

Strategic overview

Turn 15: Strategic Considerations

Situational analysis

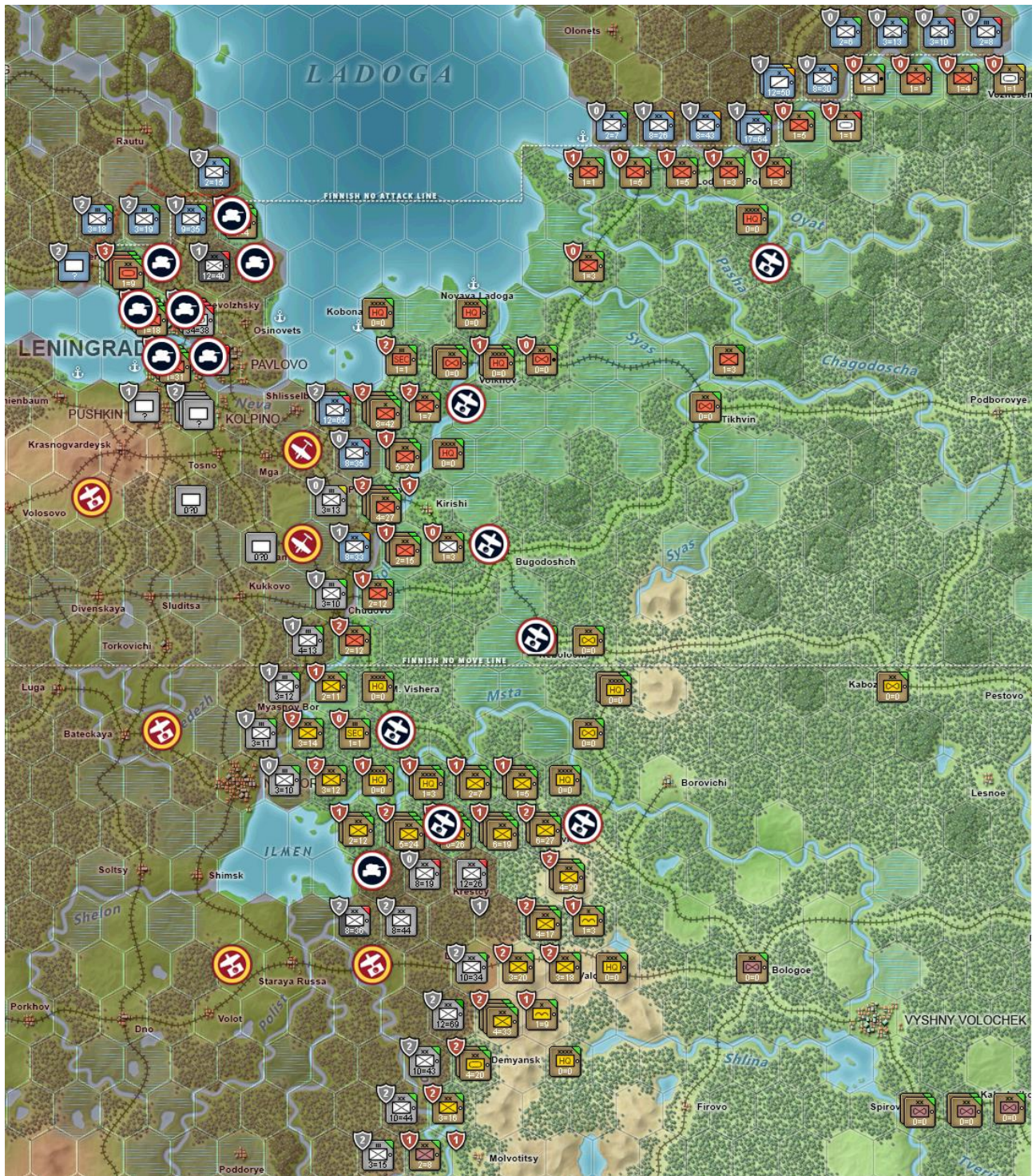
____ SPECIAL ____						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	2092	115779	0
-	Port	115	15	0	0	0
-	Railyard	221	3	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2715	72	79307	2126622	0
-	Vehicle	120	0	236853	279420	0
-	Heavy Industry	203	10	0	1302500	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	896000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	500640	0
-	Resource Production	164	0	0	2532000	0
-	Armaments Production	295	13	357229	1003750	0

The Germans have punched hard with both of their Panzer concentrations. West of Moscow, they have attacked southeast, surrounded a number of Soviet divisions, broken through and taken Kursk. In the south, they have reclosed the pockets around five or six divisions placing even more in a dangerous position. The Germans are threatening to connect their two Panzer groups surrounding large parts of the Southwestern and Bryansk Fronts.

