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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Reconnaissance Indications of Preparation for a Surprise Attack by US Naval Carrier Strike Large Units

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article examines the role of attack carriers and the level of ship and aircraft development and their vulnerabilities in assessing US capabilities for carrying out a surprise nuclear strike and Soviet capabilities and difficulties in detecting strike preparations. The main reconnaissance indications of such preparation are considered to be the deployment of carrier task forces at sea, which may involve the movement of forces from the US mainland to various parts of the globe or the activation of just the Sixth and Seventh Fleets, as well as replenishment of supplies, increase of combat readiness, and declaration of alerts which require the use of radio transmissions. This article appeared in Issue No. 5 (66) for 1962.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned the

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SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Reconnaissance Indications of Preparation for a Surprise Attack by US Naval Carrier Strike Large Units

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 5 (66) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought''. The author of this article is Captain First Rank V. Anufriyev. This article examines the role of attack carriers and the level of ship and aircraft development and their vulnerabilities in assessing US capabilities for carrying out a surprise nuclear strike and Soviet capabilities and difficulties in detecting strike preparations. The main reconnaissance indications of such preparation are considered to be the deployment of carrier task forces at sea, which may involve the movement of forces from the US mainland to various parts of the globe under the pretext of exercises or the activation of just the Sixth and Seventh Fleets, as well as replenishment of supplies, increase of combat readiness, and declaration of alerts which require the use of radio transmissions. Other, supplemental indications include an increase in combat training, mobilization of merchant and reserve combat ships, and an increase in air defense and the production of naval aircraft. End of Summary

[redacted] Comment:

Captain First Rank (Reserve) V. Anufriyev was identified as a Candidate of Military Sciences. He retired in 1972. After 1962 the SECRET version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970.

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Reconnaissance Indications of Preparation for a Surprise Attack by US Naval Carrier Strike Large Units

by

Captain First Rank V. Anufriyev

In preparing to unleash a new world war, the American command places particular emphasis on rapidly building up the nuclear striking power of all the branches of the armed forces. In the US naval forces, such power is represented primarily by the carrier strike forces. A considerable part of these forces, equipped with nuclear weapons and a large number of delivery aircraft, is constantly maintained within the complement of the forward groupings of the naval forces, that is, in areas geographically suitable for delivering surprise nuclear strikes.

As a consequence of the high mobility of the carrier strike large units, the concealment of their actions, and their deeply echeloned defense, the organization of combat against them at sea is a very complex and difficult matter that obviously will require considerable effort of forces not only from the navy but also from the other branches of our Armed Forces. The success of combat against US carrier strike large units deployed at sea will be determined not only by the availability of well-prepared, appropriate forces and means, but also, in no lesser degree, by the availability of the necessary information about these large units, about their operational and combat capabilities, and about their probable operating areas and methods.

It is from the sum total of precisely this kind of information that reconnaissance indications of the immediate preparation of the carrier strike large units for a surprise attack can be detected.

Before we begin to describe the reconnaissance indications, let us examine the views of the American command regarding the role and significance of the carrier strike forces in a future war, their strong and weak points, their present status, and the long-range possibilities for their development.

In the opinion of the American military circles, the naval forces can effectively employ missile/nuclear weapons, since, as a result of their high mobility, they are capable of carrying out surprise actions and of

massing their efforts, and have low vulnerability to enemy missile/nuclear strikes. On the other hand, stationary air and missile bases in the US can be destroyed relatively easily by long-range ballistic missiles.

It is basically this view that explains why in recent years a greater role in a future war has been going to the US naval forces.

In building and preparing the naval forces, the American command gives its main attention to building up and maintaining in a high degree of readiness all the forces and means, but primarily the carrier strike forces and missile-carrying submarine forces, which form the basis of the entire US nuclear strength.

Recently, in connection with the accelerated construction in the US of nuclear-powered missile-carrying submarines, there have begun to appear in the press occasional statements declaring that aircraft carriers are losing their importance and will soon be replaced by nuclear-powered submarines. It should be said that these are not the prevailing, much less the official views. The American command does not contrast the missile-carrying submarine forces with the carrier strike forces and does not believe that the nuclear-powered missile-carrying submarines can replace the strike carriers. In spite of the enormous advantage of these submarines, they are, as the Americans correctly assume, a single-purpose means meant to employ ballistic missiles in striking at only the most important stationary targets, the locations of which are known precisely beforehand. Aircraft carriers, on the other hand, are a multipurpose means; and they alone, through the employment of their aviation, are capable of ensuring the most effective execution of a majority of the tasks assigned to the US naval forces.

