

Turn 14, Strategic Considerations

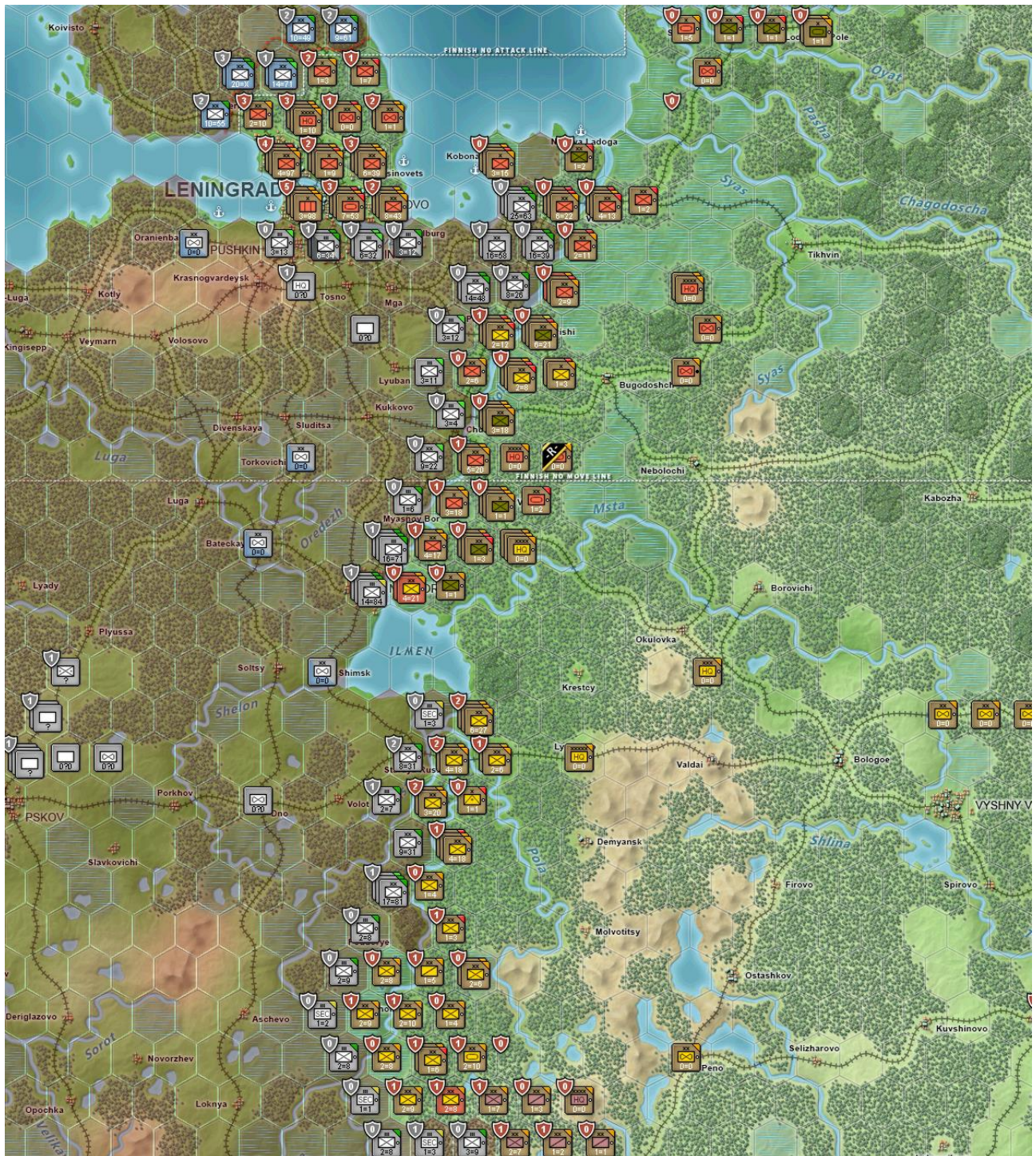
SPECIAL						
-	Vehicle Repair	A	-	2086	108490	0
-	Port	120	0	0	0	0
-	Railyard	270	0	0	0	0
-	Manpower	2936	0	78151	2089190	0
-	Vehicle	140	0	235153	279800	0
-	Heavy Industry	232	0	0	1364500	0
-	Oil Production	128	0	0	832000	0
-	Fuel Production	149	0	0	464880	0
-	Resource Production	182	0	0	2466000	0
-	Armaments Production	366	2	472626	1060750	0

The Germans have relaunched their attacks west of Moscow, while the Panzers have been withdrawn from the front at Leningrad. Further south, the Germans have not yet attempted to break my lines in front of Kharkov.

