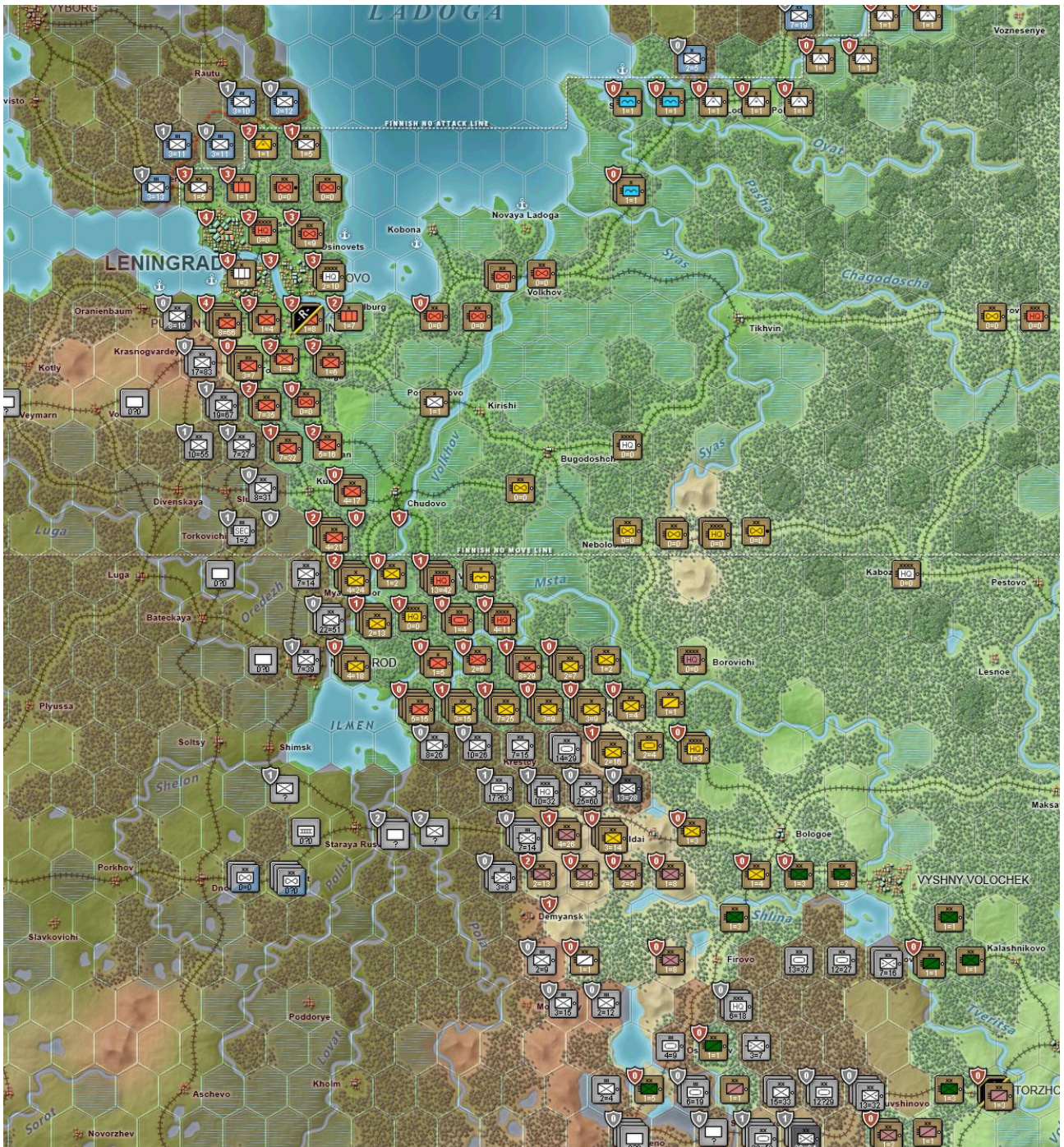
In the air, Axis losses are 79 for 282, including 13 German Single Seat Fighters. To me it seems the Luftwaffe has been a little less active this turn, mainly due to the low number of Soviet Fighter Air Regiments in need of R&R (Morale less than 45). Only eight such regiments are around, and I have more than 30 Air Regiments standing by on the assembly bases to the rear. The Luftwaffe bases also seem to have been pulled further back from the front than they have been lately, suggesting that my airbases bombing campaign will find fewer good bombing opportunities than over the previous turns.

The initial Soviet recon missions along the front has revealed that the Luftwaffe are not flying interception in the north, while they are somewhat reluctant to fly in the center and the south. It seems the Luftwaffe is beginning to feel the pressure from the Soviet air bombing campaign in earnest.

Productionwise, the Axis attacks over the last turn has not put any production facilities in new danger, and I can continue to evacuate my production in an almost orderly fashion. The only large production center with any real production within striking distance from the Germans is Moscow, where I still have a lot of aircraft and vehicle production remaining.

I have also begun receiving more and more Soviet Rifle Divisions at the eastern edge of the board, and I will begin having enough counters that I need to decide where to have my reinforcements go from now on.