German AFV+SP/AC losses this turn are 155, while they have also lost 126 fighters and 210 bombers. Soviet losses in the air are also extremely high with 522 fighters and 246 bombers going down. However, of those only eight were Yak-1's, 27 were LaGG-3's and 17 were IL-2's.

Axis VP advantage is still 2.2 to 1.

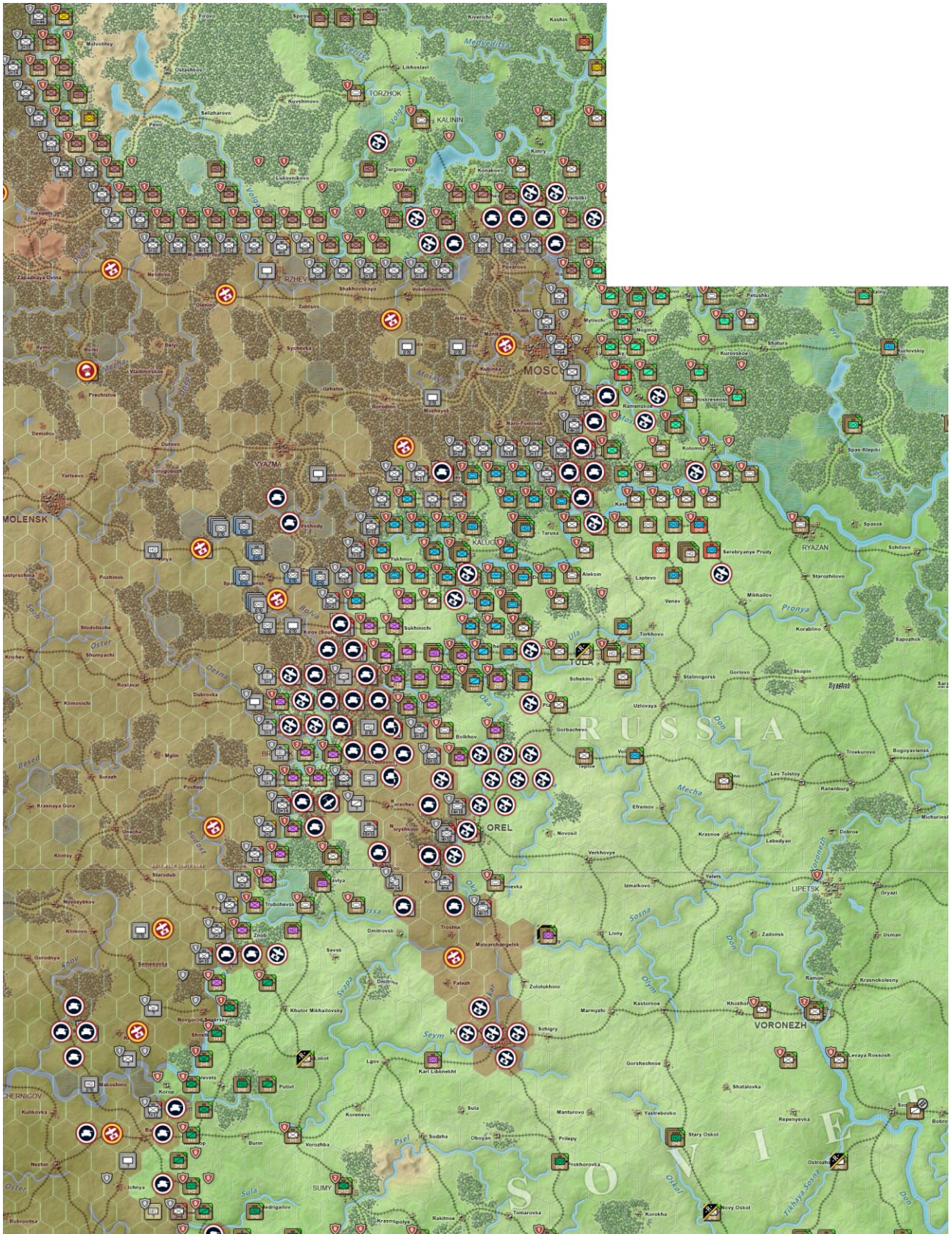
The North



In Leningrad, the Germans are continuing their destruction of the Leningrad defenses. The Finns are also taking over part of the line at the Volkhov, which means that there will be no more attacks by the Germans here, unless they redeploy to the area once more.

East of Lake Ilmen, the Germans have conducted another attack. It seems they are a little undecided as to what they wish to do here.

