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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

18 November 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Control of Naval Forces Under Modern Conditions

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 problem of organizing control of fleet forces engaged in operations. The author recommends a continuously operating fleet control system consisting of operations, command and communications elements, and stresses the need to relieve the fleet commander of non-operational functions. 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 [redacted]

[redacted]

William E. Nelson
Deputy Director for Operations

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SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Control of Naval Forces Under Modern Conditions

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 Rear Admiral Yu. Ladinskiy. This article examines the problem of organizing control of fleet forces, which he feels had not kept pace with weapons and other developments. He recommends a continuously operating fleet control system, consisting of an operations staff, a command post network and communications centers. The fleet commander should be relieved of non-operational functions, and organs which do not directly affect operations should be removed from the chain of command.

End of Summary

[redacted] Comment:

Rear Admiral Yu. Ladinskiy authored an article entitled "Maintaining Stability in the Command of Naval Forces in a Nuclear/Missile War" Issue No. 2 (72) for 1964. [redacted]

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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Some Problems in Controlling Naval Forces Under Modern Conditions

by

Rear Admiral Yu. Ladinskiy

The major changes in the means and methods of armed combat at sea have as yet had little impact on the system of controlling the forces of the navy. But, at the same time, the effectiveness of the combat employment of the all-arms naval forces, and the use by them of new types of weapons, is directly dependent on the forms and methods of control of the forces and on the state of the technical means of control. The more completely and comprehensively the methods of control are developed, the more improved the organizational forms and structure of the operational staffs will be; likewise, the higher their degree of preparation and equipping with the newest technical means of control becomes, the greater is the reason to expect better results from the combat actions of submarines, naval missile-carrying aviation, and surface ships.

The control of naval forces always has been a creative process in the activity of the command and staffs of all levels. This process has now become extremely complex; this complexity increases together with the qualitative change in naval weapons and their delivery vehicles.

Now the command and staffs, in order to successfully direct the actions of the forces, must have a distinct conception and thorough understanding of the nature and special features of armed combat at sea, an excellent knowledge of modern combat and technical means, and the operational-combat capabilities not only of the arms of naval forces, but also of coordinating large units (units) of the air forces, rocket troops, ground forces, and air defense forces.

In controlling naval forces, the commanders (commanding officers) and staffs have to know how to organize the delivery of powerful nuclear strikes against the enemy in a timely manner, and to skilfully and quickly exploit the results of the strikes of the strategic rocket troops and the actions of long-range aviation for the most rapid and complete achievement by the navy of its assigned goals. Of great importance is the comprehensive support of the actions of the naval forces participating in an operation (battle), primarily submarines and missile-carrying aviation,

operating on the ocean at great distances from their basing points against a highly mobile enemy, whose main forces are strike aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines armed with missiles.

The great fluidity of combat actions at sea requires quick reaction to all changes in the situation. This requires exceptional speed in evaluating the situation, making decisions, conveying tasks to executors and constantly checking their execution. The commanders of operational formations and the commanding officers of large units, ships, and units frequently have to make decisions instantly, in the literal sense of the word, without preliminary preparation of their decisions by the appropriate staffs.

In connection with this, the control of naval forces, especially of those which already are deployed on the ocean (sea), must be established on the principle of strict centralization, combined with the broadest initiative of the commanders in the selection of methods of completing their assigned tasks.

We will find the role of commander initiative increasing continuously in the future. The experience of fleet exercises shows that every commander, to a greater extent than previously required, must always be ready to make a responsible decision independently and quickly, in keeping with the concept and intentions of the senior commander, and corresponding to the situation which has developed.

The control of naval forces under modern conditions assumes a new character. The reliability of control must be assured by a control system which is continuously operating in the navy and capable of withstanding the effects of weapons of mass destruction, having maintained stability and continuity in the process. A continuously operating control system is a major element in the high readiness of the naval forces to carry out combat actions, especially in the initial period of war, and it must be thoroughly worked out in peacetime.

The control system for naval forces includes an operations staff, a network of command posts, and communications centers. The operations staff is the main and only organ for controlling the forces which is directly subordinate to the fleet commander.

Only the operations staff is capable of a comprehensive and objective evaluation of the situation, a continuous account of its changes, a determination of the operational-combat capabilities of our own and enemy

forces, a draft of proposals for the most desirable disposition and deployment of forces to perform the tasks assigned to the fleet, a determination of the targets of the strike and the composition of strike and support groupings, the distribution of the allocated resources of nuclear munitions, and a comprehensive coordination of the efforts of the formations and large units of the fleet and of the forces supporting it.

