

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 357

“No Retreat”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

The winter of 1941-42 saw something that had not been seen before in more than two years of world war: the German Army in retreat.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 357. No Retreat.

We were talking about the latest developments in the combat on the Eastern Front between the Germans and the Soviet Union, when the Japanese rudely interrupted our narrative by bombing Pearl Harbor, and that’s where we ended as of episode 349.

The Red Army was just beginning a counteroffensive against the Germans along the Moscow portion of the front when news of the Japanese attack arrived. Hitler was delighted and declared war on the United States four days later.

As he did so, Hitler knew a Soviet winter counterattack had begun, but he had yet to discover how serious it was. He traveled to Berlin to announce the war declaration and returned to the Wolf’s Lair a few days later, on December 16. By then, Army Group Center, the force that had been just a few dozen kilometers from the Kremlin when he left, was facing disaster.

The battered, frostbitten, and exhausted German Army was getting thrashed by Soviet formations no German commander had known existed until the Soviet offensive began. Hitler was still having trouble believing this was for real, while every German commander’s thoughts turned to the same subject: Napoleon’s catastrophic withdrawal from Russia in 1812, and the fear that history was about to repeat itself.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch, had suffered a mild heart attack in November, no doubt caused at least in part by the stress of leading Operation Barbarossa. He had asked Hitler then to be relieved of his duties, but the *Führer* refused. In

December, Brauchitsch took a quick tour of the front lines of Army Group Center and returned thinking the situation was hopeless. The Red Army had punched holes in the German lines, and was threatening to surround and annihilate what was left of German defenses.

One of Hitler's last acts in Berlin, before returning to his command post, was to order reserve units sent east to shore up the front in Russia. One of his first acts after his return was to issue an order to the Army to hold the line at all costs. He believed a retreat in the middle of harsh winter weather would likely turn into a disastrous rout, and he had reason to think that.

On December 17, Hitler telephoned Marshal Fedor von Bock, commander of Army Group Center, to reiterate his no retreat order. Not one step back. Fill the gaps and hold the line. Bock now asked to be relieved of his command; this time, Hitler agreed.

On December 18, Hitler issued yet another "no retreat" order. He also relieved Marshal von Brauchitsch of his command. Brauchitsch would hold no other command for the rest of the war. In his place, Hitler appointed himself commander-in-chief of the German Army.

This was politically useful to Hitler, who could now claim that his plan for Operation Barbarossa had been perfect, but clumsily executed by a commander who was unable to understand it or implement it properly. On the other hand, by taking personal command of the Army, Hitler had saddled himself with a huge new workload, which often kept him up past midnight.

The great shortcoming of a "no retreat" order is that it denies commanders on the scene the flexibility to move, to react to emergencies, or to dodge enemy attacks to preserve their units. Nonetheless, most German commanders complied with Hitler's instruction. The one commander who did not, unsurprisingly, was Heinz Guderian, the great genius of mobile warfare and a commander known to have a causal attitude toward following orders. On December 20, Guderian visited Hitler at the Wolf's Lair to try to talk him out of his rigid "no retreat" order. Careful maneuver and tactical withdrawal, he argued, would save lives, equipment, and supplies.

Hitler subjected Guderian to another of his hour-long rants. "Do you think Frederick the Great's grenadiers died gladly?" he shouted. "They would have liked to stay alive as well, yet the King had every right to demand that they sacrifice their lives. And I think I equally have every right to demand from the German soldier that he sacrifice his life."

Hitler waited until Guderian returned to the front, then relieved him. It served as a warning to every one of his other commanders. If an officer with the reputation and the accomplishments of Guderian could lose his command, then anyone could. Hitler wanted an Army that followed his orders without resistance and without question.

Word of how bad things had gotten on the Eastern Front soon percolated back to Germany. On December 20, Hitler made an appeal to the German public to donate winter clothes to the Army, the beginning of a campaign that lasted the rest of the winter. It was hard for the public not to

remember that until recently, Hitler's government had been assuring them the Army was adequately supplied.