The Center



In the center, the Germans have attacked in two locations. South of Moscow, some infantry attacks has led to some limited territorial gains, while the main concentration of German Panzers has punched through the Bryansk Front and taken Kursk.

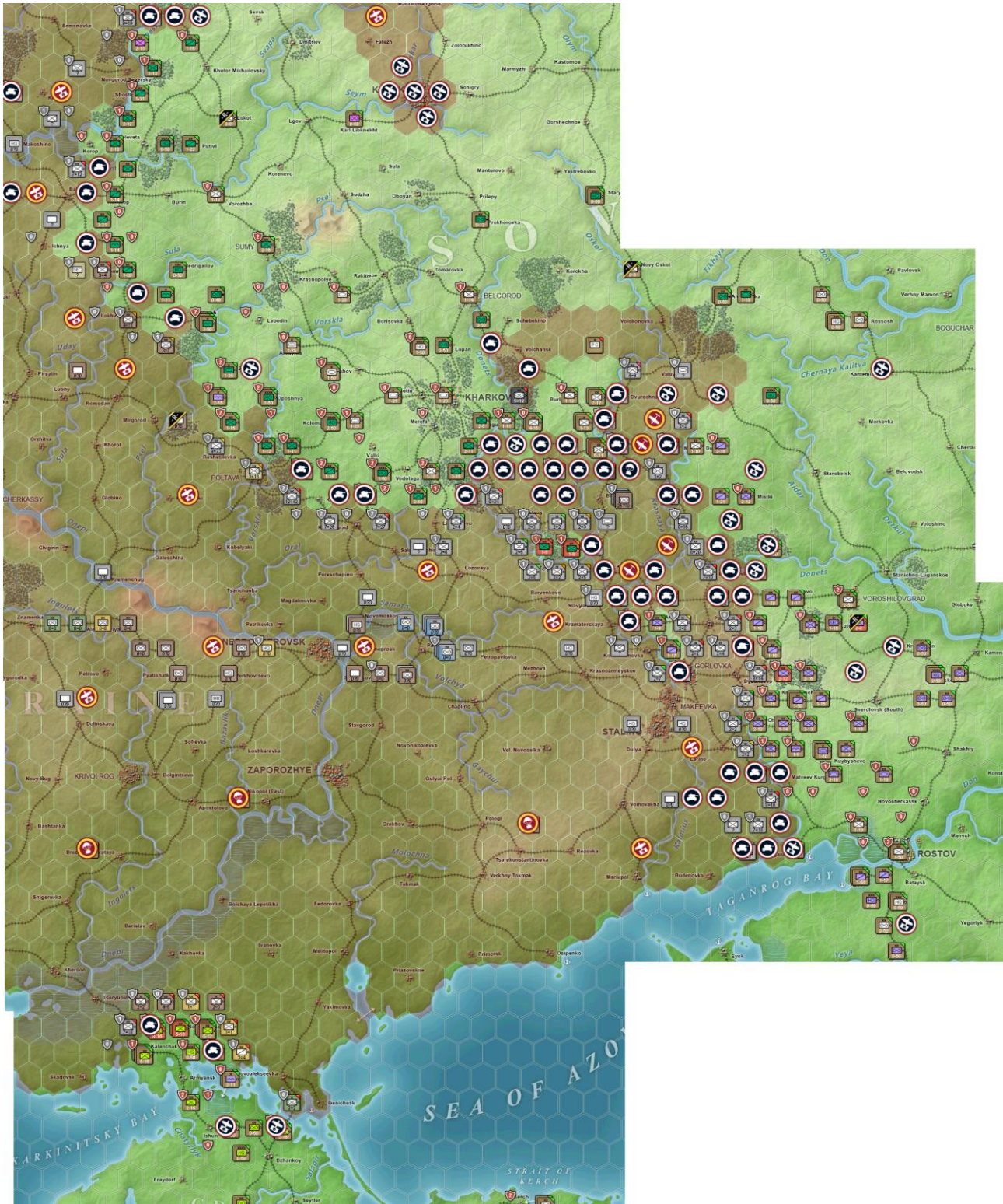
As the Germans have also struck north east of Kharkov, there is a very real threat that next turn they will close the gap between their thrusts and reenact the historical battle of Kiev in 1941. Another threat is that the Panzers will swing northeast, and in a turn or two will meet up with the infantry attacking south of Moscow. This would then encircle the entire Western Front and cripple any hope I have of a winter offensive.

