

Russian Reserves Not Yet in Action

The news out of Russia has been grave this past week. German armored and motorized divisions are sweeping across the flat, dry steppes of southern Russia, aiming for Stalingrad and the last line of communications between Moscow and the Caucasus.

But the extreme pessimism of some dispatches from Moscow seems far from warranted. These facts must be considered:

¶ The Russians undoubtedly have a reserve army which they are waiting to throw in at a moment that a counteroffensive would be of greatest value. The Nazis haven't crippled the southern army. Except at Voronezh, where it has made a stand costing the Germans thousands of men and hundreds of tanks, the Red Army has been falling back in good order.

¶ The Germany Army has not yet crossed the Don in strength except around Voronezh. Its advances follow the twisting line of the Don. It seems likely that the main battle for northern Caucasia will be fought either on the Don River line or, if the Nazis manage to cross, in the area between the Don and the Volga, perhaps around Stalingrad.

¶ Although the fall of Stalingrad would cut off the Caucasus from the north, Allied supplies still could reach the southern armies through Iran. They would reach the northern armies via Murmansk and Archangel. However, although overpessimism is to be avoided, these facts shouldn't lead to overoptimism either. The Nazis ARE advancing.

PM

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