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Soviet Naval Activity Outside Home Waters During 1983

A Research Paper

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SOV 84-10133CX

August 1984

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SOV 84-10133CX
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Soviet Naval Activity Outside Home Waters During 1983 (U)

Key Judgments

Information available as of 15 April 1984 was used in this report.

Statistical analysis indicates that Soviet naval ships spent a record high of over 60,000 ship-days outside home waters in 1983—6 percent more than in 1982. The time spent out of area by general purpose submarines and amphibious warfare ships increased, while that of surface combatants declined. The Soviet presence increased in every region except the Indian Ocean and the waters off West Africa. Overall, however, the average daily out-of-area presence of about 165 ships and submarines—more than half of which were auxiliaries and research ships—represents less than 10 percent of the Soviet Navy

Several changes in deployment patterns and composition occurred:

- In the Indian Ocean, the number of Soviet ship-days continued the steady decline that began in 1981. The Soviets continued their efforts to secure naval privileges in Seychelles, Mauritius, and other littoral states. Other activities included operations by the Novorossiysk vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft carrier.

- In the Pacific, the overall Soviet presence increased almost 18 percent. This was largely due to the continued growth of the Soviet naval force in the South China Sea to a size rivaling that of the Indian Ocean Squadron.

- In the Mediterranean, the Soviet presence increased somewhat, with a moderate reinforcement of the squadron during the Lebanon crisis. The Soviets continued to develop naval ties with Libya and to seek contracts for the repair of naval auxiliaries in Greek shipyards.

- In the Atlantic, the Soviet presence increased 10 percent. Intelligence ship and submarine operations were conducted close to the Atlantic coast, as well as the Pacific coast, of the United States.

- In the Caribbean, no Soviet task group arrived in Cuba until 1984. It conducted extensive ASW training activities with Cuban naval forces.

- Off West Africa, the number of Soviet ship-days remained stable. There were a number of show-the-flag visits.

- Soviet Naval Aviation (SNA) continued to make up a substantial part of the overall Soviet presence in 1983. Although total aircraft deployment days changed little, there were significant changes in the types of aircraft deployed in several regions. The initial deployment of nine Badger aircraft to Vietnam may foreshadow expansion to a regiment—30 to 35 aircraft.

We believe that the pattern and scope of Soviet naval deployments observed in 1983 will continue in 1984. Distant deployments provide Moscow high visibility abroad but involve the commitment of only a small portion of total Soviet naval resources. Moscow is not likely to undercut the readiness of the Navy to perform high-priority wartime tasks in waters close to home by increasing the number of units operating in foreign waters. Newer and more capable platforms will, however, be deployed. We expect the Soviets will continue to respond to fluctuations in the size of the Western naval presence in distant regions and to pursue the operational and political benefits of new or expanded naval privileges in Third World nations.

Contents

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Scope Note

This paper is one in a series that annually summarizes Soviet naval and naval air activity outside home waters. It includes trends in the level of Soviet naval presence in distant waters, and it seeks to highlight the more important or unusual activities of the Soviet Navy in those waters. Changes in Soviet access to or use of foreign naval and naval air facilities are also noted. This paper touches on Soviet naval diplomacy in the Third World as it relates to Soviet naval operations, but it does not include analysis of Moscow's foreign policy in the Third World. It also does not cover naval activities in waters contiguous to the USSR or the wartime missions or capabilities of the Soviet Navy

Soviet Naval Activity Outside Home Waters During 1983 (U)

Introduction

This paper examines the Soviet naval presence in seven regions during 1983.[1] The level of naval deployments is compared with that of recent years, and important naval activities in each region are highlighted. The paper also looks ahead to likely developments in 1984 and beyond

The US Naval Operational Intelligence Center (NOIC) supplied the data on Soviet naval activity outside home waters. We use the yearly tabulation of ship-days—the presence of one ship away from home waters for one day—to compare deployment levels with those of preceding years and to identify changes in deployment patterns. Our analysis of Soviet naval activities and use of facilities is derived from a combination of [redacted] reporting [redacted] as are descriptions of improvements made at major facilities. We also use NOIC's monthly summary of port calls to help assess Soviet interest in individual countries or regions. Judgments about Soviet use of naval forces for political purposes are all-source evaluations

General Pattern of Soviet Naval Deployments

The Soviet naval presence outside home waters increased 6 percent in 1983, to a record high of almost 60,000 ship-days—nearly 5 percent above the previous peak set in 1980. Although this number reflects an overall rise in out-of-area deployments, there have been increases a id decreases in the number, as well as changes in the type, of ships deployed to individual regions (see figures 1 and 2). In 1983, Soviet ship-days in the Pacific increased approximately 18 percent—due mainly to the continuing growth of the naval presence in the South China Sea and the continuing decline in ship-days in the Indian Ocean since 1980—a decrease of about 14 percent last year. Soviet deployment days in the Caribbean increased 9 percent. West African ship-days, which increased about 80 percent in 1982, declined slightly in 1983. The commitment of ships to the Atlantic increased about 10 percent last year, and ship-days in the Mediterranean Sea rose nearly as much

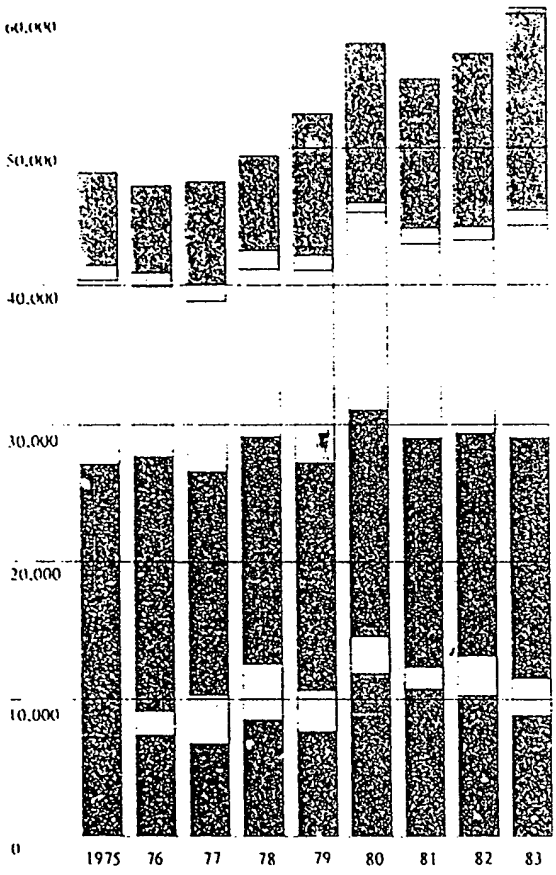
Overall changes in deployment patterns included increases in the out-of-area ship-days for general purpose and ballistic missile submarines, auxiliaries, mine warfare ships, and a rise of over 70 percent for amphibious warfare ships. Only the deployment days for surface combatants and research and space event support ships (SESSs) declined

From Moscow's perspective, the acquisition of naval privileges associated with distant deployments serves both operational and political purposes. Operationally, the Soviets' use of foreign facilities contributes to their ability to sustain worldwide deployments in keeping with the position of a major international power. It provides an opportunity for peacetime reconnaissance of Western naval forces that could extend into the early stages of hostilities. Most foreign facilities to which the Soviets have access, however, are not currently suitable for extensive wartime logistic support or for pre-positioning supplies. They serve largely as secure, sheltered anchorages, and most would be highly vulnerable in wartime. Politically, the Soviets appear to believe that naval forces abroad can reinforce Moscow's response to regional crises, underscore its commitment to specific policies or local regimes, and support its efforts to strengthen ties to individual governments. Such benefits are intangible, however, and historically transien