The North



Situational assessment

The German Infantry Divisions are pushing on towards Leningrad although with very limited progress. It is obvious, that the threat to the city is not coming from the forces attacking northwest of Lake Ilmen. This turn, the Germans have cleared one hex, and just failed to clear a second one, in what is certainly not a fortunate attack by the Germans. For one, the attack failed at 1.97:1. Second, it has cost the Germans no less than 17 stukas and finally, it has left the fortification level in the attacked hex at 0.94, which should be fairly easily increased to 1 come the next German turn.

Axis Forces Attacking:	1 of 1	81,18 - Clear - Clear	Turn:10 1941-08-21	Soviet Forces Defending:
	Forces Engaged			
	28th Army			
XXVI Corps -6%	ATK: men 83549, art 1045, afv 13	DEF: men 36622, art 446, afv 213		163rd Motorized Division (73)
291st Infantry Division (76)	DAM: men 280, art 15, afv 0	DAM: men 392, art 8, afv 14		1st Gd. Len. PM Rfl Div (47)
217th Infantry Division (92)	LOST: men 480, art 20, afv 0	LOST: men 733, art 3, afv 90		4th Gd. Len. PM Rfl Div (41)
436th Gun Battalion (0)	ATK: ftr 48, bmr 48, utl 0	DEF: ftr 116, bmr 44, utl 0		101st Howitzer Regiment (2)
633rd Gun Battalion (0)	LOST: ftr 0, bmr 17, utl 0	LOST: ftr 12, bmr 5, utl 0		573rd Crps Art Rgt (2)
563rd Panzerjäger Battalion (0)				204th Heavy AA Battalion (0)
1/51st LW Mix Flk Bn (2)				
131st Heavy Werfer Battalion (0)				
[v]	Defending Forces HELD			Northern Air Command [v]
CV: 503->776.0	Eng Val: 12			CV: 165->392.3
Comm HQ: I Corps		Odds 1.97 : 1	Exit	Fort: 2.12->0.94
G Kuno-Hans von Both	Show Details			Comm HQ: 28th Army
				GM Rodion Malinovsky

Directly southeast of Lake Ilmen, the Germans have pushed the Soviets back from their first line of defence and also continued east in what is now the northern pincer in a immediate threat to encircle all Soviet forces around Demyansk. This attack is spearheaded by four Motorized Divisions and three Panzer Divisions. With the German rail lines just west of Staraya Russa, I can expect these Panzers here to have 30+ MP come next turn.

In one location, the Germans have attacked the arriving units of the Soviet 23rd Army, sent there to reinforce the front. This battle was a poor showing by what is one of the strongest armies in the Soviet army.

<div>Axis Forces Attacking:</div> <div>XXVIII Corps -16%</div> <div>122nd Infantry Division (105)</div> <div>153rd Gun Battalion (0)</div> <div>11/47th Howitzer Battalion (1)</div> <div>843rd Howitzer Battalion (1)</div> <div>4/55th SP Flak Company (0)</div> <div>XXIII Corps</div> <div>290th Infantry Division (182)</div> <div>[v]</div>	<div>1 of 3 > 85,27 - Heavy Woods - Clear Turn:10 1941-08-21</div> <div>Forces Engaged</div> <div>ATK: men 65309, art 814, afv 13</div> <div>DEF: men 24204, art 287, afv 34</div> <div>DAM: men 169, art 4, afv 0</div> <div>DAM: men 134, art 3, afv 1</div> <div>LOST: men 215, art 1, afv 1</div> <div>LOST: men 896, art 16, afv 7</div> <div>ATK: ftr 32, bmr 87, utl 0</div> <div>DEF: ftr 21, bmr 15, utl 0</div> <div>LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0</div> <div>LOST: ftr 7, bmr 4, utl 0</div>		<div>Soviet Forces Defending:</div> <div>23rd Army</div> <div>115th Rifle Division (129)</div> <div>123rd Rifle Division (284)</div> <div>519th BM Howitzer Regiment (2)</div> <div>Northern Air Command</div> <div>9 I-153</div> <div>12 I-16 Type 24</div> <div>[v]</div>
	<div>123rd Rifle Division RETREATED</div> <div>115th Rifle Division RETREATED</div> <div>Odds 3.38 : 1</div> <div>Show Details Exit</div>		
	<div>CV: 611->574.1 Eng Val: 10</div> <div>Comm HQ: XXIII Corps</div> <div>G Albrecht Schubert</div>	<div>CV: 415->169.6 Fort: 1.92->0.00</div> <div>Comm HQ: 23rd Army</div> <div>GM Pavel Rybalko</div>	

Still further southeast, the German Panzers of Army Group Center has continued to attack northeastwards towards Vysny Volochek, thus forming the southern pincer in the attack on Demyansk. In this area, two Cavalry Divisions and a Rifle Division have been encircled, but I will be easily able to break out the Cavalry. The Wehrmacht is using no less than five Panzer Divisions, four Motorized Divisions and two Motorized Brigades in this attack, as well as several Infantry Divisions. The good news are that these units are at quite a distance from their supply lines, and should receive relatively little fuel come next turn (my prediction is, that they will have around 20MP max, even with fuel drops conducted by the Luftwaffe).

I notice however, that the main German fuel drops in the area has been done to a couple of stacks of unknown composition that are currently just southwest of the River Volga, and thus somewhat behind the German front line.

