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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

29 June 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : William W. Wells  
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Certain Problems of  
Superiority at Sea Under Conditions of  
Closed Naval Theaters

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 the capabilities of naval forces for gaining superiority at sea in a closed naval theater, indicating the direct dependence of this on the achievement of air superiority. The general requirements for troops in accomplishing tasks of air and naval superiority are listed as well as the prerequisites and the tasks themselves for gaining superiority, for which the need for the massive use of ship strike forces and aircraft is emphasized. The author also discusses ways of preventing the buildup of enemy forces in order to retain superiority at sea once it has been gained. 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. 11, which was published in 1976.

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 [redacted] Codeword [redacted]

[redacted]  
William W. Wells *for*

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# Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR/WARSAW PACT



DATE OF INFO. 1976

DATE 29 June 1977

SUBJECT

WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Certain Problems of Superiority at Sea Under Conditions of Closed Naval Theaters

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 Vice Admiral V. Em, Deputy Minister of National Defense, Commander of the Navy of the German Democratic Republic. This article discusses the capabilities of naval forces for gaining superiority at sea in a closed naval theater, indicating the direct dependence of this on the achievement of air superiority. The general requirements for troops in accomplishing tasks of air and naval superiority are listed as well as the prerequisites and the tasks themselves for gaining superiority, for which the need for the massive use of ship strike forces and aircraft is emphasized. The author also discusses ways of preventing the buildup of enemy forces in order to retain superiority at sea once it has been gained. This article appeared in Issue No. 11, which was published in 1976.

End of Summary

Comment:

The author also contributed "Tasks to be Accomplished by the Navy When Assisting Ground Forces Attacking on a Coastal Axis" to Issue No. 5 of the Information Collection



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Certain Problems of Superiority at Sea Under Conditions  
of Closed Naval Theaters

by  
Vice Admiral V. Em  
Deputy Minister of National Defense,  
Commander of the Navy of the German Democratic Republic

The concept of "superiority at sea", which took form upon the development of the first naval fleets, has retained its prominence in naval art up to this day. However, its content has undergone significant change. The reasons for this are to be found primarily in the rapid development of productive forces, particularly in technological progress, as well as in the development, as a result of this, of the capabilities of producing highly effective combat equipment, and based on this, in the changed methods of armed combat at sea.

Soviet military science looks upon superiority at sea as resulting from wide-scale naval combat actions carried out in support of other branches of the armed forces for the purpose of establishing conditions which ensure the successful accomplishment of the tasks of those branches and which also prevent or hamper the enemy from achieving success. Superiority at sea is not attained by a single attack or in a single operation. For this a number of successful combat actions are needed, which are aimed at the destruction in the shortest time possible of the enemy's forces at sea, in their basing area, and in their dispersal areas. Accordingly, the sound principle set forth by the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy of the USSR, Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union S. G. Gorshkov, fully applies to the gaining of superiority at sea: that the totality of all the combat activity of a navy is the complex combination of simultaneous and successive fast-moving strikes and operations culminating in the achievement of decisive goals which in specific cases have an immediate impact on the overall course and outcome of an armed conflict.\*

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\* See: Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union S. G. Gorshkov, "Certain Problems in the Development of Naval Art", Naval Collection, Moscow 1974, No. 12, pages 24-32.

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Under conditions of closed naval theaters, the gaining and retention of superiority at sea has acquired ever increasing importance because it constitutes not only the decisive prerequisite for the accomplishment of a fleet's main task, but also because this superiority assists troops attacking along the coast in the fulfilment of the goals of the operation. The geographical conditions prevailing in the given area, together with a number of other special features and factors, affect the gaining of superiority at sea. It is known that the characteristics of closed naval theaters are determined by military geographic conditions, and in particular by the intercommunications through straits zones with adjacent naval theaters. An indented coastline with bays and fiords, coastal islands, peninsulas, or archipelagos can have both a favorable as well as an adverse effect on operating conditions for both sides, for example, by hampering the reconnaissance of naval forces and naval aviation, especially when these are located in a dispersed manner in skerries and channels.

Furthermore, one must consider that due to the relatively short distances separating opposing forces and the limited space of a naval theater, both sides will be able to conduct combat actions by surprise.

Taking into account the high level of development of combat equipment and the special conditions of a closed naval theater, one arrives at the conclusion that in gaining superiority at sea, superiority in the air has become decisively important. As a result of the fact that enemy aviation has to cross short distances in flying from its airfields to its possible combat assignment areas, naval forces may encounter difficulty in fulfilling their tasks if they are not provided with reliable cover and support from the air.

In connection with the efforts aimed at gaining superiority at sea in a closed naval theater, where conditions in most cases are very favorable for the employment of mines, combating mines has assumed a special role in that it is hardly possible to gain superiority without effective antimine defenses.