[redacted]

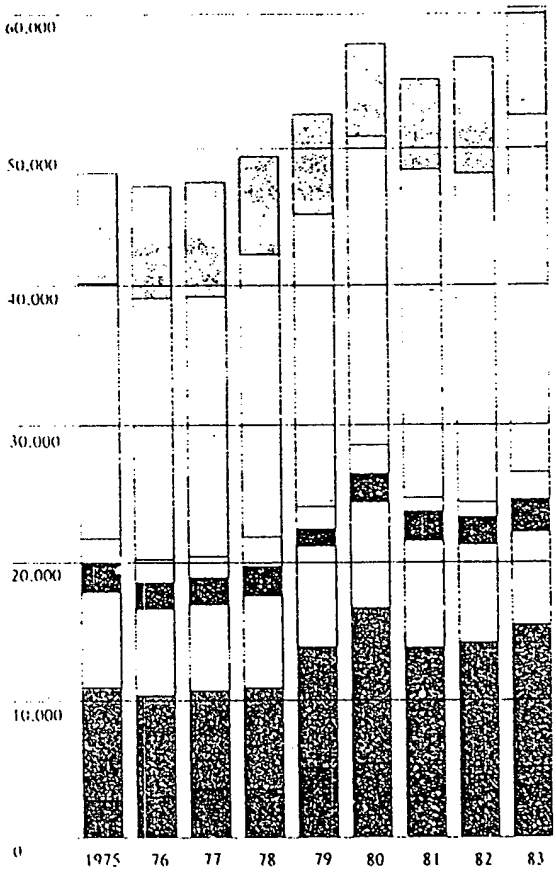
[1] Regional boundaries, as shown in figure 11, are determined by the Naval Operational Intelligence Center

Figure 1
Soviet Ship-Days in Distant Waters, by Region, 1975-83



[a] West African ship-days for 1975 are included in Atlantic Ocean data for those years.

Figure 2
Soviet Ship-Days in Distant Waters, by Type, 1975-83



Measuring Soviet Naval Presence

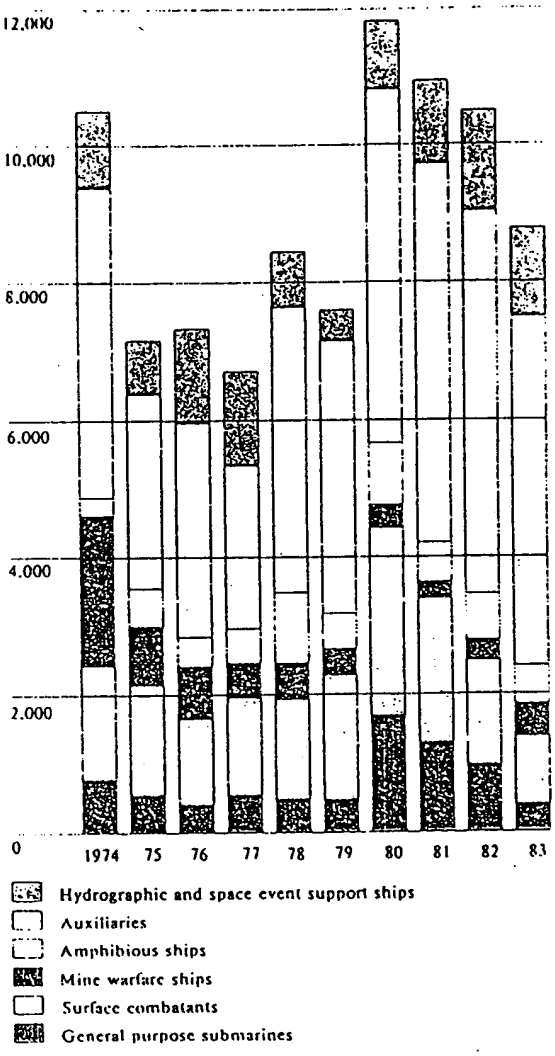
Using ship-days as a measure of Soviet naval presence outside home waters can be misleading without taking several considerations into account:

- Yearly statistics for overseas deployments do not highlight the large percentage of noncombat ships that the Soviets maintain abroad. Many naval auxiliaries such as yardcraft, repair ships, and submarine tenders are deployed out of area, and they are included in the ship-day count. In 1983 nearly 43 percent of Soviet ship-days represented such auxiliary ships and craft. (Another 13 percent accounts for research vessels and SESSs.)
- Our figures do not differentiate between days at sea and those spent in ports or sheltered anchorages.
- Ships in transit for sea trials or interfleet transfer are counted, although they may perform only limited operational functions or none at all.
- The Soviet Navy must commit ships to maintenance before, after, and sometimes during overseas deployments to maintain out-of-area force levels. Thus the ship-day count does not reflect the total time involved in supporting distant naval operations.
- Soviet out-of-area deployments attract significant attention; yet, they tie up well under 10 percent of the Soviet Navy on a daily average. In 1983 the Navy deployed a daily average of 18 surface combatants and about 28 general purpose submarines—only about 6 percent of the combatant inventory and approximately 12 percent of the general purpose submarines

Regional Levels

Indian Ocean. Soviet ship-days in the Indian Ocean continued the downward trend that began with the resolution of the Iranian hostage crisis in 1981 and the subsequent reduction in the US naval presence in the region. The Soviet presence dropped by approximately 14 percent in 1983 (see figure 3). During the same year, the Soviet Indian Ocean Squadron consisted of an average of 24 ships—down from about 32 in 1980, 30 in 1981, and 28 in 1982. The Squadron usually included one general purpose submarine, two or three surface combatants, a mine warfare ship, one

Figure 3
Soviet Ship-Days in the Indian Ocean, 1974-83



or two amphibious ships, about 14 auxiliaries, and three or four research ships or SESSs. Changes in the Squadron's composition during 1983 further diminished its operational capability:

- Surface combatant ship-days, which fell 36 percent in 1982, dropped another 17 percent in 1983 continuing the pattern begun in 1981.
- Ship-days for general purpose submarines dropped by 60 percent to a level last seen in 1976—less than a fourth of the 1980 figure. No submarines were present in the Indian Ocean for more than three months from early May to early August.
- Auxiliary ship-days decreased somewhat during 1983, while amphibious ship-days remained fairly stable.
- The only notable increase during 1983 was in mine warfare ship-days, but these ships serve as monitoring platforms and do little to enhance the combat potential of the Squadron.
- As in 1982, a Soviet carrier task group deployed into the Indian Ocean. It made port calls in Mozambique—where the official reception was lukewarm—and Madras, India. One combatant also broke off and visited Seychelles during transit. Forces deployed to the Indian Ocean participated in a worldwide Soviet naval exercise (see Global Exercise)

Soviet hydrographic research ships were busy in the region. A group of three to four research ships operated extensively in the northern Arabian Sea. Other hydrographic ships were present in the Mozambique Channel, continuing a pattern of research activity begun in 1981. We do not expect an expanded Soviet naval presence in the channel in the near term, but we recognize the potential military applicability of the program. Similar research was carried out off Vietnam, West Africa, and Cuba before regular Soviet deployments to those areas. The research in the Arabian Sea may serve both military and economic purposes