Christmas came and German soldiers put together Christmas trees as best they could, decorating them with bits of foil from empty cigarette packages and whatever else they could find. In some cases, Russian civilians donated Christmas candles. German soldiers sat together and sang "*Stille Nacht*," but they were not so imbued with the holiday spirit that they expressed any generosity to their POWs, who starved on Christmas as they did every other day. The prisoners at a camp near Kaluga were force-marched to a new camp on Christmas Day, in temperatures of -30. Those who collapsed from cold and exhaustion were shot dead where they fell.

By this time, the more farsighted soldiers in the German Army were beginning to regret their horrifying abuse of Soviet POWs. Word of German mistreatment had made it to the Red Army. Now it was the Soviet side taking German prisoners, and they were in no mood to offer mercy.

When Hitler made his 1942 New Year's address to the German people, he said not a word about the Army's difficulties on the Eastern Front. Instead, with his characteristic modesty, he declared 1941 "one of the greatest triumphs in human history," and expressed the hope that "1942 brings the decision that rescues our people and our nation's allies." Listeners noted this sounded considerably less optimistic than the New Year addresses of 1940 or 1941; on both of those occasions, Hitler had promised the war would be over by the end of the year.

On the front lines, Army Group Center remained in a perilous position, as Soviet breakthroughs threatened their supply lines. Hitler refused to accept the reality of the danger; he told anyone who would listen that many times in his life he had faced crises that might have ruined him. This crisis would pass, just as all the others had. "The main thing is not to bend under any circumstances!"

At last, on January 15, Hitler bowed to battlefield reality and authorized Army Group Center to withdraw 150 kilometers to stabilize the front, much to his commanders' relief. German defenses stiffened. Typically, Hitler claimed it was his order that had saved the Army from collapse.

In truth, the person most responsible for saving the German Army from a disaster on the scale of 1812 was Joseph Stalin. On January 5, 1942, Stalin called a joint meeting of Stavka and the State Defense Committee, where he ordered a general Soviet offensive, up and down the line from Leningrad to the Black Sea. He told everyone that the Germans were woefully underprepared for a Russian winter and had collapsed before Moscow. They would prove equally vulnerable everywhere, but would recover by spring, so the key was to attack now, attack everywhere, and attack with everything the Red Army had.

Georgy Zhukov, who had not received any advance warning of this order, frantically sought a private meeting with Comrade Stalin and tried to talk him out of it. The offensive at Moscow had cost the Red Army dearly. Soldiers and supplies were running low; the Army simply wasn't

prepared for a general offensive. Stalin listened politely, then told Zhukov, "Carry out your orders."

The Germans fell back to their new defensive line and improvised. Where the ground was too frozen to dig trenches, they used explosives, or built barricades out of piles of logs packed with snow until it turned into hard ice. German front-line officers combined stragglers from various units and organized them into new units to man these defenses.

Stalin refused to back down on the offensive until spring. It cost the Red Army a million casualties for no significant gains.

But then, Stalin was a stubborn guy. Just ask Lord Beaverbrook or Averell Harriman. They were envoys representing the UK and the US, respectively, who met with Stalin in the Kremlin back in September to discuss Western aid to the Soviet Union. But Stalin had another item on his agenda that he was keen to discuss; he wanted the UK and US governments to agree that the post-war western border of the USSR would be restored to where it was just before the German invasion. In other words, he wanted the Western allies to affirm that the Soviet Union now included the Baltic States, eastern Poland, the territory taken from Finland, and Bessarabia.

To Harriman and Lord Beaverbrook, the request had an air of unreality about it. I mean after all, the German Army was closing in on Moscow, where they were meeting, and Stalin wants to talk about postwar borders? Seriously?

The subject came up again in December, when British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden was in Moscow hoping to get Stalin to sign onto a formal alliance agreement with the UK. Stalin brought up the subject of postwar borders again, and Eden went home empty handed. Britain did agree to a different Soviet request; Stalin wanted the UK to declare war on Finland, Hungary, and Romania, three countries that were at war with the USSR, but had taken no hostile action against Britain. The British government agreed and made the declarations on December 5. Britain and the USSR did finally sign a bilateral alliance agreement in May 1942, which left open the question of postwar borders.