For this reason the American command assigns primarily to the aircraft carriers the main general task of the naval forces, which is to gain and maintain the supremacy at sea that they believe is necessary for the success of any naval operation.

Among the principal advantages of the carrier large units is the capability, particularly at the outset of a general nuclear offensive, of delivering powerful and surprise nuclear strikes against the most important ground targets and against groupings of enemy troops located along a large stretch of coastline and in the depth of the territory.

Accounting for the potency of the nuclear strikes are the large reserves of nuclear bombs and the large number of delivery aircraft which

are on the aircraft carriers. All the strike aircraft in carrier aviation are, for practical purposes, strategic aircraft.

The surprise element of the strikes is achieved by the high state of combat readiness, high mobility, and concealment of actions of the carrier large units. It is known, for example, that these large units, which are in the forward groupings of the US naval forces, are kept in a constant state of readiness for the immediate delivery of nuclear strikes. The high mobility and concealment of actions are indicated by the fact that the carrier large unit is able to cover 600 to 700 miles (1,100 to 1,300 kilometers) a day while observing practically complete radio silence over a long period of time. Therefore, to spot it may require many days of uninterrupted scanning of a broad expanse of ocean. Not a single country, not even the strongest militarily, now has nor will it likely have in the future a sufficient amount of the forces and means necessary for this kind of scanning.

Endurance and cruising range are directly dependent on mobility and concealment. The endurance of modern carrier large units is approximately 30 days, while their cruising range is almost unlimited. This situation is achieved mainly by including in the large units special groups of servicing ships which make them independent of the shore bases even when they are at sea for a long period of time. The strike large units are fully provided with everything needed for independent actions, including ammunition, supplies, all types of defense and protection, and even running repair of aircraft.

All this enables the carrier large units to make a relatively sudden appearance in the most remote places, to quickly change the areas and theaters of operations, and to deliver strikes from comparatively short distances and from unexpected directions.

Carrier-based aircraft have high tactical-technical specifications. The aircraft can deliver strikes with great accuracy from various altitudes, and almost the entire complement of aircraft from each aircraft carrier can take off to carry out a combat mission within a brief period of time.

Modern aircraft carriers are almost invulnerable to long-range surface-to-ship ballistic missiles, since the majority of these ships are constantly at sea and can maneuver secretly in widely dispersed cruising and battle formations. Moreover, it is extremely difficult to distinguish aircraft carriers from numerous large combat ships and auxiliary and

merchant ships by means of long-range radar. When reconnaissance aircraft and submarines detect aircraft carriers, they are able to determine their position, but in such an approximate manner that it is useless to deliver ballistic missile strikes against them.

Nor can a man-made Earth satellite with special equipment solve this problem, since from the moment it sends a signal giving the exact coordinates of any one aircraft carrier a certain amount of time will be needed for the launch preparation of missiles and for their flight to the given location. During this period the aircraft carrier will have succeeded in moving far outside the danger zone (the largest radius of the danger zone with an underwater missile burst equivalent to one million tons of TNT is determined by the Americans as no greater than five miles), and the launching of many tens of missiles will be required in order to cover the area of the probable location of the aircraft carrier.

Consequently, only submarines and aircraft can present a basic threat to the aircraft carriers.

Carrier strike large units also have a good number of weak points.

First of all, their actions depend to a considerable degree on the weather and on the sea state. It must be noted, however, that this dependence is gradually diminishing in view of the introduction on the aircraft carriers and aircraft of the latest technical equipment and because of the highly intensive training of aircraft crews for flights under adverse conditions. Already from 35 to 40 percent of the ground-attack and fighter aircraft of the carrier aviation of the US naval forces have been equipped for poor-visibility and night operations. In the near future, the Americans are planning to equip their aircraft carriers with a system for automatic deck landing of aircraft. It is more complicated to solve the problem of employing aircraft carriers in heavy seas. Currently it is practically possible for aircraft to take off and land on carriers only when the sea state is not greater than six to seven.

