

## Strategic overview

### Turn 4: Strategic Considerations

#### Situational analysis

| SPECIAL |                      |      |    |         |        |   |
|---------|----------------------|------|----|---------|--------|---|
| -       | Vehicle Repair       | A    | -  | 3310    | 33085  | 0 |
| -       | Port                 | 145  | 0  | 0       | 0      | 0 |
| -       | Railyard             | 296  | 0  | 0       | 0      | 0 |
| -       | Manpower             | 3383 | 80 | 24568   | 506810 | 0 |
| -       | Vehicle              | 140  | 0  | 95788   | 144200 | 0 |
| -       | Heavy Industry       | 230  | 2  | 0       | 340000 | 0 |
| -       | Oil Production       | 128  | 0  | 0       | 192000 | 0 |
| -       | Fuel Production      | 149  | 0  | 0       | 107280 | 0 |
| -       | Resource Production  | 192  | 0  | 0       | 580000 | 0 |
| -       | Armaments Production | 364  | 2  | 1091790 | 272500 | 0 |

A lot of things happening this turn. Most of it bad news for me.

The “good” news are that I have lost neither armaments production or heavy industry this turn. The bad news is that the Germans have locked down no less than 17 armament factories, 8 heavy industry factories and 6 vehicle factories. This they did by both reaching Mga locking down Leningrad and by crossing the Dnepr southwest of Poltava locking down Kremenchug. My decision to move KV-1 and T-50 points from Leningrad last turn has certainly been vindicated.

In short, the situation in both the north and the south has apparently taken a drastic turn for the worse. Only in the center does the situation look stable, but I do not doubt things will explode here as well.

Aircraft losses are still light, with 53 Germans lost versus 266 Soviet losses. The numbers are well below production numbers so both the Luftwaffe and the Red Army Aviation will be growing stronger. The Germans use the Luftwaffe for rear area assignments, such as reducing the Lvov pocket through large ground attacks using more than 300 planes.

Extensive Axis fuel drops in both the north and the south. In the north fuel drops have apparently occurred prior to the German thrust on Mga, in the south it has occurred refueling some of the panzers that crossed the Dnepr.

As my responses will be heavily depending on intel reports from recon missions, the situational reports from this point on, will be done AFTER recon missions have been flown.

Axis VP advantage is 4.2 to 1.

## North



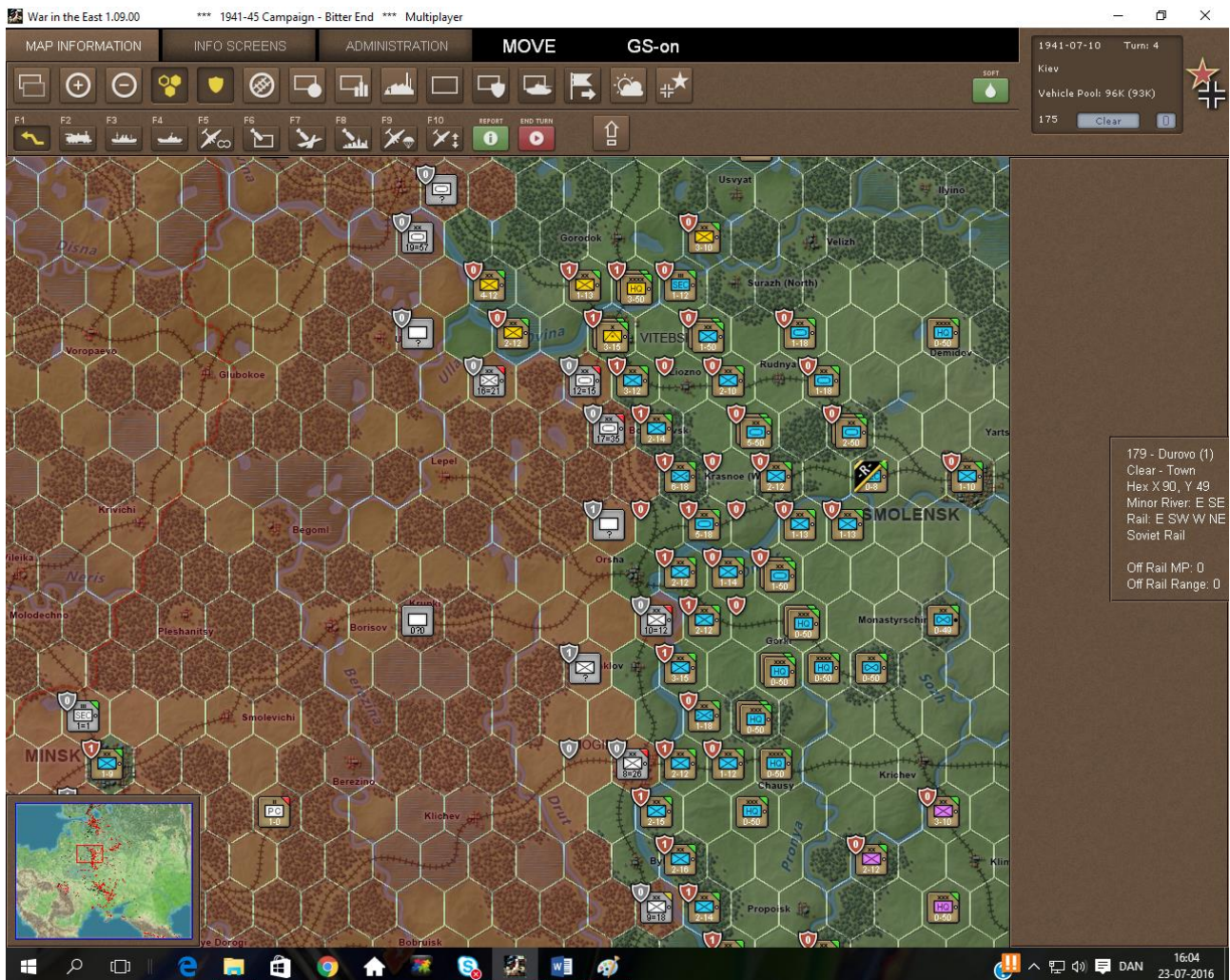
The Germans have deployed no less than five panzers and five motorized divisions in the thrust for Leningrad, cutting of the rail connection at Mga. I must be honest in saying that I did not believe that would happen this turn, although I did make some contingency planning for it, by evacuating those KV-1 and T-50 factories.

