



# HITLER'S WAR

# IN GENERAL

A story of determined but extemporized aggression.

Rhineland > Austria > Sudetenland > Bohemia > Poland > Norway > France > Britain > Russia  
Mar '36      Mar '38      Oct '38      Mar '39      Sep '39      Apr '40      May '40      Jun '40      Jun '41

Economic mobilization made Hitler's war necessary.

It is unlikely that any political combination would have deterred Hitler's attack on Poland.

It is unlikely that Hitler's regime could have survived a serious military setback prior to the attack on Russia.

Hitler was not wrong to claim personal credit for German military performance.



## GETTING TO WAR GREATER GERMANY

1935

Saarland Plebiscite (Jan)

German air force announced (Feb)

Conscription announced (Mar)

Italy invades Ethiopia (Oct)

1936

Remilitarization of the Rhineland (Mar)

Rome-Berlin Axis (Oct)

1937

Anti-Comintern Pact w/Italy (Dec)

1938

Annexation of Austria (Mar)



# Four-Year Plan

1937

Hermann Göring Works begun (July)  
Hossbach Conference (Nov)



## GETTING TO WAR AUTARKY VS READINESS

Total defense spending as a share of national income:

in 1933 1.5%

in 1934 7.8%

in 1936 15.7%

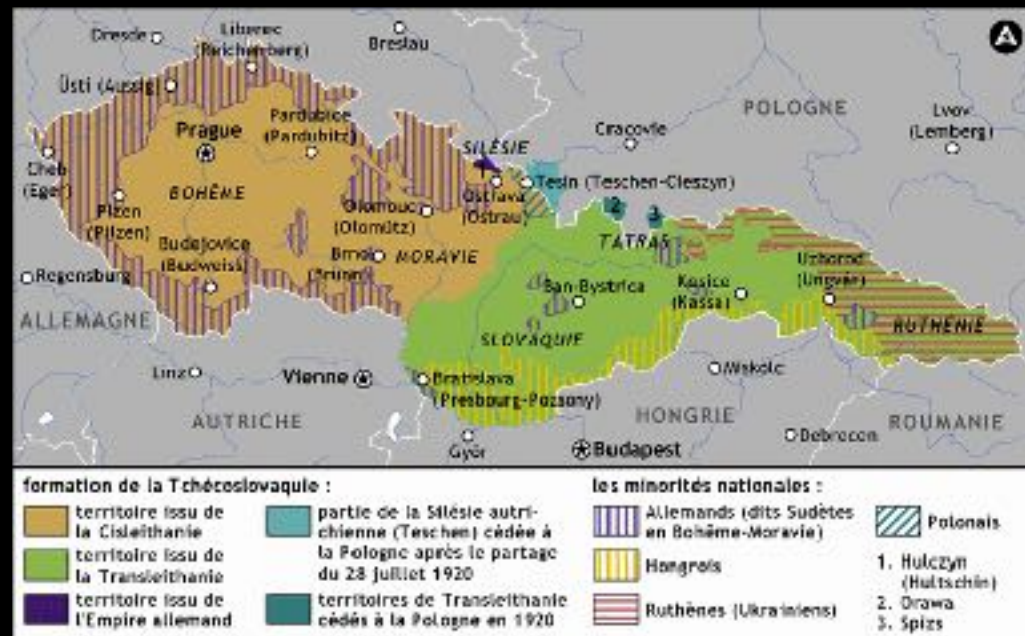
in 1938 21%

*The limitless expansion of state expenditure is destroying every attempt to put the budget in order, [and] bringing the finances of the state to the edge of ruin. (Reichsbank President Hjalmar Schacht to Hitler, January 1939)*

*... the descent upon the Czechs will have to be carried out with lightning speed. (Hitler, as recorded by Hossbach)*



# THE MUNICH AGREEMENT 30 SEPT 1938



Mar

Sudeten German Party instructed to make demand (for autonomy) unacceptable to Czech government

May

First draft of Plan Green, to begin NLT 1 Oct  
Naval building to be accelerated

Pact of Steel (DEU ITA) (22<sup>nd</sup>)

Aug

Czech atrocity stories fill the German press  
German military maneuvers along border

Ludwig Beck resigns as Chief of General Staff

Senior officer plot to arrest Hitler and install  
Göring (contingent upon British threat of war)



