Director of
Central
Intelligence

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The Readiness of Soviet Naval Forces

Interagency Intelligence Memorandum

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

Top Secret

NIIM 80-10010JX
June 1980

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THE READINESS OF SOVIET NAVAL FORCES

PREFACE

This Interagency Intelligence Memorandum was commissioned by the Director of Central Intelligence in response to a request by the Secretary of Defense for an in-depth analysis of the readiness of the Soviet Navy. In some respects, the memorandum breaks new analytical ground in assessing a number of subjective issues, such as the quality of personnel and the effectiveness of training, which do not lend themselves readily to analysis by traditional methods. There is no specific information cutoff date in this memorandum; information through the end of 1979 has been used in most cases.

The memorandum was produced under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces. It was drafted by [redacted] National Foreign Assessment Center, CIA, with contributions by the Office of Naval Intelligence, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency. The memorandum was prepared under the chairmanship of [redacted] Assistant National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces. It was coordinated with the intelligence components of the Departments of State and Defense and within the National Foreign Assessment Center, CIA.

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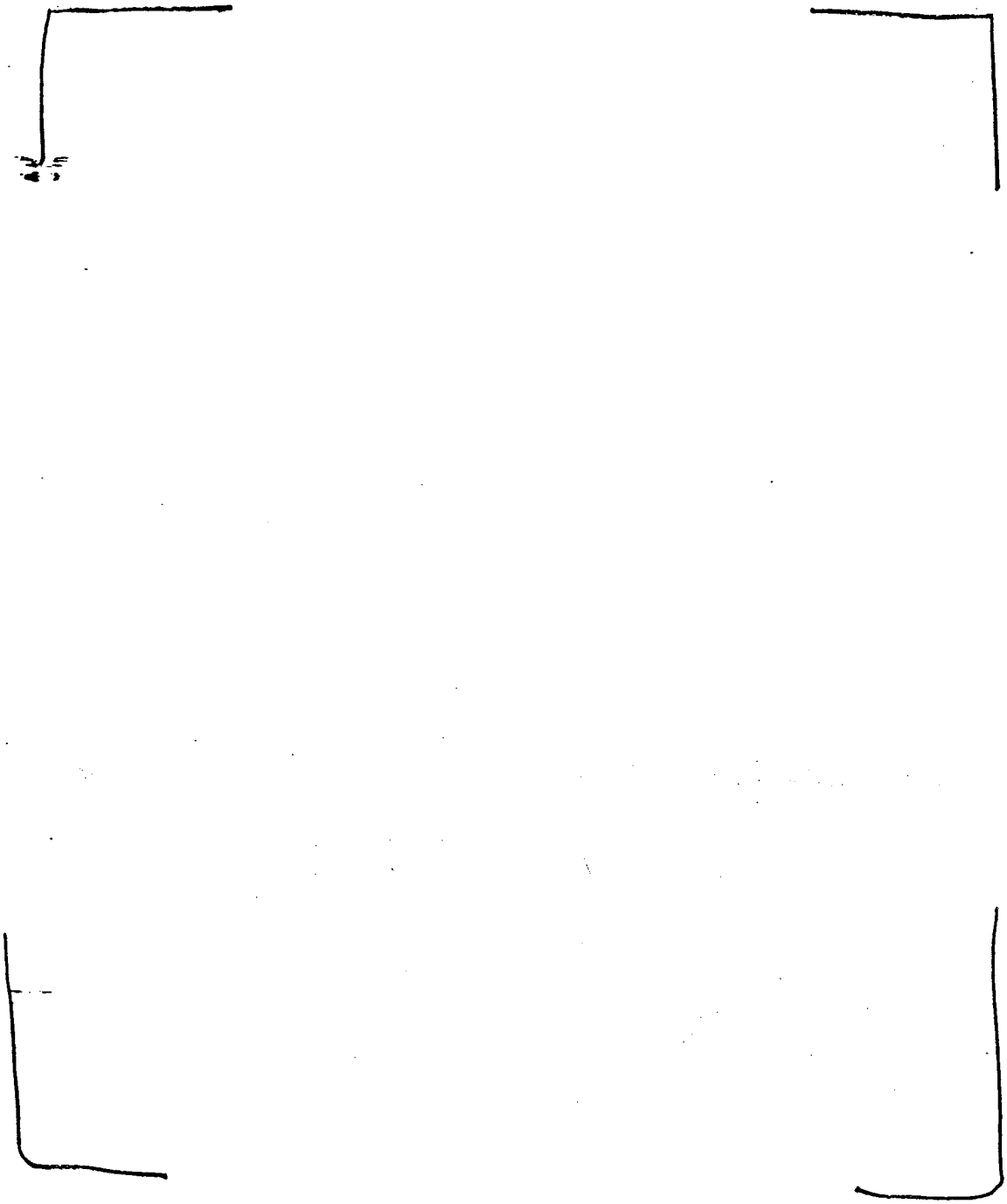

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the past 20 years, the Soviet Navy has acquired an impressive inventory of modern materiel as it has evolved from a coastal defense force into a navy with global missions. Modern surface ships, submarines, and aircraft have significantly increased its capabilities over this period. Nevertheless, we have found personnel and materiel deficiencies that impair its readiness to fight a major war with NATO.[1]

The readiness policies of the Soviet Navy have a substantial impact on its ability to fight a major war, and for NATO's warning of war:

- The Soviet Navy is operationally postured to fight a short, intense war, and its potential for "first salvo" operations in waters near the Soviet Union has been maximized at the expense of its capabilities for sustained operations.
- The Soviet Navy, consistent with the readiness policies of the General Staff, anticipates a "period of tension" before a major conflict in which it would raise the readiness of its forces. Without such warning, the Soviet Navy would be ill prepared to fight a major war. Extensive and extraordinary predeployment and other preparations of Soviet naval units would probably provide NATO with a wide range of indications that the USSR was preparing for war.
- Geography will continue to be a major factor in Soviet naval operations. Forces at sea in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Mediterranean risk isolation, and those in some home fleets risk being bottled up, causing the Soviets to emphasize predeployment and early alert.