Planning

South of Leningrad, I will be holding on to my current front lines, hoping and believing that I can prevent the Germans from advancing more than one or two hexes over the coming turn. Even with eight German Infantry Divisions attacking the gates of Leningrad, I believe I can slow the German advance to an absolute crawl unless the Germans reinforce their attacks.

Further south, at Novgorod, I will abandon my line hinging on Lake Ilmen and pull back a hex or two to a line of prepared positions. This will be done in order to free up troops as well as to avoid risking having several divisions cut off for no return.

East of Lake Ilmen is still where I see the biggest threat to Leningrad. The Germans now have seven turns before the mud to close the distance to Tikhvin and cut off the rail supply to Leningrad. I will do whatever I can to avoid this from happening. I will do so by setting up a series of strongpoints covering the northern flank of the German pincer, hopefully forcing the Germans to spend a lot of MP should they decide to turn north.

Meanwhile, I will pull most of the endangered divisions around Demyansk back, but I will leave several division behind to stall the German attacks and prevent supplies from flowing to the foremost German units.

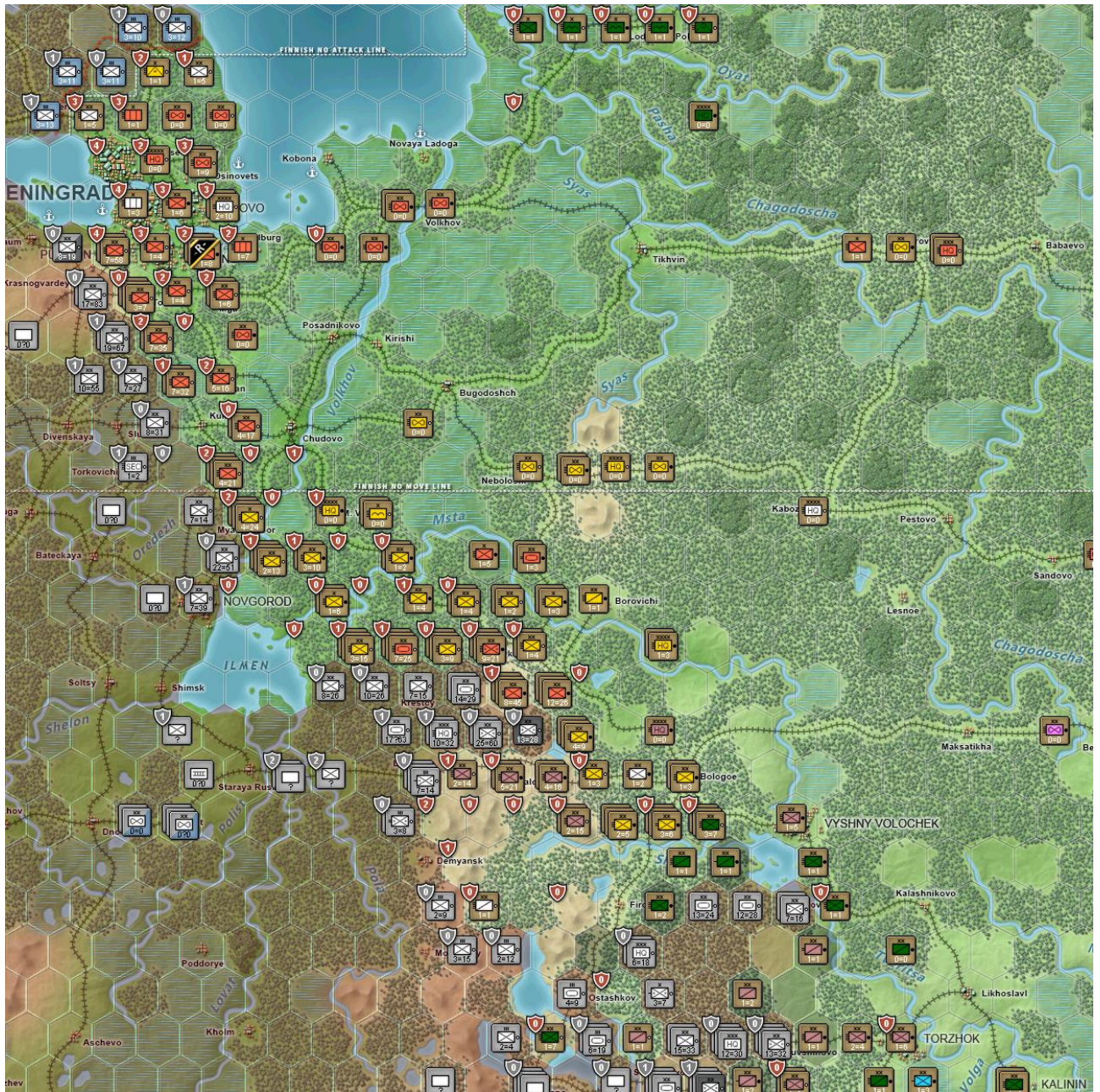
In the air, I will use the tactical bombers of the Northern Front for an attack on the Luftwaffe airbases. As the effect on the Luftwaffe on ground operations is far greater than that of the Soviets, I believe spending Soviet airforces to weaken the Germans is well worth it. Before making the master attacks, I will send in a light force of one SB-2 covered by one I-Type fighter against the German bomber base, in order to gauge the final defense.