Another weakness of the aircraft carriers when compared with airfields on shore is their low survivability. Even relatively insignificant damage to the flight deck, the take-off and landing systems, the aircraft elevators, and other mechanical systems, or listing of the aircraft carrier (for example, as a result of a hole in the underwater part of the hull) may make it totally impossible to use the aircraft. Moreover, large reserves of aviation fuel are conducive to an explosion or fire on the carriers if any kind of weapon is used against them.

The landing of aircraft on the moving and rolling deck of an aircraft carrier is considerably more complicated than on an airfield on land and requires exceptionally well-trained air crews. Furthermore, it is impossible to use aircraft having a take-off weight greater than 50 tons from aircraft carriers (even from the largest).

Let us point out still another circumstance. Carrier strike large units depend to a considerable degree on reserves of aviation fuel and nuclear weapons, and there is difficulty in replacing losses incurred by carrier aviation in the course of an operation. These situations force the large units to move from the area of combat actions after an average of three to four days in order to replenish reserves from servicing ships located in a remote part of the sea. The destruction of the latter deprives the large unit of the capability of continuing combat actions over an extended period of time.

On the basis of the views that have taken shape with regard to the role and place of carrier strike forces in a future war, the Americans have developed plans for the construction and employment of strike carriers. In conformity with these plans, it is considered necessary to have in the US naval forces no fewer than 14 or 15 strike carriers in the course of this decade (1961 to 1970).

As of 1 July 1962, the US naval forces already had 16 strike carriers, each capable of taking aboard about 90 to 100 aircraft (about 50 percent of them are nuclear weapons delivery aircraft). The most modern are the nuclear-powered strike carrier Enterprise and two strike carriers of the Forrestal class, put into service in 1961 (on all three, surface-to-air guided missiles were installed in place of antiaircraft artillery for the first time); there are also four other strike carriers of the Forrestal class, which were built in the period from 1955 to 1959 (with conventional antiaircraft armament). Three strike carriers of the Midway class will meet modern requirements until about 1970. The Americans assume that the aircraft carriers of the Oriskany class (six ships), although refitted after the war, can be used as strike carriers only until about 1965, after which they will become obsolete and subject to replacement.

For the fleet to have, as planned, 14 or 15 modern strike carriers in the period from 1965 to 1970, the Americans will have to build seven or eight new ships by 1970 to replace the obsolescent carriers, that is, they will have to lay down one carrier a year. There is currently under construction one conventional strike carrier, and the program for the 1962/1963 fiscal year calls for the start of another one. In the future,

the Americans contemplate building only nuclear-powered strike carriers, but with a smaller displacement than the first nuclear-powered strike carrier Enterprise.

As for the carrier strike aviation of the US naval forces, it is armed with jet-propelled delivery aircraft having high tactical-technical specifications. The strike aircraft include heavy ground-attack aircraft and ground-attack aircraft. The heavy ground-attack aircraft are represented by one type, the A3D-2 Skywarrior, which flies at transonic speed, has an operational radius of more than 2,500 kilometers, and can deliver nuclear strikes from altitudes up to 14,000 meters, as well as from low altitudes. Expected to make its appearance in the combat squadrons in 1962 is a new heavy ground-attack aircraft, the A3J-1 Vigilante, which has a speed of 2,200 kilometers an hour and a service ceiling of up to 21,000 meters.

The basic type of ground-attack aircraft is the A4D-2 Skyhawk, which flies at transonic speeds, has an operational radius of about 1,400 kilometers, and a service ceiling of up to 12,000 meters. New modified versions of this type of aircraft will have higher tactical-technical specifications. Expected to be put into service in 1963 is the A2F-1 Intruder ground-attack aircraft, which is intended especially for low-altitude actions.

In addition, if necessary, the Americans can use some of the carrier-based fighter aircraft to deliver nuclear strikes. The carrier-based, all-weather fighter aircraft F4H-1 Phantom 2 has especially high tactical-technical specifications. It has a flight speed of about 2,100 kilometers an hour, a service ceiling of 24,000 meters, and an operational radius of up to 1,900 kilometers.

Reconnaissance indications of preparation for a surprise attack by carrier strike large units.