The Soviets made no headway in gaining further naval access to Mauritius last year. Only a naval-subordinated research ship made a port call at Port Louis in 1983. Several civilian research vessels did call, however, during 1983 and the first quarter of 1984. In late March 1984, a [redacted] clearance request was submitted to the Mauritian Government for the projected May 1984 visit of two destroyers and an auxiliary oil tanker

In 1983 the Soviets made a record number of port calls to Seychelles. These included calls requested by President Rene—as he has done in the past—to support his regime during his absence from the country or during times of perceived danger to his government. One call, for example, was made by a Soviet Ropucha-class amphibious landing ship that stayed in harbor for several days, during which time small, tightly controlled groups of ship's crew and naval infantrymen took shore leave. [redacted] however, the Soviets ashore—as in other locales—do not command the respect of the local populace because of their arrogant attitude and lack of spending money. This Ropucha is referred to by some Seychellois as "Rene's babysitter," because it has appeared on several occasions during his absence from the country. Other calls were made by combatants and both naval and civilian research ships

The Soviets reportedly made additional efforts to increase their access to Seychelles by attempting to gain limited access to dilapidated fuel storage facilities on Sainte Anne Island. They have failed, however, to obtain access to any naval support facilities, in spite of military aid and their longstanding offer of protection for Rene

Ship visits by US, British, and French ships also occurred in late 1983 and early 1984. The US Navy reported that its port call was a success, and US naval personnel were welcomed by the Seychellois

The Soviets continued to support the Indian Ocean Squadron with auxiliary ships and yardcraft stationed at Ethiopia's Dehalak' Deset (Dahlak Island) and at Aden, South Yemen. Despite a number of reports that

the Soviets were pushing for increased naval access in both nations, little change was noted in 1983.

Sri Lanka continued to contract for the repair of a few Soviet auxiliary ships during 1983. Singapore's shipyards remained closed to Soviet naval vessels, as they have since the invasion of Afghanistan. Auxiliaries continued, however, to make port calls to Singapore, often for replenishment, during transits between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

the Soviets renewed their periodic requests for naval ship visits to Madagascar in 1983 and proposed an enhanced naval assistance program that would include patrol boats, training assistance, and a joint exercise. Thus far, President Ratsiraka has apparently resisted these Soviet overtures

Pacific Ocean/South China Sea. The Soviet presence in the Pacific Ocean, especially in the South China Sea, increased almost 18 percent over 1982, setting a new record for Pacific ship-days (see figure 4). The presence of every category of ship except research vessels increased—but the level of surface combatant days remained stable

Deployments in the South China Sea accounted for nearly 60 percent of Pacific ship-days (see figure 5), continuing the trend that began in 1982--a growth in Pacific presence in the South China Sea and the contraction of the Indian Ocean Squadron.[1]

An average of more than 40 ships and submarines were deployed out of area in the Pacific on a typical day during 1983. Of that number, about four general purpose submarines, two or three surface combatants,

[1] Because of the greatly expanded Soviet naval presence in the South China Sea since 1981, US Navy ship-days data for 1983 separate the Soviet presence in that region from that of the overall Pacific Ocean for the first time

Figure 4
Soviet Ship-Days in the Pacific Ocean, 1974-83

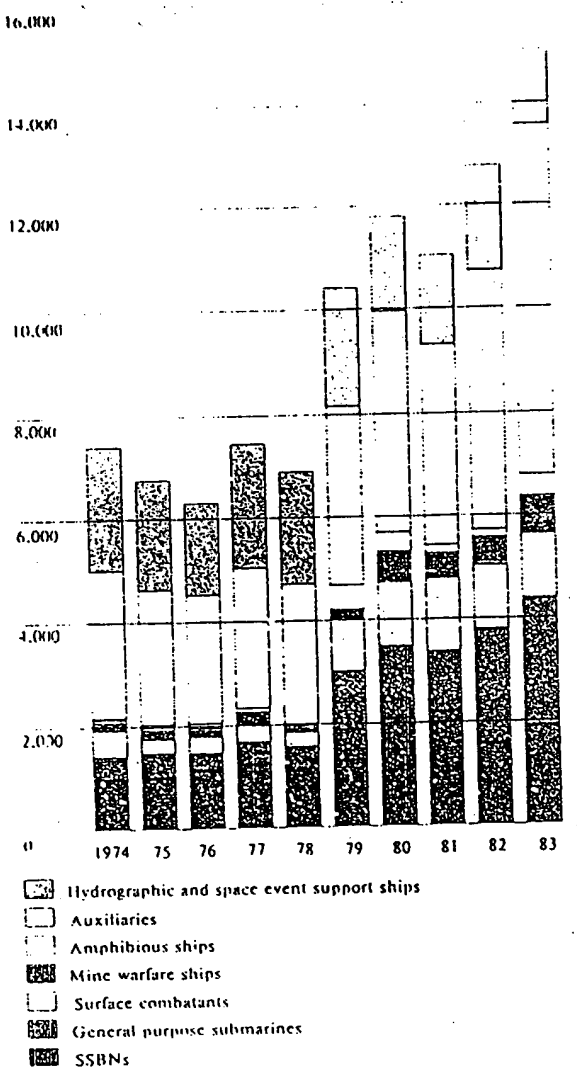
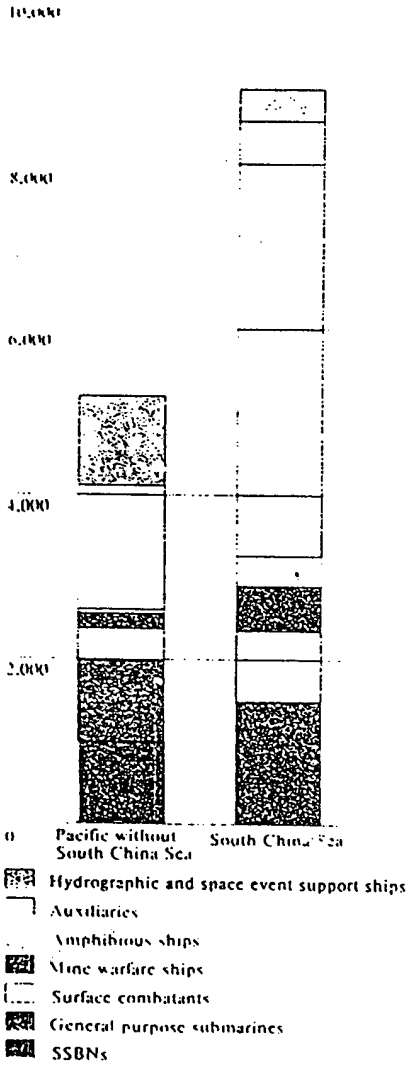


Figure 5
Soviet Ship-Days in the South China Sea Compared to the Remainder of the Pacific, 1983



one or two mine warfare ships, one amphibious ship, 14 or 15 auxiliaries, and one research ship were normally in the South China Sea—compared with two or three surface combatants, eight auxiliaries, and three general purpose submarines in 1982. Elsewhere in the Pacific, five nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), three general purpose submarines, one surface combatant, four auxiliaries, and three research or SESS ships were generally deployed out of area.