Execution

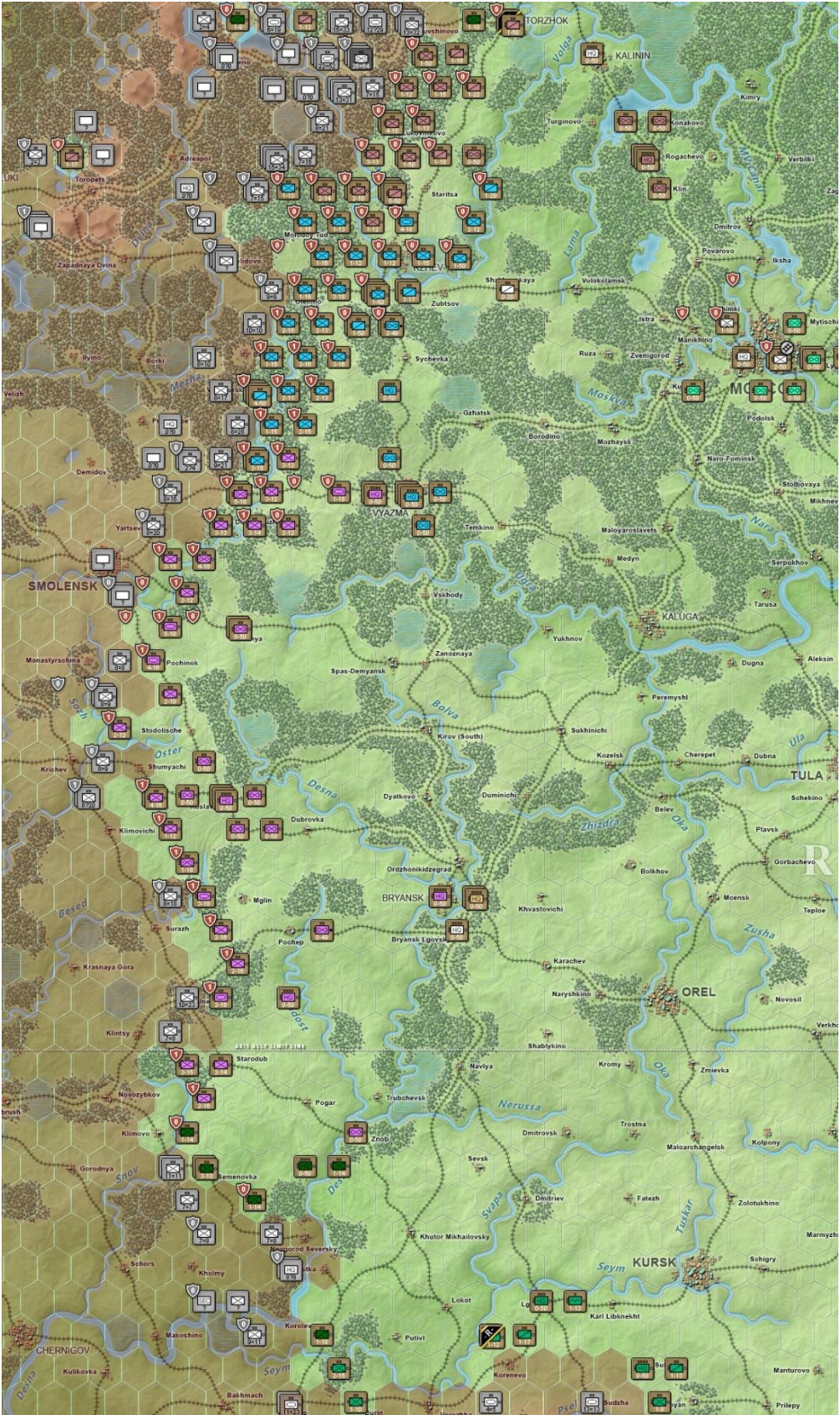
As I have conducted no attacks in the north, there is little to say of the ground war, other than I have followed my plan to the best of my ability.

In the air, the bombing of the Luftwaffe airbases has continued much to my satisfaction. While the Flak losses amongst the Soviet aircraft are noticeable, I also manage to continue to destroy a relatively large number of German Single Seat Fighters. In the north, this turn has seen the destruction of 16 such fighters for the cost of 14 Pe-2's, 9 IL-2's and 5 Su-2's. Well worth it in my opinion. The fact that the German fighters have not flown has also meant that my own fighters will have a turn of R&R before the air combats of the German turn eleven.

Below is an image of the situation in the north, as I give the turn to HJ.



The Center



Situational Assessment

The thrust by the German Panzers in the center is of relatively little importance to the threat on Moscow. While it is possible, that the Germans may continue their rail line from Staraya Russa to Vysny Volochek and Kalinin, I deem it unlikely that they will be able to do so in time to present a major threat to Moscow. Instead, it increasingly seems like the Soviets are relocating their Panzers north to cut off the supply lines to Leningrad (at least, that is what I would do in their shoes).

To the west, the pocket at Velikie Luki has been largely destroyed, leaving two very weak Soviet divisions with a total of 13.000 men.

