

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	USSR (Baltic)	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Disposition of Soviet Naval Vessels in the Baltic	DATE DISTR.	9 May 1955
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This is UNEVALUATED Information

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

A. Preliminary Remarks

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The following is an evaluation of reports on observations of Soviet naval vessels made during the period from spring to late October 1954. The evaluation includes only such vessels as were sighted once or several times and identified

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B. Naval Forces

I. General Review:

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The Soviet naval forces in the Baltic Sea form the Baltic Fleet with Kronshtadt as main naval base, the Northern Baltic (4th) Fleet with Reval (Tallinn) as its main naval base, and the Southern Baltic (8th) Fleet, with Pillau (Baltiysk) as its naval base.

The Baltic Fleet consists of:

- 1 battleship, GANOUT (formerly OKTYABRSKAYA REVOLYUTSIYA)
- 2 heavy cruisers, MAKSIM GORKY and KIROV.
- 8 light cruisers (see list paragraph C, 3);
- 35 to 40 modern destroyers;
- 100 large, medium-sized, and small-type submarines (see paragraph C, 5), and a large number of small vessels for minesweeping duties, submarine-chasing, and landing purposes.

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S-E-C-R-E-T

-2-

II. Detailed Information:

The list given below gives the various types of naval vessels and the harbors which they use as bases. The main bases are underlined, while the other harbors mentioned in the list are given according to the order of sequence of the frequency of their calls at those harbors.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. The battleship | <u>Kronshtadt</u> |
| 2. Cruisers | <u>Kronshtadt</u>
Baltiysk
Liepaja |
| 3. Destroyers | <u>Kronshtadt</u>
Baltiysk
Daugavgriva
Swinoujscie
now and then Liepaja |
| 4. Submarines | <u>Kronshtadt</u>
Riga/Ventspils
Baltiysk |
| 5. PT boats | <u>Swinoujscie</u>
Ventspils
Kronshtadt |
| 6. Submarine chasers | <u>Ventspils</u>
Kronshtadt
Swinoujscie
Liepaja |
| 7. Coastal minesweepers | <u>Swinoujscie/Sassnitz</u>
Ventspils
Tallinn
Kronshtadt |

III. Increase in Number of New Vessels:

During the period under consideration, new vessels of all types, except aircraft carriers, battleships, and heavy cruisers, appeared in ever increasing numbers replacing certain rather outmoded units. According to information available, new vessels added to the fleet between January and late October 1954 included:

<u>Addition</u>		<u>Total number of new vessels</u>
Light cruisers	2 or 3	7 or 8
Modern destroyers	8 to 12	38 to 43
Submarines	8 to 12 (roughly estimated)	doubtful
KRONSHADT Class	about 30	about 110 to 120
T-43 Class	10 to 15	between 40 and 50

For submarines, see paragraph C, 5.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



25X1

-3-

IV. Exercise Areas:

In most cases, exercises were held in the vicinity of the bases, and sea areas remote from general traffic were preferably used as exercise ground and were patrolled by guard vessels to keep off unauthorized observers.

Exercise grounds were observed:

1. In the Gulf of Finland:
 - a. Northeastern corner of the Gulf of Finland,
 - b. Porkkala,
 - c. Northern exit of Muhu Sound
2. Eastern Part of the Baltic Sea:
 - a. Sea area off Ventspils
 - b. Sea area off Liepaja
 - c. Gulf of Riga for submarines,
 - d. Sea area off Baltiysk including the Bay of Gdansk.
3. Central part of the Baltic Sea:

The sea area between Bornholm Island and Ruegen Island, and the Gulf of Pomerania.

The sea areas off Ventspils and Liepaja were used for submarine exercises. For large-scale exercises, the sea area west of the Gulf of Finland as far as the Aaland Islands and the Isle of Gotland were used.

Other exercise grounds were supposed to exist in the area of:

- a. Luga Bay (southern part of the Gulf of Finland)
- b. Kopena Bay (southern part of the Gulf of Finland).

Type of Ship	Total Number	Name	Base	Special Remarks
1. Battleship	1	GANGUT ¹	Kronshtadt	
2. Heavy cruisers	2	KIROV MAKSIM GORKII	" "	

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S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



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-4-

Type of Ship	Total Number	Name	Base	Special Remarks
3. Light cruisers				
a. SVERDLOV Class	8 (10?)	ADMIRAL USHAKOV ? ? ? ORDZHONIKIDZE ALEKSANDR NEVSKIY ? ? ?	Kronshtadt " " " " Baltiysk Kronshtadt " "	
b. Other types	1	ADMIRAL MAKAROV (ex-NUERNBERG)	Kronshtadt	Training ship

It seems improbable that more than 8 cruisers of this type are on active duty in the Baltic Sea; it remains, however, to be clarified whether this is actually the case or not.
 The total number of 10 cruisers of this type is possibly an error
 The whereabouts of cruiser CHKALOV of the CHAPAYEV Class was not determined. It is probable, however, that it is still in the Baltic Sea.