# THE MUNICH AGREEMENT 30 SEPT 1938

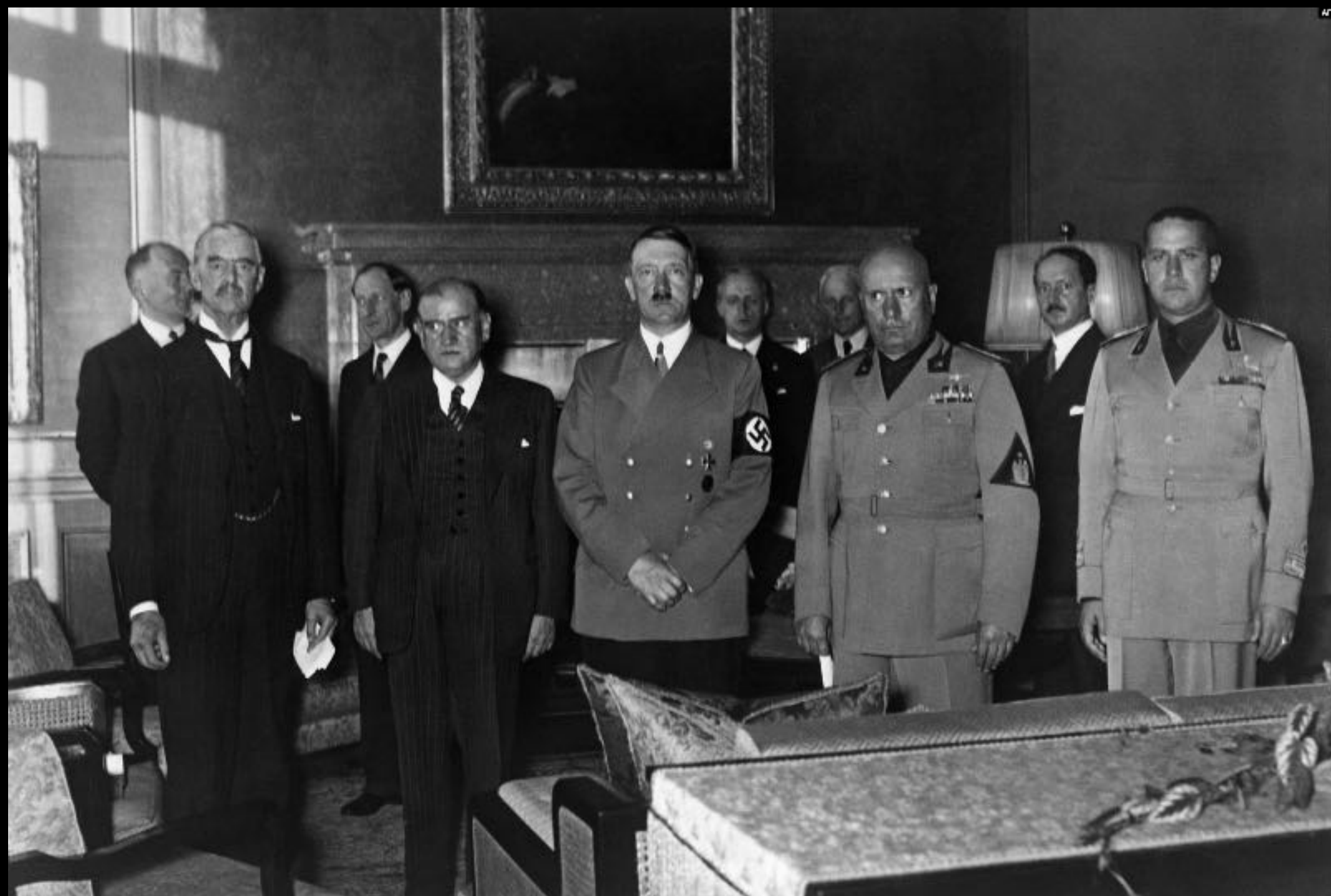
Sept

Hitler Nuremberg rally speech (12th);  
widespread violence follows

Mussolini joins discussions at  
Chamberlain's request (28<sup>th</sup>)



Left to Right:  
Neville  
Chamberlain,  
Eduard Deladier,  
Hitler, Benito  
Mussolini, Galeazzo  
Ciano







## THE PARTITION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA MAR 1939

1938

Nov

Further territorial concessions to Hungary and Poland

1939

Mar

Slovakia secedes from Czechoslovakia (5<sup>th</sup>)

Czech President Emil Hacha accedes to German occupation to avoid bombing of Prague (15<sup>th</sup>)

GBR guarantee to Poland (31<sup>st</sup>)

