

IGA-677 / RusNatSecPol / Lecture 16

Stalingrad to Berlin

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Today's objectives

1. *Consider*: how Germany adapted its strategy for a long war against a much larger, more resource-rich state
2. *Probe*: was it bad strategy or bad implementation?
3. *Analyze*: whether Germany's Plan B could have worked

Germany's invasion of Soviet Union

Assumptions

1. ~~Quick victory is possible~~
2. After 1941:
Victory still possible in long war ✓



Figure 1: Need new plan

Barbarossa: First 60 days

Balance of power	Force employment	Geography	Information	Chance
numbers	doctrine	distance	surprise	weather
replacement of losses	strategy	terrain	intelligence	timing
industry/production	training	climate	analysis	luck
logistics	officer quality	roads	communication	
natural resources	technology	fortifications		

Barbarossa: Advance toward Moscow

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Stalingrad to Berlin

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Plan B

German strategic priorities in 1942

1. Ends

- a) deny Soviet resupply
(90 percent of oil production)
- b) seize oil assets for Reich
(‘if I can’t seize the oils fields of Maikop and Grozny, I must end this war’)

2. Means

- a) shift away from Moscow, Leningrad
- b) secure oil fields of Caucasus
- c) secure Stalingrad
 - protect northern flank
 - interrupt Soviet supplies



Figure 2: Southern strategy

Case Blau

three-phase campaign

1. Encircle Soviet troops west of Don River
2. Establish blocking position in Stalingrad
3. Main drive into Caucasus

Huge front:

Rostov → Baku = 1300 km

Discussion:

- Would the loss the Caucasus have resulted in Soviet defeat?



Figure 3: Three easy steps

Comparative strength, June 1941

Germany

1. Numbers
 - a) 1.3M-1.5M troops
 - b) 1,500-2,000 tanks
 - c) 1,500-1,600 aircraft
2. Force structure (74 divisions)
 - a) 9 armored divisions
 - b) 6 mechanized divisions
 - c) 59 infantry divisions
 - d) org. into 1 Army Group:
 - South (→ Don)
 - e) split into 2 Army Groups:
 - A (→ Caucasus)
 - B (→ Stalingrad)

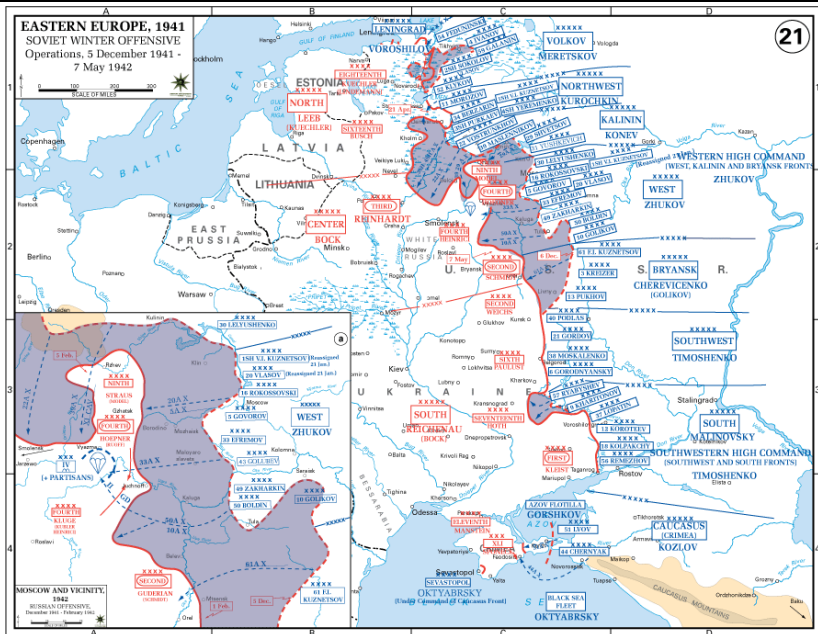
Soviet Union

1. Numbers
 - a) 2.3-2.7M troops
 - b) 3,700 tanks
 - c) 1,700 aircraft
2. Force structure (45 divisions)
 - a) 6 armored divisions
 - b) 4 mechanized divisions
 - c) 35 infantry divisions
 - d) organized into 5 Fronts
 - Voronezh
 - Stalingrad
 - South (Kuban')
 - North Caucasus
 - Transcaucasus
 - e) re-organized into 5 Fronts
 - Voronezh
 - Southwest
 - Don (Stalingrad north)
 - Stalingrad (Stgd south)
 - Transcaucasus