Type	Total Number	Base	Special Remarks
4. Destroyers			
a. SKORYY Class and O-II Class (The group arrangement of the distinguishing numbers indicates that the respective vessels presumably belong to one and the same flotilla.)	35	Kronshtadt Gulf of Finland " Baltiysk/ Gulf of Danzig Kronshtadt/ Gulf of Finland " "	

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S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



25X1

-5-

Type	Total Number		Base	Special Remarks
			Kronshtadt	
			"	
			Swinoujscie	
			Riga/Daugavgriva	
			off Baltiysk	
			Kronshtadt	
			Kronshtadt	
			off Baltiysk	
			Kronshtadt	
b. Latest type of destroyer	4		Kronshtadt/ Gulf of Finland	
			"	
			"	undergoing trials

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The vessels mentioned under 4a are modern destroyers of the SKORYY and the O-II Class, which were occasionally observed carrying out formation exercises, sometimes with cruisers.

It is supposed that there still exist another 10 to 15 outmoded destroyers, [redacted] and which probably serve training purposes.

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Submarines

5. No clear picture of the total number, types, and bases of the submarines [redacted] could be gained. [redacted] only a small percentage of the total of 80 to 90 submarines probably in existence. Kronshtadt and Ventspils/Riga were previously believed to be the main submarine bases. Modern snorkel-equipped submarines were met only occasionally, the majority of submarines sighted up to now being obsolete types as far as ocean use is concerned.

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PT Boats

6. A total of 110 numbered PT boats was observed during the period, and the main bases of about 60 PT boats could be determined. Swinoujscie, with Sassnitz as secondary harbor, is the main base for three or four flotillas (about 30 boats), and is particularly suited as an advanced base. This is because of its short distance from the entrance to the Baltic Sea, its favorable location for exercises, because of the water depths for torpedo practice, and of its good shelter from westerly winds.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



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Ventspils, which generally serves as a base for two flotillas (about 16 PT boats), is the second PT base, and numerous PT boats are permanently chocked up and mothballed ashore. One flotilla (8 boats) was permanently stationed in Kronshtadt; in addition, other PT boats continuously went to and left the shipyards available in this district.

Another 20 PT boats were chocked up ashore in Daugavgriva.

Submarine Chasers and Minesweepers.

a. POLUKHIN Class:

[redacted] fast minesweepers were observed. Another three boats of this class were sighted [redacted]

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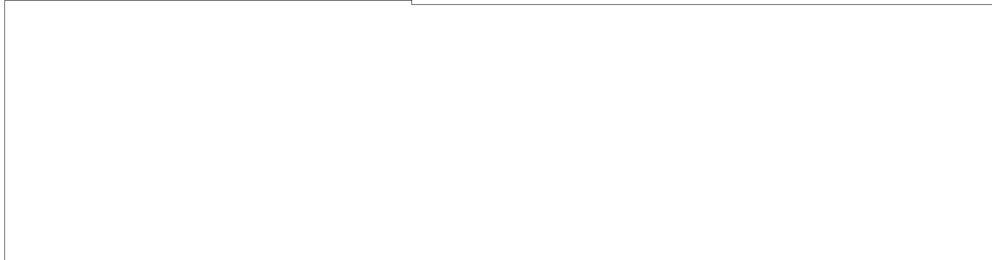
b. T-43 Class:

This type of submarine chaser, developed and improved on the KRONSHADT Class, has appeared in increasing numbers and is permanently gaining in numerical strength. A total of 35 boats of this T-43 Class was definitely stated to exist. Another twelve boats could not be definitely identified as T-43 boats, [redacted] For this reason, it is yet impossible to indicate their organization in flotillas and their respective bases.

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It seems, however, rather certain that 25 of these boats are mainly stationed in the Gulf of Finland [redacted]

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Seven boats [redacted] were stationed in Liepaja and probably cooperated with the submarines stationed there.

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c. KRONSHADT Class:

This class, too, was observed in increasing numbers and seems intended to replace eventually the entirely outmoded boats of the 301 Class.

[redacted] a total of 98 vessels were clearly identified as KRONSHADT-Class boats. Another 20 vessels, [redacted]

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[redacted] could not be definitely made out as to their type. An enormous concentration of these vessels, which can serve as submarine chasers, was observed in Ventspils harbor and the adjacent waters, since Ventspils harbor is also used as a base for submarines carrying out exercises in these waters. More than 50 percent