Directing our attention to the development of radioelectronic means attained in recent years, great importance has been given to questions of radioelectronic warfare. The short distances and varied opportunities for the concealed and dispersed basing of such means has made it possible to carry out powerful and aggressive radioelectronic measures when conducting combat actions. Therefore, it is necessary to select those forms and methods of control that ensure maximum stability and efficiency of control without, at the same time, overlooking the protection of one's means

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against enemy radioelectronic reconnaissance.

Together with ensuring the strictest secrecy and the production of jamming against enemy radioelectronic means, success in radioelectronic warfare can be achieved first and foremost by the rapid and immediate destruction of these means.

The most important prerequisite for gaining superiority at sea, in our view, is for our own naval forces to be qualitatively and quantitatively superior to the enemy's forces and also for our forces and their command to be constantly ready and capable of initiating combat actions in a short period of time and of successfully and decisively conducting these actions until the planned goals are achieved. Taking into account the fact that superiority at sea is not possible without air superiority, the requirements imposed on the forces which have to ensure the accomplishment of the task of air superiority are the same as those imposed on naval forces.

For the achievement of superiority at sea, these are the other generally accepted prerequisites:

1. The firm political-morale condition of all naval personnel, their superior combat readiness and strong discipline.
2. The outstanding preparedness of personnel, making it possible to ensure that naval forces are utilized and controlled, that weapons and combat equipment are serviced, and that personnel readiness is continuously maintained or rapidly restored under all situational conditions.
3. The conduct of decisive methodical actions by naval forces in peacetime, the core of these actions being combat duty. The organization and fulfilment of combat duty by naval forces should be regarded as one of the most important prerequisites for the successful destruction of enemy naval forces and consequently, for the gaining of superiority at sea and in the air.

To determine the specific goals, tasks, forms, and organization of combat duty in closed naval theaters it is necessary to take into account the following:

- the military-political situation in the naval theater;
- the forces, capabilities, and views of the enemy on the methods of initiating and conducting combat actions;
- the capabilities of one's own forces with regard to the combined



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actions and close cooperation of coalition forces that are using common concepts and planning as a basis;

-- the military-geographic aspects of the given theater.

The main goal of combat duty in closed naval theaters consists in continuously striving to retain the initiative and fetter the enemy by one's own actions, while maintaining an advantageous and carefully coordinated balance between offensive and defensive actions. //

By accomplishing the combat duty tasks in conformity with this goal, one is able to establish the essential prerequisites for gaining superiority at sea:

-- ensure the maximum possible detection of the enemy's naval forces as they move out of their base areas, when they are in concealed dispersal areas, and also as they enter the zone, by conducting purposeful operational reconnaissance and by performing steady patrol duty;

-- continuously monitor the enemy naval forces by conducting tactical reconnaissance and surveillance;

-- reliably secure the naval frontiers and coast under all situational conditions by setting up a stable system of border security and by preventing sabotage actions within the limits of one's own territorial waters.

4. The organization of effective reconnaissance, a reliable air defense system, a goal-oriented antimine defense, and effective radioelectronic warfare and camouflage, as well as the ensuring of the cooperation and control of the forces, for which it is necessary to maintain stable, high-speed, and secure lines of communication that meet all modern requirements.

The accomplishment of these and a number of other tasks and measures can create operating conditions favoring the rapid gaining of superiority at sea in a closed naval theater.

The primary condition for successful combat actions by naval forces consists in the skilful utilization of the prerequisites that have been established in the course of everyday actions, in the immediate delivery of strikes for the purpose of seizing the initiative after combat actions have begun, and in retaining it until superiority at sea is gained. In so doing, special attention is devoted to the delivery of the initial strike. To ensure its highest possible effectiveness, it is necessary to use in the shortest time possible the maximum amount of one's own forces to the entire depth of the area of actions or the depth of the enemy's system of bases.

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In considering the favorable conditions of a closed naval theater, one should assign paramount importance to the massive use of ship strike forces and aircraft. The massive use of aircraft in a short period of time ensures the destruction or neutralization of enemy means of air attack and the gaining of air superiority. In organizing the initial strike, the struggle for the first salvo is of decisive importance. We subscribe to the statement made by Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union S. G. Gorshkov to the effect that the well-known formula -- "the struggle for the first salvo" -- has acquired special meaning in naval warfare under modern conditions (conditions of the opportunity to employ combat means having colossal power). Any delay in using weapons in a naval battle or operation will inevitably bring about the most grave or even disastrous consequences regardless of where a fleet might be found -- whether at sea or in its bases.\*

The experience accumulated by the navies of different countries as well as the level of development attained in combat equipment enables us to draw the conclusion that the side succeeding in successfully delivering the first salvo will be provided with the most advantageous prerequisite for retaining the initiative and for enlarging the advantages gained.

