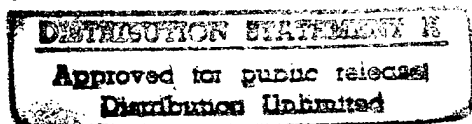


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NOTICE

The above identified patent application is available for licensing. Requests for information should be addressed to:

OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
CODE OOCB  
ARLINGTON VA 22217-5660



DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 4

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1 Navy Case No. 77284

2  
3 FUSING CONTACT DATA FOR BEST-ESTIMATE SOLUTION

4  
5 STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT INTEREST

6 The invention described herein may be manufactured and used  
7 by or for the Government of the United States of America for  
8 Governmental purposes without the payment of any royalties  
9 thereon or therefor.

10  
11 CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS

12 This patent application is co-pending with one related  
13 patent application entitled "CONTACT DATA CORRELATION WITH  
14 REASSESSMENT" (Navy Case No. 77283) by the same inventors as this  
15 patent application.

16  
17 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

18 (1) Field of the Invention

19 The present invention relates generally to data fusion, and  
20 more particularly to a method of fusing multiple contact data  
21 sets for the same contact in order to provide the best-estimate  
22 solution identifying the contact's geometric solution, physical  
23 attributes, etc.

24 (2) Description of the Prior Art

25 A variety of multiple-contact tracking assessment or  
26 correlation schemes are known in the art. For example, in U.S.

1 Patent No. 5,107,271, contact position data is initially  
2 processed through a coarse filter. All unrejected data is then  
3 passed on to a more stringent nearest-neighbor filter for  
4 correlation to a stored contact track. In U.S. Patent No.  
5 5,355,325, a measurement tree of nodes allows for the correlation  
6 between tracks and objects in a multi-contact tracking system.  
7 Three-dimensional volume measurements of the objects are  
8 correlated to one or more tracks by projecting a contact  
9 measurement into three two-dimensional planes. In U.S. Patent  
10 No. 5,392,225, contact data from multiple sensors are correlated  
11 to provide a more accurate estimate of contact position.  
12 However, without effective fusion of data from multiple types of  
13 sensors, a tactical situation "picture" can present conflicting  
14 information.

#### 15 16 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

17 Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to  
18 provide a method for fusing contact data from a plurality of  
19 sources in order to provide the best-estimate contact solution.

20 Other objects and advantages of the present invention will  
21 become more obvious hereinafter in the specification and  
22 drawings.

23 In accordance with the present invention, a method of data  
24 fusion is provided to determine a best-estimate solution to a  
25 moving contact using a plurality of trackers. Bearing-to-contact  
26 data and range-to-contact data is provided from each tracker. An

1 averaging function is applied to the bearing-to-contact data to  
2 determine weighted-average bearing data having a standard  
3 deviation associated with each tracker. The same averaging  
4 function is also applied to the range-to-contact data to  
5 determine weighted-average range data associated with each  
6 tracker. A computed solution to the moving contact is generated  
7 using the weighted-average range data and the weighted average  
8 bearing data from the one tracker having the lowest standard  
9 deviation. The computed solution includes heading and speed of  
10 the moving contact. A plurality of independently generated  
11 solutions to the moving contact are also provided. A root mean  
12 square (RMS) error in terms of bearing is then determined for the  
13 computed solution and the independently generated solutions using  
14 bearing-to-contact data from the one tracker having the lowest  
15 standard deviation. One of the computed solution or the  
16 independently generated solutions that produces the lowest RMS  
17 error is considered to be the best-estimate solution.

18  
19 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

20 Other objects, features and advantages of the present  
21 invention will become apparent upon reference to the following  
22 description of the preferred embodiments and to the drawings,  
23 wherein corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding  
24 parts throughout the several views of the drawings and wherein:

1 FIG. 1 is a top-level block diagram of the input data  
2 processing blocks of an underwater multiple-contact tracking  
3 system utilizing the data correlation/reassessment and data  
4 fusion modules according to the present invention;

5 FIG. 2 is a functional block diagram of the data correlation  
6 module; and

7 FIG. 3 is a functional block diagram of the data fusion  
8 module.

9  
10 DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S)

11 Referring now to the drawings, and more particularly to FIG.  
12 1, a top level block diagram of the input data processing blocks  
13 of an underwater multi-contact tracking system is shown and is  
14 referenced generally by the numeral 10. However, while the  
15 present invention will be described relative to underwater  
16 tracking, it is to be understood that the novel features of the  
17 invention are applicable to any multi-event scenario where  
18 multiple systems provide independently measured/generated  
19 uncorrelated data concerning the event.