In the air, the Luftwaffe has withdrawn its bomber fleets from active duty. Consequently, little action has been undertaken in the air.

The Axis VP are now 187, which would be a minor Axis victory, should the game end here.

The North



Situational Assessment

The German Panzers have been withdrawn from frontline duty, and appear to be located northeast of Pskov currently. With the withdrawal of the Panzers it seems unlikely that the Germans are still aiming for Sviritsa, and the continued German attacks may be made only to prepare a better position for the coming winter battles.

To the south of Lake Ilmen, the renewed German attacks on the northern part of the Reserve Front has begun to create a dangerous salient in the frontline. The terrain I hold this way is of little strategic worth.

In the air, all Luftwaffe bombers have been withdrawn to the National Reserve. The Germans have only 57 operational Bf109 F's left in the north.

Planning

At the Volkhov, I will continue to order my lines as best I can. While the Germans may no longer have any intentions of crossing the Volkhov, I will still make my defenses just in case.

South of Lake Ilmen I will withdraw from the salient, partly to shorten my lines and partly to extend the German supply lines, should they choose to follow me.

In the air, I have about 800 Soviet aircraft standing opposite from 60 German fighters. I will need to see if I can somehow benefit from that situation. I will set the local Northwestern Front I-Type fighters to do night time bombing attacks along with the U-2VS, and do some attacks on the two Luftwaffe fighter airfields with vastly superior numbers.

Execution

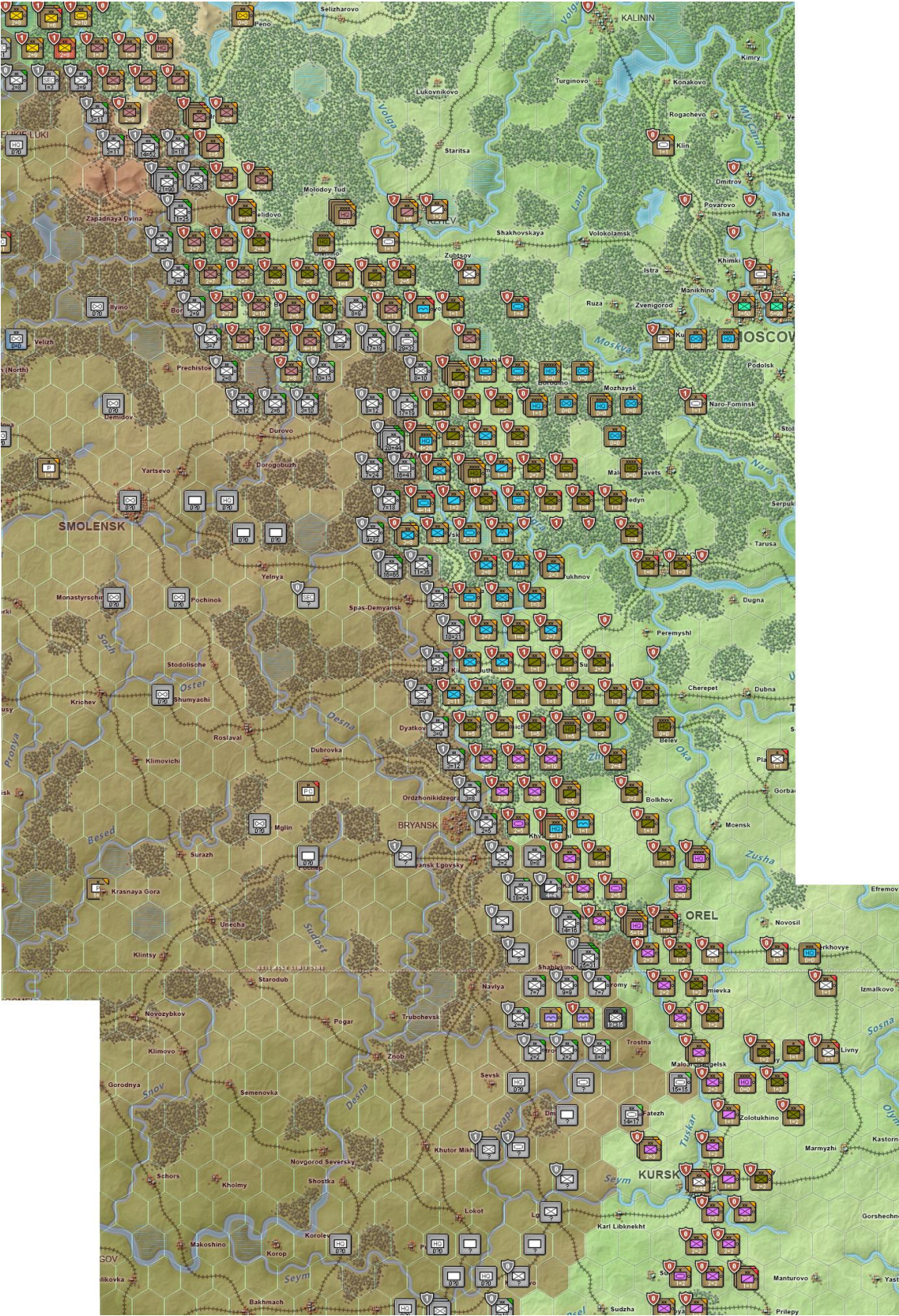
In total I did four air attacks on the two Luftwaffe fighter airfields in the north. This cost the Germans a total of seven Bf109 F-4's while I lost 33 I-Type fighters and 39 U-2VS. An exchange rate of 10:1 is usually not a good one for the Soviets, but as I took out some first rate German fighters and only lost some worthless I-Type fighters and some cheap U-2VS, I think the exchange was actually slightly in my favor.

