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THE RED BANNER BALTIC FLEET (DIE BALTISCHE ROTBANNERFLOTTE). (U)  
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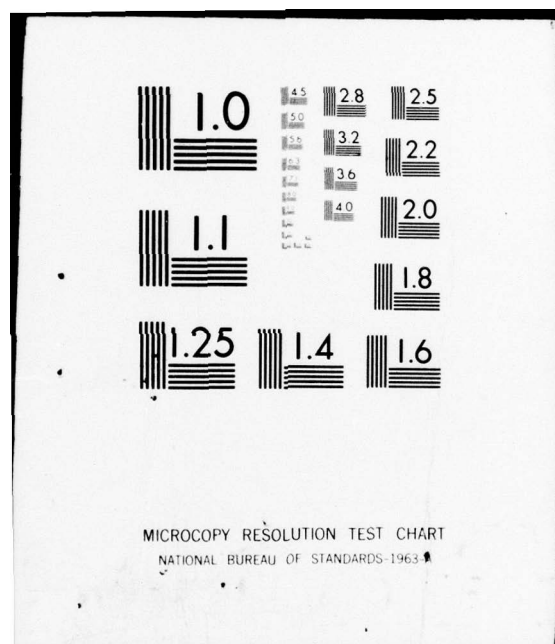
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# THE RED BANNER BALTIC FLEET

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Between the years 1945 and 1970 the Soviet Navy's Baltic Red Banner Fleet, which is employed in the Baltic, constituted the main part of the Soviet Navy. The shift in emphasis, perceptible since 1970, to NATO's flanks and to the approaches to worldwide operational areas, and to more of an offensive global strategy, as it is officially represented by Admiral Gorshkov, the CinC of Soviet naval forces, caused a change in the makeup of and the assignment of missions for the Baltic Red Banner Fleet which today is ranked third, just behind the Northern Fleet and the Pacific Fleet.

The Baltic Red Banner Fleet has undergone a reduction in available ships and only received a small share of the new surface ship construction. Moreover, this fleet time and again detaches units to other fleets which are then employed in the Mediterranean as part of the 3rd Squadron of the Black Sea Fleet or in the Northern Fleet and its Atlantic task forces. In many cases these units remain outside the Baltic as a consequence and only return after a prolonged period of time, or are replaced to some extent by units of other fleets in the course of a continuous system of rotation.

At present, the Baltic Red Banner Fleet is made up of 140,000 men, including an amphibious group of about 8000 men, naval air with 230 aircraft and 55 helicopters, and the shore defense. Available ships comprise 2 large ASW ships (KRESTA-II class; to some extent diversified with one unit of the KRESTA-II class and one unit of the KRESTA-I class. These units will not reach the 25-year limit until 1990-1995.); 5 cruisers with gun armament (3 SVERDLOV, 1 CHAPAYEV, 1 KIROV. The latter is only of limited use and presumably will be used for training purposes. None of the cruisers was modified. Consequently, it is expected that they will be stricken.); 11-12 guided-missile destroyers (4-6 KRIVAK, 3-4 KASHIN, 2 KANIN, 1-2 KOTLIN SAM.); 15-16 older destroyers (10 SKORYY, 1 TALLIN, 3 KOTLIN and 2 KILDIN; with respect to the latter, the modification involving the installation of 4 anti-ship missile launchers can extend the length of service beyond 1980 (25-year limit) to about 1985.); 5-7 guided-missile corvettes (NANUCHKA class; a guided-missile corvette developed especially for employment in the western Baltic.); about 30 frigates and escort ships (12 PETYA, 4-6 MIRKA, 1 KOLA, 9 RIGA, 6 GRISHA.); about 100 ASW ships (including the less serviceable hydrofoils of the PCHELA class and the improved units of the TURYA class [a total of 16,] as well as 25 POTI class, 40 SO-1 and 15 MO-IV; the two last mentioned classes, however, will have to be

replaced between 1980 and 1985.); 40 missile patrol boats (OSA 1 and 11, as well as KOMAR classes; by 1980 the introduction of a new class must be reckoned with.); and 60 motor torpedo boats, as well as 107 coastal minesweepers and 25 minesweepers. There are approximately 74-76 submarines (40 W-, 3 Z-, 11 Q-, 5 P-, 14 F-, 1 B-, and 2 modified-W-class. The B-class submarine is presumably employed as a target ship,) which are all conventionally-powered submarines. The amphibious component comprises 4 large landing ships, 20-25 medium landing craft, and approximately 20-25 assault boats, which are supplemented by small craft and 3 large air-cushion vehicles (4 ALLIGATOR, 15-20 POLNOCNY, and 6 ROPUCHA, 3 LCV AIST). In addition to 36 patrol boats, 16 larger auxiliary ships are part of the Baltic Red Banner Fleet (3 of them are UGRA-, 4 AMUR-, and 4 OSKOL-class), including 3 submarine tenders and 7 maintenance ships.