Apr

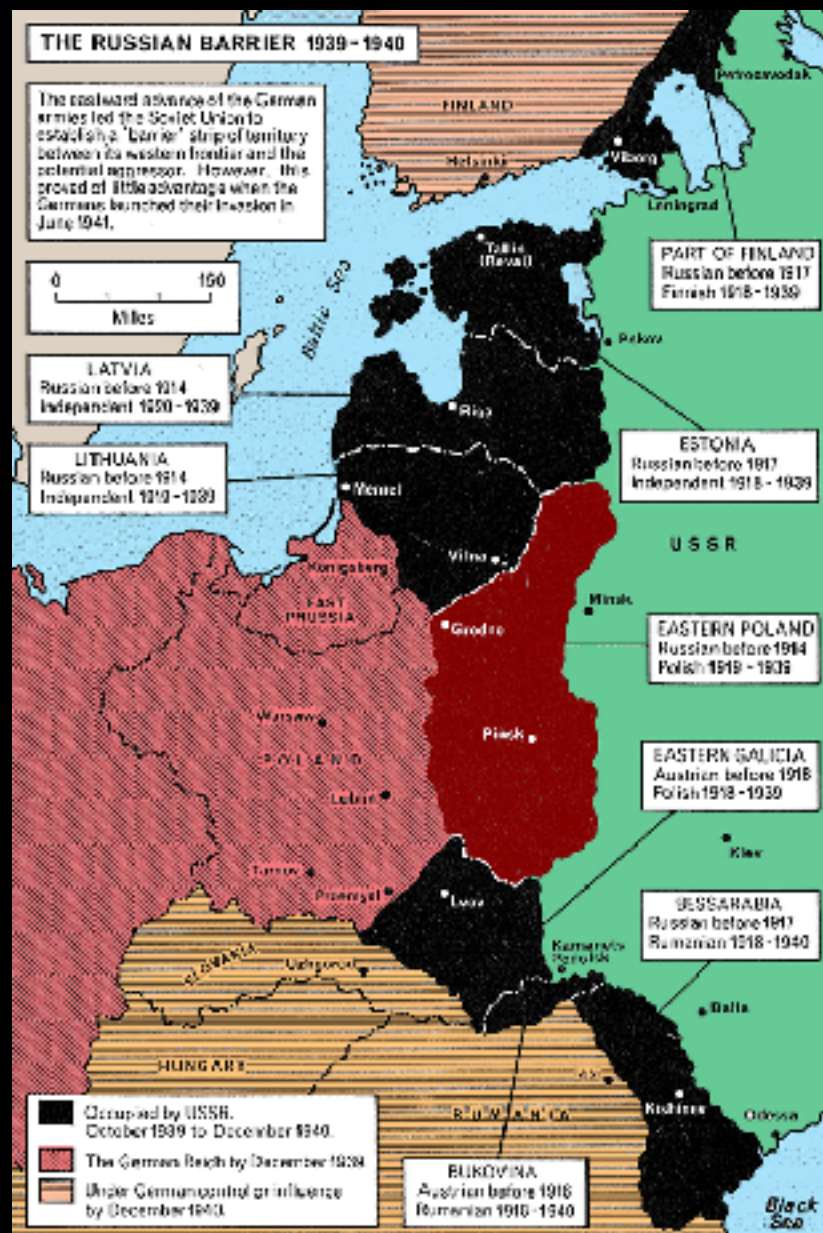
Italy invades Albania (7<sup>th</sup>)

GBR guarantees to Romania and Greece (13<sup>th</sup>)



# THE HITLER-STALIN PACT

## AUGUST 1939



Soviet outreach to the UK and France (Apr-July '39) fails.

Stalin regarded Hitler as a military problem.

Western powers saw a political problem, and feared military provocation

Too many quibbling reservations

Anti-communism

Polish and Romanian territorial integrity

Hitler could offer a general sphere of influence agreement in the East.

Communists are anti-Capitalist, not anti-Fascist.

# THE HITLER STALIN PACT



Joseph Stalin and Joachim von Ribbentrop

Stalin suspected that Western policy aimed to deflect war into Eastern Europe.

Hitler's policy aimed to isolate Eastern Europe from the West.

Appeasement was in part a strategy to buy time for rearmament.



MILITARY SPENDING  
VERSUS 1913 BASELINE

	Before WWI		Before WWII					
	1870-1913							
	Average	1913	1928	1930	1932	1934	1936	1938
Status Quo Powers								
USA	50	100	127	117	240	197	240	259
France	58	100	90	85	144	149	182	225
UK	72	100	90	84	101	109	155	290
1930s Challengers								
Japan	72	100	111	119	229	258	275	1308
Russia	61	100	151	62	304	220	324	472
Germany	53	100	30	27	42	191	459	698

# THE HITLER STALIN PACT



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Stalin suspected that Western policy aimed to deflect war into Eastern Europe.

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Appeasement was in part a strategy to buy time for rearmament.

Hitler's deal was intended to demonstrate to the British that Poland was indefensible.

Unlike Hitler, Stalin believed that Britain would go to war over Poland.

# POLAND



*This was no war of occupation, but a war of quick penetration and obliteration—Blitzkrieg, lightning war. Even with no opposition, armies had never moved so fast before. Theorists had always said that only infantry could take and hold positions...*

*Time magazine (25 Sept 1939)*



# POLAND



*... the aim of the war lies not in reaching particular lines but in the physical annihilation of the enemy. Poland will be depopulated and settled with Germans. Hard ethnic struggle will not permit any legal restrictions.*

...