Long term, the situation is also real bad as the defense of Leningrad is hopelessly outmanoeuvred. I predict the city will fall far to early to my liking. There is an extremely small chance that I can prevent the flow of supplies and fuel to the forward panzers next turn with a pincer move by divisions from either side of the german advance. It depends on that division east of Plyassa not being a combat unit. This would sacrifice the divisions however.

German FBD is at Valmera and Daugavpils. Once again thanks to Hardluckyetagain for making me aware, that german rails can be seen by hovering the mouse over the hex.



## Center



In the center, the Germans have moved their panzers to the northern part of the front and moved infantry up to the Dnepr river. The Minsk garrison still holds.

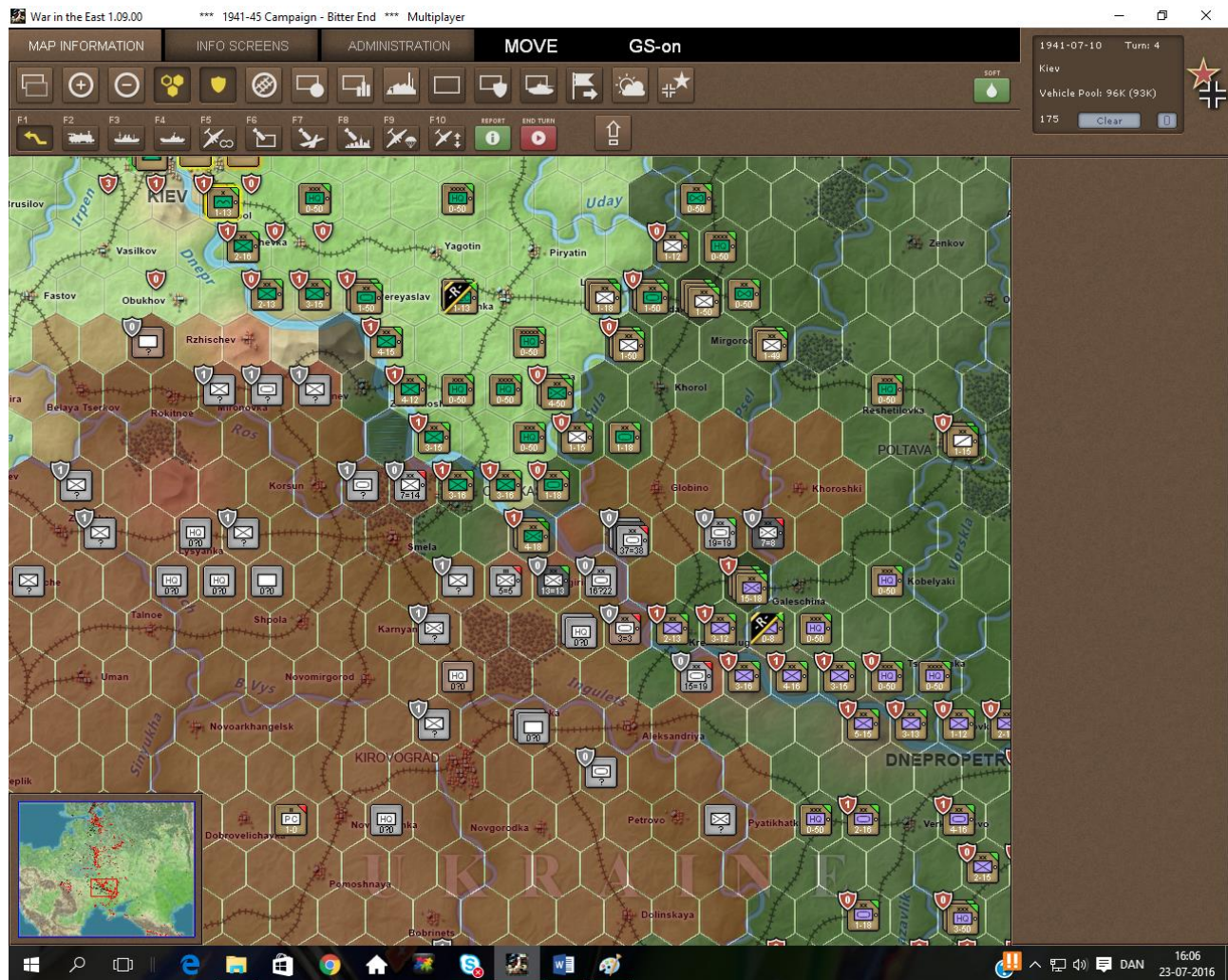
German panzers are in the red fuelwise but the rail line advances to Daugavpils suggest that the Germans might very well want to circle Vitebsk from the north.