The CinC of the Baltic Red Banner Fleet has his headquarters in Kaliningrad. This area has extensive replenishment depots to supply ocean-going Soviet task forces. The tenders and replenishment ships are frequently employed for those sorts of missions outside the Baltic. The main base of the southern task force is in Baltiysk at mid-point along the Baltic coast; the northern group is in Tallin at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland. Next to it, Leningrad and Kronshtadt, which is offshore, constitute the most important base for design, shipbuilding, and repair with a concentration of 7 major shipyards (Kronshtadt: Naval ship-repair yard. Leningrad: Sudomekh Shipyard, Admiralty Shipyard, Zhdanov Shipyard, Baltic Shipyard, Petrovskiy Shipyard, and Kanonerskiy Shipyard). The base for the amphibious group is also located in Kronshtadt/Leningrad. Additional bases are Vyborg, Riga and Windau, as well as Swinemünde and a fast patrol boat base on Darss, directly off the strait of Gedser. The most important training facilities are in Kronshtadt, Leningrad, Tallin, and Liepaya, where the submarine school is also located.

The Baltic Red Banner Fleet, in its current structure, can no longer be viewed directly in connection with the naval strategic missions of the Soviet Navy in the Arctic Ocean and the North Atlantic, since the overwhelming majority of its units seem suited for a limited mission in territorial waters or in the approaches. In like manner, modest status of modern large ASW ships and the frequent employment of the assigned units of the KRESTA-II class in the Atlantic emphasize that, in case of need, these units would be diverted and would be used in other sea areas in accordance with their mission.

About 40 of the submarines belong to the obsolete W class, which will have to be decommissioned by 1980 at the latest and which no longer meet modern requirements for deep-sea operations, and in areas with intensive air and naval surveillance. Sixteen other submarines of the Z, Q, and modified W classes will have been in service at least 25 years by 1980 and only 14 submarines of the F



class and 5 of the P class meet the requirements in age and characteristics for employment in the western Baltic or in the Arctic Ocean. On the basis of their size an efficient employment in the western Baltic with its specific factors and shallow water depths does not seem promising, nor does the opportune transfer on the inland waterway from Leningrad into the Arctic Ocean, or via the Baltic outlets into the North Sea seem probable. At any rate, the units of the P class will have 20 years of service by about 1980 and those of the F class approximately 20 years by 1986/87.

By 1980, moreover, the obsolescence (25 and more years of service) of the five conventionally-armed cruisers, the 10 escort frigates, and 16 destroyers will have to be taken into account. This goes to prove that the Baltic Red Banner Fleet by 1980 will have units of medium size primarily and will be specially keyed to an engagement in narrow waters against highly flexible, light enemy naval forces as well as missile armament and air elements. The mission consequently comprises coastal defense of the approximately 1600 km-long Soviet Baltic border and of the corresponding part of their Warsaw Pact ally as well as the attainment or assertion of naval supremacy in the approaches. This entails combat against naval and air forces by naval forces, coastal defense forces with their partial missile armament and naval pilots, whereby an integration with air defense forces must be expected. In the event of strained relations the Baltic Red Banner Fleet can be used to exert pressure on the neutral countries adjoining the Baltic, perhaps by obstructing sea transport, and to influence the political development and domestic differences of the Baltic countries which are members of NATO.

Other functions of the Baltic Red Banner Fleet follow through tying up NATO sea and air forces with the defense of the coasts and the straits as well as with protecting the sea lanes, and additionally, by threatening the sea lines of communication of NATO in the North Sea and the approaches to the North Sea. In the event of conflict the Baltic Red Banner Fleet can be used to gain naval superiority in the western Baltic, to open up the Baltic outlets, and as a naval support for the flanks of ground force operations. This can also take place by means of amphibious operations for which, in addition to the Soviet amphibious group, there are also available a naval infantry division of the Polish People's Army, and at least two amphibious regiments of the National People's Army of East Germany, including the necessary naval transport capacity.