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S-E-C-R-E-T

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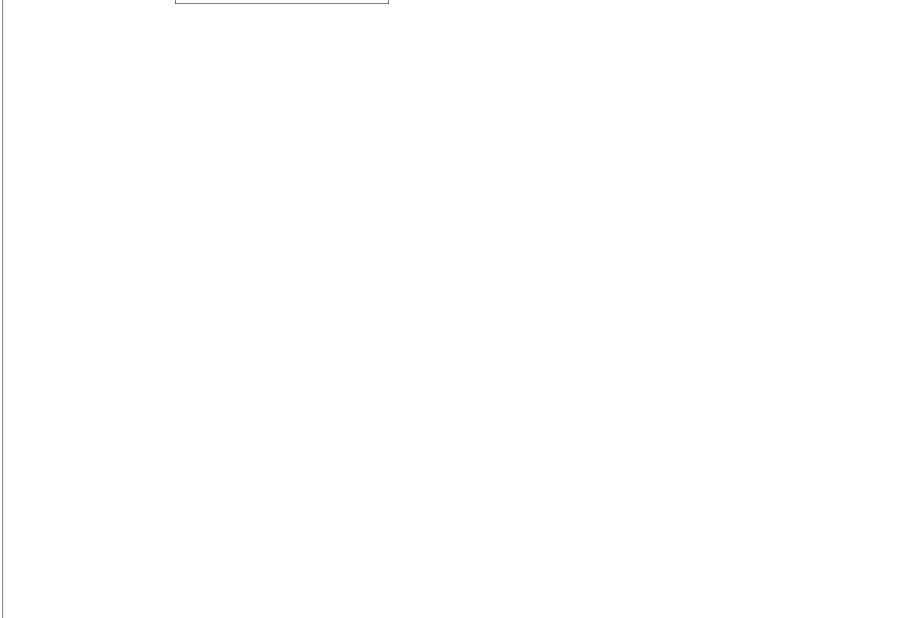
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-7-

of these KRONSHADT boats were observed in or off Ventspils throughout the summer months

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d. Minesweepers

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Only fourteen minesweepers were observed, most of them in the Gulf of Finland (possibly stationed in Tallinn) during the period

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Minesweepers were observed at various places and ports of the Baltic Sea.

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In this connection, it is interesting to note that, according to information available, a total of six vessels of this type was delivered to Rumania during the summer of 1954. (They could have reached their destination in the Black Sea only by way of the canal system.)

e. 301 - Class:



a total of 124 of these vessels was observed. 73 were definitely made out as vessels of this class, while the remainder must be considered doubtful.

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Swinoujscie and Sassnitz were the most frequented ports from which the swept channels in the Bay of Pomerania were permanently checked and widened.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



25X1

-8-

Other bases included Ventspils, Tallinn, and Kronstadt/Leningrad. 301-boats 321 through 325 were temporarily or permanently placed at the disposal of the Polish Navy in September 1954.

8. Landing Craft

Soviet landing craft were sighted only twice and in small numbers. (At the close of World War II, the Soviet Navy had a total of about 90 vessels of this type, all war booty or Lend-Lease units.)



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[Redacted] landing ships participated in a convoy exercise in the waters of the Bay of Pomerania held in July 1954.

Landing ships [Redacted] were met in the waters off Porkkala.

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Conclusion

The incorporation of an increasing number of new vessels of the types described in the foregoing paragraphs is characteristic of the development during the period, in comparison to the previous situation. This increase, however, has by no means created an alarming situation, although the Soviet naval potential has been raised at least in that a considerable increase of the light-cruiser category is concerned. On the other hand, considering the old age of the Soviet war fleet, the replacement of outmoded vessels with modern types must be considered quite a natural and unavoidable measure which, compared to other standards, was overdue for a fleet meant to be a useful instrument of war.

As to the individual training of vessels and the cooperation of homogeneous or mixed groups of ships, it is inferred from previous reports, that only very plain and simple tasks were assigned to the individual ships or groups of ships participating in the exercises held close inshore, and even then not too frequently. It is believed that the present standard of efficiency of the Soviet fleet, in particular the cooperation of combined units, is comparatively low.

Information about the Soviet submarine force is still quite unsatisfactory. Even such ordinary and well-known harbors as Tallinn, Baltischport, Paldiski, Liepaja, and Baltiysk/Kaliningrad were more or less inaccessible. Despite this fact, by far more reports would have been received if the number of modern submarines had actually increased to any noteworthy extent. Although modern submarines mainly move under water, a much larger number of such submarines would necessarily have been observed undergoing test runs or making basic training cruises. Taking as a basis of calculation a total force of 250 to 300 submarines (in all Soviet naval districts) and an average life of ten years per submarine, the minimum number of submarines to be replaced each year would be 25 to 30 boats without raising the present

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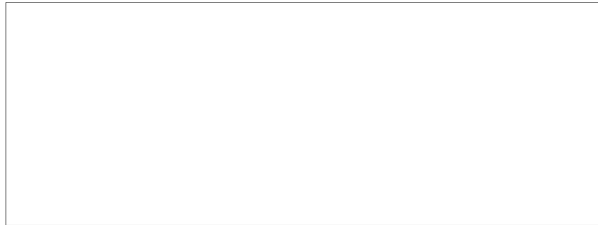
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-9-

total of 250 to 300 submarines. There is no indication that more than a yearly total of 25 to 30 submarines can be built, at least not in Baltic shipyards in which 50 percent of the Soviet shipbuilding capacity is concentrated. Since, however, the cruiser building program seems to be nearing its end phase, more shipbuilding facilities will be available for the construction of submarines in the future and this will result in further development of the Soviet submarine force.

 Comment: The OKTYABRSKAYA REVOLYUTSIYA is an old battleship of the GANGUT-Class, and was itself the ex-GANGUT.

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