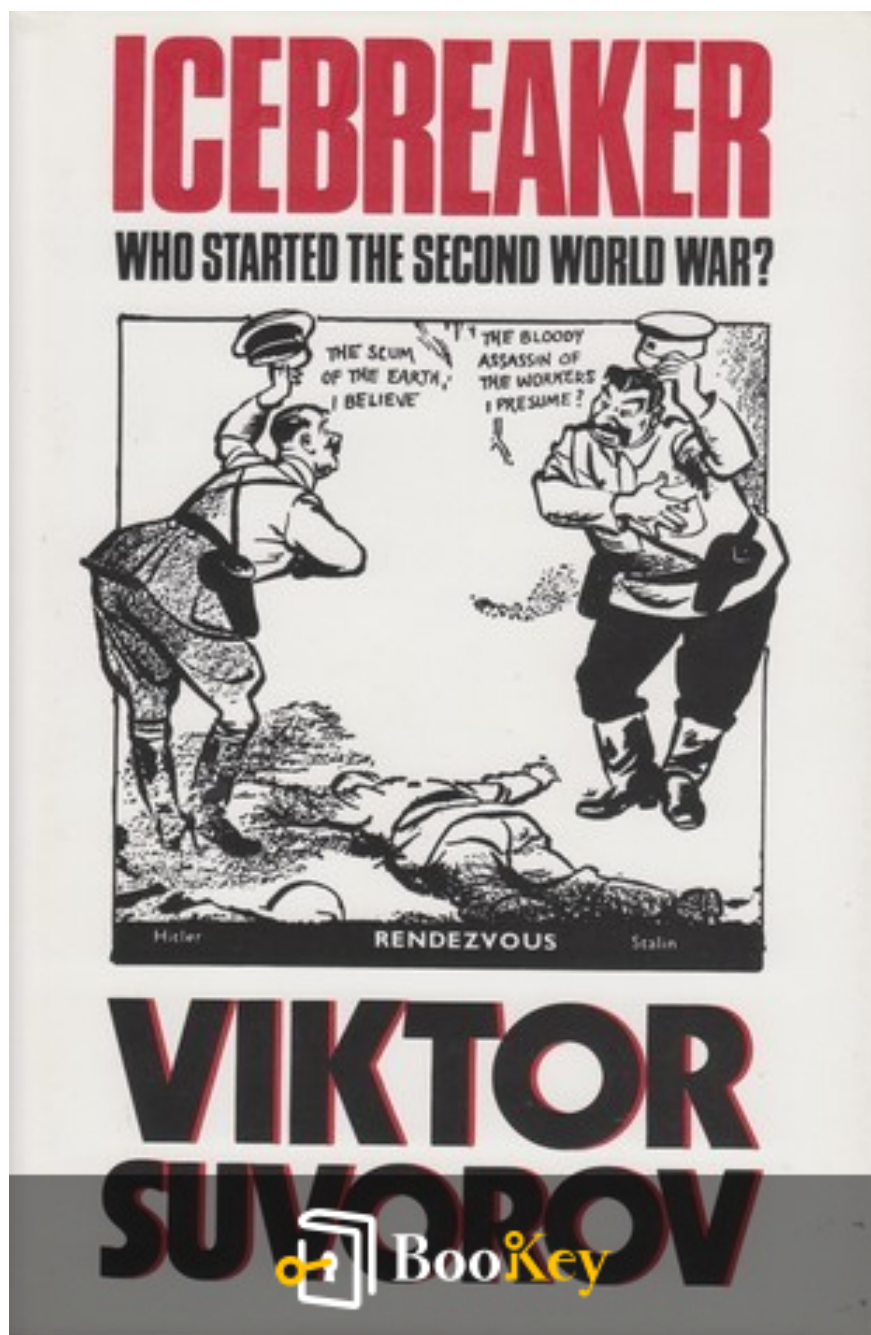


# Icebreaker PDF (Limited Copy)

Viktor Suvorov



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## **Icebreaker Summary**

"Stalin's Surprising Role in Triggering World War II"

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## About the book

In "Icebreaker," Viktor Suvorov presents a riveting examination that turns historical narratives on their head, offering readers a provocative window into the clandestine motives behind the Soviet Union's actions leading up to World War II. The former GRU officer meticulously assembles a mosaic of classified information, intelligence, and chilling revelations to argue a compelling theory that Joseph Stalin, rather than Adolf Hitler, was orchestrating events to ignite the cataclysmic conflict we know today. Blending spy-craft with historical inquiry, Suvorov's work challenges us to reconsider allied alliances and the concealed dance of diplomacy and betrayal in a world on the brink of destruction. Icebreaker is not just history retold, but a call to uncover the buried truths of a tumultuous past now crucial to understanding the tapestry of modern geopolitics.