The Americans can count on the success of a surprise attack only if they make massed use of the nuclear means of all the branches of the armed forces and carry out in good time a vast number of defensive measures. Therefore, even if there appear to be obvious reconnaissance indications of preparation by carrier strike large units to deliver initial nuclear strikes, they can only under certain conditions serve as sufficient reason for the timely delivery of a powerful missile/nuclear strike against the aggressor. Foremost among these conditions should be the availability of reconnaissance indications that the US is preparing all its other nuclear

means for a surprise strike, indications that the US and its allies in the aggressive blocs are making immediate preparations for war, or a series of reliable reports that the Americans intend to start a war in the near future.

The reconnaissance indications of preparation by carrier strike large units for a surprise attack should be reduced to two groups -- main and supplemental. Included in the first group should be reconnaissance indications of measures which if not carried out would make impossible or unlikely the delivery by carrier large units of the initial nuclear strikes in the initial period of a war. Comprising the second group should be reconnaissance indications which, even though they would indicate the great likelihood of preparation for the delivery of nuclear strikes, may not appear at all (at least some of them), because the Americans may forego a number of even very important preparatory measures in order to achieve the greatest surprise.

One of the main reconnaissance indications is the setting out to sea of carrier strike large units and their support forces. There can be two variants of this.

The first variant is when, for the purpose of carrying out a surprise attack, our probable enemy attempts to concentrate the maximum amount of nuclear forces and means in the departure areas for operations. In this variant, the carrier strike large units and their support forces, including carrier hunter-killer groups and groups of servicing ships, have to depart from the US for the eastern Atlantic, the Far East, and possibly the Indian Ocean (Arabian Sea). Several days prior to this there obviously will be a deployment of the antisubmarine forces -- mainly land-based aviation and submarines -- on the antisubmarine line between Iceland and Great Britain, on the approaches to the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the US, and at the exits from the Sea of Japan. There may possibly be an even earlier deployment of the maximum amount of nuclear-powered missile-carrying submarines in the eastern part of the Atlantic.

In so doing, the departure of carrier strike large units (groups) from the US will be carried out either under the pretext of conducting exercises or on the signalling of an alert and without mention in the press or radio about the purpose of the departure, as was the case with the events in Egypt in 1956, in Lebanon in 1958, and in the following years whenever there was a sharp increase in international tension. In either of these instances, the carrier large units will, as a rule, observe complete radio silence during their sea transit. They will most likely move into the

departure areas for delivering the initial nuclear strikes during darkness. The deployment of the carrier large units (groups), with the approximate time periods and theaters, may be as follows.

D-15: the departure of a carrier strike group from the area of the Hawaiian Islands for the Indian Ocean (Arabian Sea).

D-10: the departure of a carrier strike large unit (group) and a carrier hunter-killer group from the west coast of the US for the Far East, and a carrier strike group and carrier hunter-killer group from the east coast of the US for the Mediterranean Sea.

D-7: the departure of a carrier strike large unit (group), one to two carrier hunter-killer groups, and a group of servicing ships from the east coast of the US for the eastern Atlantic (the Norwegian Sea).

D-2: the departure of a carrier strike large unit and a carrier hunter-killer group from the western for the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, and a group of servicing ships for the central part of the Mediterranean Sea; during this same period it is possible that carrier strike groups, carrier hunter-killer groups, and a group of servicing ships will be deployed near the east coast of Japan and in the East China Sea.

The probable strength of the carrier strike forces in the departure areas after deployment (only the number of strike carriers) is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Deployment areas	Number of strike carriers	
	Before deployment	After deployment
Norwegian Sea	--	3
Eastern part of the Mediterranean	--	3
Western part of the Mediterranean	2-3	--
Arabian Sea	--	2
East China Sea	--	2
East coast of Japan	3	3
Total	5-6	13

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The probable strength of the strike aviation aboard the aircraft carriers in the departure deployment areas can be characterized by the data in Table 2.

Table 2

Delivery aircraft	Norwegian Sea	Mediterranean Sea	Arabian Sea	Far East
Heavy ground-attack A3D-2 Skywarriors	30	24	18	36
Ground-attack A4D-2 Skyhawks	96	84	24	120
Ground-attack FJ Furies	--	--	12	24
Ground-attack AD Skyraiders	24	36	36	48
Total	150	144	90	228

Therefore, if we assume that for the period of the general nuclear offensive the maximum reserve of nuclear bombs per strike carrier may be as high as 100 to 140, then the delivery aircraft shown in Table 2 will be able in the first sortie to carry no more than 30 to 35 percent of the reserve of nuclear bombs aboard the carrier strike large units deployed in the departure areas (taking into consideration that 10 to 13 percent of the delivery aircraft will not participate in the first sortie and that some of the aircraft that take to the air will be carrying conventional weapons).