*It is not the task of the administration of put the country on a sound basis economically and financially. The Polish intelligentsia must be prevented from forming itself into a ruling class. The standard of living in the country is to remain low: it is of use to us only as a reservoir of labor.*

Hitler to his generals (Aug and Oct 1939)

Above: Polish prisoners being executed.  
Below: Warsaw (1939)

# POLAND



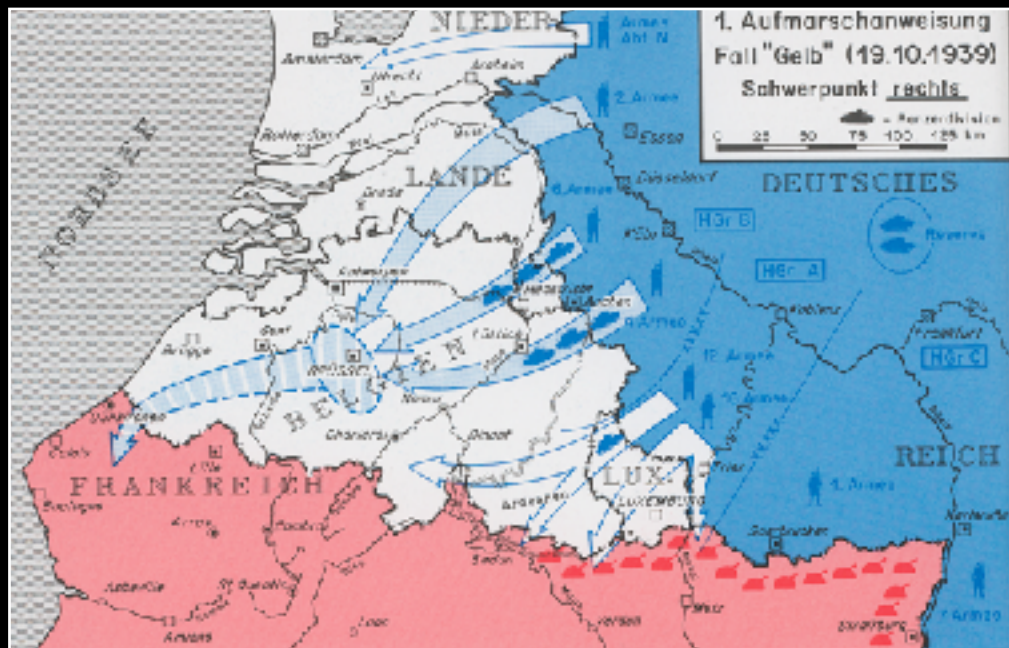


# “WHAT NOW?”

Planning for war in the West begins in October 1939.

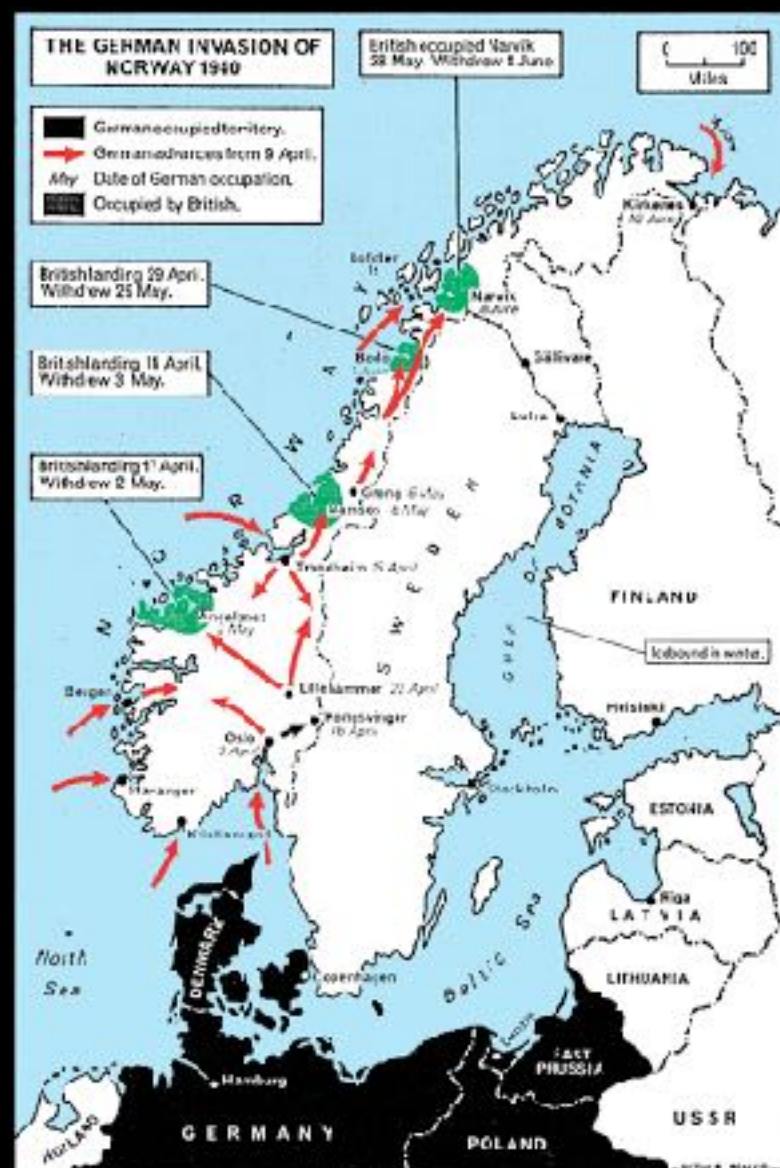
Postponements for bad weather, beginning on 8 November, gradually reconcile the Army leadership.