Readiness

This assessment presents four perspectives on Soviet naval readiness:

- An analysis of the determinants of readiness.
- An examination of the readiness of principal ship types.

[1] *The directors of the intelligence agencies of the Department of Defense believe that the overall thrust of this memorandum is too negative. Their views are detailed at the end of the Executive Summary, on page xxv.*

— A discussion of the readiness of the forces to accomplish the major missions of the Navy in wartime.

— The outlook for naval readiness through the 1980s.

We have treated *readiness* as a function of the *availability* of ships and naval aircraft to conduct combat operations under varying stages of alert and of what the Soviets term *combat effectiveness*—the aggregate of crew proficiency, adequacy of materiel, and quality of support (including maintenance, other aspects of sustainability, and command, control, communications, and intelligence).

Availability

The Soviet Navy's approach to readiness, consistent with that of other Soviet armed forces, stresses conservation of resources to generate maximum force for the initial phase of operations in a general war. Normally, about 10 percent of major surface combatants and submarines are immediately available[redacted]

[redacted] summarizes our estimate[2] of availability, showing the number of submarines and surface combatants that could be prepared for operations within specified periods after receiving an alert notice. We believe that this sample is representative of the normal peacetime availability of Soviet naval units.

[redacted]

Combat Effectiveness

We can assess with confidence the performance potential of Soviet naval ships or aircraft on the basis of what we know of their design. But

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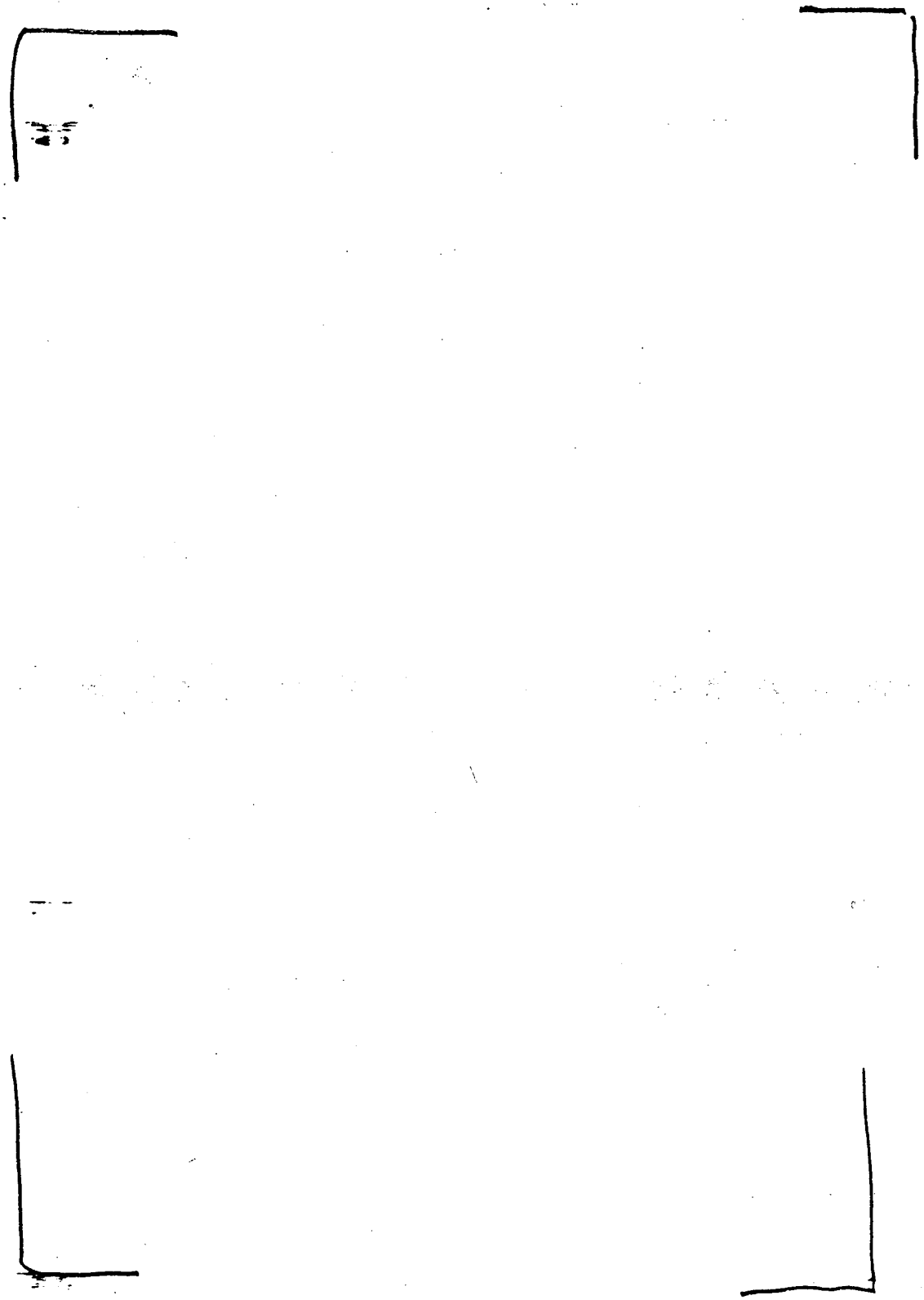

whether the potential of that naval materiel would actually be realized in wartime depends upon:

— Personnel proficiency.