The role of Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, as the support center for expanded Soviet naval operations in the South China Sea continues to grow [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] The Soviets remain dependent for these services upon a diverse group of auxiliary ships and yardcraft—whose numbers nearly doubled in 1983. The Soviet hospital ship Ob also makes periodic deployments to Cam Ranh—possibly to provide medical or other personnel support

The 8,500-ton floating drydock delivered to Ho Chi Minh City in 1982 continues to service Soviet merchant and some auxiliary ships, as well as Vietnamese ships. A second 8,500-ton floating drydock arrived in Vietnam late last year from the Black Sea. It remained moored and inactive at an old logistic support depot just upriver from Ho Chi Minh City, until it was towed to Petropavlovsk in April 1984. A small transporter dock that remains at Cam Ranh may have been turned over to the Vietnamese Navy

Mediterranean Sea. The Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea increased about 8 percent in 1983—to the highest level since 1976—yet remained well below that of the early-to-middle 1970s (see figure 6). In 1983 the Mediterranean Squadron normally included about 48 ships: nine surface combatants, nine general purpose submarines, a mine warfare ship, one or two amphibious warfare ships, 24 auxiliaries, and three or four research ships.

There were several notable changes in the composition of the squadron:

- The presence of general purpose submarines rose about 23 percent, to the highest level since 1980, ending the steady decline in the Mediterranean submarine presence since that year. The submarines not only represented a heightened Soviet response to regional tensions; they also participated in regular exercises of the Mediterranean Squadron.

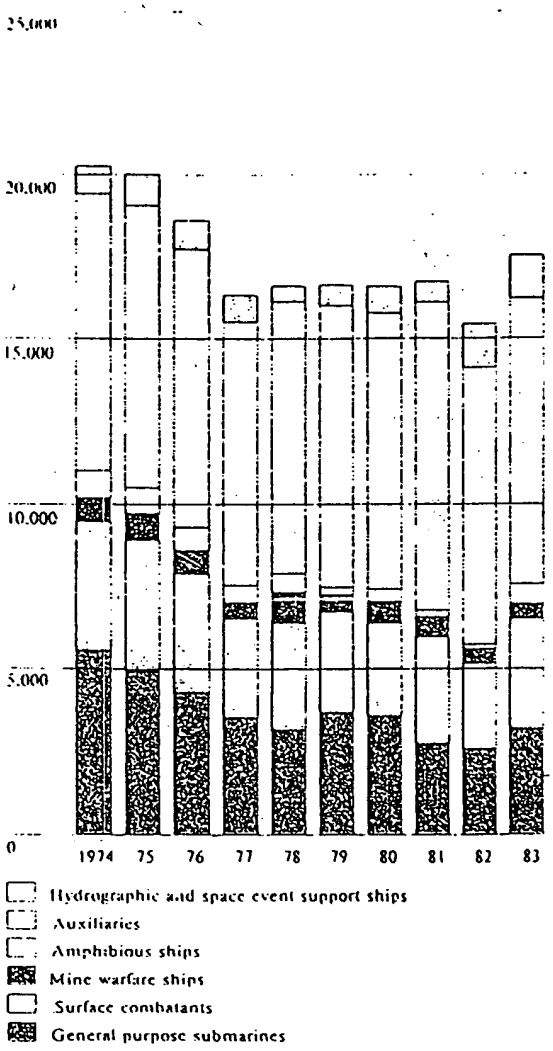
- The presence of amphibious ships—normally one Alligator landing ship or two small Polnocny landing ships—more than tripled from the year before. These ships usually remained at anchor in the eastern Mediterranean, probably ready to respond to an escalation of the crisis in Lebanon that might require the evacuation of Soviets. Amphibious ships also took part in some of the numerous exercises throughout the year.

- The presence of all other categories of ships in the region increased slightly or remained about the same

As in recent years, most Soviet naval activity occurred in the eastern Mediterranean in connection with the Lebanon crisis and the subsequent augmentation of US and West European forces in the region. In addition to monitoring Western naval and naval air forces, Soviet units made a large number of port visits to Syria, both for minor upkeep and replenishment from auxiliary ships and to show the flag in support of Damascus

The Soviets also conducted a surface gunnery exercise off

Figure 6
Soviet Ship-Days in the Mediterranean Sea, 1974-83



Lebanon for the first time in December 1983, probably in response to US actions in the region. Soviet naval aviation (SNA) reconnaissance aircraft deployed once to Syria in 1983, after a hiatus in 1982.

Soviet naval relations with Libya reflected the caution exercised by both sides in recent years. Soviet naval port calls to Tobruk and Tripoli continued periodically, with the most frequent calls during the spring and summer. The simultaneous visit of an Oskol-class repair ship and a J-class antiship cruise missile submarine (SSG) to Tobruk in December 1982 was repeated in July and October 1983 [redacted]

[redacted] A joint submarine and repair ship visit took place in February 1984 as well, when a T-class SS and an Amur-class repair ship called in Tobruk. Such visits supplement the support given Mediterranean-deployed submarines in the crowded port of Tartus, Syria, and may include support of Libyan submarines as a quid pro quo. Soviet naval aircraft also deployed periodically to Libya during the year. While the Soviets certainly will continue to take advantage of limited access to Libyan naval facilities, we believe they will reject any attempt by Qadhafi to embroil them in a potential US-Libyan maritime conflict.

Soviet access for ship repairs in the region did not change substantially in 1983. According to the Greek media [redacted] Soviet unarmed auxiliaries continued to be repaired in small numbers at the state-owned Neorion shipyard on Syros Island. [redacted] an apparent attempt to have an auxiliary repaired at a Piraievs shipyard, near a major Hellenic Navy base, was turned down, most likely because of the protests of the Hellenic Navy. The Soviets are [redacted] also testing to see how far they can push the Greeks on the matter of port access. [redacted] press reports also indicate that one visit of two Soviet warships to Piraievs, in October 1983, included the commander of the Black Sea Fleet

In 1983 the Soviets continued routine servicing of submarines in Syria and overhaul of submarines and subtenders in Yugoslavia and auxiliaries in Tunisia. [redacted] The Soviets signed a new one-year agreement for continued use of the Tunisian shipyard at Menzel Bourguiba in late November 1983. The press reported in early December that a Soviet-Tunisian protocol on maritime affairs had been signed. The protocol contained little substance, according to [redacted] but did cover the establishment of some type of training assistance for Tunisian shipyard workers