In early 1942, during his talks with Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill urged the US President to agree with Stalin's requested postwar borders, out of fear that if the Allies did not grant him this, he would seek out a separate peace with Germany. Roosevelt refused. In fact, per the Stimson Doctrine that no nation should be permitted to retain territory won by force, the United States never would recognize the Soviet annexations of the Baltic States for the next half century, until those states were independent once more.

But by 1942, and with America in the war, Stalin was now focused on something nearer to hand. He wanted the US and UK to open a second front against Germany in Europe, to take some of the pressure off the Red Army. Stalin figured this second front would force Hitler to divert 40 divisions, decreasing the number of German soldiers able to fight the Soviet Union by 25-35%.

Roosevelt unwisely sent Stalin a letter which included a vague promise that the Western Allies would open a new front against Germany before the end of 1942.

Churchill was horrified. He and the British military command wanted to continue the strategy of picking at the edges of the Nazi empire, while the Americans were contemptuous of this timid approach and were eager to take on the Germans immediately. Recall Field Marshal Sir John Dill's assessment that the Americans had no idea what they were getting themselves into. Churchill impressed upon Roosevelt that an invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe would be suicide, and proposed instead an invasion of French North Africa. This would become Operation Torch and be executed in November 1942, but I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

The British and Americans were in complete agreement on the "Germany first" strategy for prosecuting the war. The Nazis were the graver threat and needed to be taken down first; afterward, the two allies could deal with Japan. Nevertheless, and irrespective of that agreement, Japan's dramatic advances in the Pacific Theater in 1942 forced the US to devote a greater share of its effort to the war in the Pacific, at least for now.

Stalin did not trust his new allies. He feared that the capitalist vultures in the West would be content to sit back and watch Germany and the USSR destroy each other, then pick over the corpses. When Roosevelt promised a second front in 1942, then failed to deliver, it only confirmed Stalin's worst fears.

At the end of January, Hitler felt confident enough about the stabilized situation on the Eastern Front that he returned to Berlin for his annual speech on the anniversary of his appointment as chancellor. He spoke to a huge crowd in the Sportpalast. He minimized the successes of the Red Army's offensive, although it was hard to conceal the fact that they had forced the Wehrmacht to retreat. And he railed against Western leaders like an adolescent, dismissing Winston Churchill as a "drunkard" and a "layabout" and Franklin Roosevelt as a "lunatic."

Afterward, Hitler returned to the Wolf's Lair. On February 7, Fritz Todt, the German government's Minister for Armaments and Munitions, dropped in with unpleasant news. Todt calculated that German arms and munitions production would not be adequate to win the war against the Soviet Union and had come to the Wolf's Lair to urge Hitler to seek a political solution with Stalin's government. No record exists of this meeting, but you can guess it was testy. The following morning, Todt boarded a plane to return to Berlin; the plane exploded shortly after takeoff, killing everyone aboard.

There has been speculation ever since that this was a deliberate assassination, although to all appearances, Hitler was genuinely shaken by Todt's death. (That doesn't rule out that someone else did it without Hitler's knowledge.) To replace him, Hitler turned to his favorite architect, Albert Speer, who was appointed the new minister without discussion. The choice surprised many; Speer had no background in military production, but in his previous work for the Reich he had proven to be energetic and resourceful and, most important, reliably loyal to Adolf Hitler.

[music: Wagner, *Prelude* from *Parsifal*]

So much has been going on in Europe and Asia that I have neglected the North African front for a while. You'll recall that in early 1941, Erwin Rommel and his Afrika Korps pushed the British all the way back to the Egyptian border, albeit with an Allied force still holed up and under siege in the port of Tobruk.

So long as the predominantly Australian defenders of Tobruk held out, a further advance into Egypt was out of the question. Tobruk lay astride the already precarious supply line Rommel would need to advance, and he lacked the forces necessary both to adequately contain the Tobruk garrison and to push the British front line back into Egypt.

Rommel kept badgering the OKH, the German Army High Command, for more ground and air units. This was frustrating to the OKH, especially since Rommel kept beginning new attacks and new offensives against the advice of his superiors, who kept warning him that he was demanding too much of his soldiers and stretching the Afrika Korps too thinly, and also because Operation Barbarossa was coming up, and that had to be the Army's top priority.