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## About the author

Viktor Suvorov, a pseudonym for Vladimir Bogdanovich Rezun, is a former Soviet military intelligence officer who defected to the West in 1978.

Suvorov is renowned for his insightful and often controversial assessments of Soviet military strategy during the Cold War. His work as an intelligence officer for the GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate) provided him with extensive knowledge of the inner workings of the Soviet military apparatus.

After defecting, Suvorov settled in the United Kingdom, where he began a literary career that combined his firsthand experiences with extensive research into Soviet historical accounts. Among his body of work,

"Icebreaker" remains one of his most notable, presenting a provocative re-examination of Stalin's role and strategies leading up to World War II.

Through his writings, Suvorov has sparked debate and garnered both critical acclaim and criticism for his revisionist views on Soviet history.

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## Chapter 1 Summary: 2

### Chapter 5: The Pact and its Results

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in August 1939, ostensibly divided Poland between the two powers. Stalin, however, outmaneuvered Hitler early on. Although Hitler initiated the invasion of Poland, Stalin delayed sending Soviet forces under the pretext of being unprepared, making Hitler appear solely responsible for starting World War II.

This cunning move moved Hitler into a two-front war against France and the United Kingdom, fundamentally weakening Germany. Britain, supported by the United States, declared war on Germany, marking the Nazism vs. Allies struggle. Stalin's strategy let the West and Germany undermine each other, allowing the Soviet Union to seemingly benefit from both sides' depletion.

Poland, the cause for Western engagement in the war, fell under Soviet control post-war, alongside the entirety of Eastern Europe, contrary to Western intentions. Stalin maintained an image of innocence, whereas Hitler's aggressive reputation endured. Quotations reflect Stalin's early strategy of exploiting Western disunity and promoting alliances only when advantageous. The Soviets' eventual retaliation led them to claim half of



Europe, illustrating Stalin's strategic prowess and long-term vision shaped by Marxist-Leninist ideology.

## **Chapter 6: When Did the Soviet Union Enter World War II?**

Soviet participation in WWII is officially dated to June 22, 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. However, the Soviets had aggressively annexed territories like Poland and the Baltic states before this, indicating covert engagement long before the official entry. Stalin had planned for a war where the West weakened itself before Soviet involvement, as confirmed by archival evidence and post-war Soviet leaders.

The narrative includes secretive diplomatic maneuvers preceding the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 which effectively signaled Soviet war intentions. Despite its alleged neutrality, the USSR had been militarily active since Poland's partition, challenging the official Soviet war timeline. The Soviets resisted acknowledging their early aggressions and positioned their entry as defensive. Allegations arose that Stalin had meticulously orchestrated Soviet involvement to capitalize on a depleted Europe.

## **Chapter 7: 'Extending the Foundations of War'**

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The Soviet military strategy differed significantly from Tsarist Russia's; rather than simply defeating enemy armies, it involved restructuring occupied territories under Soviet governance. This doctrine, vigorously promoted by military theorist Mikhail Tukhachevsky, emphasized rapid Sovietization and exploitation to sustain aggression.

The Red Army was tasked with military offensives, while political commissars set up communist governments in conquered areas. Despite operational critiques, Stalin retained the concept of "extending the basis of war," integrating it within his broader strategy. Trotsky and other Marxist ideologues envisioned a unified socialist Europe, intensifying Soviet military ambitions and dictating operational methods like deploying ready Soviet administrative structures during invasions.

## **Chapter 8: Why Howitzer Artillery for the Chekists?**

Under Stalin, the NKVD (Soviet secret police) formed military divisions, suggesting internal security concerns persisted beside broader offensive aims. Throughout the 1930s, punitive divisions had focused on internal enemies, but by 1939 the emphasis shifted to military capabilities with organized retreats, blocking detachments, and specialized motor-rifle divisions equipped with howitzers and tanks.



These divisions, inadequate for defensive warfare, hinted at offensive intentions in Western Europe. Following Germany's invasion, the NKVD divisions' roles declined as traditional military strategies prevailed. The existence and later reorganization of these troops underscore pre-war Soviet plans to extend their influence post-capturing territory rather than focusing on national defense.