Further south, Smolensk has finally fallen. As the entire stretch of front from Rzhhev to Bryansk is manned by German infantry units, I expect few (if any) dangerous attacks in this sector in the immediate future). The German rail lines have begun advancing towards Smolensk once again, and are now at Rudnya halfway between Vitebsk and Smolensk.

In the air, the Luftwaffe have kept their bases at a distance from the front, meaning that most of my I-16 type fighters lack the range to effectively escort the bombers onto the Luftwaffe airfields. However, I have seven Air Regiments with MiG-3's (range 19 hexes) standing ready at Moscow, so I will be able to continue the airfield bombings should I use these aircraft together with the Bryansk Front bombers.

Northeast of Gomel, the German lines are very thinly held, with a section of frontline 10 hexes wide held by no more than three weak German Infantry Divisions.

Planning

West of Torzhok, I will move my divisions to restrict the flow of supplies to the frontline German formations, while also making sure to create a new line of defenses. These defenses will be aided by fresh army of STAVKA recruits (weak formations) that will be railed in to the area.

Further south, I will use a series of Western Front units in a counterattack on one German Infantry Division. While the attack will have no impact on the German march on Moscow, I hope to accumulate a few wins by doing this, and should I be able to make the Germans reallocate Panzers south, I will consider this an added bonus.

Northeast of Gomel, I will throw three Rifle Divisions forward in a bid to loosely encircle three German Infantry Divisions. While the Germans can be reinforced by infantry from either the south or the north, this would weaken the German attack eastwards. If the Germans wish to make any encirclements here, they will need to either split up their divisions into regiments (opening up for Soviet retaliation) or else move in significantly more divisions that will then not be attacking in other directions. Another option is for the Germans to send in the Panzers currently west of Belgorod and Kharkov, but this would be perfect for the Soviets, as it would remove most of the German punch in the far south.

In the air, I will Air Transfer a number of MiG-3 Air Regiments to the Bryansk Front, in order to provide escorts for the continued air bombing campaign against the Luftwaffe. As in the north, reducing the Luftwaffe effectiveness is a core concern of the soviet aviation.

Execution

I have shifted further divisions northeast in order to cover the flank of the Soviet front from further Panzer attacks much as planned. As I was railing in reinforcements, I decided to send the weaker units (low morale,

low CV) to Moscow instead of the front and set them to Refit. This was done to improve the fighting quality of those units before they hit the front.

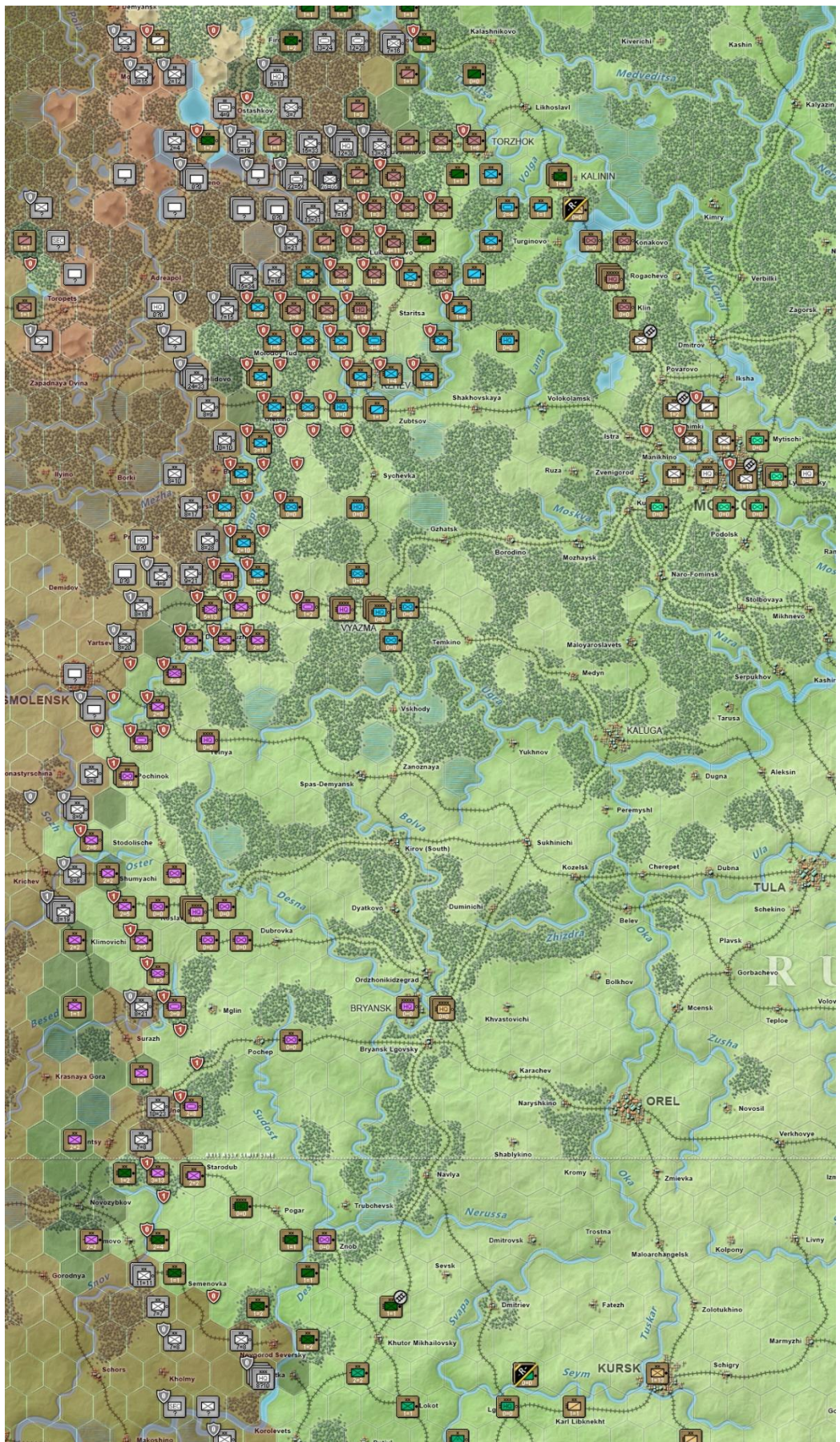
The attack at the Western Front has shown that the German Infantry Divisions pack some punch in the defense, and that attacking them comes with the promise of some losses sustained. However, a 5:1 exchange rate is not as bad as it sounds, provided of course, that the battle itself is a win.

