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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

10 October 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Some Questions of Combined
Actions of Allied Navies in Combating the Threat
of Mines

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on articles from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. This article discusses a number of wide-ranging proposals for combined actions by the Warsaw Pact's various national large units of the Combined Fleet in the Baltic Sea to counteract NATO's plans to use mines for offensive and defense purposes in the event of war in that theater. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article appeared in Issue No. 18, which was published in 1979.

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 [] Codeword [].

John N. McMahon

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR/WARSAW PACT



DATE OF INFO. 1979

DATE 10 October 1980

SUBJECT

WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Some Questions of Combined Actions of Allied Navies in Combating the Threat of Mines

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article was written by Commander W. Grzadkowski, a senior specialist on the staff of the Polish Navy. It discusses NATO's plans to employ mines for offensive and defensive purposes in the Baltic Sea and recommends appropriate responses in the form of combined actions by Warsaw Pact naval forces in that theater. One such response would be the creation of a unified Combined Fleet antimine observation system, which would track NATO mine carriers in peacetime with the aim of destroying them at the start of war. The author also deems it advisable to establish multiple-arm large units in order to accomplish antimine support tasks in naval operations, during the debarkation of an amphibious landing force, as well as during the clearing of obstacles from the straits. The article explores the composition, command structure, and various operating methods of this proposed antimine force. This article appeared in Issue No. 18, which was published in 1979.

End of Summary

Comment:

There is no information in available reference materials which can be firmly identified with the author.



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Some Questions of Combined Actions of Allied Navies
in Combating the Threat of Mines

by

Commander W. GRZADKOWSKI
Senior specialist of the Staff of the Navy
of the Polish People's Republic

Experience in local wars, particularly in the combat actions in Korea and Vietnam, shows that the mine remains an effective means of combat at sea. This is so because of its concealment, independence, stability, and also capability to destroy various types of ships and vessels without human participation. The NATO command therefore devotes considerable attention to this type of weapon: depots in West Germany and Denmark contain up to 30,000 sea mines planned for use in accomplishing offensive or defensive tasks. Analysis of exercises and combat training in the Baltic Sea shows that NATO's naval forces are constantly working out methods of employing mines against the fleets of Warsaw Pact countries with the object of hindering their departure from basing areas, disrupting their operational deployment, and preventing them from seizing the initiative in operations at sea.

For offensive purposes NATO's naval forces are working out /plans/ to lay active minefields. Aircraft (operating, as a rule, at low altitudes mainly in conditions of poor visibility), submarines, small high-speed surface craft, and merchant vessels are to be used for this.

For purposes of defense, the laying of mines in the approaches to the straits zone and in the straits is being worked out with a view to preventing or hindering the maneuvers of the surface and submarine forces of our allied navies. As a rule, plans call for coastal and field artillery, as well as surface striking forces to provide cover for defensive minefields. With a view to making warfare against mines more difficult, provisions are being made for employing different types of mines with combined actuation devices and anti-sweep explosive floats.

The active preparation of NATO's naval forces for the use of mines testifies to the fact that should the imperialists succeed in unleashing a

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war, the allied navies would have to conduct their combat actions under conditions of high risk from mines. Antimine defense will therefore be a major type of support of their combat actions. It must be organized at all levels, starting with a single ship or vessel and ending with antimine support for the combat actions of the various national large units of the Combined Fleet in the theater. This means that our navies will have to continuously develop and improve antimine forces and means capable of detecting and destroying mines in coastal channels and on routes traversed by detachments of combat vessels and convoys, find ways of circumventing detected minefields, breach minefields during the debarkation of amphibious landing forces, and demine and clear the canals and channels in the straits.

In our opinion, the special-purpose surface vessels -- minesweepers of various types and mine bumpers -- are still the main type of antimine forces in our fleets. Judging from the experience of operational and combat training of the allied navies, large units of antimine ships will play the main role in combating the threat of mines in the theater. In recent years, therefore, a great deal of attention has been devoted to developing and equipping them with combined means of searching for and destroying mines, as well as to increasing the minesweepers' security against destruction by mines.

At the same time, the complex mine situation which could materialize at sea in time of war requires that a search be made for new means and methods of eliminating the threat of mines. At present, the desire is evident among most navies of various countries to equip their minesweepers with means of detecting and destroying mines ahead of the ship doing the search, as well as to employ self-propelled, remote-controlled influence sweeps. According to the views of West German Navy specialists, for example, one set of sweeps with control means increases the effectiveness of antimine operations two and one-half times in comparison with traditional sweeps. Moreover, sweeps so equipped can be used in coastal and shallow areas, which is of special importance when breaching antilanding minefields.