## **Chapter 9: Why the Security Zone was Dismantled on the Eve of War**

In 1940, as threats loomed large, the Soviet Union dismantled its western security zones, leaving its borders vulnerable. The traditional military doctrine suggests defense zones with traps and obstacles impeding attackers, but Soviet actions indicated a planned offensive.

The Soviets had annexed strategic areas under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, transforming these into launching pads for future campaigns rather than defensives. Railway and road constructions further mark Soviet strategic interests leaning towards aggression, contrary to the imminent defense needed against Hitler's Germany.

Soviet leaders ordered the removal of defensive barriers on newly expanded frontiers. Activities like stockpiling materials near borders and abandoning defensive structures were inconsistent with defensive strategies, reinforcing



the thesis of an impending Soviet offensive.

In conclusion, Stalin's preparations unveil an offensive strategy fueled by traditional Marxist-Leninist ideologies and war doctrines. Despite Hitler's preemptive strike in June 1941, Soviet actions and military arrangements imply expansive ambitions that never fully materialized until much later in the war.

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## Chapter 2 Summary: 3

### Chapter 10: Why Stalin Abolished the Stalin Line

In the 1930s, the Soviet Union constructed the Stalin Line, a series of thirteen fortified regions along its western frontier, intended for offensive rather than purely defensive purposes. These zones, likened to a cross between brigades and corps in terms of firepower, featured a complex web of combat and supply installations capable of waging warfare independently for prolonged periods. Unlike the French Maginot Line, which was built for defense, the Stalin Line's purpose was to secure troop deployments and support offensive operations.

Despite the significant investment, the Stalin Line's dismantling began after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939, which brought the USSR into closer proximity with Germany, eliminating a buffer zone. Instead of bolstering its defenses in the face of the growing threat, the Soviet Union disbanded garrisons and stopped producing defensive equipment, including anti-tank weapons. The Stalin Line, which could have functioned as a key defensive barrier, was obliterated, leading to questions about the strategic decisions of Soviet leadership.

Simultaneously, the 'Molotov Line' was conceived as a new set of



fortifications along the new Soviet-German frontier. However, its construction was half-hearted, lacked depth, defensive measures, and was openly visible to enemy forces. This new line seemed to be more a demonstration than a serious defensive effort, highlighting potential offensive intentions rather than defensive priorities. Comparisons with the German military strategy revealed parallel processes: both Soviet and German command dismantled robust fortifications in favor of less defensible, forward positions indicative of offensive strategies.

The broader implication suggested that the Stalin Line, initially built for dual purposes of defense and springboard for aggression, became redundant after the border shift. This strategic shift pointed towards a long-term preparation for an initiative against Germany rather than defense against it.

## **Chapter 12: Partisans or Saboteurs?**

Following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the Soviet Union expanded westward, dismantling prior defensive strategies including the partisan network, a precursor to guerilla resistance movements. These were once robust mechanisms for defending Soviet territories, equipped with concealed bases and trained personnel ready to sabotage invaders.

However, by the onset of World War II, the partisan movement was



dismantled. Arms caches were destroyed, and experienced leaders were redirected to other military roles, reflecting a shift to offensive rather than defensive doctrine. In the initial days of conflict with Germany, partisans had to be hastily reconstituted, functioning significantly later in the war than their original potential.

Why was the Soviet partisan network dismantled? It appears this was aligned with an overarching aggressive doctrine. Instead of readying defenses, Stalin tasked professional saboteurs and specialists with offensive roles, undermining potential defense from within should conflict arise. Later Soviet historians attribute this shift to Stalin's focus on waging war beyond Soviet borders rather than within them.

## **Chapter 12: Why Did Stalin Need Ten Airborne Assault Corps?**

By 1941, the Soviet Union boasted more than one million air assault troops, dwarfing figures of other nations, including Germany. These troops were an offensive force, intended for rapid deployment deep into enemy territories rather than for home defense. The formation of five massive airborne corps in early 1941 alone demonstrated an overwhelming commitment to aggressive preemptive capabilities.

The Red Army's extensive training exercises simulated deep incursions into





enemy landscapes, reflecting Stalin's prioritization of offensive capabilities. These exercises revolved around coordinated air and land attacks to pre-empt enemy defenses. Soviet strategy foresaw initial surprise airstrikes disabling enemy air forces to enable massive parachute troop deployments.