It is almost a minor issue, that the Germans have cut off a number of Bryansk Front divisions that have no hope of avoiding annihilation next turn.

In the air, this area has seen some heavy fighting, with the air groups of the Bryansk Front being depleted to the point of them not being able to perform any real fighting.

Finally, even if the Germans do not encircle my units in the huge area west of Kursk, their attack has cut the rail connections to this area. Consequently, it will be very expensive in trucks to keep this area supplied throughout the winter.

The South



In the south, the Germans have punched northeast, surrounding a few divisions and threatening the encirclement of the entire Southwestern Front. I must now face the facts that with two turns until mud and another three turns of snow before the blizzard, the Germans are no more than 10 or 12 hexes from Voronezh and Rostov, which are their automatic victory conditions.

I have realized, that there is no second German airfield with Ju/52's somewhere in the German rear. The Germans repair what they can every turn, and then fly until there is nothing left capable of flying. This turn, there are 194 damaged planes on the Ju/52 airfield, the vast majority of those being transport aircraft. It also seems that there are no more than 38 flight worthy German fighters in the area, the majority of those being Bf-109E's.

Planning

In the air, I will assign a lot of fighter air groups to the airfields of the Western and Bryansk Fronts. I will also produce another eight U-2VS Air Groups. My strategic aim is to produce enough of these that the losses will match the total production. If the Germans do not do something to match this, then those U-2VS's will fly turn after turn inflicting casualties on the Germans. 30 Air Groups doing this for 100 turns should mean a lot of German casualties (I hope).

Evacuationwise, I will focus on Voronezh, moving out one of the IL-2 production facilities fully while leaving the other in place.

Finally, I will take the advice (partly) offered to me on the AAR thread, dissolve the BAK commands and start making sure that at least one sapper regiment is assigned to all armies up and down the front. This will help in digging in as well as in any upcoming attacks.

The North

With the Finns arriving to take over part of the Volkhov Frontline, I can now move a few divisions southwards, as I no longer need to fear a large German assault on my lines. Those units moving south will be reassigned to the 22nd Army and will do what they can to attack the weaker German units along the Volkhov.

East of Lake Ilmen, I will inch forward where I can, but the Germans are far too strong for me to conduct any real offensive operations.

The Center

At the Western end of the frontline held by the Reserve Front, I will attack another German infantry regiment in fortified positions. If successful, I will slowly create a section of frontline where the Germans have no fortifications. I might be able to exploit this, come winter. At Rzhev, I will conduct another two attacks, one against a fortified German Regiment and one against a non-fortified regiment. If I create a section of four hexes with no fortifications, I will be content and instead focus on inflicting losses. The 38th Army, at the eastern end of the Reserve Front, will gather all available troops for an attack on the northeasternmost German division. While CV does not favor me, I do have a very good commander (Malinovsky, avg 6.4) and several support units ready for action in the nearby army HQ.