20 Input data processing blocks provide data or contact  
21 solutions (e.g., bearing and/or range-to-contact) on various  
22 contacts (not shown) being tracked. For example, an active  
23 emissions (AE) system 12 senses and interprets various emissions  
24 (e.g., noise) from each contact being tracked. One such AE  
25 system utilized by the U.S. Navy is the AN/WLY-1 system. If  
26 possible, AE system 12 assigns an AE contact number to the

1 emissions and outputs both the AE data and assigned contact  
2 number to a data correlation and reassessment (DCAR) module 14  
3 for storage in memory 18. Input data processing also includes a  
4 sonar system 16 that collects and interprets various sonar data  
5 on the contacts being tracked. Similar to AE system 12, sonar  
6 system 16 assigns a contact number to the sonar sensor data and  
7 outputs both to DCAR module 14 for storage in memory 18.  
8 Examples of sonar systems include the U.S. Navy's AN/BQQ-5,  
9  
10 AN/BQQ-6, AN/BSY-1 and AN/BSY-2 systems. Additional systems  
11 could be used to provide even more data (correlated and  
12 uncorrelated) on the contacts being tracked. If AE system 12 or  
13 sonar system 16 are unable to assign a contact number to the  
14 data, DCAR module 14 operates to identify which contact the  
15 uncorrelated data is most likely to be associated with as will be  
16 explained in detail below. As part of the correlation process,  
17 DCAR module 14 performs novel reassessment processing to correct  
18 for correlation errors and take advantage of contact updates  
19 brought about by the various contact-data collection systems.  
20 Each contact having data assigned thereto is referred to  
21 hereinafter as a reference contact having a contact identity and  
22 data associated therewith stored in memory 18.

23 In addition to undergoing correlation and reassessment  
24 processing performed by DCAR module 14, each reference contact is  
25 also processed periodically (e.g., once per second) by a data  
26 fusion module 20 which, as will be described further below,

1 performs a variety of tasks. In general, the goal of these tasks  
2 is to merge or fuse data from the multiple sensor data sets for  
3 each reference contact in order to establish a fused reference  
4 contact file stored in memory 18 for use by DCAR module 14 and by  
5 other tactical situation processing tasks 22. The complex  
6 process of data fusion takes into account sensor system  
7 capabilities from a signal excess and parameter coverage  
8 perspective. Based on sensor capability and signal excess, a  
9 parameter tolerance is derived and used in a parameter  
10 reconciliation process. A parameter smoothing process is applied  
11 to mitigate bad data and large deviations in order to prevent  
12 same from causing a ripple error effect through the processing  
13 chain.

14 Data correlation at DCAR module 14 is performed each time  
15 new (uncorrelated) data is received in order to decide with which  
16 reference contact the data is associated with or if a new  
17 reference contact should be created. The correlation process in  
18 the present invention is, broadly speaking, a three-part process.  
19 First, point-to-track correlation examines each new sensor data  
20 block ("point") to see whether it is associated with one of the  
21 existing reference contacts ("track") stored in memory 18 or  
22 whether a new reference contact should be created. Next, a first  
23 reassessment procedure, referred to herein as track-to-track  
24 decorrelation, is performed in which the updated reference  
25 contact is examined to see whether the sensor data blocks  
26 identified therewith should be separated into different reference

1 contact designations. Finally, a second reassessment procedure,  
2 referred to herein as track-to-track correlation, is performed to  
3 determine whether any two of the reference contacts are actually  
4 the same reference contact.

5 In FIG. 2, a functional block diagram of DCAR module 14 is  
6 depicted. Incoming sonar data and AE data is received by a  
7 tracker manager 140 which maintains a history of such data. As  
8 mentioned above, if either type of data is already identified by  
9 a contact number that exists in the set of reference contacts,  
10 then the incoming data is correlated with the corresponding  
11 reference contact. However, if the incoming data block is not  
12 identified with a contact number (i.e., the data is  
13 uncorrelated), tracker manager 140 performs point-to-track  
14 correlation in the following manner. Tracker manager 140 first  
15 supplies the uncorrelated data to a bearing screen test processor  
16 141 to reduce the number of reference contacts against which the  
17 incoming (uncorrelated) data must be evaluated for possible  
18 association. A test on bearing is used because both AE data and  
19 sonar data will include at least bearing-to-contact information.

20 One such bearing screen test that can be used in the present  
21 invention will now be described by way of example. Let  $B_1 =$   
22 tracker bearing,

23  $\sigma_1 =$  standard deviation of tracker bearing,

24  $B_2 =$  reference contact bearing (time corrected to the  
25 tracker bearing time), and

26  $\sigma_2 =$  standard deviation of reference contact bearing.