Original plan compromised in January 1940



Munich *Burgerbräuerei* following attempt on Hitler's life by Georg Elser (8 Nov '39)





## NORWAY APRIL-MAY 1940

German Naval Strength  
Sept 1939

2 Battleships

3 Pocket Battleships

1 Heavy Cruiser

6 Light Cruisers

21 Destroyers

12 Torpedo Boats

German Naval Strength  
June 1940

0 Battleships

0 Pocket Battleships

1 Heavy Cruiser

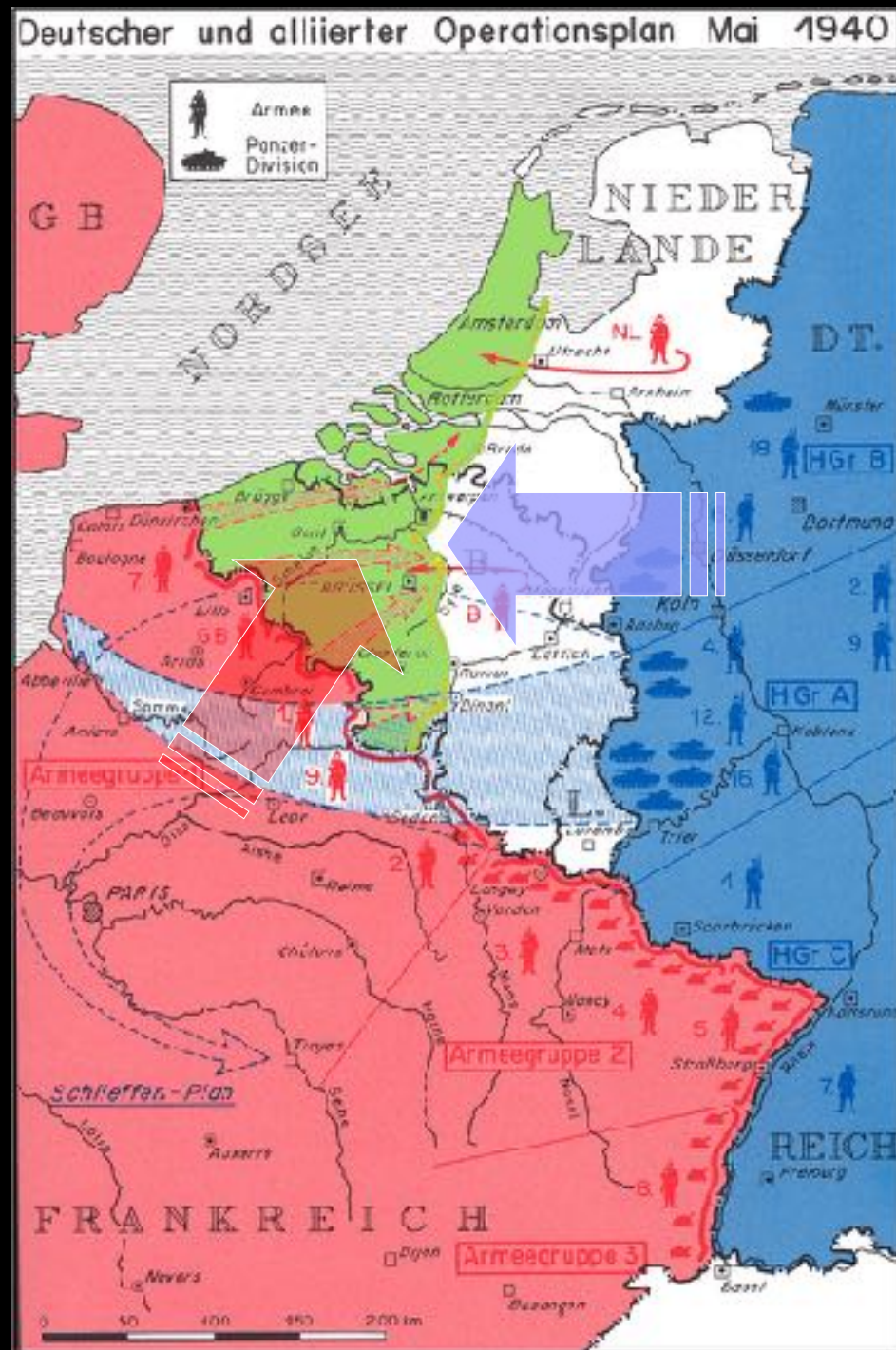
2 Light Cruisers

4 Destroyers

19 Torpedo Boats

*The operation is in itself contrary to all principles in the theory of naval warfare. ... [Nevertheless] on many occasions in the history of war those very operations have been successful which went against all the principles of warfare, provided they were carried out by surprise.*

Grand Admiral Eric Raeder to Hitler (9 Mar 1940)



## CASE YELLOW MAY-JUNE 1940

### German Order of Battle

93 divisions

7,00 guns

2,500 tanks

1,200 fighters

1,500 bombers

550 recon  
aircraft

### Anglo-French Order of Battle

103 divisions

11,000 guns

3,000 tanks

900 fighters [+ 500 in  
UK]