— Reliability and maintainability of the equipment.

— Sustainability.

— Command, control, communications, and intelligence.

Our judgments concerning these must necessarily be less sure, depending as they do on more diffuse and ambiguous evidence. To assess available evidence on the subject, we pursued an analytical examination of the above determinants. We also conducted a Delphi survey [3] of selected Intelligence Community analysts in order to gain a different perspective.

In the survey we systematically polled analytical opinion on how effective Soviet naval units would be in executing specific wartime missions, given 25 days' alert of impending combat. There was consensus that the Soviet naval units available for use in the early stages of a war could develop about 75 percent of their potential, performance being adversely affected chiefly by lack of training and operational experience, other personnel shortcomings, and equipment deficiencies. Whatever the merits of the Delphi survey, we placed greater weight on our more rigorous analytical assessment which presents a detailed inquiry into the determinants of readiness summarized below.

Personnel Readiness. Serious personnel problems have attracted the attention of both the naval and the national leadership. The Navy has a large professional officer corps and a small cadre (about 8 percent of personnel) of warrant officers and extended-duty servicemen (volunteers who reenlist beyond the required three-year term), but depends on conscription for about 75 percent of its manpower. The conscript reenlistment rate is low—probably less than 5 percent and perhaps as low as 1 or 2 percent—and the continuous influx of inexperienced personnel places a heavy burden on the Navy's training programs. Because so few conscripts reenlist, there is always a shortage of experienced and skilled enlisted personnel for lower level supervisory and technical positions. Soviet naval conscripts aboard ship serve three years, as opposed to two years for those serving ashore.

We have observed marked command concern about drunkenness, poor discipline, and other evidence of low morale, particularly at the

[3] *For agency reservations on the nature and use of the Delphi survey, see footnotes 3 and 4 of chapter II and 1, 2, and 3 of annex B.*

many Soviet naval bases located in remote and inhospitable areas. Many of these problems would disappear in wartime, but they probably would impact negatively on Soviet naval wartime performance, principally because of the loss of peacetime training opportunities. Some in the Intelligence Community have a different perspective, however. They[4] believe that the Navy has achieved its peacetime training goals, and that Soviet naval performance in peacetime demonstrates no appreciable impairments traceable to poor morale.

Although the Soviet Navy is accorded high priority for quality recruits, its increasingly complex equipment puts ever higher demands on its training system. Training for all enlisted ranks is overspecialized and often unrealistic. Individuals are typically trained to perform one task in one set of circumstances; there is little opportunity for an individual to perform any specialty but his own; and there is little incentive to exceed "book" capabilities or applications. Soviet training evidently often fails to inculcate among officers and seamen alike independent thinking and tactical flexibility. Although naval leaders stress the requirement that officers develop initiative, flexibility, and resourcefulness, the development of these qualities is often impeded in practice. For example, exercises at sea are usually stereotyped crew drills in which command initiative is neither encouraged nor necessary.

Major exercises at fleet or combined-arms levels, on the other hand, recently have tended toward more complex and realistic scenarios.[5] These exercises remain, however, relatively infrequent, and most crews have not been so trained.

There is disagreement in the Community over the impact of these personnel shortcomings. Some[6] believe that personnel shortcomings will exacerbate equipment deficiencies, reducing the Navy's ability to respond to the unexpected and to perform even its initial wartime tasks. The holders of this view further believe that the Soviet Navy is not

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[4] *The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; the Director, National Security Agency; the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force.*

[5] *The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, and the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, note that a trend toward increased complexity and realism is also discernible, below the fleet level, in exercises by forward-deployed Soviet naval forces. A prime example of this is the growth in the flexibility and diversity of the anticarrier exercises which are frequently conducted in the Mediterranean and have been observed recently in the Indian Ocean. These exercises involve multiple platforms [redacted] in coordinated tactics directed at major US units. On-the-scene US observers, moreover, have judged them to be sophisticated and professionally executed.*

[6] *The holders of this view are the Director of Central Intelligence and the Director, National Foreign Assessment Center, CIA.*

manned or trained to fight a lengthy war, and that personnel shortcomings seriously degrade Soviet capabilities for prolonged combat. Others [7] believe that Soviet naval personnel are adequately trained to perform the Navy's wartime tasks, regardless of the length of the war, and, moreover, that commanding officers and crews have demonstrated the ability to react quickly and effectively to unexpected, rapidly unfolding situations.

Soviet officers and sailors, when deployed away from home waters, do not conduct high levels of extensive underway training regarded as essential for readiness in most NATO navies. However, there is disagreement over how much underway training is conducted in home waters, where the vast majority of naval units are at any one time. One view [8] is that the Soviets do not conduct underway training in home waters sufficient to assure wartime readiness. The holders of this view believe that the Soviet limitations on peacetime equipment use, when considered on a unit-by-unit basis, apply to naval units in home waters. Others [9] believe that the evidence supports a judgment that in-area underway training is extensive and adequate to provide both the readiness and the level of "combat effectiveness" the Soviets require.