1 Further, let

2  $S_l = B_1 - 3\sigma_1,$

3  $S_u = B_1 + 3\sigma_1,$

4  $T_l = B_2 - 3\sigma_2,$  and

5  $T_u = B_2 + 3\sigma_2,$

6 be the 3-sigma lower and upper bounds on  $B_1$  and  $B_2$  defining the  
7 threshold criteria for the bearing screen test.

8 Applying the above in an example where the tracker and  
9 reference contact bearing source are colocated (i.e., the sensors  
10 are the same or colocated), the bearing screen test is as  
11 follows:

12 If  $|S_l - S_u| > 180^\circ,$  then convert  $S_l, S_u, T_l, T_u$  to be  
13 between  $-180^\circ$  and  $+180^\circ.$

14 And, if  $[S_l \leq T_l \leq S_u],$  or

15  $[S_l \leq T_u \leq S_u],$  or

16  $[T_l < S_l \text{ and } T_u > S_u \text{ and } |T_l - T_u| < 180^\circ],$

17 then the reference contact passes the bearing screen test.

18 For the situation where the tracker and reference contact  
19 bearing source are not colocated, the angle  $\theta$  between tracker  
20 sensor position and reference contact bearing sensor position  
21 must be accounted for where

22 
$$\theta = \arctan\left(\frac{x_{track} - x_{con}}{y_{track} - y_{con}}\right)$$

23 and where  $(x_{track}, y_{track})$  is the tracker's position, and  $(x_{con}, y_{con})$  is  
24 the time-corrected reference contact bearing source position.

1        Then, let

2             $S_1' = S_1 - \theta,$

3             $S_u' = S_u - \theta,$

4             $T_1' = T_1 - \theta,$  and

5             $T_u' = T_u - \theta.$

6        The bearing screen test is passed when:

7        1)     $S_1' \leq 180^\circ < S_u',$  and  $|S_1' - S_u'| < 180^\circ,$  or

8        2)     $T_1'' \leq 0^\circ \leq T_u''$  and  $|T_1'' - T_u''| < 180^\circ$

9            where         $T_1'' = T_1' \bmod (-180^\circ \text{ to } 180^\circ)$  and

10                         $T_u'' = T_u' \bmod (-180^\circ \text{ to } 180^\circ),$  or

11        3)     $S_u' < 180^\circ$  and  $T_1' < S_u',$  or

12        4)     $S_1' > 180^\circ$  and  $T_u' > S_1'.$

13            Each reference contact having a bearing that is within the  
14            (3-sigma) threshold criteria is used in the next step of the  
15            point-to-track correlation. Each comparison falling outside the  
16            threshold criteria causes the associated reference contact to be  
17            dropped from further point-to-track correlation processing.

18            Reference contacts passing the bearing screen test are  
19            evaluated in a more exhaustive manner by a likelihood-of-match  
20            processor 142 that applies a total correlation algorithm to each  
21            such reference contact. Likelihood-of-match processor 142  
22            computes a score based upon a comparison of the incoming  
23            (uncorrelated) data block and the data identified with each  
24            reference contact passing the bearing screen test performed by  
25            processor 141. The incoming data is then correlated to the  
26            reference contact that achieves the highest score. A contact

1 manager 143 updates the reference contact (using the incoming  
2 data) and stores the updated reference contact in memory 18.

3 The total correlation (TCOR) computation used by processor  
4 142 utilizes both geometric data (i.e., bearing, bearing rate,  
5 range, range rate, and depression/elevation angle) and  
6 classification data maintained in an intelligence data base 144.  
7 Such TCOR computations are in use by the U.S. Navy in a variety  
8 of applications and are therefore well understood in the art. In  
9 the present invention, for each type of data existing for both  
10 the incoming data block and the reference contact being compared,  
11 TCOR computes a score. A positive score favors correlation of  
12 the incoming data block with the reference contact to which it is  
13 being compared, while a negative score favors non-correlation.  
14 For each type of data, there is a maximum allowed score and a  
15 threshold for which the maximum score is applied. For example, a  
16 maximum score of 10 could be given if the incoming data bearing  
17 and reference contact bearing are within a small deviation (e.g.,  
18 a 1/4 sigma threshold) after adjustment for sensor position and  
19 time. Other deviation thresholds are used to determine non-  
20 correlation or neutral correlation scores. Each type of  
21 geometric data has its own thresholds and minimum/maximum scores.  
22 The present invention can also include classification data  
23 comparisons (according to comparison methods known in the art)  
24 that are based on spectral consistency and classification types.  
25 These values can be

1 adjusted based on available data in order to optimize performance  
2 of the TCOR computation.