Axis Forces Defending:		1 of 1 91.43 - Clear - Clear Turn:10 1941-08-21		Soviet Forces Attacking:	
VIII Corps 8th Infantry Division (97) I/Lehr LW Mix Flk Bn (3) 3/66th SP Flak Company (1)		Forces Engaged		13th Army 232nd Rifle Division (20) 229th Rifle Division (23) 55th Rifle Division (34) 37th Rifle Division (24) 161st Rifle Division (20) 265th Rifle Division (27) 231st Crps Art Rgt (1)	
12 -> 88mm Anti-aircraft Gun 3 -> 37mm Anti-aircraft Gun		DEF: men 17686, art 240, afv 8 DAM: men 120, art 6, afv 0 LOST: men 228, art 10, afv 0 DEF: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	ATK: men 117425, art 1610, afv 90 DAM: men 950, art 8, afv 5 LOST: men 1164, art 9, afv 8 ATK: flr 7, bmr 4, utl 0 LOST: flr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	[v]	
CV: 101->102.7 Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: VIII Corps G Walter Heitz		8th Infantry Division RETREATED Show Details Odds 4.94 : 1 Exit		CV: 207->507.8 Eng Val: 6 Comm HQ: 13th Army GM Fyodor Tolbukhin	

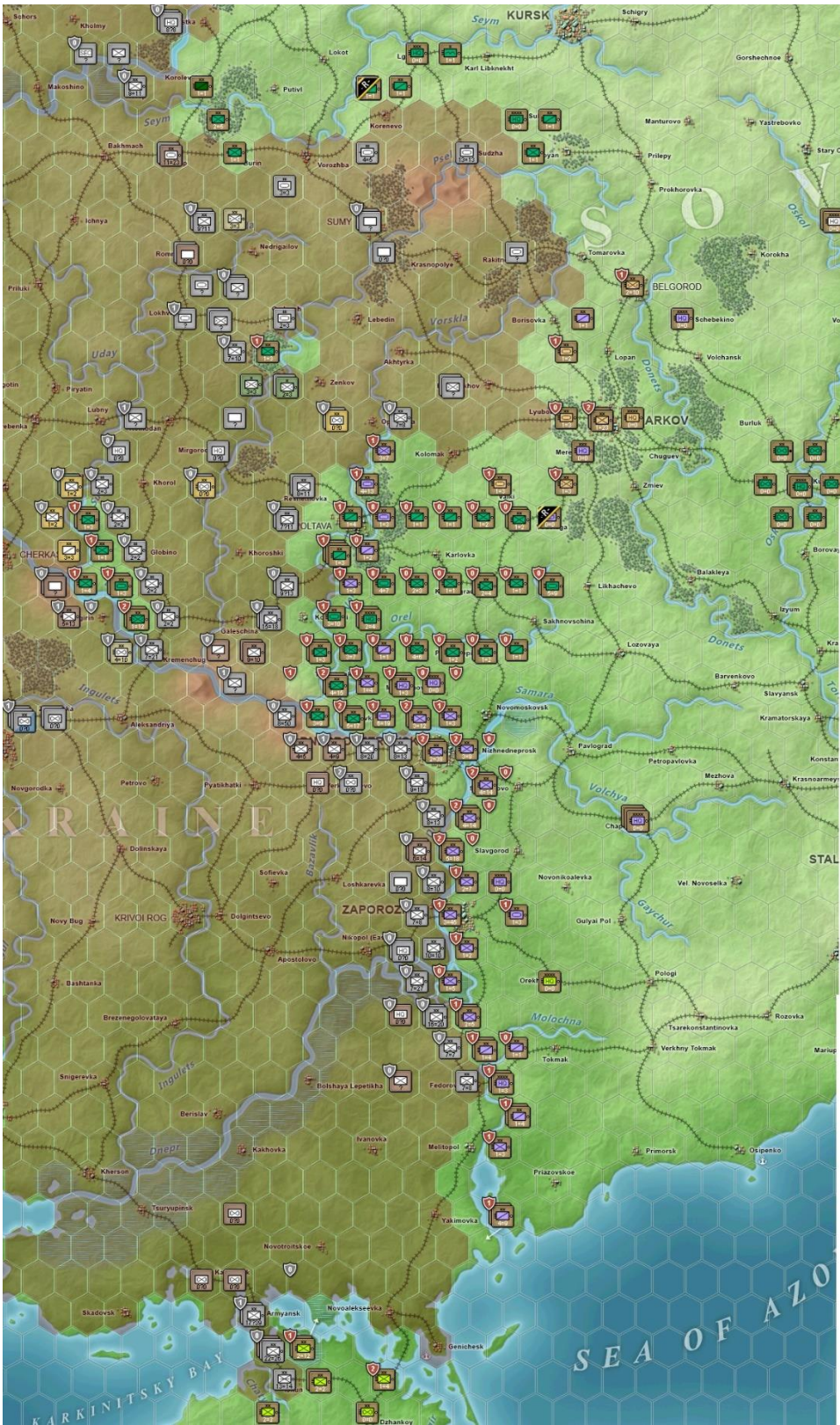
Northwest of Gomel, I have no doubt that the Germans can reestablish contact with their encircled divisions (three Infantry Divisions), but they will also have to take measures to ensure that I simply do not just reencircle whatever units are in the area come next turn.