400 bombers [+ 300 in  
UK]

550 recon aircraft



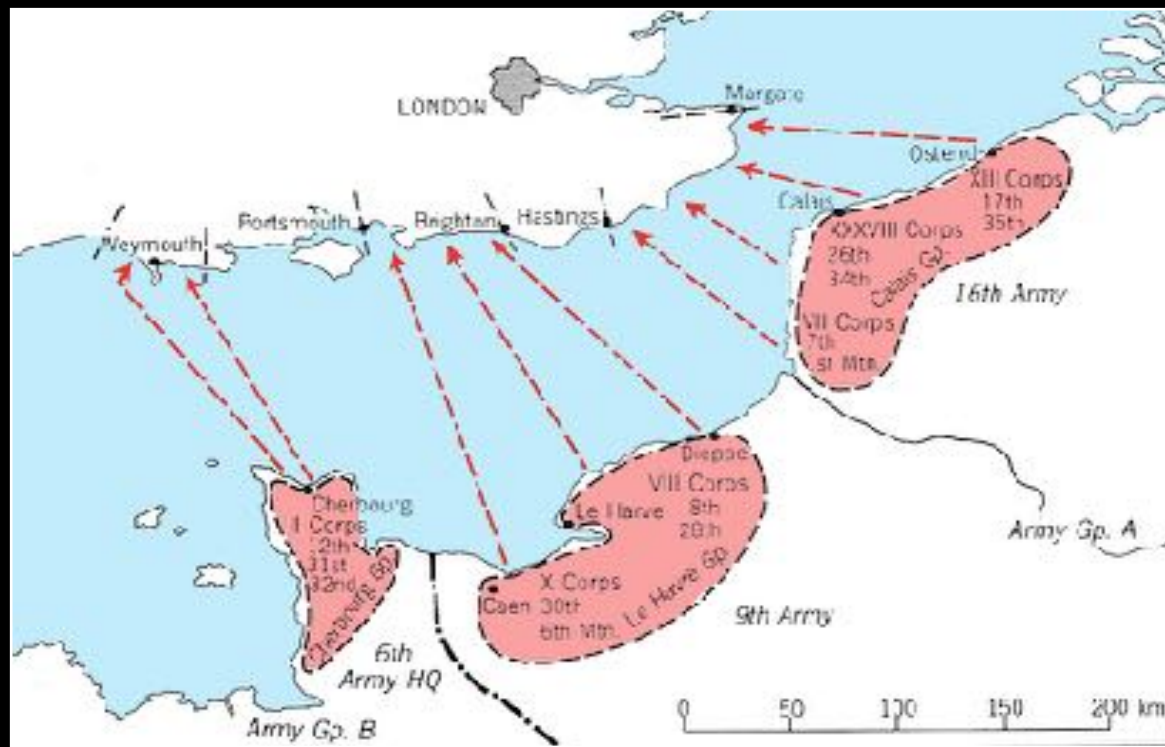


# CASE YELLOW MAY-JUNE 1940

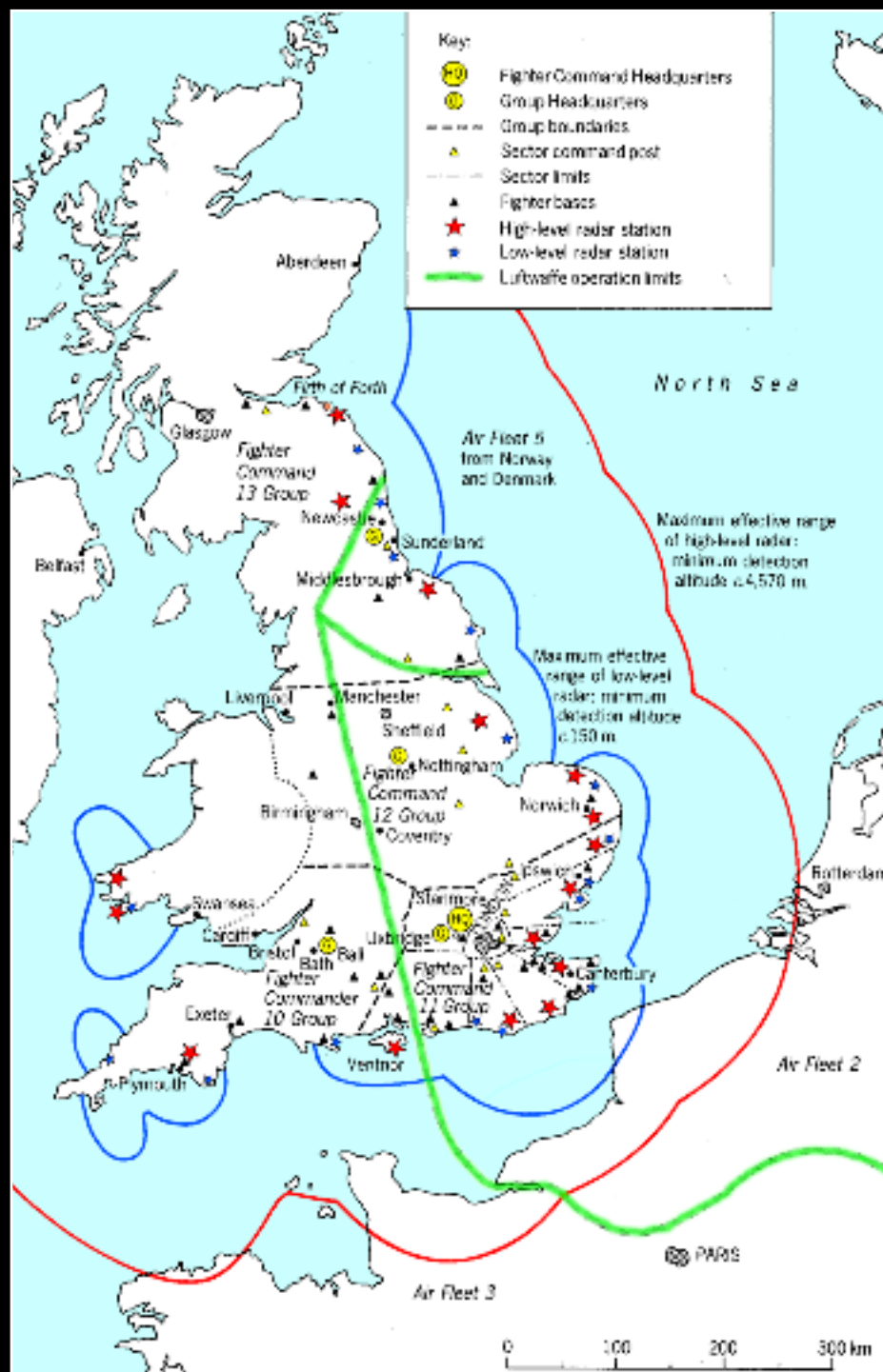




# OPERATION SEA LION SEPT 1940



# THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUMMER 1940



## British Civilian Casualties (Jul-Dec 1940)

23,002 killed | 32,138 injured

## Total Aircraft Losses (Jul-Nov 1940)

Fighter Command: 792 | Luftwaffe: 1,389 [fighters + bombers]