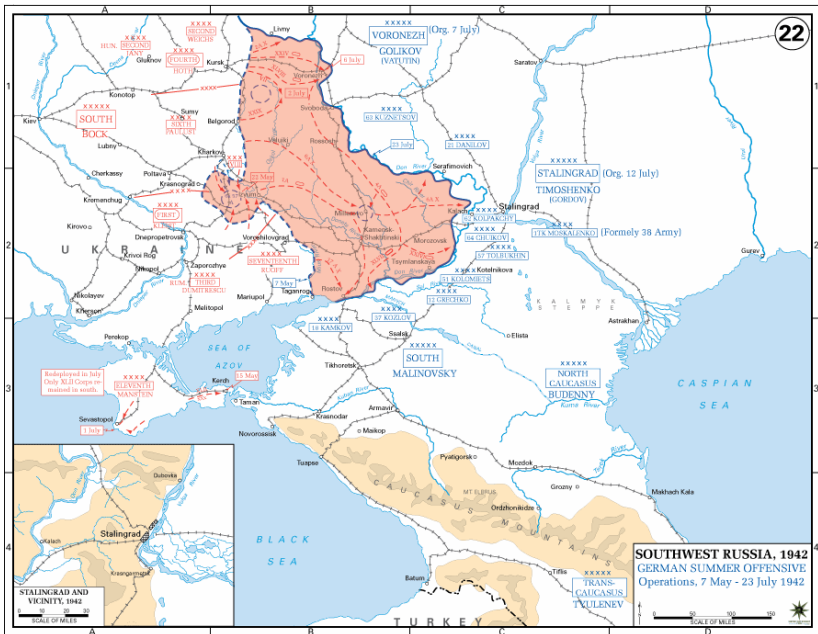
Before the Cauldron

Plan B Into the Cauldron

Before the Cauldron Strategy Change



Before the Cauldron Strategy Change



Strategy Change

Case Blau

two simultaneous offensives

1. Split Army Group South into A and B
 - a) Group A → Caucasus
 - b) Group B → Stalingrad
2. Push to oils fields before northern flank secured in Stalingrad
 - a) divert 1st Pz Army to A
 - b) Stalingrad left mainly to Paulus' 6th Army (infantry)

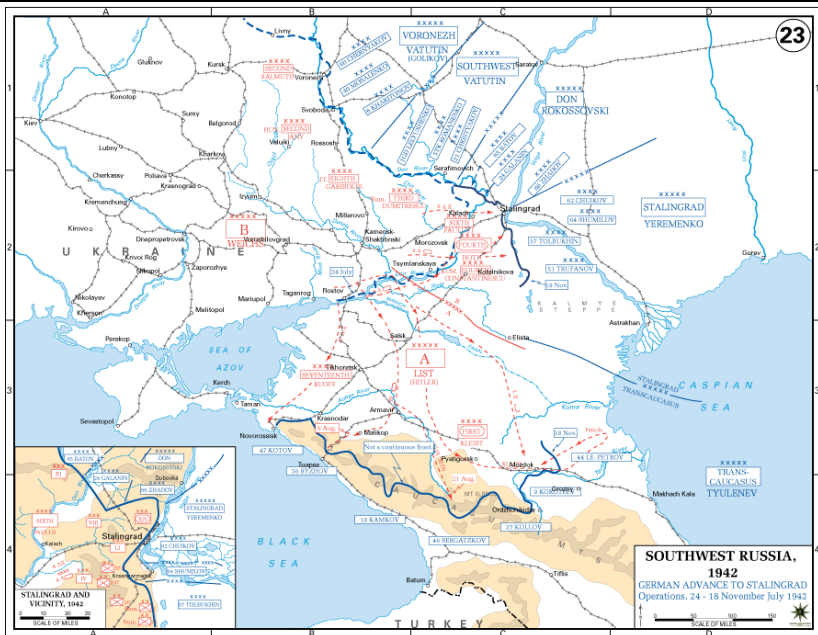
Discussion:

- Should the Germans have stuck to the original plan?
- Were there other options?