On the Dnepr front there is nothing but infantry, so even if the Germans force a crossing, I think it unlikely they will have movement left to conduct any encirclements.

The southernmost infantry however, threaten to join up with that cavalry unit south of Pripyat encircling the divisions that has not yet come out of the Pripyat marshes.



## South



The Germans have crossed the Dnepr with five motorized divisions. While they have failed to lock down significant industry on this front, they now threaten several thrusts:

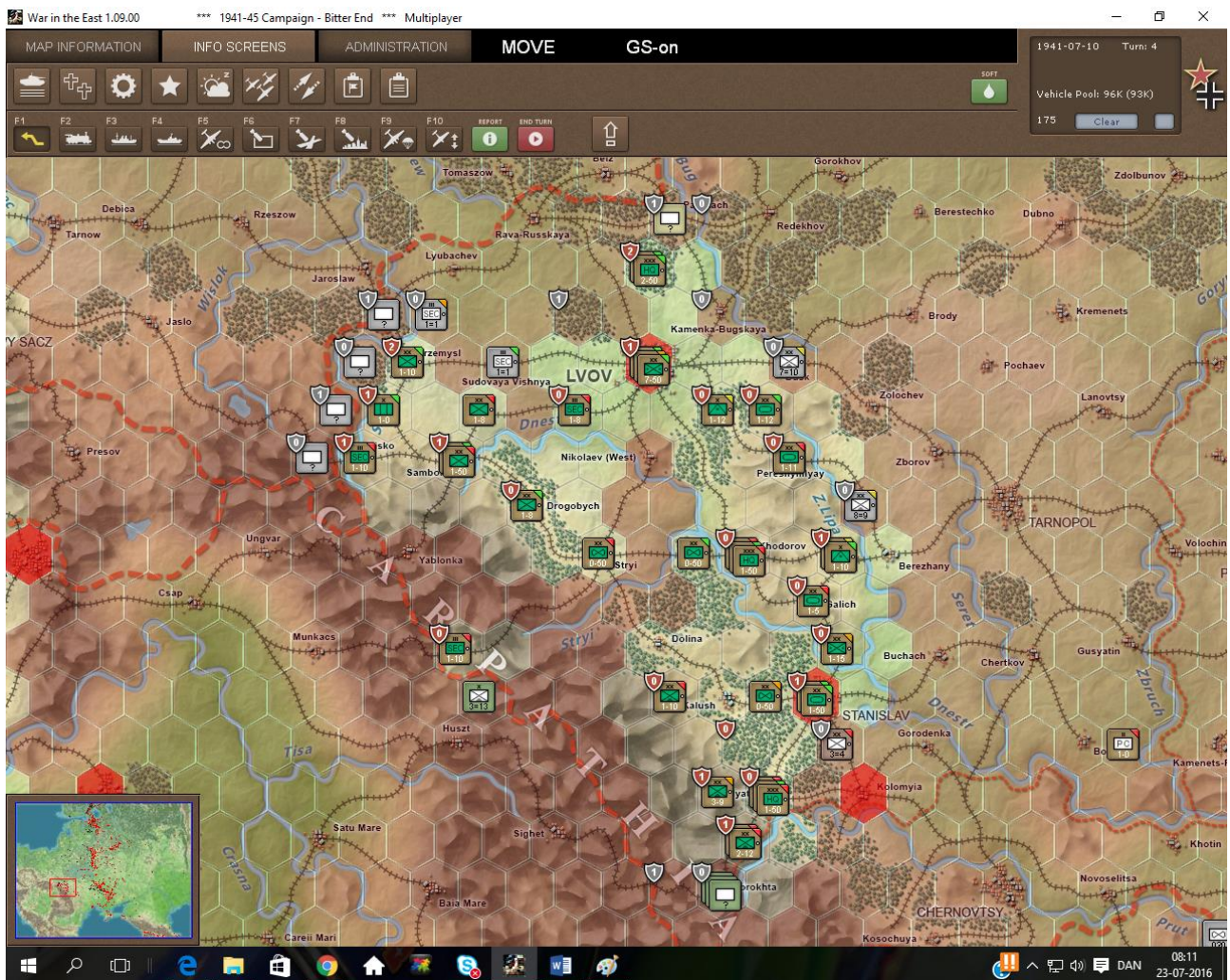
- The northward move aimed at cutting off my units still east of Kiev
- The northeastwards move aimed at the industry in Poltava and Kharkov
- Swinging back into the Dnepr bend, locking down Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye

At least two of his units are KIRO in fuel and the FBD is in Floreshty. German supply lines are thus in the 25 to 30 hex range north of the Dnepr but 20 to 25 south of the river.

Around Odessa I still hold a five hex ring of territory around the city and no moves have been made on Nikolaev either.

I believe I made a mistake in the choice of factories to evacuate last turn. Even if the Germans could have locked them down in one turn using very little force, the factories in Odessa would have continued to produce until taken, and taking them would take Germans away from their preferred axis of attack.





In the Lvov pocket nothing much has changed. The Germans conducted eight ground attacks and a number of ground bombings this turn. Supply stores are now Lvov: 1300, Stanislav: 350. The slow and steady grinding continues.

## Planning

The only airforces in need of recycling or national reserve this turn are four SB-2 bombers that have been involved in the ground fightings in the north and the south respectively. These units will be recycled and I will be equipping that Recon airfield at what will become the Bryansk front.

On the factory evacuation side, I am faced with yet another hard choice. I will certainly need to evacuate the T-34 and Su-2 facilities (1 point each). But do I concentrate on the evacuation of vehicles, or should I continue to prioritize evacuation of other factory types? Kharkov accounts for a full 1/7<sup>th</sup> of total Soviet vehicle production. However, I have decided to focus on evacuating other production facilities for now. While on the defense, I will rely heavily on my rail capacity for supplies and vehicles will not be as important as they are on the offense. As I obviously need to stop the Germans before attacking myself, vehicles are less important than guns and tanks for now.

I will continue to form armies around the units mustering in the rear. I will not, however, spend Rail capacity on depleted units. These will have to make their own way towards the front.

### *North*

I will withdraw those units west of the German pincer to Leningrad along with the few “better than one CV” units in the Northern Front. I hope this will be enough to offer some resistance to the Germans when they come. I do not know if I face an armored assault on Leningrad next turn, or if the armor will just seal off the city and swing southeast towards Moscow. Either way, I need to build whatever defense I can in the city. All units in Leningrad will be set to “Refit” mode.

Some of the units west of the German pincer will not be able to make it back to Leningrad, and will instead be ordered to go towards Oranienbaum. I will then evacuate what I can from here using the Soviet navy.

The Volchov river line is all but impossible to hold at all. I have no units with a decent CV available, and even a lone German panzer could easily force a crossing at this point. Consequently, I will not try to hold this line, as it will just lead to Soviet units being cut off. Instead I will put up a token defense here with the low value units available, while pulling the 28<sup>th</sup> army back to the Msta river while setting it in “Refit” mode. As I expect a move towards Sviritsa and cutting off Leningrad entirely (if the panzers does not swing southeast), I will also need to put up a small force to slow down any German advance.

On the Karelian front I will conduct a fighting withdrawal of sorts, hoping to extract all forces south to Leningrad. East of lake Ladoga I will pull back full scale, as a German breakthrough at the Volchov will threaten units to the north with encirclement. Hanko defenses will be disbanded and all forces returned east.