South of Lake Ilmen, I have attacked a lone German Security Regiment and pushed my own divisions into the hex vacated this way. The main news from this front however, is the withdrawal of the southern part of the Northwestern Front.

Below is an Image of the situation south of Leningrad, as I give the turn to Hermann.



The Center



Situation Assessment

In the area held by the Reserve Front, the Germans have renewed their attacks, and pushed a few more hexes forward in the direction of Rzhev. The German attack is spearheaded by four Panzer divisions and one Motorized division supported by plenty of infantry. The expected MP of the German Panzers next turn is 40+ MP with a possibility for an HQBU.

Stretching south from Vyazma all the way to Bryansk is a sector of the front, where the Germans now use only infantry to hold the line.

North of Kursk, one German Panzer Corps is positioned to begin an attack towards Voronezh, and the IL-2 production facilities I still have there. Those Panzers are expected to have around 30 MP or so next turn.

In the air, the Luftwaffe is almost absent, the attacks having been done without any form of bomber support.

Planning

In the north, the Reserve Front will be pulled back a few hexes and a new line established. The Western Front meanwhile will have its southernmost armies pulled north, so I will have some high quality armies standing in front of any German advances in the direction of either Rzhev or Moscow. The gaps left by the Western Front will be filled by the STAVKA armies in the area. Furthest to the south, the Bryansk Front will be charged with holding the line, while new forces are being brought up from the rear.

In the air, I have decided to test my MiG-3 fighters and their RS-82 rockets in a night bombing role against the Luftwaffe Airfields. This will mainly be done to see how they fare against the expected heavy flak.