There is also the possibility of shifting the forces of the Baltic Red Banner Fleet as an advanced deployment into the North Sea and in this way, at the beginning of the conflict, achieving a critical decisive effectiveness against the sea lines of communication in the North Sea, the western outlet of the Danish straits, and the supplying of reinforcements, as was practiced, for example, in the fall of 1976 in the course of the NATO exercises. Then, too, in the

event of a limited survival time, a task force of this type would, nevertheless, achieve a high level of obstructiveness which could make itself felt in the western Baltic and in the area of the Baltic outlets.

In accordance with the changes in mission and in structure and composition the training activity of the Baltic Red Banner Fleet has also altered. In 1970 the various forces took part in the large-scale OKEAN maneuvers which featured the offensive for the Baltic outlets and the support of the Northern Fleet. The following year, too, ways of supporting the Northern Fleet in the naval area between Greenland and Norway were practiced. This development was concluded in 1973 with the participation of a task force in exercises of the Northern Fleet in the naval area east of Iceland. At the same time, landing exercises were being held again and again in the mid- and western Baltic.

By standardizing the landing ships, which were constructed to some extent in Polish shipyards, a favorable pre-condition for multinational operations could be produced. For the large-scale naval maneuvers in April 1975 the Baltic Fleet detached a task element with a large ASW ship, several destroyers and auxiliary ships to the Atlantic, transferred individual units to the Mediterranean and others to the Northern Fleet and there participated in the maneuvers. In the Baltic, forcing the Baltic outlets and interdicting NATO were practiced.

Only some of the units which had been employed outside the Baltic returned to the Red Banner Fleet again after the conclusion of the exercises in 1975. This decreased the number of medium and large surface units by five. In June 1976 an exercise in the North Sea was begun and subsequently transferred to the Western Baltic; a few months later another large-scale amphibious exercise ensued in the western Baltic in conjunction with the SHIELD 76 Pact exercise, in which units of the Polish naval forces and of the East German People's Navy also took part.

#### The Baltic and the New Law of the Sea

The third Law of the Sea Conference of the UN which, in four sessions thus far in New York, Caracas, Geneva, and again in New York, has been trying since 1973 to compile the fundamentals for a new international law of the sea, will also have to assemble provisions which will be relevant to the legal situation in the Baltic.

The conference work is being dealt with by three committees, the first of which is supposed to see to regulations for the deep seabed to answer the question who is permitted to exploit the seabed outside the borders of national territorial jurisdiction, private companies, countries, or a UN seabed authority, which would first have to be established, of course. During the session in Geneva the second committee set itself the goal of answering individual questions

with respect to the law of the sea which have turned out to be in need of reform. Finally, the third committee is working on the settlement of questions concerning pollution of the sea, oceanographic research, and the transfer of technology for the benefit of the developing countries, the latter in connection with the new simultaneously aspired-to international economic system.

Although it is not yet possible to pass judgment on the outcome of the conference, still what has thusfar transpired indicates that the prevailing principle of the freedom of the seas will no longer be upheld in its original scope. The individual questions which are being treated in the second committee are especially conducive to this qualification. These individual questions concern the following areas: territorial seas, straits, economic zone, main-land pivotal area, the high seas.

As for the question of territorial waters, deliberations thusfar have indicated that territorial waters should be extended from the former three to the present twelve nautical miles; no one objected to this plan essentially. Thus, the territorial waters, in which a country can exercise complete sovereign rights, as in its own territory, attains the breadth, which up to now was shaped by the territorial sea and the contiguous zone, in which only certain sovereign rights belonged to the contiguous states, but for whom the freedom of the high seas had otherwise been safeguarded. Conversely, the sovereignty of the contiguous state within these 12 nautical miles now constitutes the standard by which the exercise of individual rights of freedom of the seas by other countries forms the exception.

These rights are covered by the concept of "innocent passage" through foreign territorial waters, whereby the conference members tried, by providing a list of criteria, to fashion a corresponding regulation for the cases of non-innocent conduct. In this matter, however, the contiguous state is entitled to decide upon the damage to the peace, the domestic order, or security, which could give rise to abuses by the contiguous states.

The delimitation of territorial waters of the neighboring and opposite-lying countries is not being directly solved by the conference itself but is being left rather, in accordance with the wishes of the participants, to the contractual settlement of the countries concerned in each case; the conference itself does not favor any generalized solution, as, for example, the principle of equidistance.