## British Aircraft Production (Jan - Dec 1940)

Luftwaffe Estimate: 9,900 | Actual: 15,049

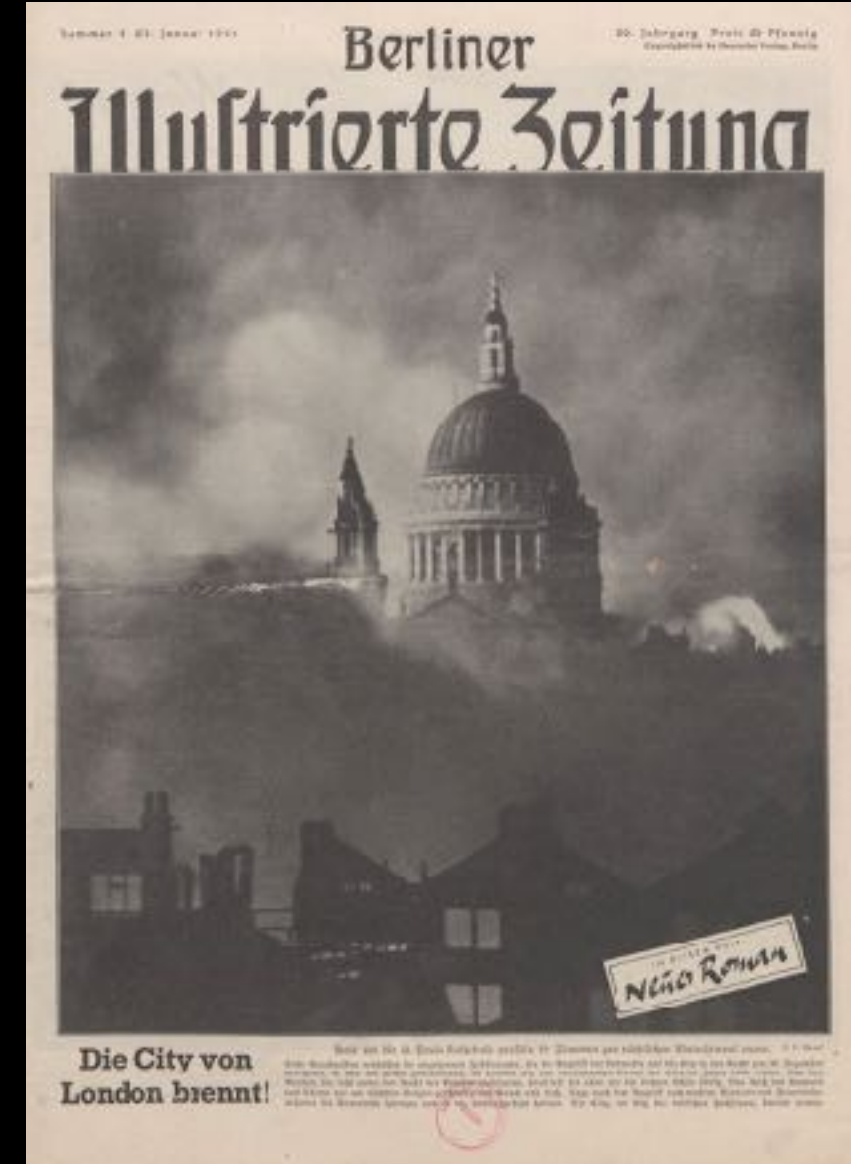
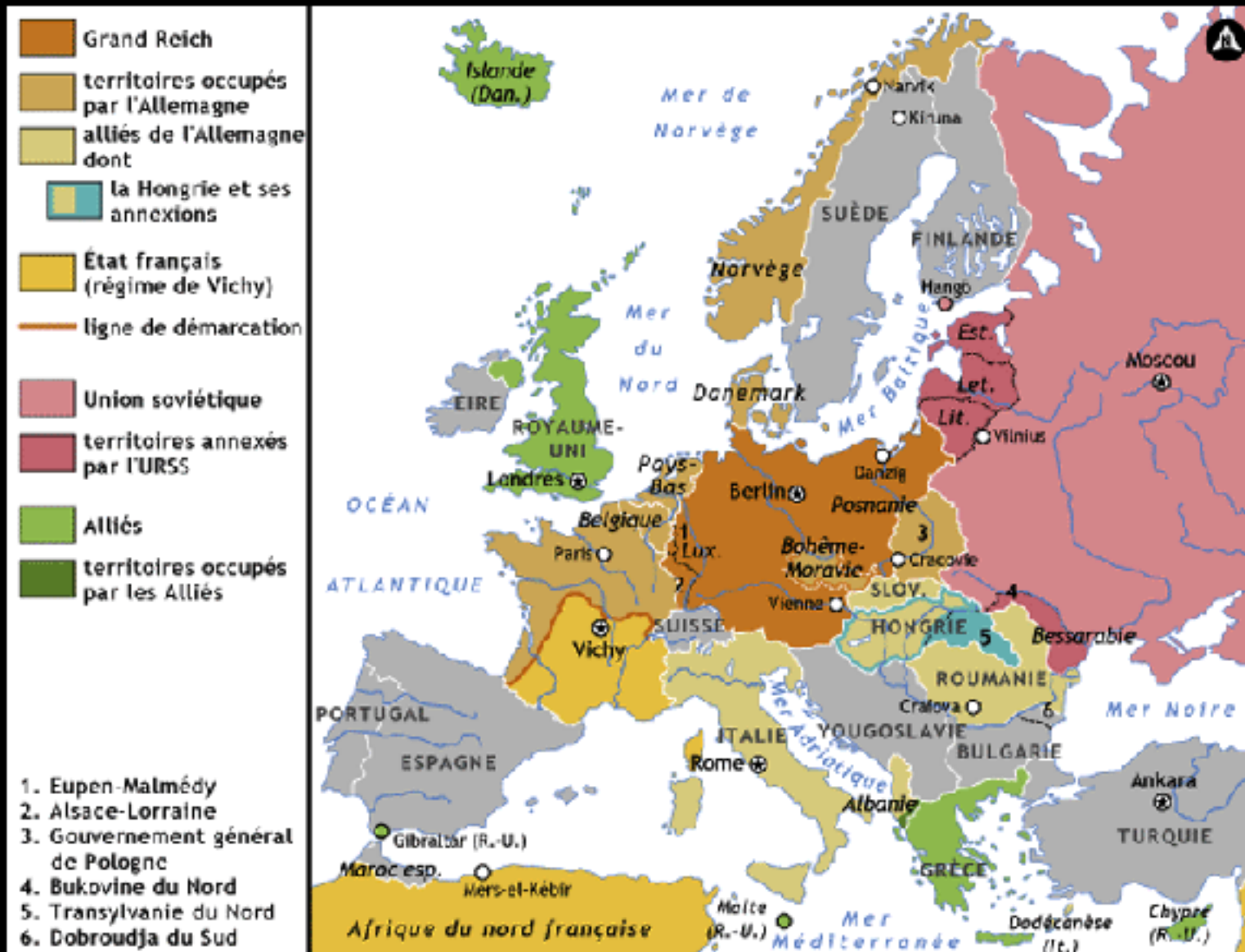
## Operational Fighter Pilots

30 Jul 1940      British: 1,377 | German: 869

1 Nov 1940      British: 1,796 | German: 673



# HITLER'S EUROPE





# RUSSIA

July '40      Planning begins for Operation OTTO  
“Marcks Plan” approved Dec '40

Mar '41    Lend-Lease



Operation Otto Preliminary Plan for Operation Barbarossa -- August 5th, 1940

Hitler believed that Germany had lost the First World War because it failed to detach Britain from Russia.

Stalin thought time was on his side, because did not believe Hitler would move against Russia until Britain had come to terms.

*England's hope lies in Russia and America.* (Hitler to Army High Command, 31 July 1940)