The second variant is when the strike large units may be forced to set out to sea; that is, when, because of the situation, the Americans will be unable or will consider it impossible to deploy strike forces from the US

and will decide to deliver a strike with the forces of the forward groupings. In this variant, prior to the surprise attack the carrier strike forces of the Sixth and Seventh Fleets will already be located in the departure areas "on combat training", ready upon a signal to deliver a strike. Naturally, there will be a greater element of surprise in this kind of strike, but its power will be considerably less than if delivered with a maximum concentration of strike forces. In view of this, the US command considers the first variant of actions preferable.

Emerging from the examination of this reconnaissance indication is the exceptional importance of constant surveillance of the strike carriers and their support forces even in peacetime. This will enable us to determine at any given moment, even if only approximately, the area in which they are located and the probable nature of their activity. With this information we can then deduce correctly whether they are preparing for a surprise attack and within what time frame and from which areas this attack should be expected, or that they are not ready to deliver a massed strike and are only carrying out demonstrative actions or conducting ordinary planned exercises.

Another main reconnaissance indication of attack may be the replenishment of the carrier strike large units with various kinds of reserves, primarily nuclear weapons, up to the maximum norms. It is virtually impossible to deliver an initial powerful nuclear strike without carrying out this measure. When this replenishment of reserves takes place -- it is carried out in a brief period of time and immediately before the deployment of the carrier strike large units -- there will be a sharp rise in the activity of the rear services organs and of the special weapons and fuel depots. This will result in a considerable increase in the volume of conversations over the various communications channels. Prior to this, obviously, there will also be an increase in the movement of nuclear weapons from the US to the forward (overseas) depots. Similar measures will also take place in the forward groupings of the US naval forces, the only difference being that the reserves for the aircraft carriers will start being delivered to them while they are at sea (particularly for replenishing reserves of nuclear weapons).

Consequently, this reconnaissance indication is quite a pronounced one. Under the appropriate conditions it can provide evidence that the carrier strike large units are very probably preparing for a surprise attack.

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An increase in operational combat readiness and the forming of new carrier strike large units (groups) also can serve as an important indication of the preparation of a surprise attack. These measures cannot be avoided, although it will not always be easy to distinguish them from similar measures carried out for the usual combat training, particularly in periods when there is no sharp increase in international tension. With reference to time, these measures can be carried out either immediately before the deployment of the carrier strike large units or well in advance of their deployment. In identifying this reconnaissance indication, we should be guided primarily by an analysis of the indications that the naval forces as a whole, as well as the other branches of the US armed forces, are preparing for a surprise attack. For example, a sharp increase in the readiness of all the missile means and strategic aviation, the rapid formation of new operational fleets, a significant reinforcement of the antisubmarine defense forces on the approaches to the US and at lines on the ocean, etc., may serve as an indication that the increase in operational readiness and the forming of new carrier strike large units evidently are aimed at their preparation for participation in an attack.

The declaration of an increased combat alert and a general combat alert may serve as a reconnaissance indication of an attack by the forces of carrier large units. The Americans regard the declaration of these alerts as being obligatory. They have been specially developed to ensure the proper coordination and organization of efforts in the actions especially of all the strike means at the outset of a surprise attack. Naturally, without these alerts and without the transmission of uniform signals it is hardly possible to achieve surprise and the maximum effect from the employment of missile/nuclear weapons.

Upon the declaration of an increased combat alert, the carrier large units deployed at sea begin preparation for the delivery of nuclear strikes (the move to the departure areas, the preparation of the delivery aircraft and of the nuclear bombs, etc.). Based on the experience of a number of exercises and maneuvers of the NATO allied armed forces, particularly the experience of the FALLEX-60 exercises conducted in 1960, increased alert is declared on the eve of the day military actions are to begin (D). With the introduction of the general combat alert, which usually is declared on D-day, the carrier strike large units are supposed to already be in immediate readiness to deliver nuclear strikes upon receiving the special signal permitting them to begin employing nuclear weapons.