Materiel Reliability and Maintainability. Materiel reliability and maintainability reflect a variety of factors, including design, materials and method of manufacture, and the efficiency of personnel who maintain and operate the equipment. Soviet equipment casualties—breakdown of materiel in service—are due in many instances not only to bad design or manufacture, but also to inadequate, incorrect, or nonexistent performance of required maintenance. Although standards as high as those applied in the most efficient Western naval units are maintained aboard some Soviet ships, substandard units appear to be more common and probably remain in worse condition longer.[10] Moreover, we know that Soviet naval officers often tolerate—even disguise—important shortcomings in materiel readiness. On the one hand, Soviet naval weapon system design stresses simplicity, speed, redundancy, and the achievement of maximum firepower. On the other hand, we know that throughout the Soviet Navy there are equipment deficiencies that in some cases critically handicap successful mission performance.

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[7] *The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy.*

[8] *The holders of this view are the Director of Central Intelligence and the Director, National Foreign Assessment Center, CIA.*

[9] *The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy.*

[10] *The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy, are aware of no analysis which defines "substandard" ships in the Soviet Navy or compares any such ships with those of Western units in terms either of their condition or the length of time it persists.*

The Soviet Navy's policies on maintenance and training do little to redress difficulties occasioned by human interface with materiel: since the Soviets construe readiness of materiel to mean "new" or "freshly overhauled," they limit operations at sea. Ships of the Soviet fleet normally spend much of their time in port, many undergoing major maintenance.

Most major maintenance is shore based, and complicated underway repair aboard ship generally is not done in the Soviet Navy. Hence, this maintenance system would function best at the outset of a major war, but would probably impose significant operational limitations in the event of protracted conflict.

Sustainability. The Soviet Navy is not well designed to support its fleets in an extended conflict. Its ability to sustain combat operations distant from its shore bases is limited, even for relatively close maritime theaters such as the Norwegian Sea. Most participants in this study believe that the Soviet Navy's sustainability probably is adequate for most of the tasks for which the Navy is designed. One participant [11] believes, however, that sustainability could be a serious problem for Soviet naval forces even during a short war. All agree that limitations in sustainability would, however, be a key vulnerability in an extended conflict.

While Soviet doctrine holds that protracted warfare is possible, the Soviets evidently have not regarded a long campaign at sea as likely. They have provided few naval ships for afloat logistic support beyond those required for peacetime operations. For example, there is little capability for underway replenishment of munitions. Most large Soviet surface combatants have fuel capacity for about seven days, and thereafter would be dependent on support from oilers. Soviet long-range submarines can cruise for two months or longer, but would, in combat, probably require munitions resupply much sooner. Should a protracted campaign become necessary, the Soviet Navy would be dependent on use of merchant ships and improvised logistics. The lack of extensive preparations by the Soviet Navy for fighting a protracted war would be a serious, and potentially critical, liability if the war should extend beyond the relatively short period for which the Navy is optimally designed.[12]

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[11] *The holder of this view is the Director, National Foreign Assessment Center, CIA.*

[12] *The following comment is made by the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; and the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps. They note that recent construction programs reflect a trend toward greater sustainability, particularly in regard to greater weapons capacity and redundancy, and increased survivability. These programs include the Kiev-class carriers, Kara-class guided missile cruisers, four new classes of guided missile cruisers—one of them nuclear powered—now under construction, and a projected new class of large-deck, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. The addition of the Berezina and Boris Chilikin AORs (replenishment oilers) and of the first Soviet hospital ship, access to foreign shore facilities, and increased proficiency in underway replenishment techniques also add to the gradual but steady growth in the Soviet Navy's sustainability.*

Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence. Soviet naval doctrine for these functions, as well as the equipment and organizational structures supporting them, appears generally to enhance the readiness of the Navy to carry out its mission. This would be particularly true in the case of[ ]a period of threat (international tension) lasting a few days to a few weeks, leading to a conventional war, followed by a sudden, massive nuclear strike against the NATO navies.[ ]The Soviet Navy's channels of communication from fleet headquarters to operational forces in wartime probably could be kept open. However, the Soviet Navy's stereotyped peacetime exercises and command rigidity would no doubt create wartime command and control problems on a tactical level: commanders are not often exercised in coping with the unexpected. If a war were to begin suddenly, supporting command and control structures would be severely strained and could suffer breakdowns.

One part of the Soviet command structure that could be the key to Soviet performance in a war is the afloat officer-in-tactical-command (OTC), the on-scene commander whose judgment could be critical in any combat operation.

There is disagreement within the Intelligence Community over the degree of freedom of authority allowed the OTC in actual practice by higher headquarters. According to one view,[13] the afloat Soviet OTC has limited authority to begin with, and he tends to lose rather than gain tactical command and control responsibilities as an operation unfolds.[ ]

Others[14] believe that there is a large body of evidence that indicates Soviet Navy OTCs have a great deal more authority and responsibility than indicated above, and that the Soviet command and control system is very flexible. They believe that the position on the OTC's lack of freedom fails to take into account the magnitude of coordination required to execute a naval combat operation and of the fact that certain control functions can be performed only by the on-scene, afloat OTC.