3 The TCOR computation is based on a comparison of several  
4 parameters (depending on availability for both the incoming data  
5 block and the reference contact) and can include bearing, bearing  
6 rate, range, range rate, depression/elevation angle, passive  
7 narrow band (PNB) tonals, emitted frequency correspondence to  
8 radiated frequencies, and classification. For the given incoming  
9 data block and reference contact the TCOR computation resembles  
10 that used in other Navy applications. Briefly,

$$11 \quad TCOR = 70 + GCOR + SCOR + ACOR + CCOR \quad (1)$$

12 where GCOR is the geometric correlation coefficient, SCOR is the  
13 signature correlation coefficient, ACOR is the AE correlation  
14 coefficient, and CCOR is the classification correlation  
15 coefficient. The constant "70" is an arbitrary number selected  
16 as a threshold level passing score.

17 If the incoming data block indicates a new track (i.e., is  
18 not currently correlated with a reference contact), it will be  
19 correlated with the reference contact which yields the highest  
20 TCOR value provided  $TCOR \geq 70$ . Otherwise, a new reference  
21 contact will be created. If the incoming data block is already  
22 associated with a reference contact by means of an assigned  
23 contact number from either AE system 12 or sonar system 16, it  
24 can again be correlated with that reference contact. However,  
25 the threshold level passing score is slightly reduced, e.g., to

1 60, to prevent unwanted decorrelation when contact numbers have  
2 already been assigned.

3 Determination of GCOR will be explained below by way of  
4 example with respect to bearing data. A similar determination  
5 can be made using range data. The reference contact bearing is  
6 time-corrected using the reference contact bearing rate and  
7 acceleration (if it is available). Otherwise, the bearing will  
8 be used as is but the bearing standard deviation will be  
9 increased (e.g., at a rate of 10°/minute up to a maximum of 10°)  
10 to the time of the tracker bearing. More specifically,  
11 let B = reference contact bearing (tracker time)

12 = reference contact bearing (previous time) + ( $\Delta T \times \text{BRATE}$ )

13 where  $\Delta T$  = tracker time - contact recorded time, and

14  $\text{BRATE}$  = reference contact bearing rate.

15 Note that if the reference contact bearing is from a towed array,  
16 the tracker bearing is from a hull array, and the reference  
17 contact has a range associated with it, then the towed array  
18 reference contact bearing must be parallax corrected as is known  
19 in the art.

20 To perform the bearing comparison, the scoring function  
21 given below will be used,

22 
$$L(B) = 18.12 - 7.391 (\ln(\sigma_{bres}) + bres^2 / 2\sigma_{bres}^2) \quad (2)$$

23 where  $bres$  = bearing residual

24 = reference contact bearing - tracker bearing, and

1  
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21

$$\sigma_{bres} = \sqrt{\sigma_{Btracker}^2 + \sigma_{Bref}^2}$$

wherein

- $\sigma_{Bref}$  = standard deviation of reference contact bearing, and
- $\sigma_{Btracker}$  = standard deviation of tracker bearing.

In addition, L(B) is clipped so as not to exceed -10 or +10. This is done to prevent an error from having an unrealistic effect on the scoring function and to prevent one term (e.g., GCOR, SCOR, etc.) from skewing the overall TCOR score. If a bearing comparison cannot be performed L(B) = 0.

The above scoring function in equation (2) is derived from the likelihood function (ie., the population density function of the residual)

$$P(bres) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_{bres}} \exp(-bres^2/2\sigma_{bres}^2) \tag{3}$$

and the log likelihood function

$$\ln(p) = -\ln(\sqrt{2\pi}) - \ln(\sigma_{bres}) - bres^2/2\sigma_{bres}^2 \tag{4}$$

A linear combination L(B) of ln(p) is then found which satisfies acceptable boundary conditions, e.g.,

- for  $\sigma_{bres} = 3^\circ$  and  $bres = 0^\circ$ , L(B) = 10; and
- for  $\sigma_{bres} = 3^\circ$  and  $bres = 1.645\sigma_{bres}$ , L(B) = 0, thereby yielding equation (2). Similar scoring functions L(BRATE), L(R), L(RRATE) and L(D/E) are used for bearing rate, range, range rate

1 and depression/elevation angle, respectively. The value of GCOR  
2 is then determined from the sum of all the above scoring  
3 functions.

4 Determination of SCOR is based on the PNB tonals associated  
5 with the reference contact and incoming data block. The PNB  
6 tonals originate either from the same sensors/band or from  
7 sensors with overlapping bands with the tonals in the overlap  
8 being compared to determine SCOR. The scoring function,  $L(PNB)$ ,  
9 also has a permissible range, e.g., between -7 and +10. To  
10 perform this scoring, the fraction of correctly matched and  
11 unmatched tonals is determined.

12 Let  $N$  = number of matched overlapping tonal bands,

13  $M$  = number of tonal bands left unmatched

14 = (number in tracker -  $N$ ) + (number in reference -  $N$ ).