This vast array of airborne personnel and gear underscored an offensive strategy aimed to function post-disabling enemy air capabilities, revealing Stalin's aspirations beyond borders.

## **Chapter 13: The Winged Tank**

The Soviet military's focus on innovation to support its airborne troops extended to the development of impressive yet impractical concepts like the "winged tank" capable of being air-dropped into enemy territory. Soviet designers worked tirelessly to create and mass-produce military transport vehicles and gliders to mobilize troops and equipment deep into the rear of perceived enemies. The glider production surge in 1941 indicated a strategic timeline that assumed their imminent use within the same year.

These preparations underscored an initiative to retain air superiority and rapidly strike. Soviet military doctrine and logistic advancements focused on facilitating swift airborne operations by ensuring overwhelming aerial capability, further confirming broader offensive ambitions.



## Chapter 14: On to Berlin

The Soviet dismantling of the Dnieper Naval Flotilla, initially geared for defensive river operations, and the establishment of aggressive flotillas on the Danube signaled a strategic redirection towards offensive actions across Europe. These flotillas, such as the one on the Danube, highlighted their intended roles in facilitating Soviet incursions into Romania and further upstream strategic points, critical for severing Nazi Germany's oil lifeline.

This strategic disposition was not defensive but an offensive measure, as seen when the Danube Flotilla conducted successful operations on the Romanian bank during the early days of the German invasion, despite the adverse conditions for defense. The persistent pressure on Romanian oil resources catalyzed Hitler's strategic reevaluation, resulting in a preventive strike on the Soviet Union.

The establishment of the Pinsk Flotilla and the construction of a strategic canal linked the Dnieper to the Western river systems, providing a direct naval route towards Germany. Stalin's focus on offensive military infrastructure along these routes indicated a planned westward thrust towards Berlin – a strategic vision only halted by the surprise of Barbarossa.



The narrative of Stalin's offensive rather than defensive preparations, without adopting reactionary defensive measures against Hitler's aggression, suggests the Soviet stance was set more on expansion and influence over Europe than purely defensive measures against a German threat.

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# Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Strategic Adaptability in the Face of Changing Alliance Dynamics

**Critical Interpretation:** The dismantling of the Stalin Line by Soviet leadership, following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, serves as a testament to the necessity of strategic adaptability. In a world characterized by ever-shifting alliances and geopolitical landscapes, it's crucial to continuously reassess and realign strategies to current realities, rather than clinging to obsolete structures or assumptions. Embracing change with a clear understanding of the broader context allows for smarter preparation and positioning in all aspects of life, enabling forward-thinking actions rather than reactive measures. This approach can inspire us to be more agile and proactive in personal and professional arenas, adapting our strategies to meet evolving circumstances.



## Chapter 3 Summary: 4

### Chapters 15-19 Summary:

### Chapter 15: The Marine Infantry in the Forests of Byelorussia

Before 1940, the Soviet Red Army did not have marine infantry due to the impracticality of distant shore landings. However, as Hitler's forces expanded in Europe, the Red Army underwent significant structural changes, leading to the creation of the Soviet marine infantry in June 1940. This force received its first baptism by fire in June 1941 at the Liepaja naval base near the German frontier, a base clearly intended as a staging area for offensive operations. This chapter outlines the preparatory offensive maneuvers and exercises carried out by Soviet forces, such as the 9th Special Rifle Corps, suggesting Stalin's interest in a potential aggressive strike towards Europe.

### Chapter 16: What are 'Armies of Covering Forces'?

In the prelude to World War II, Soviet military formations underwent a transformation, characterized by the sudden creation of new armies in western Soviet territories in the late 1930s and 1940. These forces, equipped

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to carry out offensive operations, were labeled deceptively as "covering armies" to mask their true purpose: aggressive surprise invasions. The formation of these armies contradicted Soviet claims of their peace-loving intentions and indicated preparations for large-scale operations, possibly against Germany, by clustering mechanized corps and armored units near the borders.

## **Chapter 17: Mountain Divisions on the Steppes of the Ukraine**

The Soviet Union's intensive military preparations involved the creation of specialized formations like mountain rifle divisions, notably within the 12th and 18th Armies. These divisions were strategically located in the Carpathian region, better suited for offensive moves through the mountain passes to Germany's oil supplies in Romania. However, these offensively oriented mountain units proved vulnerable to German attacks on the plains, underscoring the Soviet Union's initial offensive posture, which faltered under unanticipated German aggression.