The operations staff plans and organizes the conduct of naval operations. We see this activity as a single, centralized process, which encompasses all aspects of the development of all events in the sea (ocean) theater of military operations and in which, besides line operations officers, representatives of all arms of the fleet forces and weapons specialists must participate. Organizationally it is desirable to combine them into one organ--the department of operational planning.

The operations staff ensures control of the forces during operations (combat actions). This requires constant knowledge of the situation. The collection, processing, and reporting to the command of all data on the situation must be concentrated in the staff information center, to which these data are sent directly from all sources of information and which are reported to the command in collated form. This system eliminates various intermediate and parallel echelons, greatly shortens the time required to pass the information, and ensures quick reaction by the command to changes in the situation.

The criterion for evaluating the efficiency of the operation of this staff organ is the time required to collect and process information on the situation. The executive activity of the information center must be carried out in the least possible amount of time, measured in a number of cases not just in minutes, but in seconds.

The information center, however, only determines the situation and represents it on maps, plotting boards, screens, or in summaries. Besides this, careful and thorough analysis of all situation data, and conclusions from it based on calculations, are required, as is a draft of proposals to the command.

This work must be performed by the appropriate elements (departments) of the operational and intelligence organs of the staff, which subsequently have the task of working out the details of the decisions and instructions formulated by the commander, conveying the tasks to the executors, and

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organizing and monitoring the execution of these tasks.

Some doubt may arise as to the propriety of having independent staff operations organs - planning and executive. This is like creating two centers which are parallel to a certain extent, one of which plans and the second, relying on the data of the information center, deals with the problems of firsthand direction of combat actions. Naturally, this leads to the necessity of coordinating the work of these organs, and for this reason they should be combined under one leadership--the chief of the operations directorate (department) of the staff.

It should be pointed out that the practice of major fleet exercises, meanwhile, has not rejected the presence of separate planning (department of operational preparation) and executive organs within the operations directorate of a fleet staff.

The remaining subunits which currently are organizationally organic to the fleet staff and which have no direct relation to the direction of the operational and combat activity of the fleet forces, in our view should be assigned to the system of independent fleet directorates (departments), and be made subordinate, depending on the functions to be fulfilled, either to the first deputy fleet commander or to the deputy fleet commander for the rear.

We think this simplification of the control structure will considerably relieve the fleet commander and chief of staff of daily administrative chores and numerous organizational problems, and will be conducive to increasing the efficiency and stability of the control of fleet forces.

The second element of the control system involved in the organizational structure of the control organs, is the network of fleet command posts.

The increasing importance of the control of fleet forces under modern conditions provides the basis for believing that the operations staffs will become one of the main targets the enemy will try to destroy as quickly as possible in the initial strikes at the beginning of a war. Therefore, the organization of the operations staffs has to ensure first and foremost, that these staffs are highly viable and capable of maintaining continuity of control in any situation, even the most complex.

Under conditions in which weapons of mass destruction are used extensively, this may be achieved by creating a far-flung network of command posts in constant readiness for action, dispersed in the theater, equipped with the necessary communications and control means, protected from the effects of nuclear bursts, and thoroughly camouflaged from enemy observation.

These control posts must always have the appropriate operational-combat documentation to ensure control of fleet forces in the event of surprise onset of combat actions.

This problem is resolved at the operational level of a fleet by establishing main and alternate shore flag command posts, and also auxiliary and rear control posts.

The flag command post of a fleet, at which the entire main complement of the subunits of the operations staff is located under combat conditions, is the center ensuring direct control of forces during the preparation and conduct of operations (combat actions) at sea.

The organization of the flag command post may have its own special characteristics, depending on the tasks to be performed by the fleet. Thus, when naval forces are participating in operations conducted by ground troops on coastal axes, a ground situation post will have to be established to supplement the organic elements of the flag command post. While combat actions are in progress to protect our sea communications, the availability of a naval communications post, etc., may become necessary.

The structure of the alternate flag command post must be similar; this post, while smaller in terms of the number of personnel assigned to it, nevertheless must also be an organ capable of fully assuming control of fleet forces in the event the main command post is put out of action.

In order to use electronic computers and other means of automation and mechanization, there must be a corresponding group of computer equipment specialists at the main and alternate fleet command posts.