15 Then the scoring function is given by:

16 
$$SCOR = L(PNB) = 10 \times \left( \frac{N - \max(O, M - N_E)}{\max(N + M, DMIN)} \right) \quad (5)$$

17 where  $DMIN$  = minimum allowable denominator which is used to keep  
18 scores lower with fewer lines, and  $N_E$  = number of extraneous  
19 (unmatched) lines to discount before affecting scoring.

20 Determination of ACOR is based on a comparison of the PNB  
21 tonals of either the incoming data block or reference contact  
22 with tonals maintained in intelligence data base 144. ACOR is  
23 then given a value of, for example, 0 for no matches, +3 for 1  
24 tonal match, and +6 for 2 or more tonal matches.

1           CCOR is obtained from a comparison of the reference contact  
2 classification with the incoming data block classification. If  
3 the reference contact of the incoming data block contains  
4 multiple classifications, each classification of the reference  
5 contact is compared with each classification from the incoming  
6 data block. The comparison which results in the highest value is  
7 then utilized to obtain CCOR. If the reference contact  
8 classification is from the same sonar tracker as the incoming  
9 data block processed, CCOR = 0. If the reference contact  
10 classification is from a different sonar tracker than the one  
11 being processed, the CCOR value is assigned in accordance with a  
12 predetermined correlation score between the values of -10 and  
13 +10.

14           Upon update of a reference contact with the data from the  
15 incoming data block, contact manager 143 applies a track-to-track  
16 decorrelation in order to reassess the newly updated reference  
17 contact. This is a form of error checking to verify whether two  
18 just-correlated contact "tracks" should remain correlated. (If  
19 only one data block or stream is associated with the reference  
20 contact, e.g., as is the case with a newly created reference  
21 contact, track-to-track decorrelation is not performed.)

22           Track-to-track decorrelation is performed in the following  
23 manner. The incoming data used to update a reference contact is  
24 compared with each of the other data blocks already associated  
25 with that reference contact. Each such comparison begins with a  
26 check of the classification of the incoming data used to update



1 the reference contact and each of the other data blocks already  
2 associated with the reference contact. If there is an  
3 incompatibility between the classification of the incoming data  
4 block used to update the reference contact and that of one of the  
5 other data blocks already associated with the reference contact,  
6 the two data blocks are decorrelated into two reference contacts  
7 by contact manager 143. If the classifications agree, contact  
8 manager 143 submits the same two data blocks to bearing screen  
9 test processor 141 (which operates as described above). If the  
10 bearing screen test is failed, i.e., the threshold tolerance is  
11 exceeded, contact manager 143 decorrelates the two data blocks  
12 into two reference contacts. Finally, if range and range rate  
13 are available in each of the two data blocks, a range screen test  
14 is applied by range screen test processor 145. The range screen  
15 test algorithm used in the present invention is the same as the  
16 above-described bearing screen test except that the range data  
17 and their standard deviations are used in place of the bearing  
18 data/standard deviations. If the range screen test is failed,  
19 contact manager 143 decorrelates the two data blocks into two  
20 reference contacts.

21 Following any track-to-track decorrelation processing,  
22 contact manager 143 performs track-to-track correlation as  
23 another level of error checking. Track-to-track correlation is  
24 used to determine if an updated (or newly created) reference  
25 contact is actually one of the other existing reference contacts.  
26 As a first step, contact manager 143 submits the updated (or

1 newly created) reference contact and each of the existing  
2 reference contacts to bearing screen test processor 141 (which  
3 operates as described above). If one or more of the existing  
4 reference contacts is within the given bearing threshold, a  
5 second track-to-track correlation step is performed. In the  
6 second step, likelihood-of-match processor 142 computes total  
7 correlation scores (using the above-described TCOR algorithm)  
8 between the updated (or newly created) reference contact and  
9 those of the existing reference contacts passing the most recent  
10 bearing screen test application. Contact manager 143 then uses  
11 the updated (or newly created) reference contact to update the  
12 existing reference contact that i) passes this most recent  
13 bearing screen test application, ii) achieves a TCOR threshold  
14 value (e.g., a value of 70 in the illustrated example), and iii)  
15 achieves the highest TCOR score. If the TCOR threshold is not  
16 met by any of the existing reference contacts passing this most  
17 recent bearing screen test application, no further update takes  
18 place.

19 Referring again to FIG. 1, each reference contact maintained  
20 by contact manager 143 in memory 18 is processed periodically by  
21 data fusion module 20 which is depicted as a functional block  
22 diagram in FIG. 3. The goal of data fusion module 20 is to  
23 generate the best quality data possible for each reference  
24 contact. The data fusion process consists of several functional  
25 blocks to include a bearing fusion block 201, a range fusion

1 block 202, a compute trajectory block 203, a select solution  
2 block 204 and a data fusion manager block 205.