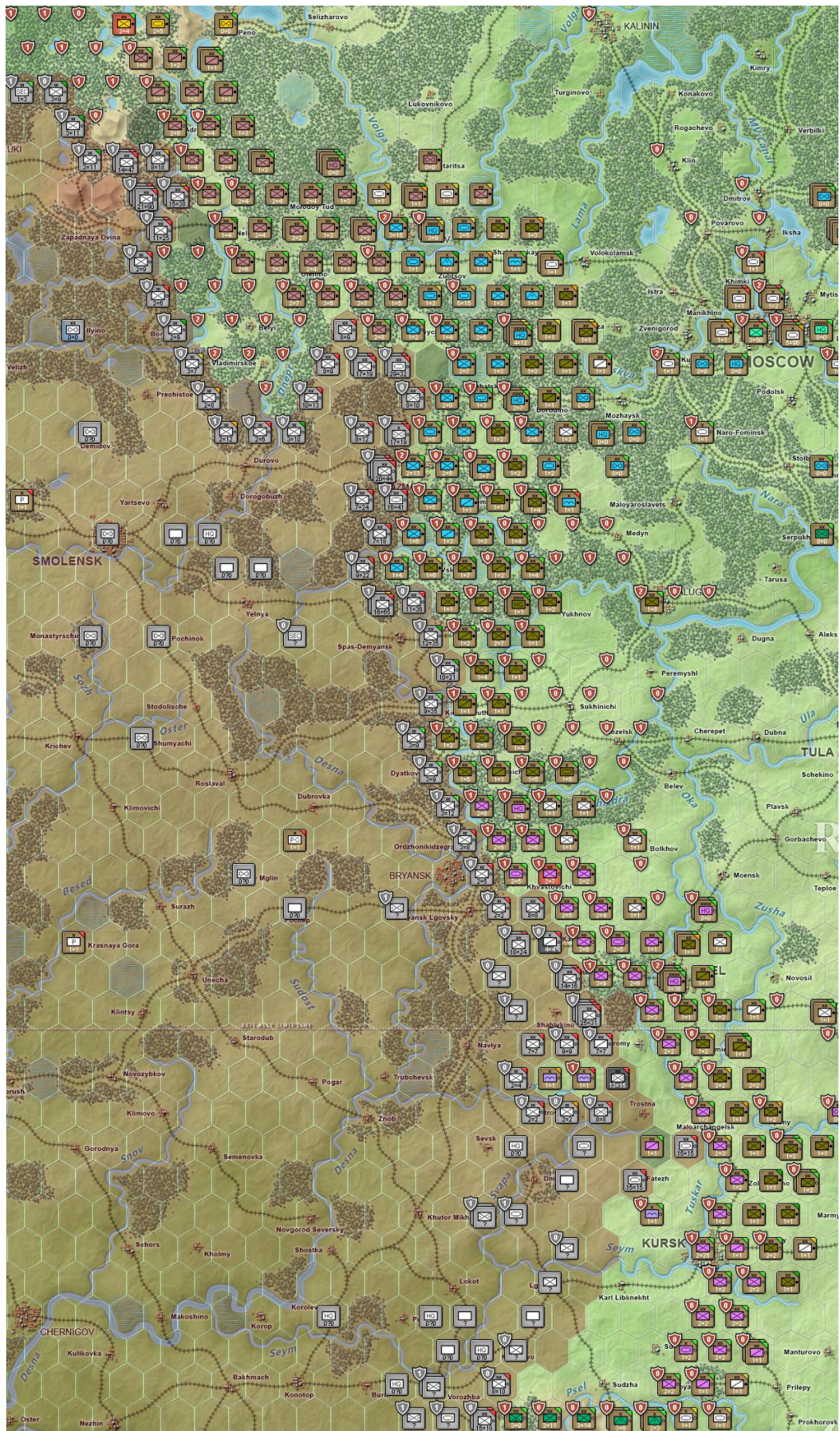
Execution

The result of the Mig-3 experiment was that for the cost of eight MiG-3 fighters, I destroyed nothing. As I did not damage any planes either, I take this as a hint that MiG-3's should not be used as night bombers against enemy airfields.