Figure 7: Two steps at once

Before the Cauldron Strategy Change



Caucasus

German challenges

1. Strategy

- a) too many objectives
- b) impossible to achieve unity of effort
- c) 1,500km gap between Army Groups
- d) constant swapping of units between combat zones
- e) drop in strength, readiness, serviceability
- f) Soviet scorched earth campaign – burn oil fields before Germans arrive



Figure 9: Reach vs. grasp

Caucasus

German challenges (continued)

2. Geography

- a) tallest mountains in Europe
- b) 'wild and untamed'
- c) excellent terrain for ambushes
- d) weather
- e) extended, vulnerable logistics

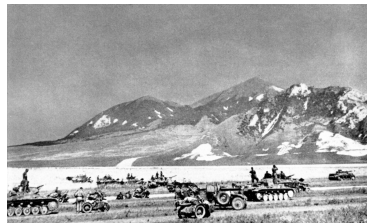


Figure 10: Far from home

Into the Cauldron

Why urban warfare is hard

1. Fighting in 3 dimensions
 - a) streets
 - b) buildings (including interiors)
 - c) sewers and tunnels
 - d) lines of communication
not visible on map
2. Terrain favors defender
 - a) ample cover and concealment
 - b) local knowledge of area, secret routes, floorplans
 - c) multiple hidden entry and exit points, escape routes
 - d) hard to destroy underground structures, tunnels
 - e) booby traps, snipers, MGs
 - f) attacker exposed on streets



Figure 11: Harder than looks

“Not one step back!”

1. Soviet response
 - a) Luftwaffe terror raid does not make city surrender
 - b) Stalin's order No. 227, July 28 – ‘no retreat!’
 - c) hold west bank of Volga at all costs, almost no reinforcements
2. Close quarter fighting
 - a) fighting block-by-block, house-by-house, room-by-room