The Forces

Submarine Force. The Soviets consider their large submarine force their prime naval arm. Their nuclear-powered ballistic missile

[13] *The holder of this view is the Director, National Foreign Assessment Center, CIA.*

[14] *The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; and the Director, National Security Agency.*

submarines (SSBNs) are the Navy's contribution to the Soviets' overall strategic strike mission—and they are supported and protected by other submarines. In addition, the submarine force has a role in nearly all other naval tasks—antisubmarine warfare (ASW), anticarrier warfare, protection of amphibious operations and supply lines, interdiction of enemy supply lines, and similar functions. Several limitations impair the readiness of the submarine force:

— Most Soviet submarines are noisy, a distinct disadvantage relative to most of their Western counterparts.

— Long-range submarine-launched cruise missiles need external targeting assistance.

— Submarine-mounted ASW sensors have substantially less range than those of their Western opponents, and the submarines in some areas are vulnerable to detection by the US SOSUS (broad-area sound surveillance system).

— Soviet nuclear submarine propulsion systems have serious design faults, including relatively short reactor core life and high noise levels.

— Geographic constraints force submarines to undertake long transits to or from some wartime stations, or vulnerable transits through narrow passages.

[redacted]

On the other hand:

— The Soviets have the largest submarine force in the world.

— The performance characteristics of some types of units make them formidable threats: for example, the high speed of Soviet submarines, particularly the V and A classes, the apparent deep-diving reach of the A class, and the relatively quiet submerged operations (on battery power) of the F-class, T-class, or J-class diesel units.

— Some submarine weapon systems, such as the SS-N-3 or SS-N-12 antiship missiles, are without peer in terms of range and destructive power.

[redacted]

— Soviet nuclear submarine propulsion systems attain a high shaft horsepower, allowing higher speed with less volume.

[redacted]

Surface Force. The surface fleet, which includes some 270 active major combatants (half over 3,000 tons) and about a hundred amphibious ships, is the most visible arm of the Soviet Navy, and carries the peacetime burden of Soviet "show the flag" operations throughout the world. The surface navy contributes directly to all wartime naval tasks except strategic strike. Certain weaknesses, however, impair the readiness of the surface fleet:

- The Soviets' design philosophy, operational practices, and maintenance system severely limit ability to perform maintenance at sea, impairing the availability of in-port units as well as the serviceability of deployed units.
- Seaborne tactical air support is limited.
- The fleet cannot be defended against a substantial hostile air threat when operating beyond Soviet coastal waters.
- ASW sensors are poor, rendering surface units vulnerable to submarine attack and limiting offensive ASW and the ability to protect Soviet SSBNs.
- Most surface force exercises are "canned" and simplistic.
- Design and training inadequacies render surface warships especially vulnerable to battle damage.
- Few units carry reloads of cruise missiles, their most effective weapon systems, and the fleet has inadequately provided and trained for at-sea ordnance replenishment.

On the other hand, Soviet surface units demonstrate the following strengths:

- They have good speed, good sea-keeping abilities, and reliable engineering systems.
- They are equipped with a number of potentially effective weapon systems, such as antiship cruise missiles and torpedoes, and they often carry redundant weapon systems.
- The units are well designed for electronic warfare and for operating in a CBR (chemical, biological, and radiological) warfare environment.

Naval Aviation. The naval air force, with some 1,100 combat aircraft, contributes to all Soviet naval tasks. Naval air units, in the event of war, are to provide reconnaissance, to conduct antiship and antisubmarine strikes, to mine ports and approaches, and to strike land-based facilities (such as radar stations), in support of a variety of

military objectives. The primary readiness problems of Soviet naval aviation are:

- — Maintenance practices, which reduce capability to sustain high aircraft availability for more than a few days of combat operations.
- — Limited flight experience among Soviet naval pilots, who fly annually only about half the training hours of their Western counterparts.
- — The age of the Badger—the backbone of the naval bomber force—which is no longer competitive with modern air defenses.
- — ASW sensors inadequate to cope with the quietness of Western submarines.

To the credit of the naval air force:

- — Naval aircraft maintain high availability.
- — Some naval aircraft, primarily the Bear D and Bear F, have long ranges, enabling them to cover sea transit lanes far from the Soviet landmass, and to approach targets indirectly.
- — Modern antiship cruise missiles (ASCMs) effectively extend the useful life of the Badger bombers.
- — The Backfire, a modern supersonic strike aircraft with both air-to-surface missile (ASM) and bombing and minelaying capabilities, provides longer range and better performance, including a supersonic dash capability, than other naval strike aircraft.
- — Design of new aircraft is excellent, emphasizing simplicity and ruggedness.
- — With the advent of the Kiev-class carrier, Soviet Naval Aviation has become seaborne with fixed-wing aircraft.

The Soviet Navy in Wartime

The Soviet Navy, as we have pointed out, has wartime missions of strategic strike and deterrence, sea control, sea denial, and power projection. We have examined these missions as they affect operations of the Northern, Baltic, Black Sea, and Pacific Fleets, and that of the Mediterranean Squadron, as well as the Navy's usual peacetime posture in the Indian Ocean, off West Africa, and in the Caribbean. We find that the most important implications for readiness are as follows.

Strategic Strike. The Soviet Navy's 84 ballistic missile submarines are its most effective arm, constituting a major part of the Soviet strategic arsenal. Sixty-two are modern boats carrying 12 to 16 missiles. The Soviet SSBN force—considering both crews and weapons—probably can achieve the [ ] available force level the Soviets desire with two weeks' notice. The overall system reliability—the submarines and missiles combined—we estimate to be 65 to 75 percent.