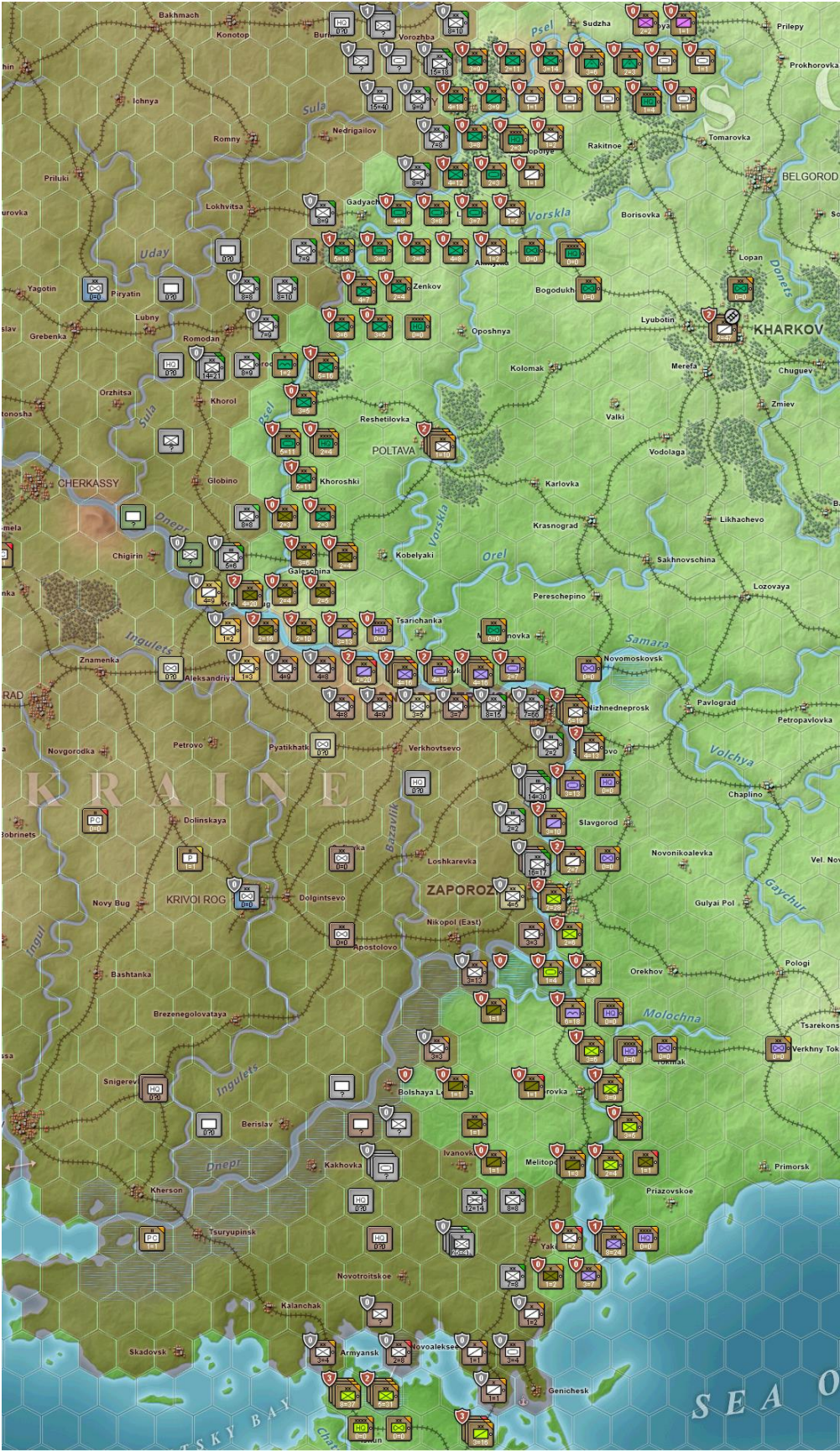
I have decided not to fly my own tactical bombers this turn, as I wish to have them available for responding to the German attacks next turn.

I have also done some reshuffling of my STAVKA armies, my Western and my Bryansk Front to ensure that the divisions opposing the expected German attacks next turn belong to the "proper" commands.

Below is an image of the central front, as I give the turn to Hermann:



The South



Situational Assessment

In the south, the Axis attack has cut the land connection to the Crimean. The Axis have placed only Rumanian forces to guard the Crimean crossings, while the German infantry is rushing east. The local Panzers seems to have been put into reserve.

At Odessa, only the city itself is now in Soviet hands. Opposite the three Rifle divisions I have inside the city, the Axis siege forces consist of three German Infantry divisions and three Rumanian infantry divisions as well as four Rumanian infantry brigades.

In the air, recon reveal that the Germans have set up a force of 94 Bf 109's in Krivoi Rog, so my own air attacks needs to take this into account.

Planning

The Southwestern Front will be left in its positions for now, as I believe they will have some decent defensive CV's come next turn, and that the Germans opposite them will find it hard to break through the lines.