The employment of helicopter-towed sweeps greatly increases the capabilities of navies to combat the threat of mines. They can move out swiftly to a designated area, have a high sweep capacity, and ensure the safety of personnel when blowing up the mines.

Effective use is being made of frogmen mine specialists to search for and neutralize mines in dock basins, entrance channels, and coastal areas.

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The measures aimed at preventing the enemy from laying mines in the theater represent an important direction of activity pursued by the allied navies in organizing an antimine defense. In this connection, we believe it would be advisable to track the mine carriers during the period preceding war, to destroy them at the start of combat actions, and also to put mine depots and loading points out of action. This can probably be accomplished most effectively when a unified Combined Fleet antimine observation system, including coastal (mobile and fixed) and shipbased observation posts, is established in the theater in advance, that is, in peacetime. It would be useful to have this observation system cover existing primary and alternate channels, anchorages, and possible areas of ship dispersal. In this case, it would be advisable to provide for the mutual exchange among the allied navies of information on the situation in order to effectively and accurately determine the places where mines are laid, thereby narrowing the scope of measures connected with the reconnaissance and monitor search for mines and their destruction.

We also consider it advisable to decide on a unified system of channels and recommended courses as well as procedures for mutual warning of the threat of mines, and also to establish uniform standards for sweeping methods during antimine operations.

At the same time, responsibility should rest with the command and staffs of the national navies, with the naval bases and coastal defense flotillas, and with the offshore defense large units for maintaining favorable operational conditions, from the antimine standpoint, in their zones of responsibility.

From the foregoing, it follows that antimine defense forces and means can be employed to combat the threat of mines in the operational zones of the national navies and also for antimine support of the forces of the Combined Fleet in naval operations, as well as for the destruction of mines in important areas and in the straits.

The accomplishment of antimine support tasks in naval operations, during the debarkation of an amphibious landing force, as well as during the clearing of obstacles from the straits, will require considerable coalition antimine forces. In such cases, therefore, it would obviously be advisable to form large-scale multiple-arm large units consisting of antimine ships as well as special units and subunits of the navies' rear services that are capable of clearing underwater obstacles from landing sectors, canals, and channels.

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Judging from the training experience of the allied navies in the Baltic Sea, one of the most complex types of antimine support is that of providing antimine defense for an amphibious assault landing. The enemy may employ mines in the formation areas of the assault landing detachments, on their sea-passage routes, and in the approaches to the assault landing points.

Among the most important operating methods employed by antimine forces and means in support of the debarkation of an amphibious landing force, one should include the following: monitor sweeping of the formation areas of assault landing detachments and of the approaches to a landing force's embarkation points; reconnaissance searching for mines on the assault landing detachments' sea-passage routes; locating the perimeters of detected minefields and determining the routes for circumventing them; carrying out reconnaissance of the landing-force debarkation area; sweeping the approaches to assault landing points and clearing passages through antimine barriers; and sweeping the unloading areas of transport vessels and ships.

Experience gained from the combined exercises of allied navies shows that the accomplishment of the antimine defense tasks of an amphibious assault landing (particularly during the sea-passage and debarkation stages) will require the employment of considerable antimine forces. Therefore, it will take the efforts of all the allied navies to accomplish these tasks.

In this case, we believe it would be advisable to establish a large unit (grouping) for sweeping made up of different national forces and means, which is best placed under the command of the commander of the national large unit of forces constituting its main component. This will ensure the most favorable conditions for coordinating the operations of the shipbased sweeping groups and maintaining close cooperation among them.

In preparing combined operations, regardless of the composition and number of forces assigned to conduct them, there will obviously have to be agreement on the following matters: the priorities /to be observed/ in performing the tasks of antimine forces and the sequence of their operations; the operating procedures of the sweeps; the organization of cover for antimine forces against strikes by the enemy's aviation and surface ships; the operations of forces in the event minefields are detected during the sea passage of an assault landing force; the action procedures during a penetration (breakthrough) of the antilanding obstacles at the approaches to a landing area; the organization of warning,

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communications, and identification; materiel-technical support; and also the actions of the rescue service if ships are blown up by mines.