Finally, the 29<sup>th</sup> Army will be moved north from Moscow to Kalinin and Torzhok, as I deem the threat in the north to be greater than the threat in the center.

Due to the low casualty rate in the air, I have decided to start using the local airforces to actively harass the German panzers using ground attacks. It seems the Germans have no forward airfields.

### *Center*

In the center, I will withdraw the units threatened by encirclement north of Vitebsk, in order to preserve these forces. The line stretching from Vitebsk to Dnepr will also be withdrawn a couple of hexes, in order to get a little distance to the panzers. The line along the Dnepr itself will be held.

Meanwhile, I will be mustering two new armies for the Reserve/Kalinin Front around Moscow, moving them west/northwest in the process.

Finally, I will be moving forward one of the new army HQ's from Moscow in order to place units in the Orel MD under army command. I will also let the Orel MD forces take over a slightly longer section of the front south of Mogilev in order to free up a few infantry divisions.

### *South*

The forces of the Southwestern Front are now either standing in the Lvov pocket or on the Dnepr river above the German bridgehead. In the Lvov pocket, I will pull the forces around Przemyśl back towards Lvov and I will start concentrating what I have left on either Lvov or Stanislav.

The SouthWestern Front forces on the Dnepr river will be pulled back eastwards.

I will also need to place troops in front of Kharkov in such a way that I can delay the Germans in reaching the city, hopefully giving me one more turn to evacuate factories. This will be done mainly in the form of a defensive line along the Vorskla river, where the Southwestern Front will be charged with holding the northern part of this line. Behind this line, scattered units will be placed in order to make German encirclements more difficult.

The Southern Front units north of the Dnepr above Dnepropetrovsk will also be pulled back to the Vorskla, forming the southern part of this line. As the Germans can cut off Dnepropetrovsk industry if they reach Nizhnedneprosk I will place Motorised units with high CV in order to prevent this if possible.

The infantry divisions in the Dnepr bend will be pulled back behind the river, as German advances next turn can easily put them in a less than desirable position. Most of the tank divisions in the Dnepr bend will remain here, while a few will be pulled north. If the German panzers swing back across the river into the Dnepr bend, they will no longer be threatening Tula, Voronesh and all the central Soviet cities, and I will have a lot less ground to hold in order to contain the German advances. I strongly fear, however, that the Germans will continue to drive northeast from here, threatening Moscow from three directions shortly. However, if they swing northeast prematurely, they will leave the industry in Dnepropetrovsk and Stalino untouched.

South of Zaporozhye, I will leave the Dnepr line and pull back to Molochna. This will free up forces, I am going to need in a few turns time, as well as reducing the threat of having forces cut off from the east and being forced to withdraw to the Crimean.

On the Crimean itself, forces will be transferred to the Caucasus MD in order to free up space in the Southern Front command structure. It seems increasingly like the Germans are not particularly interested in trying to take Sevastopol in 1941.

Finally, the 1 BAK is in place and will start bombing the German units north of the Dnepr and in the Dnepr bend (with focus on the units north of the bend).