## **Chapter 18: The Purpose of the First Strategic Echelon**

The First Strategic Echelon, comprising 16 armies and numerous detached corps, reflected the Soviet Union's overarching military strategy. Intended





primarily for offensive operations alongside German aggression, these forces were strategically moved to the borders under Stalin's orders. These preparations aimed to leverage any opportunities to launch invasions, once ready, into Germany and its occupied territories, intending to stretch and disrupt German military efforts.

## **Chapter 19: Stalin in May**

May 1941 is identified as a pivotal month in Soviet history. On May 6, Stalin assumed the chairmanship of the Soviet government, a strategic move suggesting his preparation for initiating personal and official aggressive actions. This internal shift highlighted a potential plan to launch an offensive against Germany, suggested by tense German-Soviet relations and Soviet military maneuvers. This chapter scrutinizes the covert machinations and strategic ambiguities leading up to Germany's pre-emptive strike in June 1941, revealing Stalin's intent to position himself as the leader of an anticipated European conflict, seizing the opportunity to launch "unexpected events" — aggressive military actions that would have officially borne his signature.



## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** The Intentional Preparation for Leadership

**Critical Interpretation:** Chapter 19 of 'Icebreaker' suggests that preparation and positioning are crucial for effective leadership. Stalin's assumption of chairmanship in May 1941 reveals a strategic maneuver to realize ambitious goals, regardless of obstacles. This key point inspires you to recognize that being ready isn't just about seizing opportunities as they arise. Instead, it entails intentionally aligning yourself with your aspirations by taking calculated steps and assuming roles that bring your vision within reach. In doing so, you, like a meticulous leader, orchestrate your life's path, ready to become the initiator of impactful actions, even amid uncertainty or potential resistance.

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## Chapter 4: 5

The chapters in question explore the complex interplay between Soviet military strategies during World War II, the secretive nature of Stalin's directives, and the impact of these strategies on both the internal military structure of the Soviet Union and its international relations. The narrative unfolds with an analysis of Stalin's secret speech from May 1941, which paradoxically suggests the Soviet Union's lack of aggressive intentions, while simultaneously preparing for a potential offensive against Germany.

Chapter 20 discusses Stalin's secretive behavior and military directives that pointed towards an aggressive stance despite public assertions to the contrary. He orchestrated large-scale troop movements and preparations along the German frontier, which included the removal of defensive installations, suggesting an offensive posture. This duplicity was reflected in the secret orders to Soviet military leaders to be ready to strike swiftly when commanded, highlighting Stalin's long-standing strategy of keeping his true intentions shrouded in secrecy. The narrative underscores the disconnect between public pronouncements and covert military preparations.

Chapter 21 highlights the Soviet Union's preparation for a possible conflict with Germany, trivializing reports by Japanese media about troop concentrations as mere fantasies. Yet, General Shelakhov's accounts and other sources reveal extensive movements of troops and equipment under



camouflage, indicating a readiness for large-scale offensive operations. The transfer of airborne brigades and other strategic military units from the Far East to the German front ripples with urgency and secretive mobilization, contradicting the downplayed public narrative. Emphasis is placed on the covert nature of these movements designed to catch the enemy off guard.

In Chapter 22, the mysterious TASS report, which asserted Soviet and German adherence to the non-aggression pact, is discussed. The report, incongruous with Stalin's secretive nature and aggressive military buildup, is dissected for the purpose of deceit. Simultaneously, Soviet diplomatic channels were laying the groundwork for potential Allied support, while maintaining the façade of neutrality. The TASS report is seen as a strategic tool to mislead both domestic and foreign observers, while real military projections were being activated behind the scenes.

Chapter 23 delves into the dismantling of Soviet internal military districts, as their command structures and troops were inexplicably mobilized to the western borders, effectively leaving broad regions without military governance. This unprecedented realignment was suggestive of an impending large-scale deployment against an external threat. The equality of all military commanders' responsibilities towards imminent external engagements pointed towards a lack of defensive considerations within Soviet strategic planning.