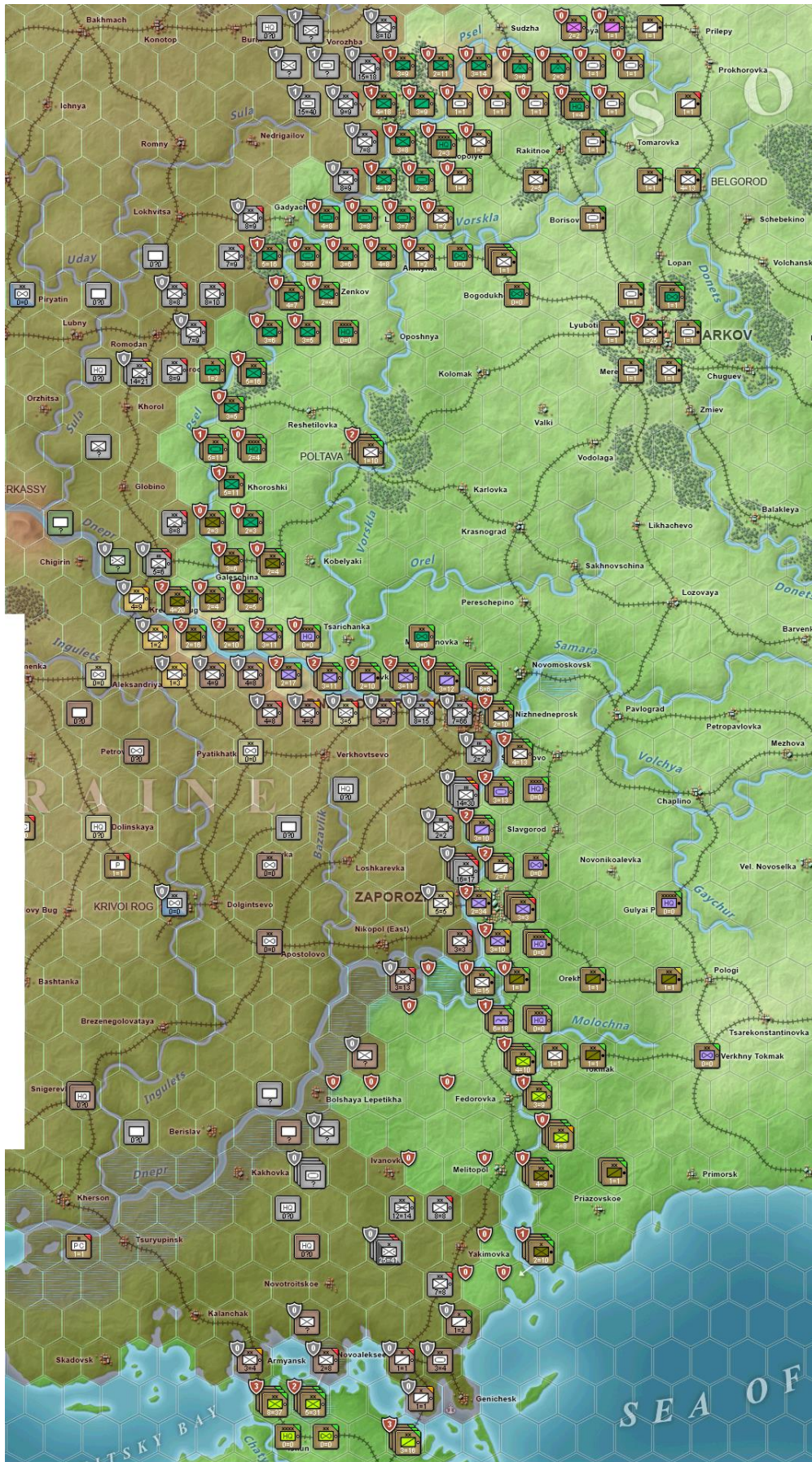
Further south, between Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye, the Germans may be able to force a crossing of the Dnepr, but as there is only four turns left before the mud, I believe the Germans may do better by simply beginning to dig in along their current positions rather than risking getting caught in the open when winter begins. So, quite deliberately, I will not be strengthening my positions here, but merely bring up fresh troops to act as a reserve in case of a German attack.

At the Molochna River to the south, I will simply strengthen my lines and do little else. The same goes for Odessa, where I am quite content to keep several German divisions pinned up protecting the Rumanian flank.

Execution

As I have plenty of I-153's and absolutely nothing to use them for, I decided to do a daylight bombing attack on one of the Rumanian airfields west of Zaporozhye. That attack had 48 Axis fighters flying in defense of the airfield, so I decided to follow up by an attack of my Tactical bombers supported by LaGG-3 fighter bombers. Those attacks proved that the LaGG-3 fighter is not worth much as a dog fighter going up against enemy fighters, even when they are Rumanian. In the process, I lost some 22 LaGG-3's.

Below an image of the situation east of Kiev, as I give the turn to Hermann:



Conclusion

It seems to me that Axis progress is getting steadily harder. Moreover, the Axis forces need to start consider the winter that will be over them in a few short turns. When that happens, the full blizzard will call for a major soviet offensive.

For now, I am content to do little but wait for the coming mud and the following winter.

Kharkov is now empty of industry, and just to make sure I will not be unpleasantly surprised, I have taken some of the named industries from Voronezh (not the IL-2's) as well.