Further east, The Moscow MD will attack on that single, low CV German division out in front.

The Western Front needs to be pulled back to the Oka minor river line. I might be overly careful here, but I deem that a major encirclement of the Western Front would be catastrophic to me at this point. I will leave cavalry units out in front in the fortified area that are close to the Oka line, and I will use infantry in the fortified hexes that are adjacent to the Oka but on the German side. I also need the Western Front to guard a little more of the Oka line, both in a northeasterly and in a southern direction than they do currently.

The Bryansk Front will be pulled south to continue the defensive line along the Oka. The units west of the northern German pincer will be pulled back as far as their MP allows them.

The South

The Southwestern Front finds themselves sorely threatened by encirclement this turn. I have no intention of reenacting a game version of the historical 1941 battle for Kiev, and will do what I can to extract my divisions creating a new front. I will also move the 26th Army to Voronezh and establish a defensive position

around the city with units pulled up from the east. I REALLY want to avoid having to offer my surrender due to the Germans meeting the automatic victory conditions in 1941.

The Southern Front will maintain and strengthen its current line, while also conducting a few attacks on weaker German units. I will also stack up the defense of Rostov if possible. This will leave a large section of the frontline virtually unguarded, and the Germans will be able to gain a large area of territory, if they so desire. I really hate this idea, but should I decide to try to hold it, it will be with a very thin line of divisions that are easily surrounded and destroyed. IF I find some units I can spare when I execute my plans, I will do what I can to strengthen this area.

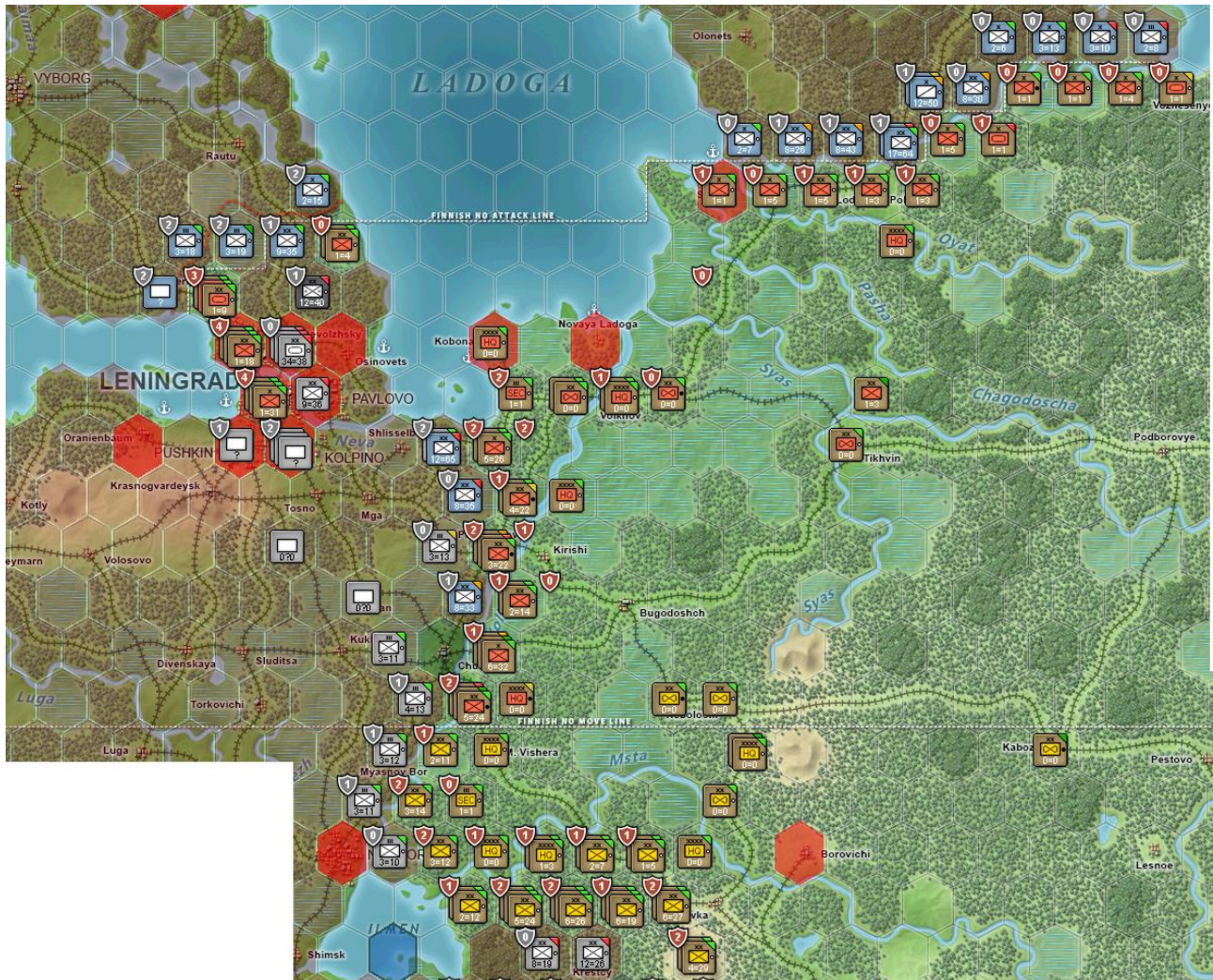
The Caucasus MD will continue to attack the local Axis Minors as always.