## Execution

### North



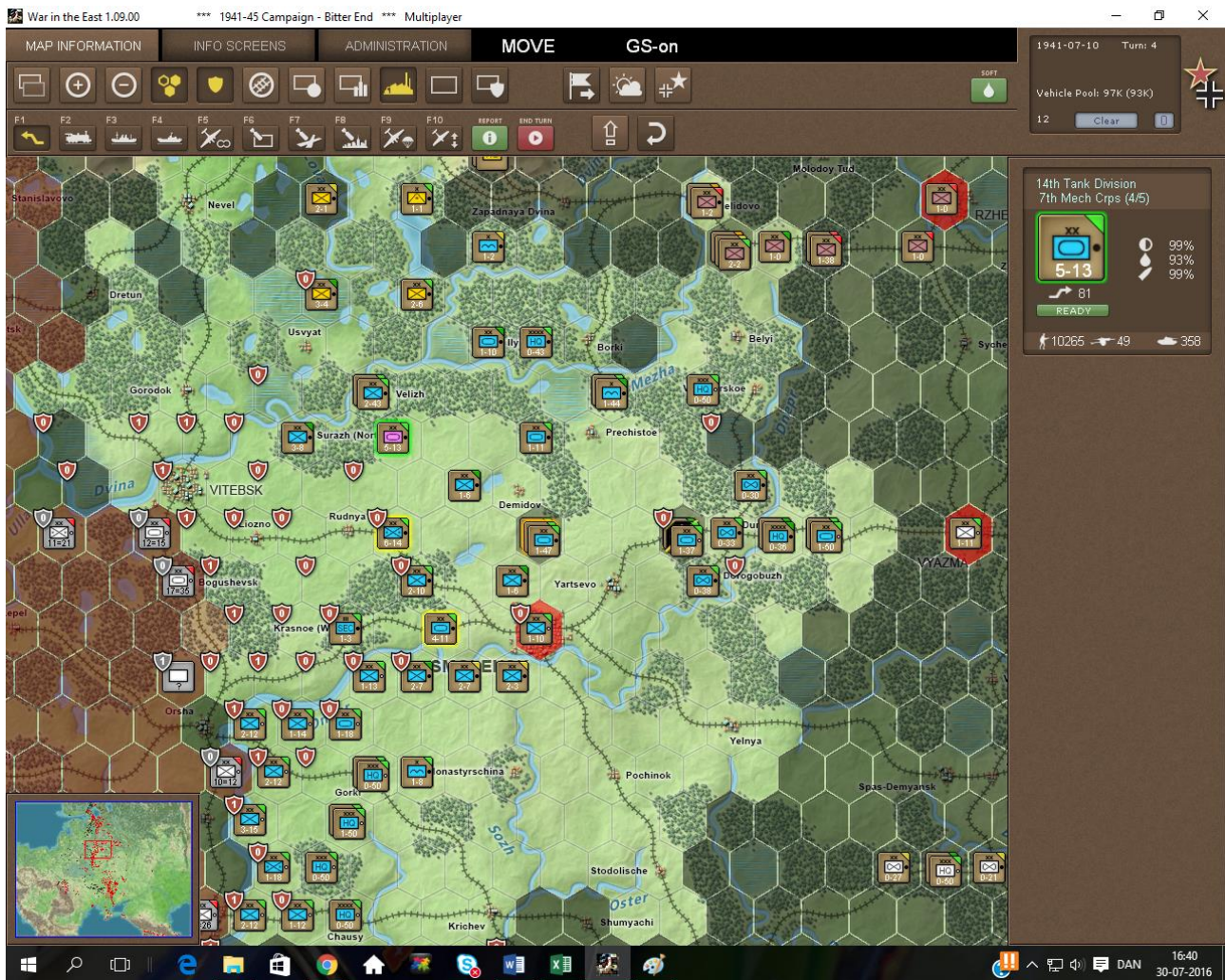
A line has been established defending Leningrad. This line is probably weakest at it's easternmost point, where I have 6 CV in a \*3 Multiplier area. A German attack thus needs to cross a major river and then establish at least 36 CV to break my defenses. I don't think the Germans will attempt this, but rather that they will push eastwards in order to break the supply line to Leningrad going over Lake Ladoga.

I have little strength along the Volkhov, so I guess the Germans can push forward here, the only question being how far.

I have also used the local airforces to conduct ground attacks against the German panzers and motorized units. This has caused very few casualties, but a few elements have been disrupted, which will be turned into fatigue come the next Axis round. I have no idea how much this will subtract from German MP's but the effect should be somewhat cumulative over subsequent turns, if I continue to conduct areal bombardments. The Germans have no airforces in the area, so I effectively have air superiority (for now).