Fleet forces also may be controlled from the auxiliary control post, which usually is deployed on the main axis of fleet forces actions in an operation, in those instances in which control from the main command post is hampered or impossible. The auxiliary control post may be deployed under field conditions, located on a special ship equipped with the

necessary communications and control means; and it also may be located at the command post of one of the operational formations or large units of the fleet, for example, at the flag command post of the naval base, and completely equipped with the appropriate technical means to ensure the control of fleet forces in the operation.

The proper selection of a location for the command posts is of great importance in providing continuity of control of the forces under modern conditions. In particular, the auxiliary fleet control post, in our opinion, is most desirably located on a special control ship, which is capable of relocating throughout the sea theater, by the same token eliminating the main deficiency of any stationary command post--its immobility. This makes it very difficult for the enemy to deliver strikes aimed at destroying the auxiliary control post, provides great viability to the latter, and consequently also ensures stability of control.

During exercises conducted by some fleets, they practiced organizing an auxiliary control post on a submarine located in the ocean near the main submarine deployment area in the operation. On this control boat, as the fleet command called it, there usually was a commander of a large unit of submarines with a small operations group. The task of this auxiliary control post was to relay the orders of the fleet commander to the submarines during the operation, and reports from the latter to the address of the fleet staff. The capability of controlling submarines directly from this boat also was provided for, but this was not actually carried out.

It seems to us that such use of a submarine is hardly desirable under actual conditions, since it will quickly attract enemy antisubmarine forces to the area in which it is located; these enemy forces will not give it the least opportunity to fulfil the control tasks assigned to it. However, the idea of establishing an auxiliary control post on a submarine is in itself worthy of attention.

Close coordination at the control posts plays a major role in the direction of fleet forces operating at great distances on the ocean. Precise organization of their work will ensure quick reaction of the command to the events taking place and the necessary monitoring of the actions of the forces; and it will make it possible to attain a high capacity for results in the use of all the means of armed combat at sea, primarily missile/nuclear weapons from submarines and aircraft. An important organizational aspect is a well-conceived and smoothly operating system of transferring the control of the forces from one command post to another.

The considerable distances separating the combat action areas of the main fleet forces--submarines and aviation--from their permanent basing areas is the reason why it is necessary to have technical means of control with an operating range that would ensure continuous and reliable control of the forces.

To use the technical means of control, communications centers are organized; these are the third component element of the control system.

The organization of communications with submarines is of special importance. To control submarines, a single, continuously operating communications system is used with submarines on a Navy-wide scale; this ensures the capability of controlling them from the fleet command posts and from the center, the continuity of communications when transferring control of submarines from one command post to another, the interchangeability and reserving of the communications means of the fleets and the center, and the security of submarine actions, by using ultra-high-speed automatic communications and other modern technical means.

The existing communications system, which is being developed in all fleet exercises, basically satisfies modern requirements; however, there still is need for improvement, since the experience of the exercises revealed a number of separate organizational defects in it.

Improving the control system of fleet forces by reorganizing operational staffs and extensively introducing electronics, telemechanics and automation, will greatly increase the efficiency of all control organs and, to a large extent, will affirm the principle that the commander controls the forces personally and through his staff.

However, this alone does not produce a final solution to the problem of controlling fleet forces. It seems to us that successful control of fleet forces under modern conditions requires maximum simplification of the chain of command, eliminating from it all superfluous elements, and freeing the operations chief (forces commander), insofar as possible, from having to fulfil administrative-rear services and support functions.

The main function of the fleet commander must be purely an operational one, primarily the control of fleet forces, especially those operating on the ocean.

We cannot be confident about the state of such a vitally important question as the control of the forces, as long as the fleet commander

spends, as he now does, the bulk of his time on rear services problems of all kinds, digressing from his main function--operational direction and planning.

The fleet commander, insofar as possible, must be relieved of such chores as providing for the basing of ships and units, supplying them and bringing them up to strength, repair, theater preparation, and shore construction. All these problems should be fully entrusted to his deputy.

The fleet commander has to create the conditions which are the most conducive to fulfilling his most important responsibility--directing the planning of naval operations and controlling the forces while these operations are in progress.

The fleet commander is obligated to personally direct the combat actions of the main fleet forces--submarines and missile-carrying aviation, controlling the former directly and through the fleet staff; and aviation, including long-range aviation supporting the fleet, through his assistant for aviation--the commander of fleet aviation. All other intermediate and parallel levels and echelons of control must be eliminated.

Thus, we arrive at the conclusion that there is a real requirement for maximum simplification of the chain of command in relieving the commander insofar as possible of all problems not directly connected with the control of the fleet forces.