In Odessa, the port damage is back at 54%. The Rumanians seem content to lose 5 planes and 1500 KIA every turn to achieve very little in the attack on the port. I intend to do nothing there at all this turn.

In the air, I will conduct air bombing of the German airfields, especially important is the Ju/52 airfield. With the lack of German fighters in the area, I might even be able to strain the German fighters with some preliminary attacks (those fighters have already escorted the German supply runs last turn) and conduct a major daytime attack on the Ju/52 airfield.

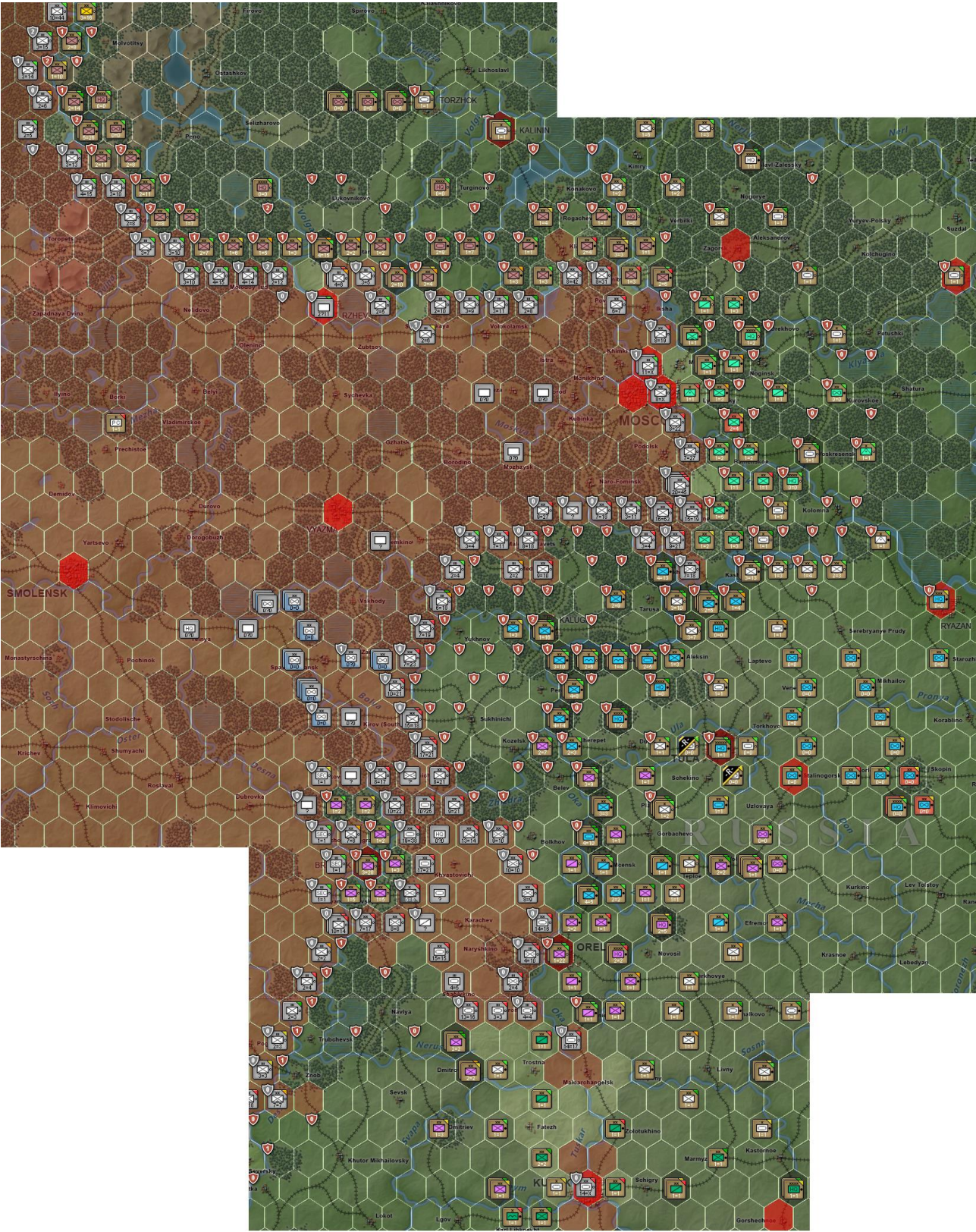