3 Bearing fusion block 201 periodically receives bearing data  
4 associated with a reference contact from contact manager 143.  
5 The bearing data originates from a plurality of independently  
6 operating trackers (e.g., sensor systems such as AE system 12 and  
7 sonar system 16). Bearing fusion block 201 applies a linear or  
8 quadratic weighted least squares fit to each tracker's bearing  
9 data over a given time span (e.g., up to 30 bearings over a two-  
10 minute time span). While the linear fit function is useful for  
11 short range or high (bearing) noise applications, the quadratic  
12 fit function is a more general solution. A weighted least  
13 squares fit technique was selected over an unweighted technique  
14 so that better bearing data would be used and aberration bearing  
15 data would be filtered out. Accordingly, the following  
16 description will focus on a quadratic weighted least squares fit  
17 technique.

18 The quadratic weighted least squares fit is performed as  
19 follows. Let  $b_i = i$ -th bearing,

20  $t_i =$  time of  $i$ -th bearing, and

21  $w_i =$  weight of  $i$ -th bearing.

22 Then, the coefficients A, B, C of the quadratic equation

$$23 \quad b(t) = At^2 + Bt + C$$

24 are found which minimize the sum

$$25 \quad \sum w_i (b_i - b(t_i))^2$$

26 where  $b(t)$  represents the fitted bearing at time  $t$ . The equation

1 for  $b(t)$  is used to estimate a weighted-average bearing at the  
2 current time, as well as the bearing rate and bearing  
3 acceleration, and the standard deviations of the bearing and  
4 bearing rate. This estimation is performed for each tracker  
5 which has been assigned to a reference contact. The tracker  
6 providing the lowest standard deviation of the bearing data is  
7 considered to be the best tracker. The best tracker is thus  
8 selected to provide the bearing parameters for each reference  
9 contact used by compute trajectory block 203 in further  
10 processing. Since the bearing data sets are evaluated  
11 periodically by bearing fusion block 201, the "best tracker"  
12 selection is a dynamic process that adapts to changing  
13 conditions.

14 Range fusion block 202 receives range data for each  
15 reference contact from contact manager 143 and processes the data  
16 in parallel with bearing fusion block 201. Range fusion block  
17 202 performs a quadratic weighted least squares fit to the range  
18 data using an algorithm similar to that used by bearing fusion  
19 block 201. For example, up to 30 ranges (over a maximum of two  
20 minutes) could be processed at a time. However, there is no  
21 restriction that the ranges be associated with a single tracker.  
22 A weighted-average range, range rate, range acceleration,  
23 standard deviation of range, and standard deviation of range rate  
24 are computed. These computed parameters are then provided to  
25 compute trajectory block 203 for further processing.

1           Compute trajectory block 203 utilizes the range and range  
2           rate provided by range fusion block 202 and the bearing and  
3           bearing rate provided by the tracker selected at bearing fusion  
4           block 201 to generate a solution for the reference contact. The  
5           solution computed includes the course (heading) and speed of the  
6           reference contact. This solution is then sent to select solution  
7           block 204.

8           The computed solution is a standard "x equations with x  
9           unknowns" problem where

10           R = range (known from range fusion);

11           RRATE = range rate (known from range fusion);

12           B = bearing (known from bearing fusion);

13           BRATE = bearing rate (known from bearing fusion);

14           VOSx = ownship east velocity (known from a ship system); and

15           VOSy = ownship north velocity (known from a ship system).

16           Then, the computed solution is given by:

17           Vtx = contact east velocity

18                   = VOSx + RRATESIN(B) + RBRATECOS(B);

19           Vty = contact north velocity

20                   = VOSy + RRATECOS(B) - RBRATESIN(B);

21           Ct = contact course = arctan (Vtx/Vty); and

22           St = contact speed =  $\sqrt{V_{tx}^2 + V_{ty}^2}$  .

23           Select solution block 204 selects one of several available  
24           solutions for the reference contact. Each such available

1 solution is independently generated or made available from  
2 several subsystems, e.g., the solution provided by compute  
3 trajectory block 203, a solution provided by active emissions  
4 system 12, a solution provided by sonar system 16, etc. More  
5 specifically, select solution block 204 uses the bearing data  
6 from the best tracker (as determined by bearing fusion block 201)  
7 to compute the root mean square (RMS) bearing error for each  
8 available solution. The solution with the minimum RMS error over  
9 a given time period is then selected as the contact solution for  
10 that reference contact. The solution is provided to data fusion  
11 manager 205.