Figure 12: Tractor factory



Figure 13: Verdun on Volga

Turning point

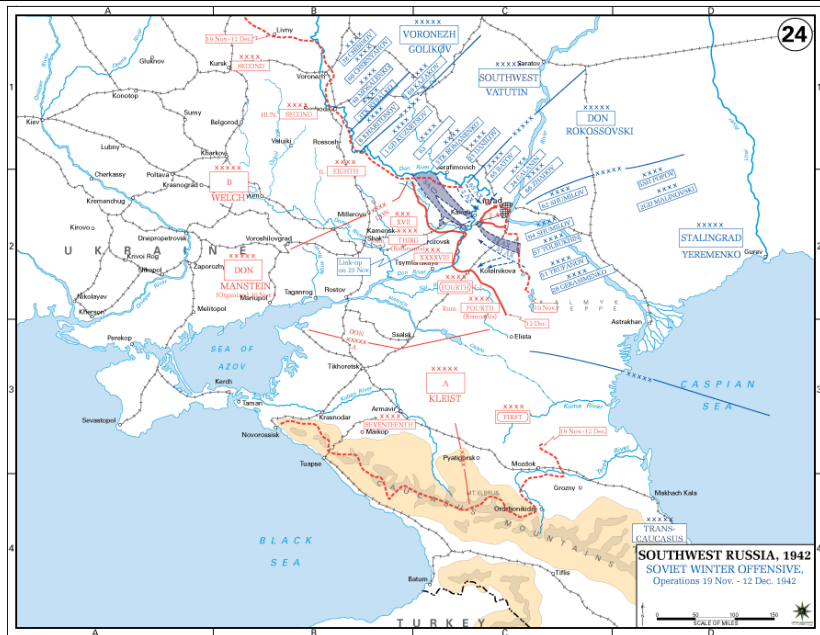
Soviet counteroffensive

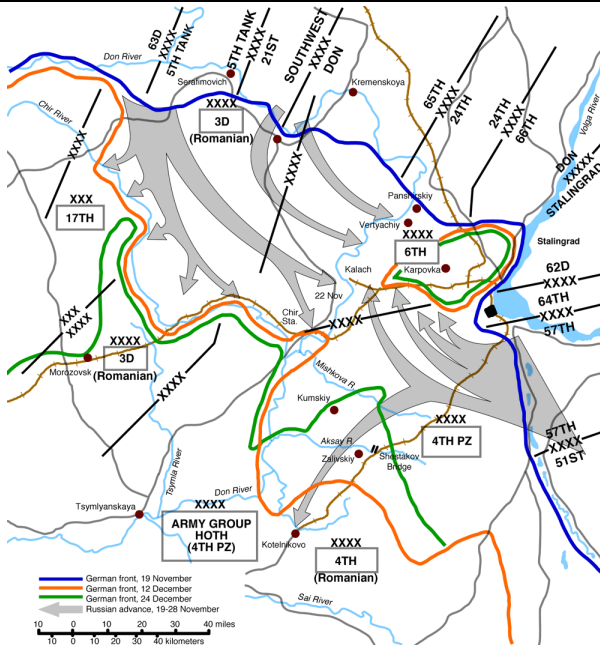
Operation Uranus, November 1942

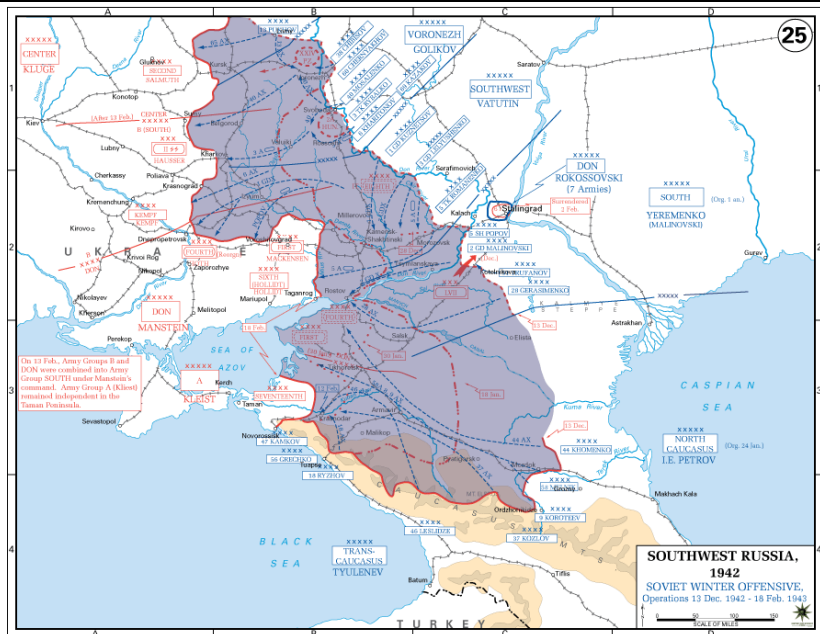
1. Leadership
 - a) Zhukov takes over defense of city
 - b) complete disregard for casualties
2. Ends
 - a) cut off German troops in Stalingrad from rest of Wehrmacht
3. Means
 - a) pin Germans down in city
 - b) counterattack from north, south flanks vs. weakly-defended positions
 - c) keep reinforcements to Soviet troops in Stalingrad at minimum



Figure 14: MVP?







The Cauldron

November 1942 - February 1943

1. Running on fumes
 - a) Pulus' 6th Army completely surrounded
 - b) 210,000 German troops trapped in pocket
 - c) Hilter refuses to let Paulus attempt break-out
 - d) no reinforcements, supplies for either side (but esp. Germans)
 - e) unsanitary conditions, disease
 - f) frigid winter temperatures
2. The bitter end
 - a) Gen Paulus surrenders on Feb. 2



Figure 18: Hold...



Figure 19: Hold...

Costs of Case Blau

1. Killed, wounded, captured
 - a) Germany: 1,013,000
 - b) USSR: 2,227,000
 - c) 2:1 loss-exchange ratio
2. but...
 - a) Stalingrad not captured
 - b) oil fields out of reach
 - c) whole eastern front on verge of collapse



Figure 20: The prize



Figure 21: The cost

What if?

Discussion: Could the Germans have succeeded?