A frustrated Rommel ordered multiple assaults on Tobruk during the month of April 1941, to no avail. He quickly discovered the Tobruk garrison was much larger than he had believed, and this mistake cost the Germans dearly.

News of the losses suffered from these unsuccessful assaults on Tobruk persuaded OKH to send an observer who could learn firsthand exactly what was going on down there. The person they chose to send was General Friedrich Paulus, chief of staff of the Sixth Army and an old comrade of Rommel's. Paulus was told to explain to Rommel that the tremendous difficulties the Italians faced keeping his forces in supply, and the coming invasion of the Soviet Union meant that large-scale reinforcements in North Africa were out of the question, and to find out exactly what Rommel planned to do next.

The answer to the last question proved to be that Rommel intended to keep up the attacks on Tobruk. After witnessing yet another attack on Tobruk's defenses on April 30 end in bloody failure, Paulus used the authority granted him by OKH to issue Rommel a direct order to halt his attempts to take the city. Rommel deployed Italian infantry units to keep Tobruk surrounded and under siege, while moving his best German units to the frontier with Egypt. Paulus returned to OKH, where he reported that the biggest problem with the war effort in North Africa was Rommel himself.

Rommel wasn't the only one who was impatient. On the British side, Winston Churchill was eager to get the British Army on the offensive again and make up for the embarrassment of their earlier retreat. General Wavell, commander of the Middle East Force, worried that he was short on tanks to face the feared German panzers, so Churchill ordered Operation Tiger, a special convoy to carry some 300 British Crusader tanks and 50 Hurricane fighter planes to Egypt along

the direct but dangerous Mediterranean route, past the Luftwaffe on Sicily. It was a gamble, but it paid off.

Even before the British forces in Egypt had time to unload those tanks and learn how to operate them, Churchill was pushing for an offensive. On May 15, Wavell began Operation Brevity, which was meant to seize positions along the Libyan border and set the stage for a drive to relieve Tobruk. But Rommel had placed his best armored units on the border and they were able to outflank the British and drive them back with little difficulty.

Churchill was undeterred and wanted to press ahead with the offensive to relieve Tobruk, codenamed Operation Battleaxe. But this was May of 1941. As you know from episode 343, the British had to send Indian Army units to Iraq to deal with a pro-Axis coup. Middle East Command did not have to contribute much to that operation, but then it was called upon to invade and occupy Lebanon and Syria, even as Wavell was preparing for Battleaxe.

Battleaxe finally began on June 15. After some initial success, the British were again outflanked and forced to pull back. The Germans and Italians collectively had higher casualties, but they lost only 12 tanks and ten aircraft, while the British lost 91 tanks and 36 aircraft, a stinging defeat.

So what happened? On paper at least, the British Crusader tank was comparable to the Panzer III and Panzer IV tanks the Germans were using, but it wasn't German tanks taking down so many Crusaders; it was those 88s, the excellent German anti-aircraft gun that also made a very good anti-tank gun. Two great tastes that taste great together. The British, on the other hand, continued to use their 40mm gun, known as the "2-pounder," both as an anti-tank gun and as the main gun on their tanks, including the Crusader. Often derided as a "pea shooter," it simply lacked the punch of the 88s. Ironically, Britain, the country that invented the tank, struggled throughout the Second World War to produce tanks that matched those of their enemy.

Churchill needed the British military to be doing *something*, to impress upon the world that the UK was doing more than simply waiting around for the Americans to come in and save their bacon. After the failure of Operation Battleaxe, Churchill replaced Wavell with General Sir Claude Auchinleck, commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, reassigning Wavell to the post Auchinleck vacated. Later, after Japan entered the war, Wavell was made commander of ABDACOM, as I told you in episode 354.

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, the USSR and the UK became allies. One might venture to call them strange bedfellows, as Winston Churchill had been one of the voices in Britain most hostile to the Bolsheviks ever since the October Revolution. Still, back in June, as the German invasion was about to begin, Churchill famously remarked to his personal secretary, "If Hitler invaded Hell, I would at least make a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons."