## Center

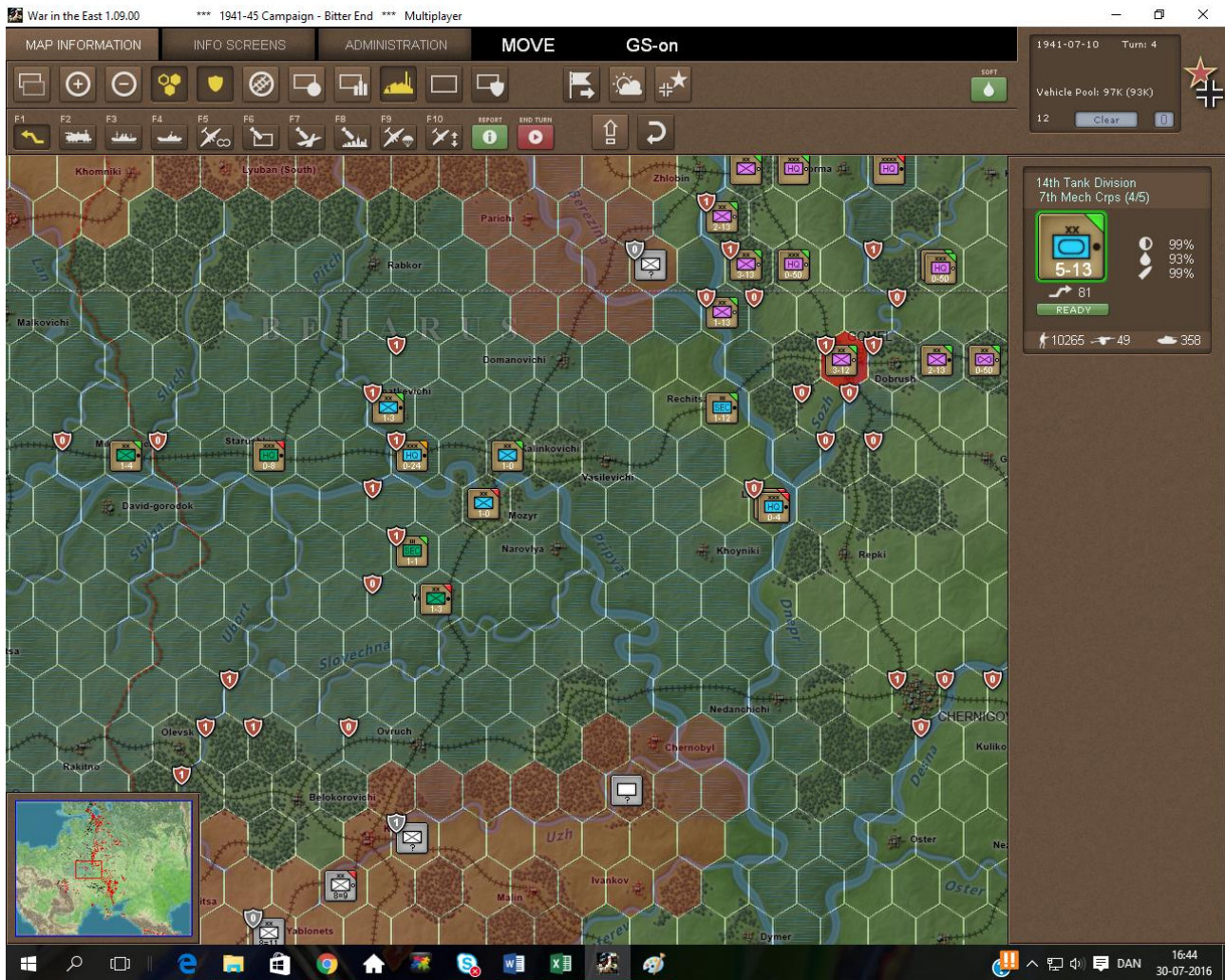


In the center I have pulled back a bit, but I still expect a German encirclement of some Soviet tank units left on the line. However, as German infantry units are not yet able to reach the area between Vitebsk and Smolensk in strength, the Germans will have to split their panzers in order to conduct encirclements.

As only infantry stand across the Dnepr river, I still defend the river line, waiting to see what the German Panzers will do from here.

In the rear, the first of the Kalinin Front armies is capable of being deployed to the front from next turn.