Operations of the sweep forces will also assume a complex character when the straits are being cleared of mines, since it is relatively easy for the enemy to organize a rather strong defense system for them /the straits/ in which mines are accorded an important place. Moreover, Western military specialists hold the view that part of the defensive minefields can be laid out even prior to the start of combat actions.

In general, it can be assumed that the enemy will lay his minefields in two stages. In the first stage (D-1 /D minus 1/ or D), the enemy will mainly reinforce the minefields of the antilanding defense of the islands. The second stage will most probably begin under conditions in which the enemy has lost the operational initiative and is threatened with loss of the straits zone. His naval forces will therefore be forced to make an effort to lay out the maximum number of mines in the straits zone* in order to prevent the forces of the Combined Fleet from moving out to the North Sea.

These circumstances predetermine the need to conduct sweeps and clear the channels of mines so that the main forces of the allied navies can move into the contiguous sea following the seizure of the islands and coastal area of the straits zone by the front troops. In this case, the choice of a method to clear the mines and obstacles from the straits either simultaneously or successively will depend on the overall operational situation in the straits zone, the density of minefields and engineer obstacles laid out by the enemy, and also on the combat capabilities of the available antimine forces. We believe it would be advisable, however, to seek to establish a powerful grouping of sweep forces and to concentrate its efforts on one of the straits in order to clear the main channel in the shortest possible time so that the naval strike forces can move into the contiguous sea.

 * The shallow depths of the straits favor the employment of all types of mines, while their comparatively narrow width creates favorable conditions for laying minefields of great density in the channels.

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The antimine forces we are considering could be composed as follows: a group of forces for marking channels and hunting mines (helicopters, minesweepers, hydrographic and rescue vessels, frogmen mine specialists); forces for sweeping and clearing channels of obstacles; a navigation support, observation, and communications detachment (radio navigation stations, shore visual and technical observation points, shipbased /floating/ mine observation posts); a detachment of materiel-technical support forces (tankers, supply ships, tugs, rescue vessels, and hospital ships).

Experience gained from exercises we have conducted shows that it takes about two to five days to clear a passage to the entire depth of a strait up to 300 meters wide (it takes three days to demine and clear a channel through a strait 65 miles long). This time period is determined by /the need/ to conduct the following measures: the reconnaissance search by helicopters for mines and submerged objects in the channels, the sweeping of anchored mines and search for underwater objects by minesweepers employing contact sweeps and sonars, the examination by frogmen mine specialists of cleared areas and detected underwater objects, the marking or destroying of detected mines, the marking of detected underwater obstacles (up to a depth of seven meters) and of channels for circumventing them, the sweeping of an area of detected influence bottom mines by minesweepers equipped with electromagnetic and acoustic sweeps (based on the experience of local wars, the timers on mines have been set for six temporal units or less).

Calculations show that the probability of ships being blown up in the channels cleared in such a manner through defensive minefields is decreased to 0.1-0.2.

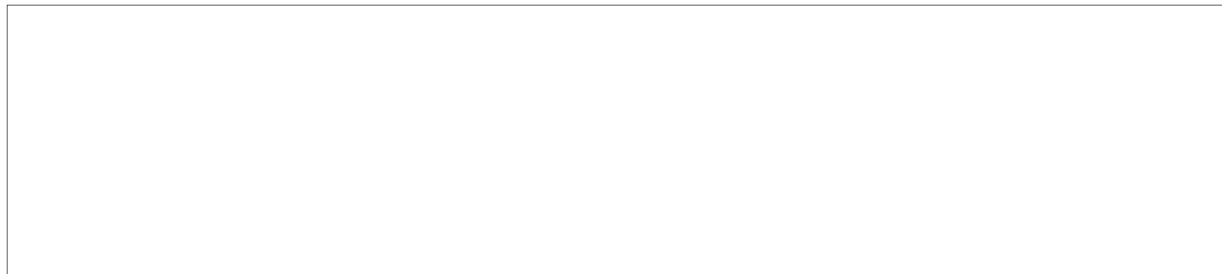
In summing up the foregoing, it would be appropriate to stress that combat against the threat of mines represents a complex system of measures and is one of the directions of combined activity which the allied navies are urgently pursuing. In order to effectively combat the threat of mines, therefore, it is of particular importance to coordinate the efforts of the allied navies in developing antimine forces and means and improving the antimine defense systems in the theater, as well as to prepare antimine forces in advance for combined actions as part of the Combined Fleet in the theater.

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