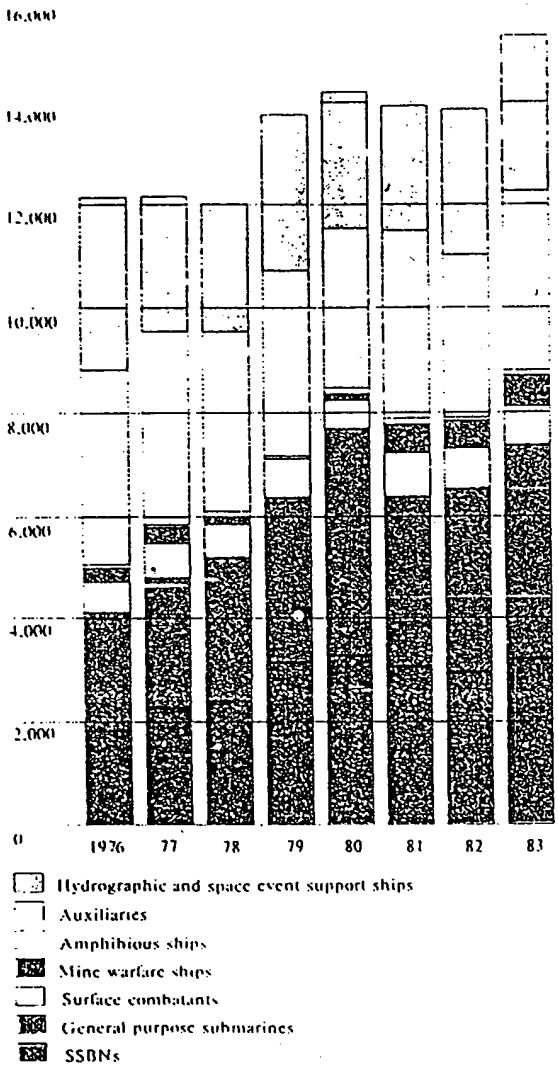
Atlantic Ocean. Soviet ship-days in the Atlantic Ocean increased about 10 percent in 1983. The ships and submarines deployed usually included nine SSBNs, 11 general purpose submarines, two surface combatants, one or two mine warfare ships, nine or 10 auxiliaries, and eight or nine research or SESS ships (see figure 7). All categories of ship presence increased except for surface combatants, which declined.*

The Atlantic statistics for 1983 reflect normal Soviet activity—participation in Warsaw Pact training in the North Sea, Northern Fleet exercises outside home waters, and routine Soviet activities such as stationing an oceangoing tugboat north of the Shetland Islands on a contingency patrol for submarine rescue.

V-III-class SSNs were initially deployed off the US east coast for reconnaissance and surveillance patrol in 1983. In early November, a V-III collided with the towed acoustic surveillance array of a US frigate several hundred miles west of Bermuda. One of the two signals intelligence collection ships (AGI) that routinely operate off the US east coast and a salvage ship deployed to Cuba responded to the disabled submarine. The disabled V-III SSN was towed to

* Although the number of Soviet ship-days in the Atlantic is second only to that in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic ship-day totals do not represent the same kind of operational naval presence that is found in the Mediterranean, where an on-station squadron makes up the majority of the ship-days. Ships moving from the Northern Fleet to the Mediterranean, West Africa, and other regional deployment areas appear in Atlantic ship-day counts, as will most interfleet transfers, maiden deployments, and sea trials

Figure 7
Soviet Ship-Days in the Atlantic Ocean, 1976-83



Cuba for emergency repair and was eventually able to return to the Soviet Union under its own power. A similar V-III patrol unit [redacted] the US west coast in 1982, and V-Is and V-IIs had previously operated off the east coast against US SSBN facilities and operations, including joint AGI/SSN activities.

Caribbean Sea. No Soviet task group visited Cuba during 1983, although the one which arrived in late November 1982—two combatants and an attack submarine—did not depart Caribbean waters until the end of January 1983. Soviet presence for the remainder of the year consisted of a few auxiliaries and research ships (see figure 8).

The next Soviet task group, comprised of the Moskva-class helicopter carrier Leningrad, a Udaloy-class destroyer, an F-class diesel-attack submarine, and a naval tanker, arrived in Cuba in late March 1984. The Leningrad is the first helicopter carrier sent to Cuba by the Soviets, and the task group's arrival marked the first visit to the Caribbean by an Udaloy-class ship. The task group conducted joint exercises with the Cuban Navy and also a joint cruise into the Gulf of Mexico.

West African Waters. In 1983 the Soviet naval presence in the waters of West Africa dipped by 6 percent from the 80-percent upturn in 1982 (see figure 9). The composition of the West African patrol changed only marginally from that of 1982 and consisted of an average of one surface combatant, one amphibious warfare ship, three or four auxiliaries, and one or two research ships. The general purpose submarine presence was reduced, however, to a single F-class SS deployed for about two months, in contrast to the presence of an F-class during most of 1982. An Alligator-class landing ship was deployed to the region for most of 1983, however, which more than doubled the amphibious deployment of the previous year.

We note that during 1984 Ds and Es have been deployed off both coasts as a response to INF deployments to Europe.

Figure 8
Soviet Ship-Days in the Caribbean Sea, 1974-83

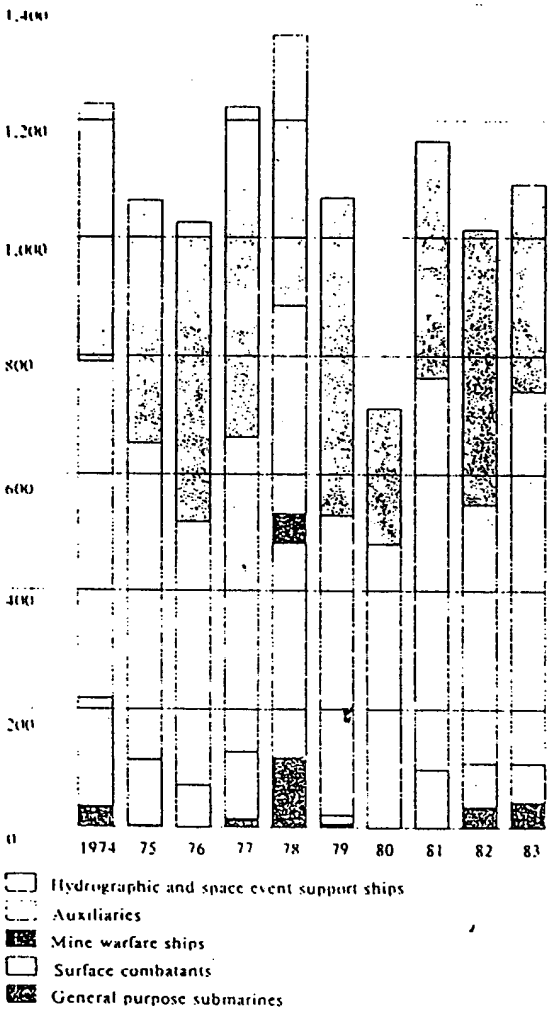
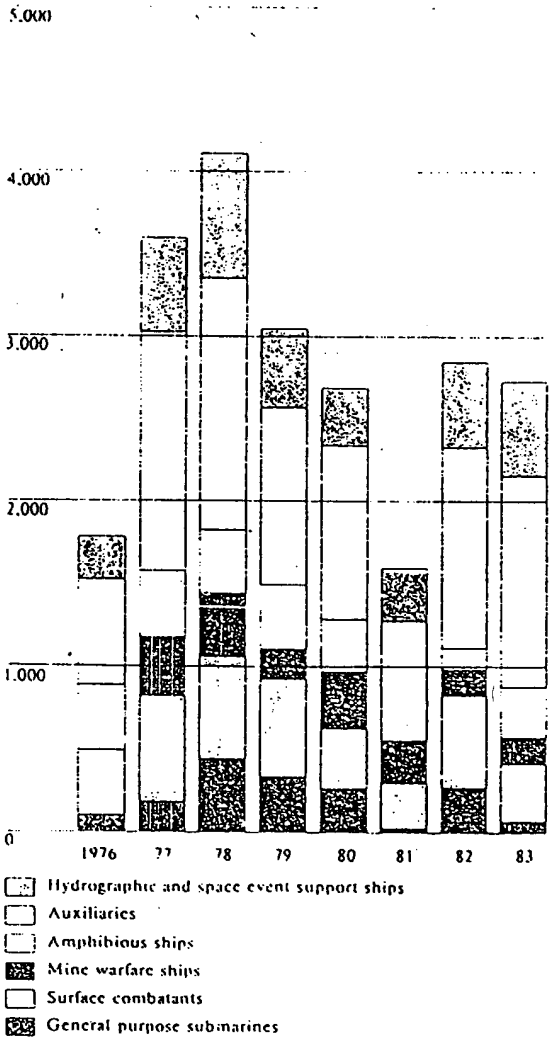