About 20 percent of the modern SSBN force is kept at sea on continuous patrols or en route to or from such patrols. The 32 D-class units are capable of striking US targets from home port areas, however, and an increasing number of submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) are entering the force, permitting the Soviets greater intercontinental strategic firepower without the long transits required by Y-class units. Soviet SSBNs, like other Soviet submarines, are relatively noisy and are vulnerable to ASW forces, particularly in a long conventional phase of a war.

Antisubmarine Warfare. Soviet ASW operations for sea control or sea denial are severely hampered by lack of sensors capable of detecting most Western submarines. Detection by any Soviet naval unit of a foreign submarine in the open ocean is unlikely because of the USSR's lack of a long-range detection system such as the United States' SOSUS, and because of the technical limitations of other Soviet sensors and associated equipment. In wartime, the most likely cause for Soviet detection of a Western submarine would be either chance encounter, or an attack or other operational action by the target submarine that revealed its presence. Once the presence of an enemy submarine were revealed, the Soviets would then attempt to conduct more refined localization, the next phase of ASW.

There is disagreement over Soviet proficiency in this aspect of ASW. One view [16] is that the limited range and sensitivity of Soviet sensors, plus the lack of skill demonstrated [ ] in past chance encounters, indicate that the Soviets have a low level of ability to localize a target well enough to achieve a reasonably accurate targeting solution. Others [17] believe that, once the Soviets detect a target submarine, they have demonstrated a credible capability to localize the targets sufficiently to launch their ASW weapons. All agree that the localization phase of ASW is a complicated process the success of which

[16] *The holder of this view is the Director, National Foreign Assessment Center, CIA.*

[17] *The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; and the Director, National Security Agency.*

is dependent on a number of environmental factors, on the composition of the prosecuting force, and on the time required for that force to arrive on the scene of a detection. If a targeting solution were achieved, however, Soviet ASW weapons would be effective.

Anticarrier Warfare. Because of the enormous firepower of large modern attack carriers, their destruction is a principal task of Soviet naval forces assigned sea control or sea denial missions. This is reflected in the continued emphasis on anticarrier warfare (ACW) in the Soviets' naval exercises, tactics, and doctrine, and the improvement in some facets of their ACW capabilities. The Soviet Navy has developed a substantial capability to counter carriers. The primary difficulty facing Soviet forces is getting within weapons range of the carrier. The principal forces the Soviets intend to use against carriers are missile-carrying Soviet Naval Aviation strike aircraft and cruise-missile-launching surface units or submarines.

Given the number of available missile-configured Badgers and Backfires, and the newer, long-range ASMs, the SNA strike force poses a serious threat to surface forces operating within its combat radius. Although the Soviets have no rigid set of tactics for antiship airstrikes, their writings and exercises indicate that, whenever possible, they would mount large-scale attacks against such important targets as aircraft carriers. The airstrikes would be coordinated, whenever possible, with attacks by submarines and surface ships.

However, from what we have observed of their exercises, identifying the locations of carrier targets remains a problem. We believe that aircrewmen generally are unable to discriminate among individual ships in a target group at the time of missile launch. Only through visual acquisition can a reconnaissance or strike aircraft positively identify each ship in a target group. The effectiveness of antiship strikes by naval aircraft, and other platforms as well, would depend critically on how well the Soviets could solve such reconnaissance and targeting problems, as well as on the defensive capabilities and actions of the opposing force.

Soviet cruise missile submarines can be effective against carriers, but generally would require multiple hits to put a carrier out of action, unless nuclear weapons were used. These units would be vulnerable to NATO ASW forces, although some carry missiles with ranges of 200 nautical miles, or more, making ASW defense difficult.

The newer Soviet antiship cruise missiles, because of their range, flight profile, warhead size, and sometimes their speed, probably will be

effective, provided the Soviets can solve the problem of targeting carriers. The shorter range submarine-carried systems have the additional advantage of being launched from submerged submarines. These ACSM systems require externally provided targeting information, particularly in situations where over-the-horizon capabilities at long range are involved[ ]

Amphibious Operations. The Soviets maintain small and geographically dispersed amphibious assault and lift forces. In a NATO–Warsaw Pact war, major landings would likely be spearheaded by these forces, with army units making up the bulk of the followup forces. We do not foresee a change occurring in the basic wartime or peacetime tasks of the USSR's amphibious warfare forces—assaults on the periphery of the land theaters. However, these forces could be effectively employed in areas where modern defenses do not exist or where opposing forces could not be brought to bear in time to make a difference.

Outlook

The outlook for Soviet naval readiness through the 1980s is mixed. On the one hand, the Soviets continue to introduce new platforms and weapon systems that will enhance their Navy's war-fighting capabilities. On the other hand, the new systems will require more professionalism and flexibility by naval personnel if this equipment is to be used and maintained at its full potential. The factors impairing naval readiness in the USSR are deeply rooted, and the Soviet Navy's state of readiness is a matter of serious concern to the Soviet leaders. Soviet literature demonstrates a concern over the often serious shortcomings in training and maintenance, and new programs aimed at improving personnel and equipment performance are under way.

The Soviets probably believe that these programs will contribute to increasing the readiness of their naval forces. Nevertheless, much of what we observe of their operations and training suggests that the steps they have taken thus far have not had a significant impact on many longstanding deficiencies.