In August, he told the nation in a radio address, “The Russian Armies and all the peoples of the Russian Republic have rallied to the defense of their hearths and homes. ... The aggressor is surprised, startled, staggered. For the first time in his experience mass murder has become unprofitable. He retaliates by the most frightful cruelties. As his armies advance, whole districts are being exterminated. Scores of thousands—literally scores of thousands—of executions in cold blood are being perpetrated by the German police-troops upon the Russian patriots who defend their native soil. Since the Mongol invasions of Europe in the sixteenth century, there has never been methodical, merciless butchery on such a scale, or approaching such a scale. And this is but the beginning.”

The view from Moscow was a little different. Stalin and the Soviet government complained that the USSR was bearing the brunt of an attack from the largest army ever assembled, while the British were sitting pretty and contributing nothing.

British diplomats protested that Britain was fighting the Axis in North Africa. Soviet diplomats were like, are you kidding me or what? The British were engaging only a tiny fraction of the military machine that was bent on destroying the Soviet Union, and not doing even that much particularly well.

Summertime in North Africa is hardly the time to begin an offensive, so both sides resupplied and waited. Rommel spent the time planning the capture of Tobruk. On the front lines, British and German reconnaissance units chatted with each other over the wireless. In one instance, an annoyed German officer ordered his troops to fire on the British, which led the British to contact their new German friends and ask them just what the hell was going on.

You can forgive these guys because their lives weren’t easy. Soldiers on both sides were limited to one liter of water per day. That one liter was for drinking and washing both. They were forced to live in trenches infested with sand fleas and scorpions. Dysentery was endemic. Tobruk was pounded from the air by the Luftwaffe. A German Stuka took out the city’s water desalination plant, leaving the Australians short of water too. They took to looting the city of whatever looked valuable, and when a ship docked, trading their trinkets for bottles of beer, because of course they did.

While Rommel impatiently awaited supplies and reinforcements, the British side was actually getting them, as American Lend-Lease aid began to arrive. The Western Desert Force was redesignated XIII Corps and augmented with the British armored XXX Corps, the combined formations designated the British 8th Army. I should note that I keep using the word “British” as an umbrella term, though the 8th Army also included units from India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and some smaller formations from Sudan, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and some Free French soldiers.

Supply on the Axis side was dicey. The British were shipping airplanes to Malta as fast as they could, now faster than the Axis could shoot them down. In the four-month period from June to

October 1941, with the Luftwaffe occupied in the fight against the Soviet Union, British air and naval forces sank 220,000 tons of Italian shipping en route to Libya. In October, the British felt confident enough to station torpedo bombers at Malta, and a few warships: two cruisers and two destroyers, designated Force K.

By this time it had become painfully obvious in Berlin that it had been a major mistake to divert paratroop units from the planned attack on Malta to seize Crete. Capturing Malta would have been far more helpful to the Axis cause.

On November 7, a large Italian convoy set out for Libya from the Italian port of Naples. This convoy consisted of two German freighters, three Italian freighters, and two Italian tankers, carrying 389 vehicles and large quantities of fuel and munitions, all items Rommel needed badly. They were escorted by two Italian cruisers and ten Italian destroyers. Because of the enhanced British air power at Malta, the convoy was routed far to the east of that island rather than the west, and sailed for Benghazi rather than Tripoli. It was hoped the convoy would enjoy better air cover along this route.

But the British had decrypted Italian radio traffic and knew all about the operation. They sent a spotter plane to “find” the convoy, and then sent Force K to intercept. The Italians apparently believed that Force K wouldn’t dare attack a convoy this well protected, and therefore the only danger was from air attack, which could only come in daytime. Thus they were taken by surprise when Force K, guided by radar, located the Italian convoy and attacked it just after midnight on November 9 with guns targeted by radar.

At first, the Italians thought it was an air attack. Confusion reigned; Italian warship crews had neither the equipment nor the training to do battle at night. Force K sank or wrecked every one of the enemy merchant ships and retired to Malta with only minimal damage. Italian Navy morale plummeted, and the Germans were furious. The Italians had not even taken such basic steps as advising the crews of the merchant ships to disperse in the event of an attack. The Germans began demanding that German naval officers be posted aboard Italian ships.