The air bombings in the center has been less effective than those in the north, mainly due to the distance from the staging bases to the bombing targets, and partly because all bombings in this area was done by level bombers (SB-2's and Pe-2's).

Below is an image of the center, as I give the turn to HJ.



The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, the German Panzers have passed around the northern flank of my defenses in front of Khakov and advanced into the Ukranian plains. This have placed them at a fair distance from their supply lines, signalling that the amount of available fule should be limited over the coming turns. As the Panzers are also spread out over a large area and in one case even split into regiments, I do not think they will have the means for any significant attacks in the coming turn.

Further south, the Axis firces have more or less connected to my defensive line between Dnepropetrovsk and the Sea of Azov. However, as there are no Panzers in the area, I do not feel that there is any need for withdrawals in this area. At the Crimea however, the Germans have broken through my defenses at the base of the peninsula, and there is now little reason for not withdrawing to better defensible positions.

1 of 3 > 95,112 - Clear - Clear Turn:10 1941-08-21	
Axis Forces Attacking: LIV Corps 50th Infantry Division (118) 170th Infantry Division (83) 72nd Infantry Division (91) 73rd Infantry Division (96) R 737th Howitzer Battalion (1) 731st Gun Battalion (0) 1/64th LW Mix Flk Bn (3) [v]	Forces Engaged ATK: men 70735, art 862, afv 33 DAM: men 340, art 21, afv 1 LOST: men 420, art 7, afv 2 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 DEF: men 30807, art 404, afv 18 DAM: men 65, art 3, afv 0 LOST: men 1638, art 23, afv 4 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 276th Rifle Division RETREATED 165th Rifle Division RETREATED 157th Rifle Division RETREATED Odds 5.60 : 1 Show Details Exit
CV: 434->1112.1 Eng Val: 14 Comm HQ: LIV Corps GL Karl Adolf Hollidt	Soviet Forces Defending: 16th Army 157th Rifle Division (66) 165th Rifle Division (71) 276th Rifle Division (44) 126th Crps Art Rgt (3) CV: 184->198.5 Fort: 2.16->0.00 Comm HQ: 16th Army GL Maksim Purkaev

The Axis rail line is now west of Kirovograd.

Planning

Much like further north, the spread out German formations open the possibility of some penetration attacks on my part which will, I hope, delay the German attacks further east. As I have plenty of Cavalry in this area, I will use some of these divisions to penetrate the German defenses and dealy (or better yet, disrupt) the flow of supplies to the German divisions in the front.

Further south, I will pull back the forces on the north side of the Dnepr and establish a new line stretching from Dnepropetrovsk to Kharkov and northwards using the forces of the Southwestern Front to do so. Meanwhile, the forces of the Southern Front will make a single attack against a weak German Mountain Division. Once again, my aim with this attack is not to gain ground or inflict casualties, but rather to inflict a little morale damage to a division that will be essential to the Germans once winter arrives.

On Crimea, I will pull back. Part of my forces will move back to Sevastopol while the remainder will establish a new line at Ak-Manay