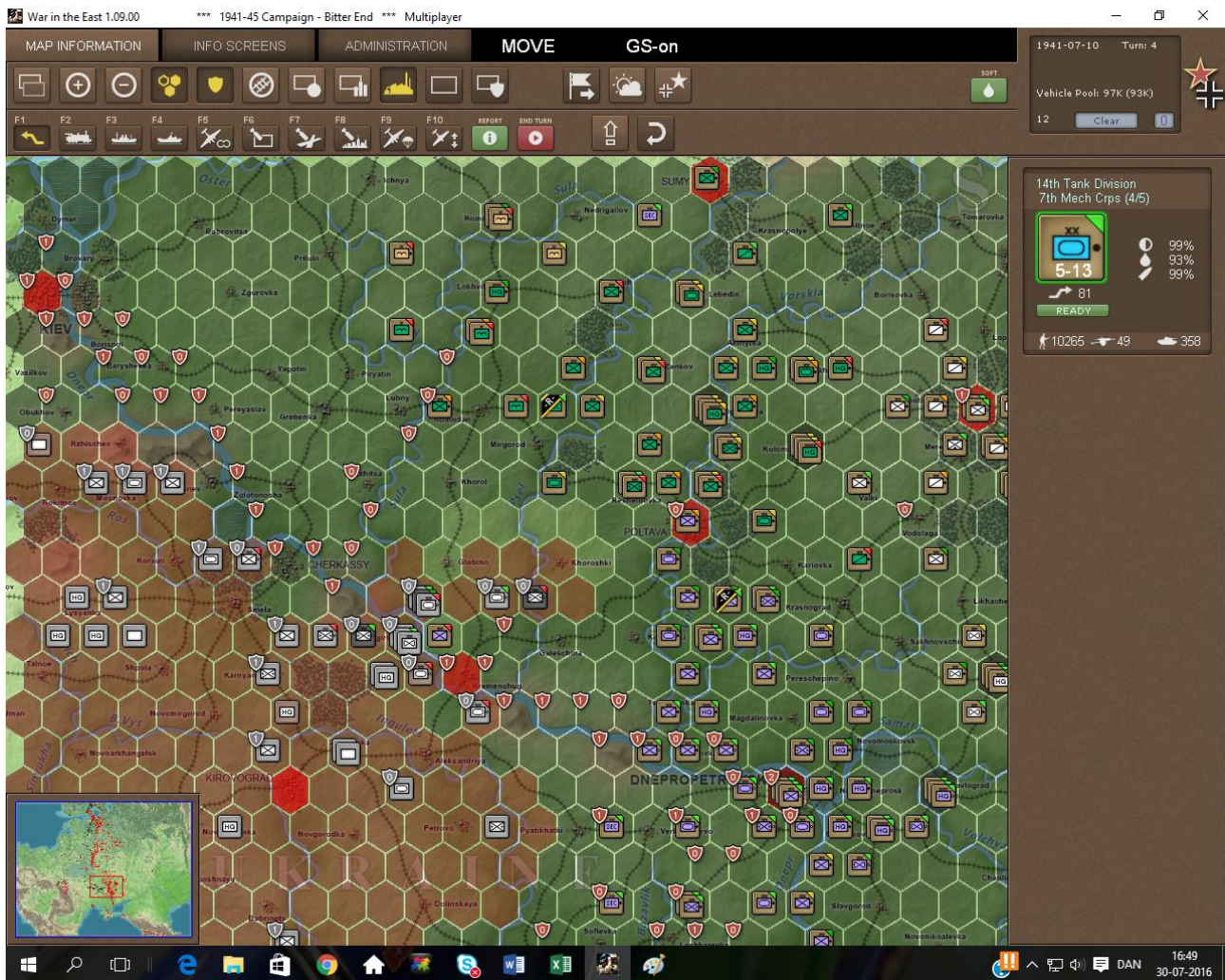




In Pripjat, I have come to believe that I will not be able to extract the slow moving infantry divisions before the meeting of the two German pincers. Even if I did manage this, the units would be in the open and very vulnerable to the southern German panzers. Instead I decided to establish a defense of the Pripjat marshes based on the villages in it's eastern parts. As the units here require practically no fuel, I can use my IL-4's to resupply them.



## South



I have evacuated Kiev entirely, and pulled back eastwards, hoping to protect Kharkov and Dnepropetrovsk. Not shown on the above picture is a thin line of Orel MD units to the north, further limiting the range of the German Panzers in this direction.

As the German Panzers are now partly north and partly south of the Dnepr, whatever the Germans decide to do will cost MP's to get the panzers back together again. I am hoping that the defenses I have in place will be sufficient to delay the German advance on Kharkov and Dnepropetrovsk long enough for me to continue evacuation of essential production capacity.

The IL-2's and Su-2's of the first BAK has been attacking all German Panzers north of the Dnepr and some south of the river, inflicting few casualties but some disruption.

In the far south, I have pulled back to a line going straight south from Zaporozhye and reassigned the units on the Crimean to the Coastal Army, which has been assigned to the Northern Caucasus MD.





There is little to report from the Lvov pocket, I have redeployed a few units, but am increasingly finding myself restricted to conducting a static defense.



### *Conclusion*

I have evacuated all industry from Kiev and Poltava and also the T-34, the Su-2 and a little other industry from Kharkov. I am wondering if the cutting of the Mga rail line was in fact such a disaster. While the German advances are really bad, I would not have had sufficient rail capacity to evacuate any factories from Leningrad, even if the rail lines had still been open.

I expect to see the Germans closing off Leningrad within a turn or two, but as there is plenty of supplies (30K+) and fuel (190K+) in the city, the Germans will have to attack it head on eventually.

In the center I think the Germans might just advance a few hexes while moving up more industry. It is possible, that they will encircle some of the armored units I left at the front here.

In the South things are "interesting". While I hope the Germans will swing back into the Dnepr Bend, I suspect they will continue to press on towards Kharkov and Dnepropetrovsk on the northern banks of the Dnepr. Moving south will simply confine the Panzers leaving them with less room to manoeuver, thus making it easier for me to contain them in the future.

Soviet tank production is now in shambles due to the evacuations from Leningrad and Kharkov. No more than 42 T-34's and six KV-1's will be produced next turn. I'm a long way from the Soviet armored juggernaut of 1944 and 1945.

I have been using some of my 175 Admin points this turn in assigning better army commanders to some of the critical sectors. I still need to pull Konev away from his post in the North Caucasus MD, but this is quite expensive.

The Axis is certainly on the march, but I am not even considering giving up!!!