Rommel wasted months waiting for supplies that never came. Now tired of waiting, and never one to shy away from attack, he planned to attack Tobruk on November 21.

As that start date drew near, Rommel’s Italian allies were warning him of a British buildup near the front line in Egypt. The Italians had a history of being panicky, so Rommel was inclined to dismiss them. Big mistake. You see, the Italians had decrypted coded messages from the US military attaché in Cairo, Bonner Fellers, who was informing the US State Department about British plans. Three days before Rommel could begin his offensive, the British began theirs, codenamed Operation Crusader.

This time, the British had plenty of tanks, while the Germans were short on fuel. A British armored thrust through the middle of the front line captured a German airfield, including 19

Luftwaffe planes caught on the ground, before the Germans had time to react. The going was much tougher though, on the British right flank, along the coast road. And on the British left flank, an Italian armored division was battering their advance units. The new British Stuart light tanks, provided by the Americans, proved vulnerable to those handy German 88 mm anti-aircraft guns, capable of taking out a Stuart tank before the Stuart was close enough to fire back.

Both sides were losing tanks at a fearsome rate, though the British could better afford to lose them. On the fourth day of the British offensive, with progress minimal and that armored formation in the middle of the line exposed, the commander of the units besieged in Tobruk decided to try to break out. Three days of bloody fighting later, he was ready to quit, but Auchinleck ordered him to keep fighting.

The British suffered severe losses on their left flank, which tempted Rommel to take an all-or-nothing gamble: an attempt to break through the British left and circle behind. If it worked, Rommel could destroy the entire 8th Army.

But it didn't work. German vehicle losses were too high; German soldiers were fatigued. The maneuver broke down into disorganization; at one point the vehicle Rommel was riding in broke down and he was caught behind enemy lines and out of communication with his own army.

At the same time, the British center, reinforced with additional tanks, pushed forward and made contact with the defenders of Tobruk. Rommel now had no choice but to order his units to pull back, while the British paused to consolidate their gains.

Rommel made another plea for supplies and reinforcements, but the Italian Navy told him he could not expect a better supply situation before January 1942. On December 6, he asked the German OKH for reinforcements, but this was just as the Soviet winter offensive was starting, and all available reinforcements had to be sent to Army Group Center. Rommel now had no choice; he gave up on retaking Tobruk or holding the front line and ordered a withdrawal, a withdrawal that was harried by British Hurricane fighters, which now had control of the skies.

Rommel's withdrawal continued for the rest of December and into early January, until the Axis front line was right back where it had started a year earlier, in central Libya.

The British celebrated Operation Crusader as a great victory, but the principal reason for the victory was numbers; numbers of soldiers, tanks, and planes. But the British side had lost 800 tanks and 300 aircraft. Eighth Army was now much weaker, its soldiers exhausted, and now it was they who were dependent on supplies brought in by truck over a thousand kilometers of bumpy road. The North African pendulum had swung their way for now, but there are two things you can be sure of regarding Erwin Rommel. The first is that he is already planning his next offensive. The second is, it will begin sooner than you think.

We'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd especially like to thank Robert for his kind donation, and thank you to Greg for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Robert and Greg help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, you are most welcome; just visit the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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And I hope you'll join me next week, here on the *History of the Twentieth Century*, as we take a look at the German government's reaction to their failure to conquer the Soviet Union as quickly as they'd expected. Let's just say, it will get ugly. The Wannsee Conference, next week, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. Winston Churchill, among others, had this great fear that Stalin might cut a deal with Hitler to quit the war and leave the Western Allies hanging. This fear was not unfounded. Hitler and Stalin had already entered into a cooperative agreement once, despite their ideological differences and their mutual loathing. That they might do so again was not unthinkable.

That was the view from a distance. Up close, the brutality of the Germans—their cruelty to their POWs; the murders of so many innocent civilians in German-occupied lands—was convincing evidence to Stalin and his government that the Germans would settle for nothing less than the extinction of the USSR. Hitler viewed the destruction of Bolshevism as his life's work; he would never settle for a job half done.

Not so long as his armies were advancing anyway. That was true in 1941 and 1942. Afterward? Well, things would be different by 1943, but I don't want to get ahead of myself.

[music: Closing War Theme]