Execution

Northern Front



In the north, I have conducted a single attack across the Volkhov river. Other than that, I have done little but digging in a little deeper.

The Center



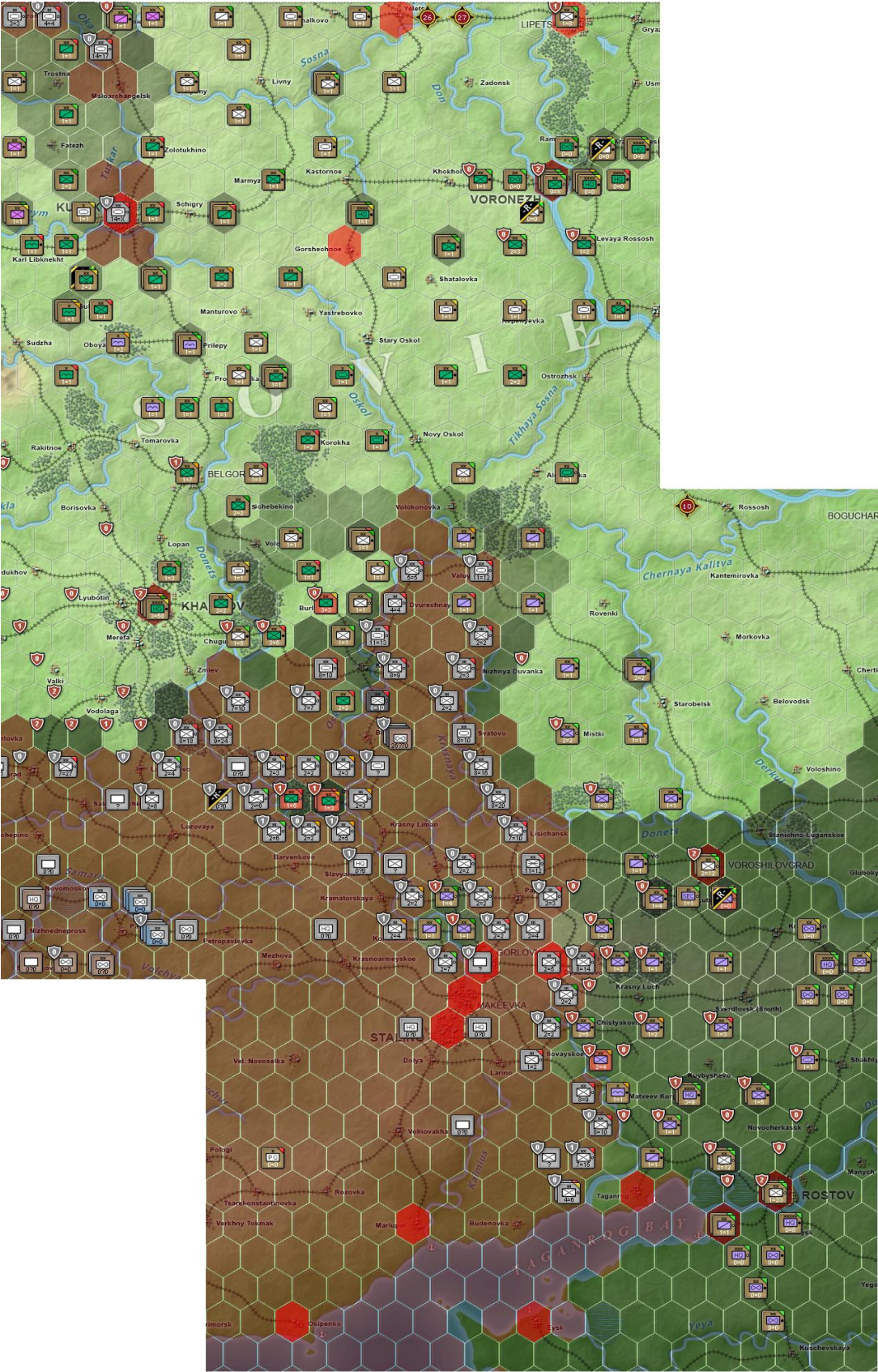
The Reserve Front has been conducting four attacks on exposed German units, including one against a German infantry division north of Moscow. All attacks were successes, showing that I can attack and win over even division sized German units by now. I have also moved the airforces of the Front southwards a little, so they are better placed to take part in the upcoming battles.