Finally, Chapter 24 examines the enigmatic presence of "black" divisions within the Soviet military structure—units composed significantly of GULAG inmates wearing black uniforms, moved secretively to the frontlines in an apparent offensive configuration. These divisions were part of a broader Second Strategic Echelon, ready to engage in offensive

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## Chapter 5 Summary: 6

### Summary of Chapters 25-29:

#### Chapter 25: The Kombrig and Komdivs

In June 1940, Stalin began reordering military ranks, changing the older Red Army titles of kombrig, komdiv, komkor, and komandarm into more familiar general ranks. This reorganization aimed to restore confidence in the military after the Great Purge of 1937-38 by offering symbolic promotions, despite having previously demoted commanders or imprisoned them in the GULAG. As tensions increased with Germany, Stalin found those experienced but previously purged commanders valuable. Many were released and reinstated, some with new ranks, although there remained a disparity in uniform and insignia between those restored to favor and others less fortunate.

#### Chapter 26: Why the Second Strategic Echelon was Formed

Despite Stalin's disbelief in an imminent German attack, the Soviets carefully planned troop movements for the Second Strategic Echelon, long before Germany invaded. Initial preparations began in 1939, following the decision to form and move divisions closer to the western border. The



expectation was to reinforce frontline positions for a rapid counteroffensive, not purely defensive purposes. Soviet leadership, particularly Zhukov and military strategists, recognized that mass mobilization meant war was inevitable, and delaying action after such a build-up could lead to a deterioration in troop morale and readiness.

## **Chapter 27: Undeclared War**

Stalin quietly prepared for a major offensive involving several military fronts, classifying them under the guise of military districts. Despite the formal establishment of these fronts occurring after Germany's invasion, they were being organized in secret months prior. Soviet High Command Representatives, including key generals like Rychagov, moved to front areas to oversee preparations, highlighting the depth of strategic planning. Soviet intent was more than defensive; it was an aggressive posture doomed to secrecy due to the technically continued peace with Germany.

## **Chapter 28: Why Stalin Deployed the Fronts**

In expectation of offensive operations beyond Soviet territory, Stalin arranged military districts as fronts, positioning them for action. These formations hinted at plans extending beyond Soviet borders for strategic gains linking multiple fronts under a unified command. Command posts were divided, anticipating future advances where territorial governance over



conquered regions would be crucial. This deployment reflected an aggressive strategic stance counter to the public narrative of peace with Germany.

## **Chapter 29: Why Stalin Did Not Trust Churchill**

Despite warnings from Churchill about an impending German attack, Stalin remained skeptical of British intentions due to Churchill's advocacy against communism and British wartime interests. Historical distrust between Soviet and British leadership further fueled Stalin's doubts about the warnings. Churchill's letters, seen through Stalin's eyes, suggested not a genuine concern but a maneuver to redirect German aggression from Britain to the Soviet Union. Stalin was waiting for Hitler to commit fully against Britain, inadvertently giving the Soviet Union a chance to liberate Europe from Germany. However, wary of over-reliance on any side, Stalin's response was firmly calculated to avoid being provoked into premature confrontation with Germany.

Overall, these chapters illustrate the complex interplay of military and political strategies preceding the German invasion, highlighting Stalin's cautious but ultimately aggressive preparations, as well as his deep-seated skepticism of Western leaders' overtures during the precarious prelude to the Soviet-German conflict.

Chapter	Title	Summary
Chapter 25	The Kombrig and Komdivs	Stalin altered military ranks to restore confidence in the army after the Great Purge. Experienced commanders were reinstated, some promoted to new general ranks amidst escalating tensions with Germany.
Chapter 26	Why the Second Strategic Echelon was Formed	Despite doubting a German attack, Stalin planned troop movements and organized the Second Strategic Echelon as early as 1939, preparing for a counteroffensive rather than a defensive war.
Chapter 27	Undeclared War	Soviets secretly prepared for a major offensive by organizing military fronts covertly, highlighting serious strategic planning to capitalize on an aggressive stance hidden under the guise of ongoing peace.
Chapter 28	Why Stalin Deployed the Fronts	Military districts were deployed as fronts with the anticipation of operations beyond Soviet borders, signaling aggressive strategic positioning for potential territorial expansion.
Chapter 29	Why Stalin Did Not Trust Churchill	Stalin's distrust of British intentions, fueled by historical tensions and skepticism towards Churchill's warnings, resulted in measured responses, avoiding premature conflict with Germany.



# Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Strategic Foresight

**Critical Interpretation:** In Chapter 26, the formation of the Second Strategic Echelon despite Stalin's disbelief in an imminent German attack highlights the profound value of strategic foresight. As you navigate life's challenges, embody the practice of preparing contingencies and maintaining readiness, even when the immediate threat seems distant or uncertain. Just as Zhukov and Soviet strategists recognized that mobilization was imperative for survival, let this foresight inspire you to anticipate future needs and lay the groundwork for resilience. It's about envisioning possibilities beyond the visible horizon and equipping yourself with the skills, plans, and mindset necessary to thrive amidst unforeseen adversities.

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## Chapter 6 Summary: 7

### Summary of Chapters 30 to 33

### Chapter 30: Why Stalin Did Not Trust Richard Sorge

Stalin was intensely focused on Soviet military intelligence, known today as the GRU, but was notorious for purging its leaders, leaving a long list of executed chiefs and officers before, during, and after World War II. Despite these purges, the GRU remained a strong and effective entity. Richard Sorge, a Soviet spy in Tokyo operating under the alias 'Ramsay,' frequently requested to return to the Soviet Union, illustrating his suspicion about his safety due to his colleagues' arrests and executions. Sorge, aware of the precariousness of the situation, chose to continue his intelligence work in Japan, much of it at his own expense, rather than risk returning to Moscow and facing punishment. Stalin did not trust Sorge, suspecting him of defection. Although Sorge was a competent intelligence officer, his reports about German invasion plans were inconsistent, sometimes misleading the GRU. Stalin valued intelligence but prioritized stability at the top, which Sorge's precarious position threatened. Ultimately, Sorge's lasting contribution was his accurate report that Japan would not attack the USSR in 1941, allowing Stalin to redeploy troops critical to Soviet success on the

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Eastern Front.

## **Chapter 31: How Hitler Frustrated Stalin's War**

After World War II, Allied interrogation of German officers like Field-Marshal Keitel revealed their belief that Germany's attack on the Soviet Union was preventive, aiming to forestall a Soviet offensive. In the 1960s, Soviet Admiral Kuznetsov corroborated this view, admitting that Stalin had prepared for war and planned to strike Germany. Despite this acknowledgment, Keitel was executed for his role in launching an unprovoked war, while Soviet admissions went unpunished. Soviet scholars later admitted that German actions preempted Soviet plans. The significant military buildup near the Soviet western border indicated offensive intentions. Soviet infrastructure, communications, and leadership movements also hinted at plans to push westward. However, Hitler's invasion forced the Soviets into defensive improvisation, thwarting their offensive strategy and compelling them to confront the unexpected challenge of defending their territory.

## **Chapter 32: Did Stalin Have a War Plan?**

Robert Conquest suggests misconceptions existed about Stalin's strategic

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plans due to his reticence. The Soviet military, unprepared for defense and focused on offensive plans, was thrown into disarray by the German invasion in 1941. The intense preparation efforts by the Soviet General Staff, led by figures like Zhukov, focused on offensive strategies, dismissing the need for defensive plans. Despite the surprise German attack, Stalin did not blame Zhukov or his planners, as their original task was to create plans for an offensive war that became obsolete once conflict began defensively. Evidence of pre-war Soviet intentions, such as missions assigned to the Soviet fleets and army, revealed that plans existed but were oriented towards initiating war. The offensive plans were impractical once the defensive war commenced. The improvised Soviet counter-strikes were often unsuccessful. Stalin and his strategists focused on exploiting the unexpected German decision to attack without proper preparations, attempting to leverage the Soviet Union's vast resources to rally and strike back.

### **Chapter 33: The War Which Never Was**

General V.F. Von Mellentin praised the Soviet High Command's acumen, hinting at a strategic vision beyond the common understanding. Stalin fervently prepared for a massive Soviet offensive in 1941, code-named Operation Groza, intended to launch on 6 July 1941. Had Hitler delayed his invasion until late July, Stalin likely would have initiated this operation. The Red Army had amassed unmatched resources and offensive capabilities near

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its western borders, but the German invasion caught them off-guard. Instead of being the initiators, Soviet forces scrambled to react defensively. Stalin envisioned a rapid assault on German territories, yet it was Hitler's preemptive strike that altered the course of history, forcing the Soviet Union into a defensive stance and setting the stage for a prolonged struggle on the Eastern Front. Though this offensive never materialized as planned, Soviet ambitions for broader influence and control would later manifest after the war, culminating in the 1945 advance into Eastern Europe and the eventual establishment of Soviet-aligned states.

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