Figure 9
Soviet Ship-Days Off West Africa, 1976-83



Although Soviet support for the Angolan Government increased in 1983, the level and nature of Soviet naval operations in the region did not change markedly. As in 1982, the Soviet Navy made port calls in the region to show the flag. The most visible was that of a task group visit to Luanda led by the Kiev-class carrier Novorossiysk in November 1983 [redacted] the visit may have included an amphibious landing exercise by naval infantry and landing craft from the Ivan Rogov-class large landing ship with the task group. Unlike the two preceding years, no Soviet naval visits were made to Namibe (Mocamedes) in 1983. The Soviets cautiously stayed away during the increased hostilities in the region.

Following the early April coup in Conakry, Guinea, the Soviets made contingency plans for the possible naval evacuation of Soviet citizens from that country. [redacted]

No evacuation became necessary, but we believe that future Soviet-Guinean naval relations and Moscow's limited naval access remain areas of Soviet concern.

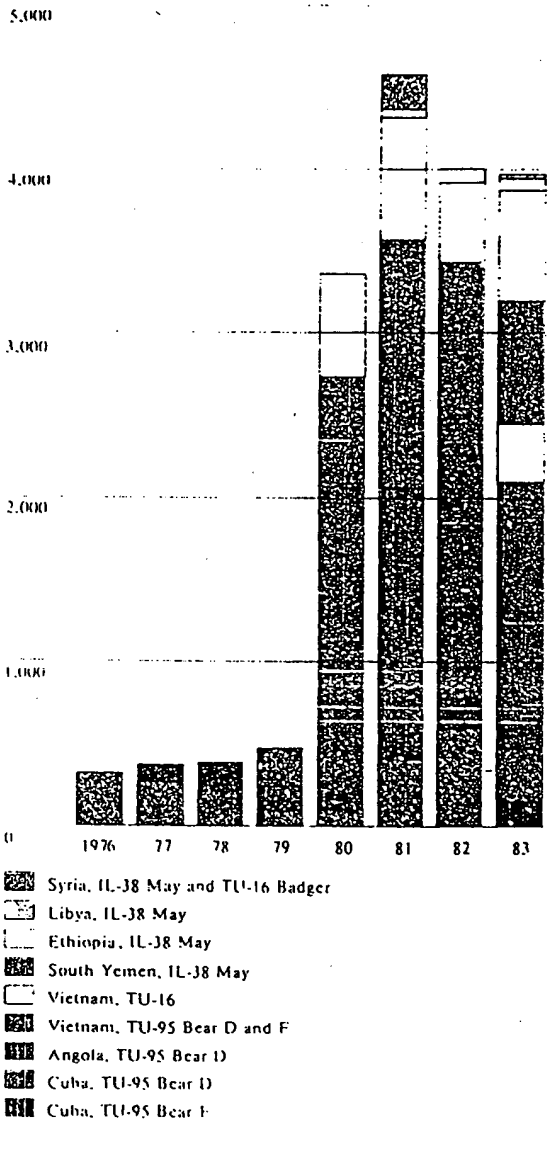
The destroyer stationed at Luanda subsequently made a port call to Ghana—the first visit to that nation since late 1981. In 1983 Ghana also began to allow some Soviet access for air transports. Relations with Ghana may become increasingly important for Moscow if access to Guinea is curtailed or denied

Soviet Naval Air Deployments

Deployment of Soviet Naval Aviation (SNA) aircraft to distant areas continues to provide Moscow a valuable asset for reconnaissance of Western naval forces. Increasingly, however, SNA is becoming more important as an operational tool in reaction to regional events and as a potential asset in the event of hostilities

The level of SNA presence abroad in 1983, as measured in aircraft days in country, dropped less than 1 percent from that in 1982 (see figure 10). This trend

Figure 10
Overseas Deployment of Soviet Naval Aviation, 1976-83



does not reflect, however, the many significant changes in the pattern and types of deployments that occurred.

In the Indian Ocean, the deployment of IL-38 May antisubmarine warfare (ASW) aircraft fell by about 14 percent as the disparity between SNA presence at Al Anad Airfield, South Yemen, and Johannes IV Airfield near Asmera, Ethiopia, was sharply reduced. Deployment to South Yemen—normally about twice that to Ethiopia—dropped by about 36 percent to 748 days, while deployment to Ethiopia increased nearly 38 percent, to 672 days. This reflects the reduction of the deployment to South Yemen from the two pairs of IL-38 Mays usually present in the preceding years to a single pair. The pattern of Ethiopian deployment—also a single pair of Mays—was not disrupted as it was in 1982, when, because of the Eritrean rebel threat, SNA aircraft apparently could not use Johannes IV Airfield for several months

The most important SNA development in 1983 was the deployment of nine TU-16 Badger aircraft to Cam Ranh Bay in November. The force, apparently a composite squadron, consists of five strike, two tanker, one photoreconnaissance, and one electronic countermeasures (ECM) aircraft. Other than the presence of Badger bombers in Egypt in the early 1970s—which were eventually turned over to the Egyptians—the only previous out-of-area use of Badgers occurred in a single exercise-related reconnaissance deployment of short duration to Syria in 1981

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] the first flights by the Badgers at Cam Ranh were for area familiarization, followed by reconnaissance flights over the South China Sea, and air-to-air refueling practice. In early April, [redacted] Badgers from Cam Ranh participated in a joint Soviet-Vietnamese amphibious exercise near Haiphong [redacted]

Deployments to Cam Ranh by Bear D naval reconnaissance and Bear F ASW aircraft have continued on a stable basis with a pair of each type normally present. In July 1983, [redacted] new pattern of a single Bear F and single Bear D flying operational missions as a team. We believe the Soviets may see such a combination as a more efficient use of resources than the previous practice of flying pairs of Bear Ds or Bear Fs.

After the arrival of the Badgers, the Bear aircraft expanded their normal area of operations, taking greater advantage of their long range by flying missions over the East China and Philippine Seas, to the Luzon Strait, and west into the Gulf of Thailand. The Badgers have supplemented the Bear Ds and Bear Fs in a reconnaissance role in the South China Sea

SNA Bear aircraft based in the Soviet Union also fly occasional intelligence collection missions into the northern, central, and eastern Pacific Ocean

Pairs of IL-38 May ASW aircraft deployed to Libya three times in 1983 where they participated in exercises—including the worldwide naval exercise in September—and flew reconnaissance missions against US naval forces in the Mediterranean. A pair of Mays also staged to Syria for use during the worldwide

[redacted]

exercise. They flew one additional intelligence mission after the exercise in response to the heightened tensions of the Lebanon crisis.