The Moscow MD has conducted two attacks this turn, and again both were successful. However, those "X" defensive CV's of the German divisions in the city implies that I am a long way from recapturing Moscow.

The Western Front has been pulled back to new positions along the Oka river. I have tried to maintain bridgeheads across the river, both to delay the Germans and also, hopefully, to have a better position for counterattacking come winter. I have reassigned the remaining BAK airfields to the Western Front, dissolved the BAK command and assigned Faleev as Western Front Air commander (Avg 5.7).

The Bryansk Front has conducted a single attack against a German Panzer Regiment and done what it can to pull back units to avoid encirclement. The situation is a sticky one, and I will certainly have divisions on the wrong side of the German front come next turn. The question is: How many?

The South



In the air, I did about 16 preliminary bombing runs with the Southwestern Front and the North Caucasus MD airforces before I launched my main daylight bombing attack on the Ju/52 airfield. All in all, I destroyed ten Ju/52's for significant Soviet losses.

The southwestern Front has been ordered into a general withdrawal, and most units have been pulled back as far as they can go. In the eastern section of the Southwestern Front, I have conducted an attack on a German Motorized division (another success), but the "pending Soviet control" are costing me a lot of MP's preventing me from getting out all units. I have also pulled up fresh divisions from the east and assigned those to the Southwestern Front around Voronezh.

The Southern Front has conducted two attacks (successes) and extended their frontline north to delay any German thrust towards the Don river. The Southern Front airforces has been strengthened with some IL-2 from the National Air Reserve.

The North Caucasus MD (outside of the above image) has conducted five successful attacks, but have otherwise remained in their current positions.

In Odessa, I have done nothing.

Conclusion

In the air, I have suffered large level bomber losses, but as my pool of those planes is also quite large, I care little. I will also soon be receiving P-40B's with a range of 33, and I plan to use them as escorts for my long range bombers in the south. The Axis have lost another 77 planes this phase, and I hope to continue giving heavy losses to the Luftwaffe.

I have evacuated one of the IL-2 production sites from Voronezh, but have had to leave three armaments factories in the city. I do not think however, that the Germans will be able to push through to the city next turn.

I expect the Germans to close the Kharkov pocket next turn, with several Soviet divisions inside. I also expect to lose a total of 15 encircled divisions, so my total OoB will drop somewhat next turn. In fact, my total OoB has not risen compared to the Axis one over the last five or six turns. I am desperately holding on, waiting for the mud to arrive.