To declare these alerts, radio communications means must unavoidably be used. Consequently, the intercept and deciphering of messages to the

carrier strike large units about the declaration of the appropriate alert can make it considerably easier to accomplish the task of timely warning of a surprise nuclear strike that is being prepared. When making any deduction on the basis of a particular reconnaissance indication, one should keep in mind that for the purpose of deception the Americans may declare an increased combat alert and a general combat alert under the guise of "training" alerts. This can create the impression that ordinary exercises or large-scale demonstrations are being conducted and thus, to a certain degree, conceal the actual preparation for a surprise attack.

Some of the important supplemental reconnaissance indications may include the following:

-- conduct by carrier strike large units of planned or non-planned large-scale exercises in US coastal areas, in the eastern Atlantic, in the Mediterranean Sea, in the Far East, and in the Indian Ocean, with a curtailment of the ongoing regular combat training; the simultaneous or almost simultaneous conduct of such exercises in all or in a majority of the indicated areas will be evidence of the great likelihood that they are dress rehearsal exercises, that is, final preparation for the actual delivery of nuclear strikes;

-- a considerable increase in the combat training of all the main operational formations and large units of the naval forces, with thorough work on the most important matters of standard naval operations for the initial period of a war; in the first place these should include missile/nuclear strikes, operations to provide support to the ground forces, and operations and combat actions to protect the sea lanes.

The rapid and concealed movement of diverse types of large units out to sea in different naval theaters and the massive dispersal of combat ships and merchant ships unable to participate in the initial combat actions among the most sheltered secondary ports, bases, and bays and out to sea. The Americans and their allies have repeatedly worked on the conduct of such measures during exercises in recent years. It is contemplated here that these measures will be carried out immediately before a surprise attack in order to safeguard the large forces of the naval and merchant fleets in the event of a retaliatory missile/nuclear strike by the enemy.

The mobilization of a considerable number of ships from the merchant fleet, their adaptation for actions primarily to support fleet strike forces at sea, and their inclusion in the servicing forces of the naval forces.

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A strengthening of security at naval bases, individual ports, and the most important naval depots, with the partial evacuation of the families of servicemen and civilian personnel from them.

The reduction or complete cancellation of leave for the personnel of the operational large units that may participate in the first operations of the initial period of war, and the manning of these large units up to the level of wartime tables of organization.

A sharp increase in the air defense forces and means on the approaches to the US and on its coast.

The preparation and transfer of the shore staffs of the fleet to sheltered command posts that have been prepared for wartime, and the bringing to readiness and general checking of all the means of control of the naval strike forces. As the experience of recent years shows, the Americans have carried out these measures more than once by order of the US military high command.

The preparation and putting into service of a large number of combat ships and naval aircraft from the reserve. Here it should be noted that the Americans may also carry out such measures on a comparatively limited scale for the purpose of increasing international tension, without intending to carry out a surprise attack. For example, in 1961, during the so-called "Berlin crisis", the US put into service from the reserve more than 30 combat ships and up to 20 land-based antisubmarine air squadrons.

A sharp increase in the production of aircraft for the naval forces, primarily delivery aircraft and carrier-based fighter aircraft. It is known that for the last several years the annual production in the US of all types of aircraft for the naval forces has been approximately 900. This makes it possible only to maintain the numerical strength of aircraft in the naval forces at a certain level and even with some drop in that level from year to year. During and following the conduct of a general nuclear offensive, large losses of carrier aircraft are inevitable, a fact that is recognized by the Americans themselves. Consequently, to replace these losses, the US will have to establish some reserves in advance, mainly in delivery aircraft and fighters. Obviously, to achieve maximum surprise, the Americans will begin to establish these reserves shortly before the attack. However, this will require a certain period of time, which will be marked by a considerable increase in the activity of the various mobilization organs of the naval forces and of the enterprises engaged in filling the orders. This important reconnaissance indication is

practically impossible to conceal.

These, then, are the most important reconnaissance indications of the preparation by US naval carrier strike large units to deliver the initial nuclear strikes. Of course, this does not completely exhaust the list of possible reconnaissance indications, particularly the supplemental and prewar indications. However, the appearance of just these indications alone, or just some of them, may already be sufficient reason to draw the conclusion that a surprise strike from the sea is being prepared. The detection of other reconnaissance indications will only give additional corroboration to this conclusion.

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