What must the activity of the commander and operations staff involve in the preparation, and during the conduct, of naval operations under modern conditions? We have the following conception of it.

The fleet commander, when making a decision on an operation, determines the main axis of actions, designates strike targets, distributes among them the forces and the nuclear munitions allocated for the operation, sets the lines and time and establishes the sequence for the delivery of strikes by the main groupings of forces, allocates tasks, and organizes the coordination of forces.

When the forces begin to deploy to conduct the operation, the fleet commander personally directs the deployment of submarines and their guidance to enemy groupings of fleet forces or convoys, directly controlling the actions of each submarine screen and tactical group, and individual submarines. In the guidance process the commander makes the strike targets more precise for the submarines, and organizes and

implements submarine maneuvers in accordance with changes in the situation. The submarines are guided until the moment they come in contact with the enemy.

A special concern of the fleet commander will be to concentrate the main efforts of the submarines and missile-carrying aviation to deliver powerful nuclear strikes against the main enemy targets at the beginning of the operation.

While the operation is in progress the commander watches changes in the situation closely; when necessary, he redistributes the forces in terms of axes of actions and strike targets; maintains coordination among the main groupings of forces; and monitors the fulfilment of the assigned tasks. Serious attention must be devoted to the problems of organizing operational and combat support to the actions of the strike groupings.

The missile submarines carrying out the tasks of destroying enemy shore installations are given specific main and alternate points of aim, areas of fire positions, boundary lines with adjacent tactical groups or individual submarines, time of arrival in waiting areas, main and alternate passage routes, and reporting procedures.

In this way, simplifying the chain of command results in the fleet commander becoming personally the one directly exercising control of the forces in every way.

The practice of fleet exercises fully corroborates the desirability of freeing fleet commanders from direct supervision of those organs of the overall fleet organization which are not involved in the problems of controlling forces in an operation. The proposed reorganization of the chain of command increases the responsibility of the deputy fleet commanders, who have quite specific responsibilities in the support of the combat activity of the fleet and become real assistants to the operations chief, relieving him of non-operational functions.

Briefly about the work of the staff in controlling the forces.

The operations staff, while ensuring the control of fleet forces in operations and while combat actions are in progress at sea, continuously keeps track of all the changes in the situation, and prepares and presents to the commander proposals regarding the axes on which to deploy the forces, strike targets, the location and time for delivering the strikes, the composition of the strike groupings, and the distribution and

redistribution of nuclear munitions. While the forces are being deployed and in the combat actions areas, the staff organizes reconnaissance, neutralization of the enemy antisubmarine and air defense systems, camouflage, and radio countermeasures. When strikes are being delivered against enemy shore installations, the staff transmits the orders of the commander to the missile submarines to occupy fire positions and deliver the strike, and, when necessary, retargets them and aviation against other targets.

During combat actions the staff monitors the fulfilment of assigned tasks by the forces and, specifically, organizes special reconnaissance to determine the results of the delivery of nuclear strikes. The staff devotes special attention to the problems of ensuring the stability of control of the forces, systematically verifying the organization and use of long-range communications and radiotechnical means of surveillance.

As evident from the foregoing, the former functions of a staff basically have been maintained under modern conditions as well. But the methods of its work will be radically different from those to which we have become accustomed through the experience of World War II.

All the cumbersome written and graphic documentation must be eliminated. The control of forces will be implemented only by short instructions and signals. All operational-tactical calculations must be automated.

We have not touched, in this article, upon a concrete statement of the question of automating the processes for controlling the forces. The importance of this factor and the main ways of accomplishing it already have been dealt with in sufficient detail in the pages of the military press. As to the practical aspect of the matter, it can be pointed out that the process of introducing computer technology already has begun in the fleets; this substantially facilitates the activities of the command and staffs in controlling the forces and organizing all types of support to them. However, the development of this field of military affairs is hampered by the slow solution of the technical problems of automating the processes of the control of fleet forces. For example, there still is no equipment to collect and process data on the enemy (composition, cruising and combat disposition, courses and speed of movement), to collect information on friendly forces (location of submarines deployed at sea, readiness of the boats and aviation for actions), to forecast the weather, to collect and process data on the radiation situation, etc. It is particularly important to obtain visual representation of the continuously

changing situation. Information transformed into visual form substantially accelerates and facilitates the whole process of controlling the forces. The fastest solution of the problem is the first priority task of the scientific-research organizations of the Navy.