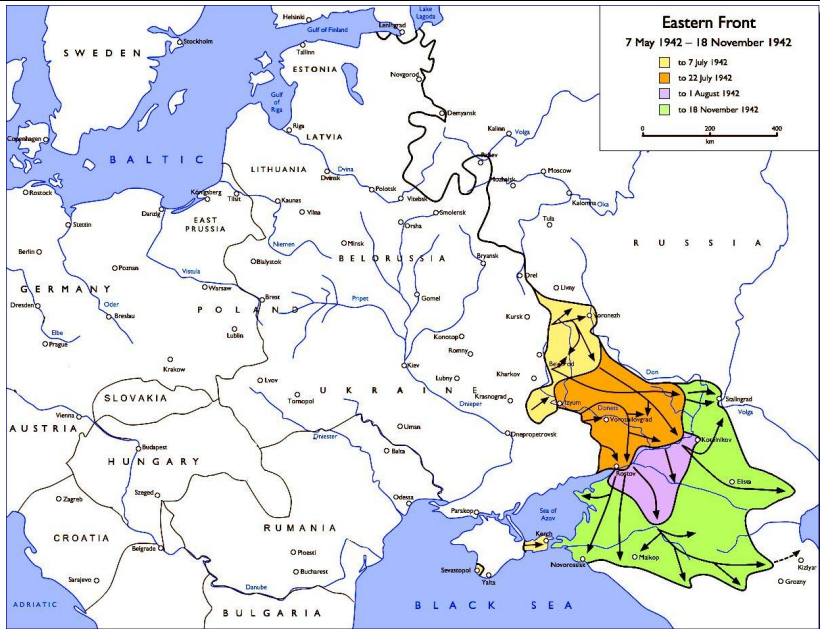
How realistic are these scenarios?

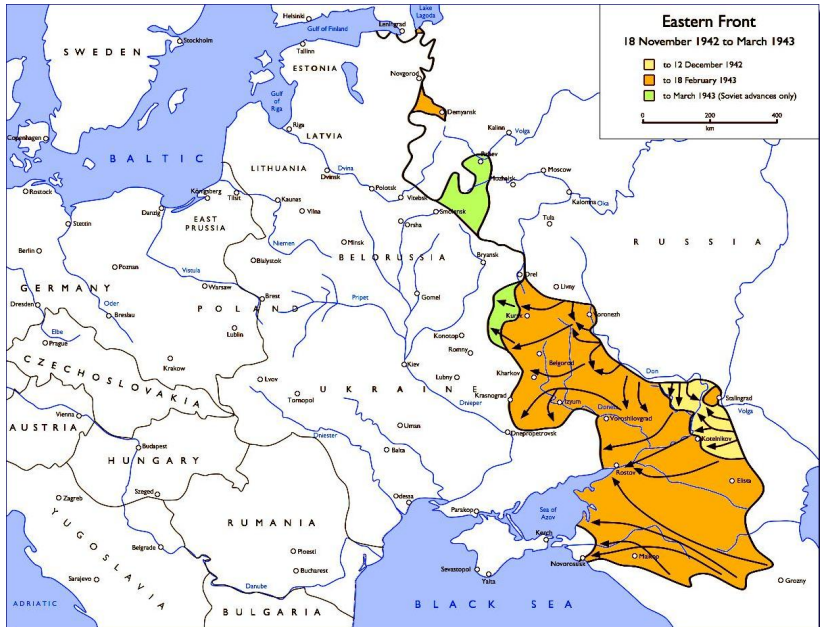
1. *'Stalingrad first' option*

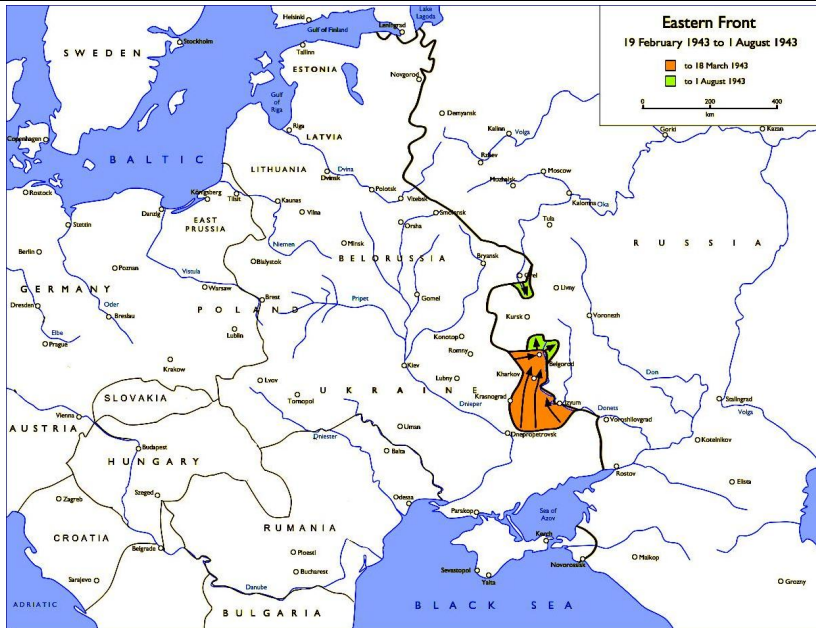
- a) fast Panzer drive to Volga
- b) envelop city, take east bank of Volga
- c) but. . .
 - would need to capture Stalingrad before August
 - follow-up operation in Caucasus may need to wait until 1943