The question of the legal regulation of straits is directly connected with enlarging the breadth of the territorial sea: by extending the territorial sea to 12 nautical miles the number of straits will increase to more than 100. The main point in legal regulation has to do with whether the universal rights of contiguous



countries to their territorial waters are to obtain, or else separate arrangements are to be made for straits.

Thereby the question focuses on the determination between a "right of innocent passage", independently applicable by the contiguous states, or a universal "right of free passage", excluded from the regulation of the contiguous states, which could not be fundamentally limited by the contiguous states. In this area several recommendations are being discussed, in the course of which, perhaps, the US will demand free passage for all straits which are used by international shipping; a recommendation by the USSR, Poland, the Ukraine, and the Czech SSR asks that, with respect to straits which join two parts of the high seas, the right of free passage, as on the high seas, be in force, whereas in straits which connect the high seas with the coastal waters of one or more countries, the right of innocent passage obtain, which, however, must not be suspended. A proposal by Great Britain, as well, calls for free passage for all straits which connect two parts of the high seas and which are used for international shipping, and for all other straits, non-suspendable innocent passage.

With the establishment of economic zones for the exclusive use of contiguous states, not only is the extension of these zones to 200 miles no longer contested but also, in the interim, it already has been effected by several contiguous states. On the contrary, the question: To what extent are rights in this economic zone to be granted to other countries?, is causing problems.

The legal regulation of the continental shelf was originally combined with that of the economic zone and thereby would have eliminated the separate arrangement thusfar in force. Actually, however, during the conference, it appeared that no agreement could be reached on this inclusion, since many contiguous states wanted to lay claim to the exclusive rights to the continental shelf to the point where it actually descends into the ocean, which, with respect to Canada, for example, would involve an extension up to 600 nautical miles.

Concerning the situation in the Baltic, the possible regulations for straits, which for their part, are based on extending the territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, represent an occasion for controversy; whereas the extension of territorial waters entails a narrowing of the line of movement but does not yet lead to a qualitative change for shipping in the Baltic, this could be done by means of a straits regulation within the meaning of the proposal submitted by the USSR and its allies; the only passable transit for larger ships in the mid-Baltic leads through the so-called "Cadet-Channel", which would then come to be situated completely within the territorial waters of East Germany. The West is apprehensive that, through the force of the decision of the contiguous states concerning innocent passage, East Germany would be granted the opportunity for political activities related to shipping in this strait.

As a result, it is feared, first and foremost, that this strait would then be subject to the sort of control, if it were to succeed, to give the Baltic the status of a "mare clausum". The consequences would then certainly exceed, by far, the control rights at the entrance; in a mare clausum utilization is relinquished to only the adjoining countries, and military utilization is permitted only for these same countries, whereby the NATO presence would be limited to the navies of West Germany and Denmark. These apprehensions are based, on the one hand, on the definition of "maria clausa" as those seas which are connected to the high seas only via a strait, on the other hand, on the proposals which are being constantly propagated by the Soviets, to make the Baltic a "sea of peace", in which a special cooperation would be laid down for the contiguous states, with the simultaneous exclusion of other countries. Additional interpretations in this direction could be derived from the regional accords for the Baltic, such as the Helsinki accord concerning the control of marine pollution, or the accord for the conservation of the fish stock.

In contrast to that, the West emphasizes the continuance of the disposition of the Baltic as the high seas, the most important elements of freedom of the seas would have to be adhered to, with all due regard for the legitimate regulations against a misuse of the Baltic by the contiguous states. Even the present accords would not fundamentally exclude other countries from the use of the Baltic and, therefore, could not be interpreted in the direction of a "mare clausum".

As a start, in order not to allow possible problems to emerge at the outset in the wake of the Law of the Sea Conference, the West has at times proposed that the western contiguous states of West Germany and Denmark for their part should forego extending their territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, and thus induce the other contiguous states to follow their example and to be discreet. The impetus for such efforts could be provided by the fact that the USSR, in a Council of Ministers resolution of 24 February 1977, adopted the 200-mile zone for its exclusive use until the definitive ruling by the Law of the Sea Conference, but in the process limited itself to those parts of the Pacific and the Arctic Ocean lying off the Soviet coast and consequently did not include the Baltic in an economic zone regulation.