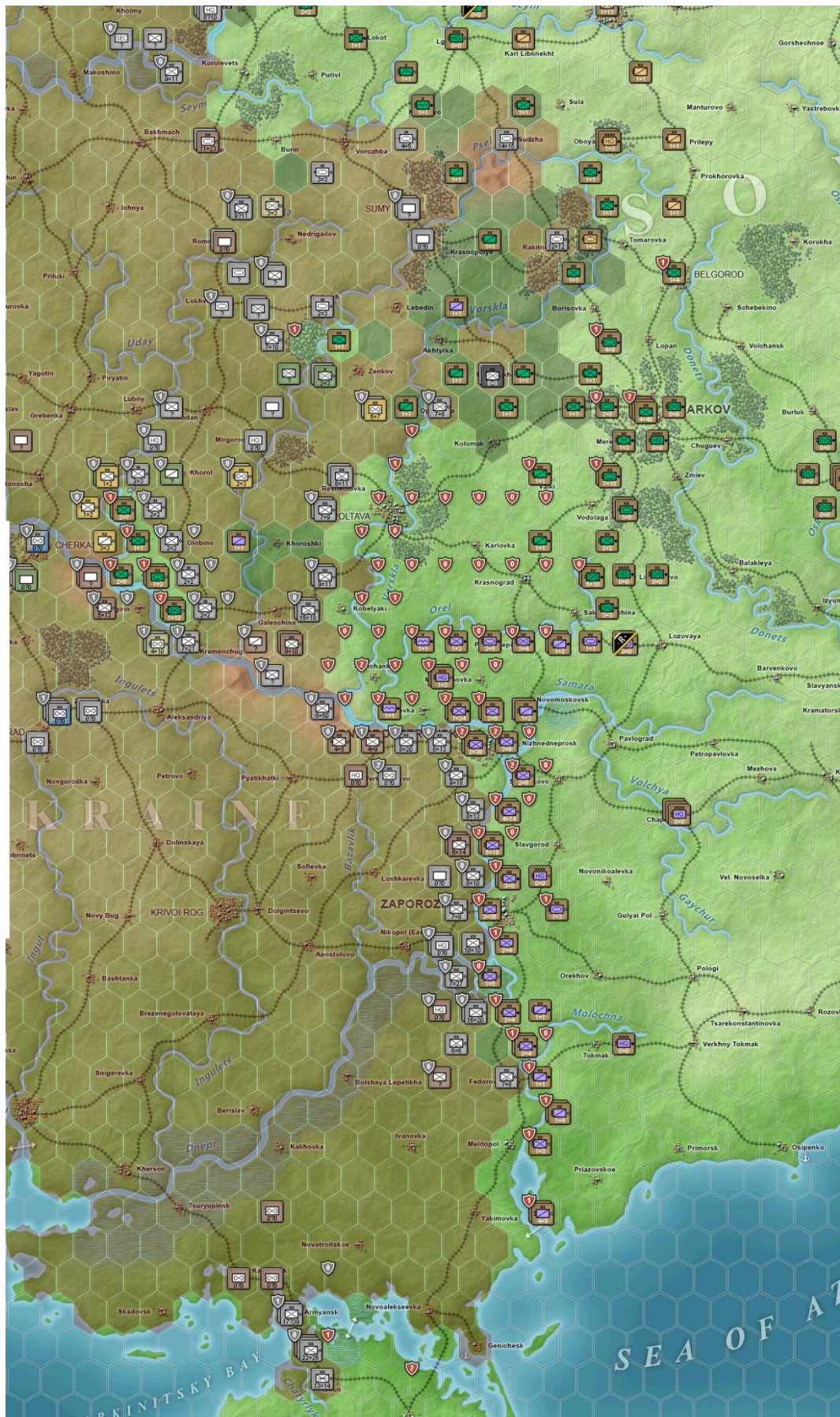
Execution

The Panzer attack northwest of Kharkov has been somewhat disrupted. While the Germans will certainly not lose any units next turn, I have ensured that three mobile divisions will receive no supplies whatsoever, while further divisions will receive a lot less than they otherwiase would.

The Southern Front attack on the German mountain Division went pretty much as I had expected. The Germans inflicting some decent losses upon the Soviets, before being forced to withdraw.

1 of 1100,103 - Clear - ClearTurn: 10 1941-08-21		
Axis Forces Defending (W): LII Corps 101st Lt Inf Div (74) I/37th LW Mix Flk Bn (2)	Forces Engaged	
	DEF: men 13706, art 183, afv 0 DAM: men 92, art 9, afv 0 LOST: men 112, art 4, afv 0 DEF: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0	ATK: men 67993, art 871, afv 29 DAM: men 531, art 11, afv 0 LOST: men 937, art 8, afv 4 ATK: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0 LOST: ftr 0, bmr 0, utl 0
	101st Light Infantry Division RETREATED	
CV: 76->34.8Fort: 0.02->0.00 Comm HQ: LII Corps G Kurt von Briesen	Show DetailsOdds 7.05 : 1	Exit
		Soviet Forces Attacking: 19th Army 134th Rifle Division (24) 171st Rifle Division (34) 442nd Crps Art Rgt (2) 272nd Crps Art Rgt (2) 111th Sapper Battalion (1) Coastal Army -10% 156th Rifle Division (13) [v]
		CV: 112->245.4Eng Val: 4 Comm HQ: 19th Army GL Ivan Konev

Below is an image of the situation in the south, as I give the turn to HJ.



Conclusion

Ground losses this turn have been hard on the Soviets, even though I deem myself able to sustain such losses. 202.000 Ivans have been lost to 26.000 landers. In the air, losses stand at 129 Axis aircraft to 387 Soviet ones. I am increasingly worried about my short range level bomber fleet, which will dry out in a few short turns at this rate. Losing 115 SB-2's and 30 Pe-2's with no more than 540 SB-2's in the reserve pool is worrisome. However, my airforce is getting ever stronger, and I now have spare Air Regiments standing by on my assembly bases with nowhere important to send them.

For this reason, I have refrained from bombing the Axis ground units this turn, instead setting the airforce up for a fight come the next Axis turn, with ground support at 100 and ground support escort at 200.

Finally, I have evacuated some of the vehicle production from Moscow.