12 Data fusion manager 205 builds the fused contact data files  
13 containing the best current estimates of contact parameters.  
14 These files include both geometric solution data and attribute  
15 data such as classification. Data fusion manager 205 uses  
16 geometric data provided by bearing fusion block 201, range fusion  
17 block 202, and select solution 204. Data fusion manager 205 also  
18 receives or assigns confidences to classification data in order  
19 to reconcile any conflicts in classification. Thus, data fusion  
20 manager 205 has access to intelligence database 144 to aid in the  
21 reconciliation process. The fused data files for each reference  
22 contact are stored in memory 18. The fused data files contain  
23 all of the geometric and attribute data that is believed to best  
24 represent the current tactical situation for use by DCAR module  
25 14 and tactical situation processing tasks 22.

1           The advantages of the present invention are numerous. By  
2 combining correlation with reassessment processing, correlation  
3 errors can be reduced or minimized. Data fusion can be used to  
4 pick the best solution from a variety of independent solution-  
5 generating sources to provide the clearest tactical "picture"  
6 possible.

7           By way of illustrative example, the present invention has  
8 been described relative to a particular application thereof.  
9 However, it will be understood that many additional changes in  
10 the details, materials, steps and arrangement of parts, which  
11 have been herein described and illustrated in order to explain  
12 the nature of the invention, may be made by those skilled in the  
13 art within the principle and scope of the invention.

14

1 Navy Case No. 77284

2  
3 FUSING CONTACT DATA FOR BEST-ESTIMATE SOLUTION

4  
5 ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

6 A method of data fusion determines a best-estimate solution  
7 to a moving contact using a plurality of trackers that provide  
8 bearing-to-contact data and range-to-contact data. An averaging  
9 function is applied to the bearing-to-contact data to determine  
10 weighted-average bearing data associated with each tracker. The  
11 same averaging function is also applied to the range-to-contact  
12 data to determine weighted-average range data. A computed  
13 solution to the moving contact is generated using the weighted-  
14 average range data and the weighted average bearing data from the  
15 one tracker having the lowest standard deviation. A root mean  
16 square (RMS) error in terms of bearing is then determined for the  
17 computed solution and each of a plurality of independently  
18 generated solutions using bearing-to-contact data from the one  
19 tracker having the lowest standard deviation. One of the  
20 computed solution or the independently generated solutions that  
21 produces the lowest RMS error is considered to be the best-  
22 estimate solution.