In most cases the initial strikes can be delivered from a state of performing combat duty. For the comprehensive enlarging of success, up to the routing of enemy forces and the gaining of superiority at sea, it will be necessary in the future to purposefully and without interruption continue delivering follow-up strikes.

In order to gain superiority at sea, as well as rapidly destroy enemy naval forces, there may arise the necessity of accomplishing these other tasks:

- carrying out aggressive blockade actions to prevent the buildup of the enemy's forces in the naval theater and to prevent him from evacuating his forces and means;
- landing combined amphibious and airborne landing forces for the rapid seizing of straits, islands, and important sectors of the shore as well as military, political, and economic centers and structures and facilities located on them;
- participating in the antilanding defense by destroying enemy landing forces in their bases, on the sea crossing, and in the debarkation;
- protecting one's own sea lines of communication and making sea shipments in support of the ground forces;
- effectively combating any mine hazard created by the enemy. In the

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 \* See: S. G. Gorshkov, "The Navy at War and in Peacetime", Naval Collection, Moscow 1973, No. 2, pages 13-25.

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interests of immediately ensuring the freedom of actions of one's own forces, it is evident that the destruction of enemy mine obstacle forces or combat against them even before they arrive at the combat actions area will play an increasingly important role.

The successful accomplishment of the tasks connected with the gaining of superiority at sea in a closed naval theater imposes the very highest requirements on the planning for and organization of the utilization of forces, and on the control of these forces by commanders and staffs at all levels. That is why in peacetime great attention must be devoted to the instruction and training of command personnel.

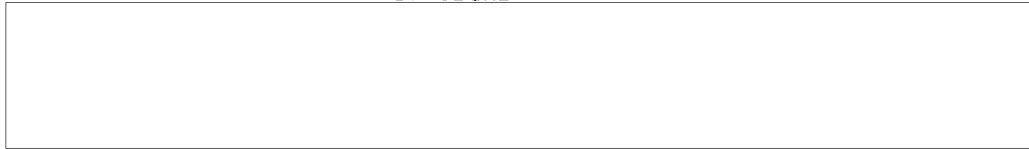
Depending on the operational significance of the naval theater, the retention of superiority at sea can play a decisive role in the successful outcome of combat actions as well as in the seizing of other adjacent water areas or enemy territory.

The successful retention of superiority at sea requires primarily the prevention of the buildup of enemy forces. This task can be accomplished by organizing and conducting aggressive blockade actions whose effectiveness will depend to a great extent on how far, by coordinated and unified efforts, one is able to carry these actions into the interior of the enemy's territory. Depending on the geographical conditions of the naval theater, the ground forces large units operating on the coastal axis can significantly affect the success with which the blockade is conducted. For example, the rapid seizure of the enemy coastal area, and also the territory adjacent to the straits, can create conditions favoring the expansion and conduct of naval actions. In so doing, it will be necessary to have coordinated cooperation both among the naval forces of the coalition and also between naval forces and ground forces large units, especially when there arises the need to very quickly land an amphibious force or to assist ground forces when they are crossing wide water obstacles.

Successful blockade actions by naval forces, which prevent the enemy from moving up reinforcements and supporting forces, will have a favorable effect on ground forces actions and on the rapid seizure of enemy territory by these forces. By these means the struggle of naval forces to master the closed naval theater will have a considerable effect on the gaining of the initiative and on the success of the actions of one's own forces on the coastal axes.

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From what has been set forth above it follows that superiority at sea, which results from wide-scale naval combat actions and the efforts of other branches of the armed forces in closed naval theaters, will give rise to an operating routine that favors the successful accomplishment of a navy's main task and prevents or hampers effective enemy actions.

Superiority in one of the operational zones or over the entire closed naval theater also provides favorable conditions for the basing of our forces, for the protection of the sea lanes, for coastal defense, and for the actions of other branches of the armed forces. For example, the successful accomplishment of this task lessens the threat of enemy attack, making it possible to allocate additional contingents of ground forces as well as air defense forces for action on other axes. On the other hand, the absence or loss of superiority at sea requires the use of considerable forces to defend the coast. From this standpoint, superiority at sea can decisively affect the course of ground forces combat actions on the coastal axis.

Based on these facts it is necessary, even in peacetime, to take steps to establish those prerequisites that will ensure the rapid gaining of superiority at sea. These steps involve the maintenance of combat readiness, the continuous study of the enemy, the inculcation of superior morale and fighting qualities, outstanding naval and specialized training proficiency, exemplary order in subunits and large units, and the exemplary status of the equipment of the naval forces, making it possible to use these forces immediately, and finally, the thorough knowledge of the combat capabilities of the equipment as well as the ability to skilfully use the equipment under any climatic conditions and under varied sea conditions.



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