Some of us [18] believe that the overall readiness of the Soviet Navy to carry out its primary missions is unlikely to improve significantly. Although the introduction of new equipment promises gradual improvements in some areas, the potential value of such equipment is

[18] *The holders of this view are the Director of Central Intelligence; the Director, National Foreign Assessment Center, CIA; and the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.*

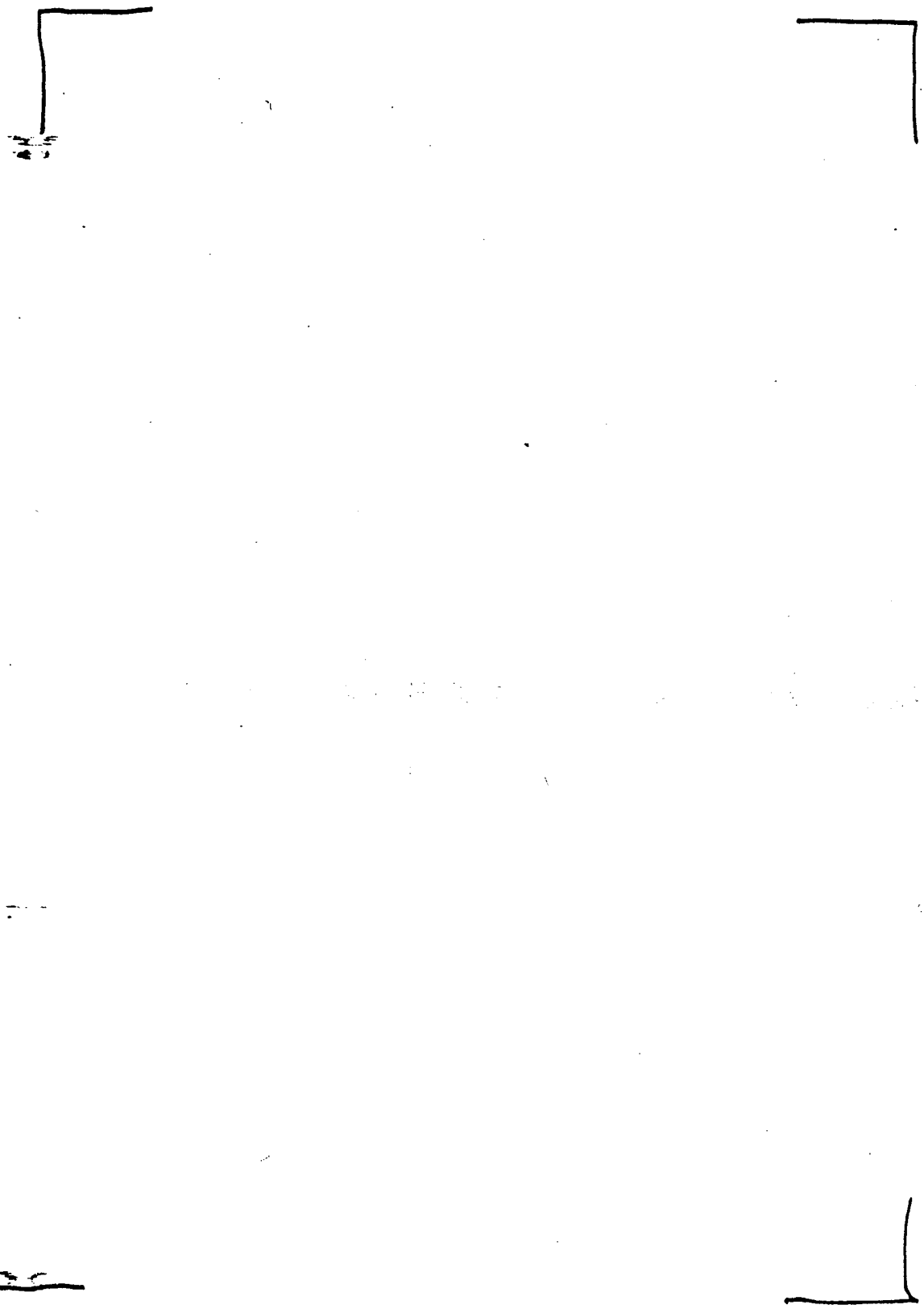
likely to be largely nullified by increased complexities in operation, maintenance, and training, compounded by personnel deficiencies, as well as by more demanding missions. They note that, although more advanced materiel has been steadily introduced over the past 20 years, the Soviet Navy's readiness—its availability and basic level of effectiveness—has not improved dramatically. They further note that, although more realistic training has frequently been forecast, it has not appeared to any great extent. There is, therefore, no good reason to believe that the Soviets will radically change their past practices in the near future.

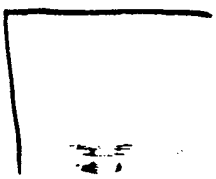
Others [19] disagree with this conclusion. They believe not only that the Soviet Navy's missions and tasks will continue to grow but that its readiness for, and effectiveness in, an expanded range of missions will also increase gradually and steadily—just as has been evident over the past 20 or so years. In that time the quality of the Navy's materiel, maintenance, and personnel has improved, its command and control have been more responsive and survivable, its operational procedures have been tightened, and its experience in open-ocean operations has risen manyfold, so that today the Soviet Navy more effectively performs a much wider range of tasks than it did in the 1950s. Moreover, they believe there is little prospect of a halt in the trend toward further improvement of the Soviet Navy's overall readiness in the 1980s. On the contrary, evidence of (a) further expansion of maintenance and support facilities and capabilities, (b) advances in surveillance systems and greater redundancy and hardening of command, control, and communications systems, and (c) increasingly realistic training and high levels of out-of-area operations all portend a continuing improvement in the professionalism, maturity, and proficiency of the Soviet Navy.