2. *Strategic bombing option*

- a) focus on denying oil resources to Soviets
- b) bomb wells, refineries, storage tanks, ports
- c) but. . .
 - Baku at far end of German bomber range
 - must fly missions without fighter escort
 - local Soviet air superiority
 - lack of local runways
 - bomber losses likely high







Plan B Into the Cauldron

Turning point What if?



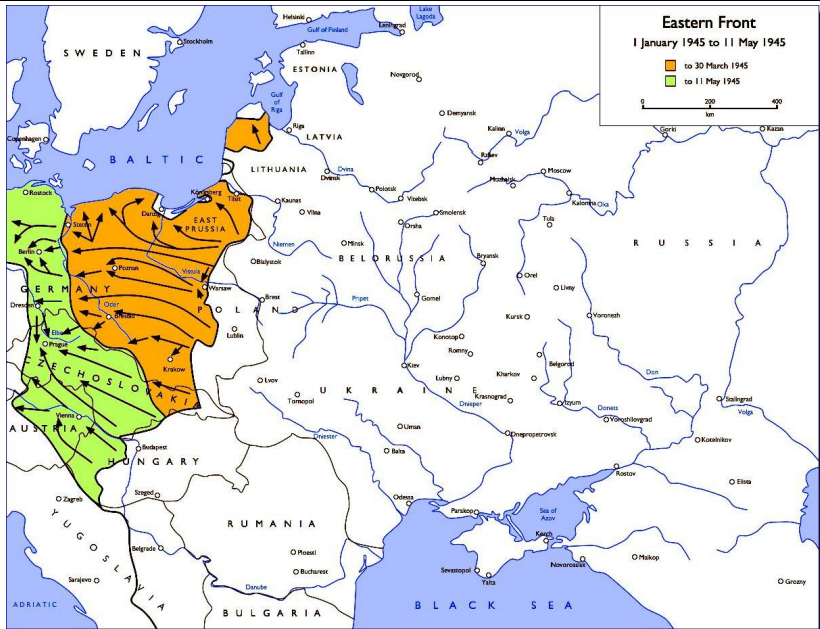




Figure 27: Hoisting the victory banner for the cameras

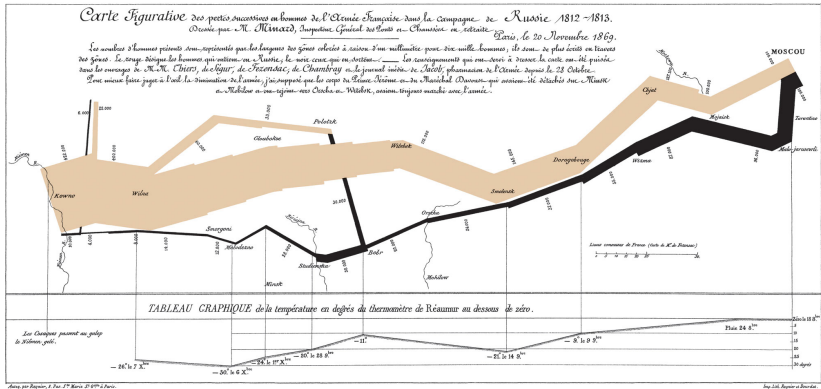


Figure 28: Remember this?

NEXT MEETING

Origins of the Cold War (Tu, Oct. 31)

- how did a wartime alliance turn into a global peacetime rivalry?
- how did the Soviets seek to “catch up and overtake” U.S.?
- what are the lessons for a potential Cold War 2.0?