FIG. 1

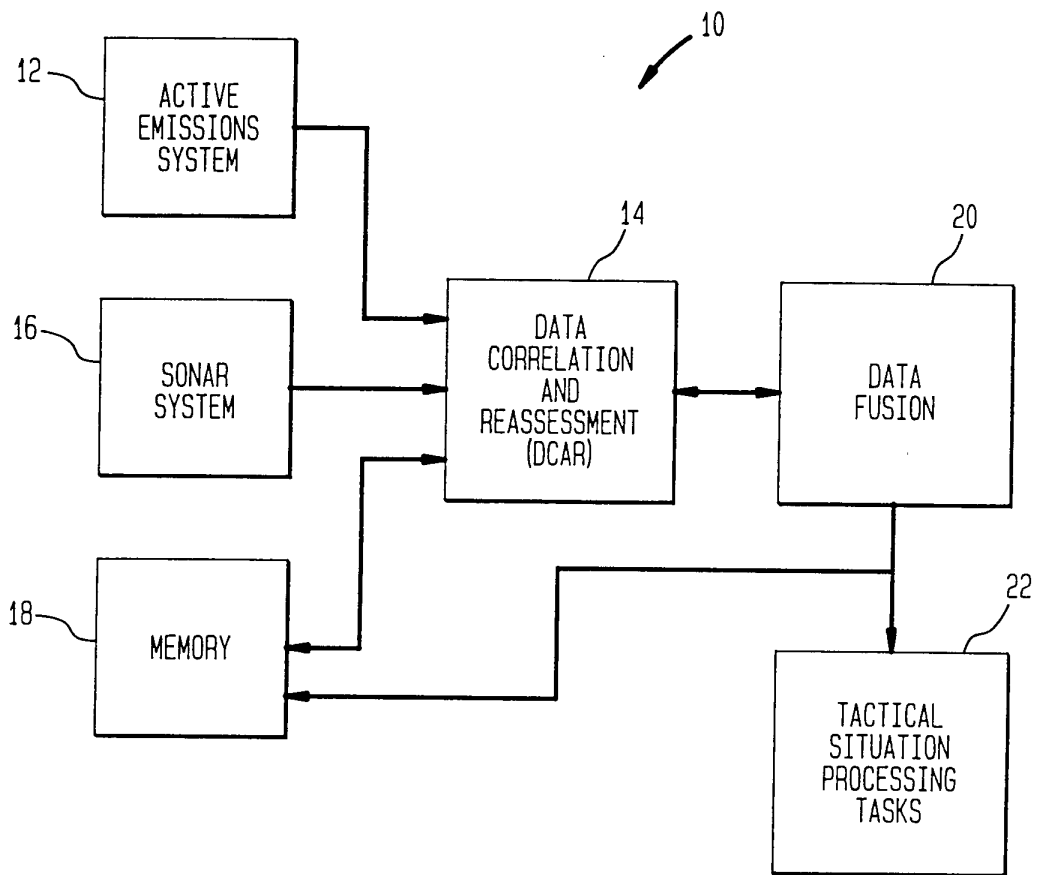


FIG. 2

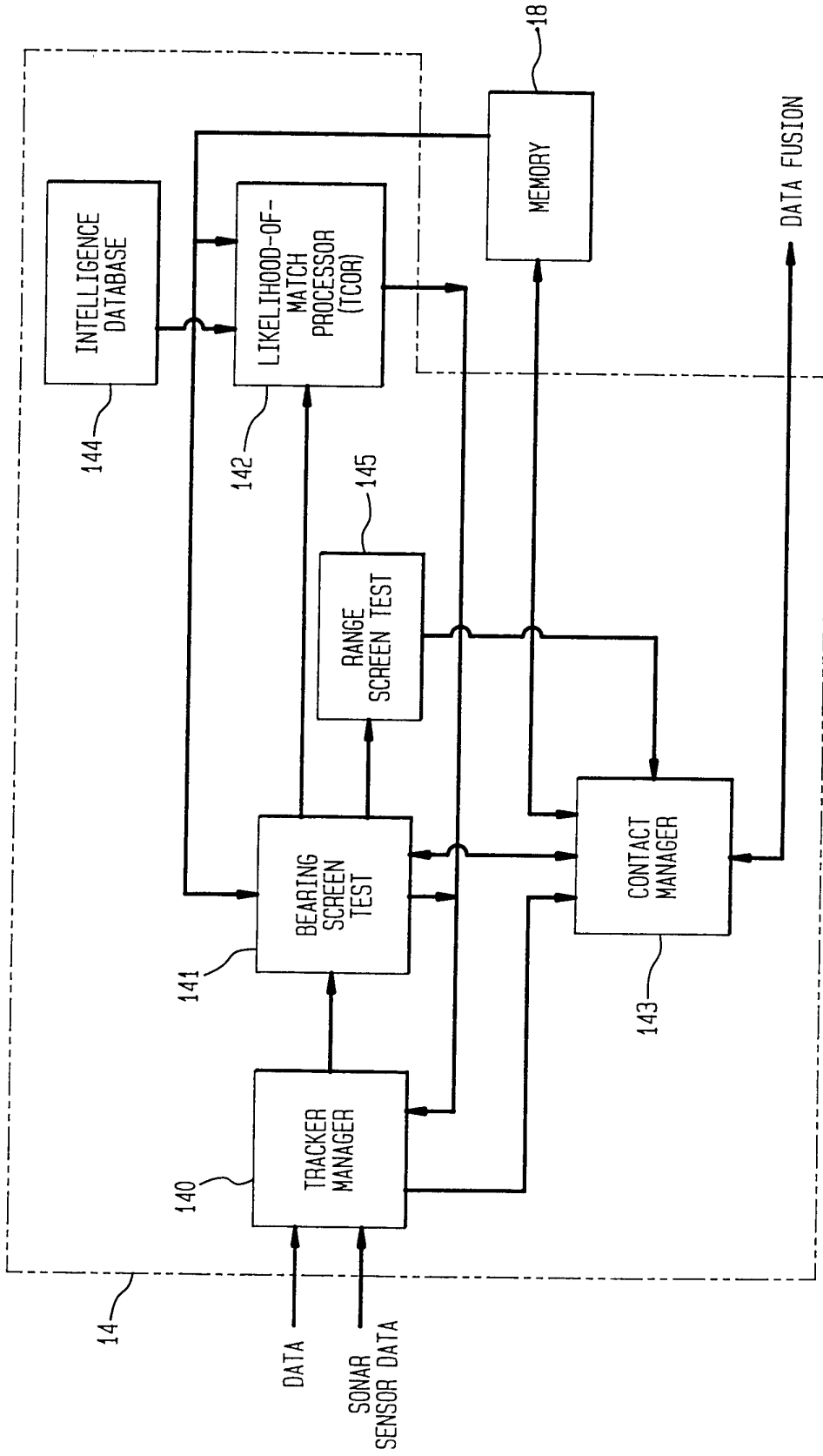


FIG. 3