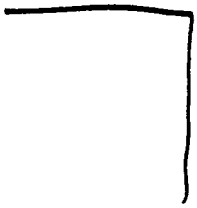
For the foreseeable future, there is little if any evidence to suggest that Soviet naval readiness practices will undergo appreciable change. Therefore, any improvement in naval readiness is likely to occur principally as the result of the introduction of new classes of ships and aircraft and accompanying improvements in sensor and weapons technology and capability. The ability of the Soviets to absorb this new equipment and maintain it at a high level of efficiency is problematical, but on balance we believe they should be able to achieve about the same degree of availability with the new generations of warships as they have with those now in service.

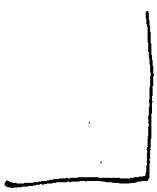
[redacted]

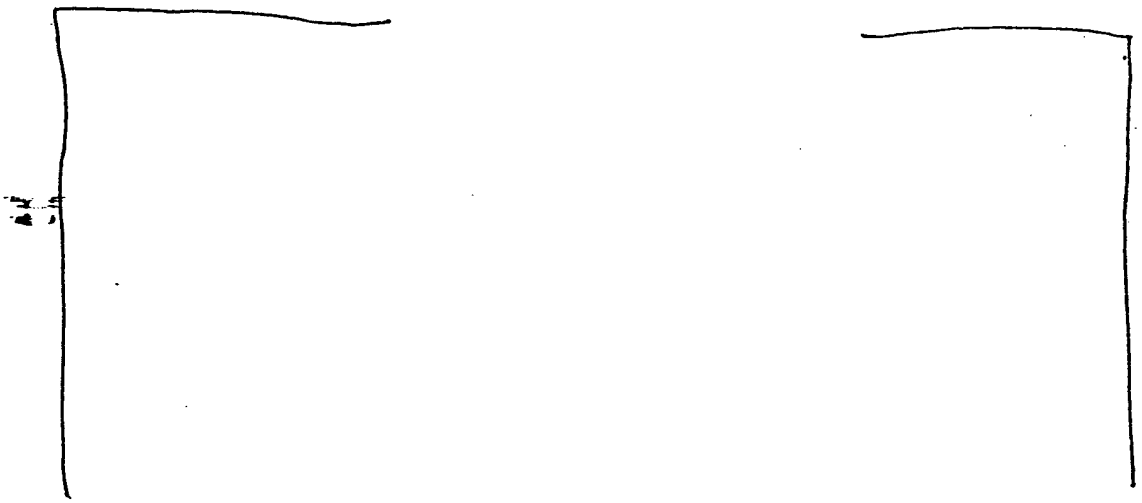
[19] *The holders of this view are the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force; the Director, National Security Agency; and the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army.*

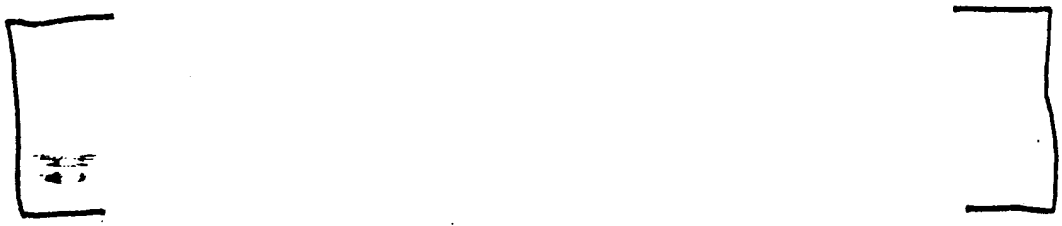












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The following are amplifications of footnote 1 at the beginning of this Executive Summary.

The following is the view of the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; the Director, National Security Agency; the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force. They believe that this memorandum, taken as a whole, overstates the negative impact of readiness factors on the Soviet Navy's ability to fight a war at sea. They believe that the Soviet Navy maintains an adequate degree of readiness to perform its wartime tasks, especially in the type of short, intense war fought primarily in Eurasian waters, which is depicted in the majority of Soviet writings and reflected in most naval exercises.

Specifically, the holders of this view believe that the personnel problems identified in this memorandum, which are not unique to the Soviet Navy, are not so pervasive that they significantly impair its combat capabilities. They further believe that the impact of other readiness related problems, such as sustainability and material reliability and maintainability, is scenario dependent, and, in general, increases as wartime operations become farther removed from the Soviet base areas and/or more protracted. They agree that the Soviet Navy has significant technical deficiencies in open-ocean ASW search, area air defense, and sea-based tactical air that could degrade its ability to perform some of its missions. The Soviets, however, are aware of these deficiencies and, with the exception of ASW area search, are introducing or planning new platforms and systems that are likely to alleviate current technical shortcomings. They note, moreover, a trend in construction programs that will increase the Soviet Navy's capabilities for sustained operations at greater distances from home bases.

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, in a separate opinion, believes that this IIM underestimates the ability of the Soviet Navy to fight a war at sea. He holds that the Soviets clearly anticipate short, intense naval warfare, principally in Eurasian waters, and believe themselves fully capable of success in naval battle. Given that the Soviet Navy has readiness problems which defense analysts see in other navies of the world, the readiness-related condition of the Soviet Navy is not sufficiently deleterious to seriously inhibit its performance in wartime. The Soviets clearly recognize their technical limitations and are striving for the most part to overcome them. The very modern new Soviet naval combat forces will surely overcome the majority of these limitations and offer even greater capability for Soviet naval combat at ever-increasing distances from the Soviet supply base.