The Soviets continue periodically to deploy a pair of Bear Ds to Cuba. Since March 1983, however, a pair of Bear Fs has accompanied these aircraft. Although the Bear Fs and Ds do not yet fly in mixed teams as they do out of Cam Ranh Bay, two Bear Fs and one Bear D did fly a mission together in October 1983. The Bear F ASW aircraft operate mainly between the United States and Bermuda, where they may attempt to locate US SSBNs transiting to and from their bases. The Bear Ds fly intelligence collection flights—often against US naval battle groups—in a wide area off the East Coast

SNA Bear D deployment to Angola dropped by almost a third last year. We believe the Soviets continue occasional SNA deployments to Luanda mainly to exercise their right of access there, although missions flown from Luanda usually lack substantial military value because they are too distant from the Atlantic transit lanes used by the US Navy.

Global Exercise

The September 1983 worldwide Soviet naval exercise involved out-of-area operations in a number of regions:

- Activity in the Mediterranean Sea included antisurface warfare operations involving the new Slava guided-missile cruiser and participation by IL-38 May ASW aircraft staged to Libya and Syria.
- Bear aircraft from Cam Ranh Bay took part, and Soviet submarines in the region may have been active in the South China Sea.
- Units of the Soviet Indian Ocean Squadron and IL-38s deployed to Ethiopia and South Yemen conducted antisurface warfare operations.
- Bear aircraft were deployed to Cuba and Angola, but the extent of their involvement in the exercise is not known

The extensive use of Soviet naval aircraft access during this exercise highlights its value to Moscow both during peacetime and in the early stages of actual hostility

Outlook

We expect the evolution observed in the type of Soviet deployments to foreign waters during 1983 to continue in 1984 and beyond:

- The presence of general purpose submarines operating out of area will continue a gradual upward trend. These units are increasingly being used for reconnaissance near US SSBN bases on both coasts. In addition, modernization of the Soviet general purpose submarine force will continue to make more and better submarines available for out-of-area operations.

- While the number of surface combatant ship-days logged in distant waters may continue to decline or stabilize near current levels, we expect the Soviets to deploy newer and more capable surface ships out of area.

- The presence of amphibious warfare ships in foreign waters will probably continue to increase as the Soviets become increasingly aware of their utility for regime support and contingency response to crises abroad.

- Because Moscow's quest for naval access abroad continues to meet with mixed results, the presence of large numbers of auxiliary ships will continue to be essential to support the Soviet Navy's out-of-area operations. As in the past, the Soviets are unlikely to allow their desire for naval and/or naval air privileges to jeopardize their political relations with potential host states

The overall level of distant Soviet naval deployments will probably remain relatively stable. Regional naval presence, however, will fluctuate because of crises and/or the augmentation of deployed Western naval forces. The Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean should stabilize at a lower level—barring a new regional crisis—as the presence in the South China Sea stabilizes at a higher level

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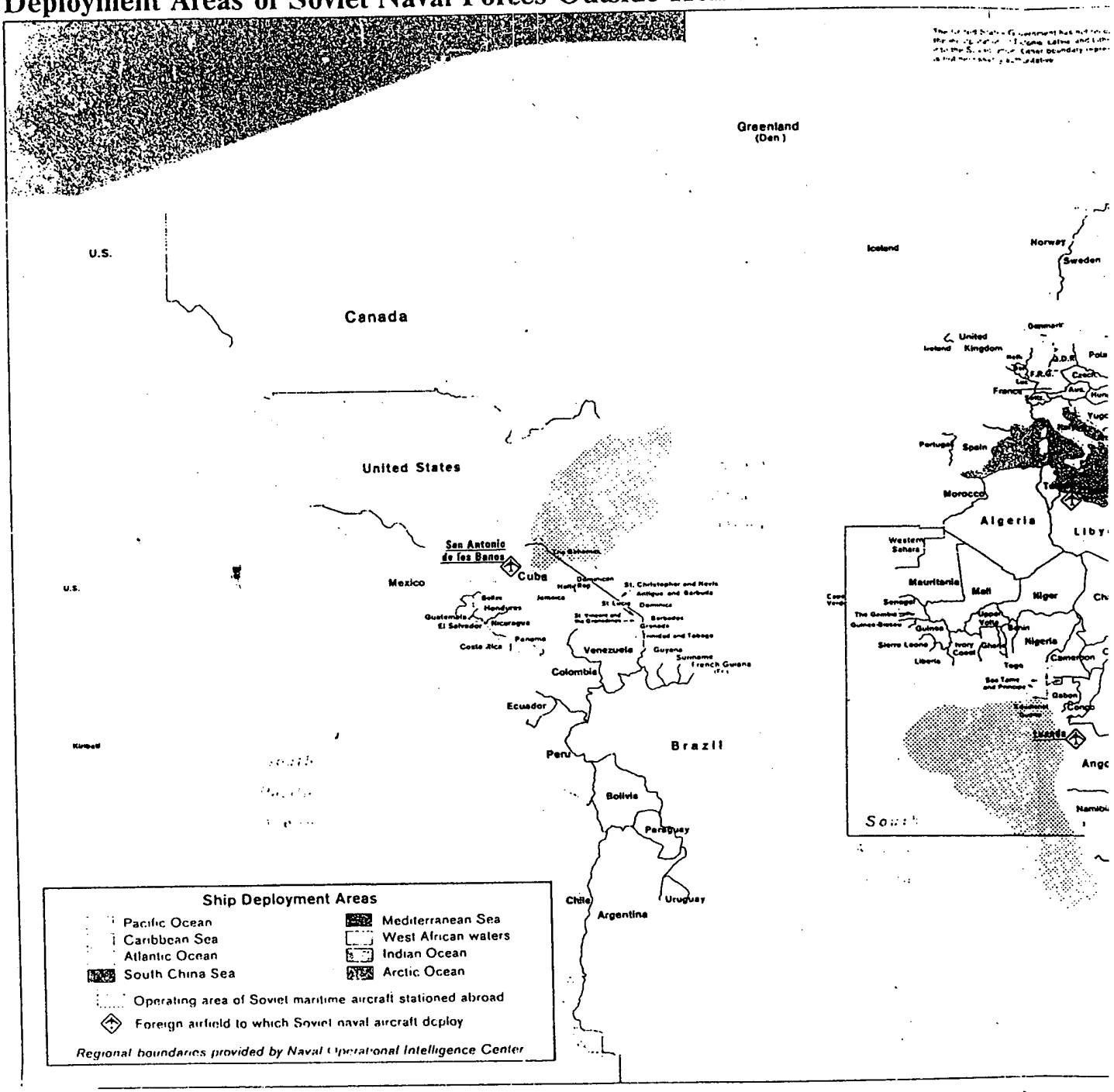
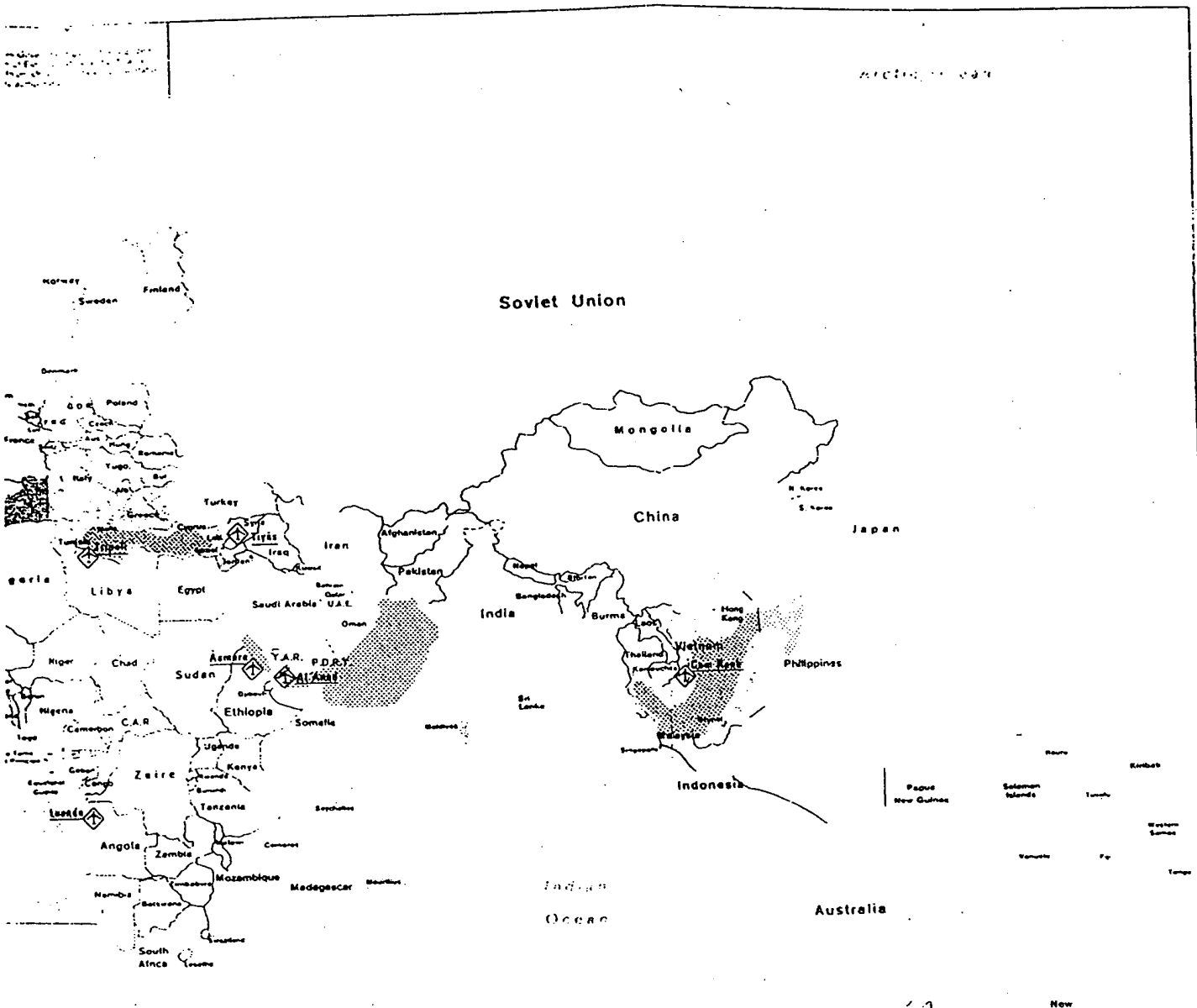
The Soviets will continue to pursue opportunities for deployment of naval aircraft—especially in West Africa and the Indian Ocean—while working to maintain their present access in the Mediterranean. Further upgrading of SNA use of Vietnamese facilities is also likely

Figure 11
Deployment Areas of Soviet Naval Forces Outside Home Waters





C.A.R. —Central African Republic
F.R.G. —Federal Republic of Germany
G.D.R. —German Democratic Republic
U.A.E. —United Arab Emirates
Y.A.R. —Yemen Arab Republic
P.D.R.Y.—People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

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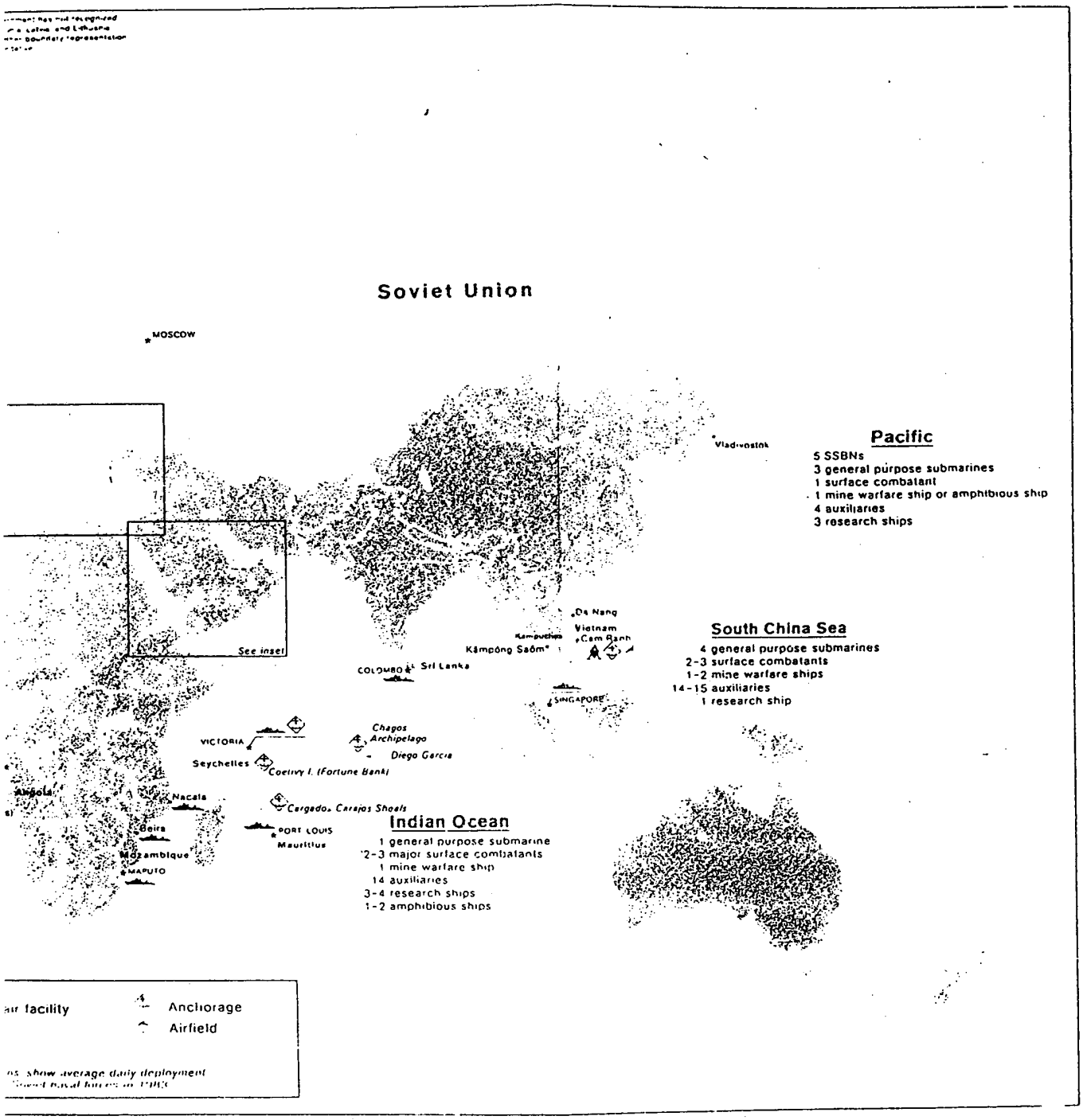

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