

1969

The Barometer

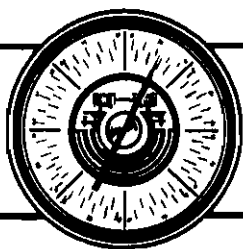
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THE BAROMETER

I read Captain M.D. Blixt's article "Soviet Objectives in the Eastern Mediterranean" in the *March Review* with interest and general agreement.

Capt. Blixt opined that the newly constructed Soviet aircraft carriers appear to be designed for helicopter assault but undoubtedly possess an anti-submarine capability.

I translated the enclosed article from the 22 December 1968 issue of *Red Star*, as perhaps the first Soviet commentary regarding their aircraft carriers.

Of interest is the obvious attempt by the Soviets to emphasize the effective ASW role of the carrier to the exclusion of any assault mission.

RICHARD T. ACKLEY
Commander, U.S. Navy

The 22 December 1968 issue of the Soviet Ministry of Defense newspaper, *Red Star*, carried a front page photograph and article concerning the new Soviet antisubmarine cruiser, presumably the *Moskva*. This, if not the first public mention of the helicopter cruiser, is the most extensive Soviet internal publicity given this class of ship to date. Two photographs were shown: one an aerial port quarter view of the ship, and the other of six aviators walking on deck after a flight.

The accompanying article was written by Capt. 2nd Rank N. Radehenko, a correspondent for *Red Star*. His article is of interest as it is, perhaps, the first official Soviet commentary on this new type of ship and its operations. The

article is titled "Antisubmarine Cruiser Conducts the Search" and translates as follows:

The presence of an enemy nuclear submarine is assumed in square "N." Detect and destroy her—is the training problem received by the crew of the antisubmarine cruiser.

Raising a resilient wave, the cruiser proceeds to the search area at full speed. No matter how complicated the training problem may be, the ship's commander firmly believes that the high readiness of the crew, and the modern equipment and techniques with which the ship was armed, would permit her to successfully solve the problem.

Such confidence arose from the strenuous training days, in frequent sea cruises. For example, on a recent cruise in the Mediterranean Sea, the commander of the cruiser once again satisfied himself of the excellent seaworthiness of his ship. The cruiser is steady in waves of any stormy weather, which provides her crew the best of working conditions.

In contrast to other ships of such displacement, narrates the commander, the cruiser possesses good maneuverability. This quality, during the search and tracking of submarines, allows an uninterrupted tracking of any maneuvering target. Such a bulky and cumbersome thing—said Fedor Tetovich—but it can literally turn around on a five kopeck coin.

The ship is able to make good speed and has high self-sufficiency. Thanks to this, the cruiser is able to sail in any area

of the world ocean, retaining full fighting efficiency.

Sailors, petty officers, and officers pride themselves in serving in such a ship. Sailors of the mine-torpedo unit, headed by Capt. 3rd Rank B. Popov, took first place in the socialist competition. This experienced and authoritarian officer knit together a friendly collective fighting unit, and managed with high marks to fulfill all the problems of the past training year.

Close behind the minemen and torpedomen followed the rocketmen. The electromechanical specialist section also produced good work. Several thousand miles lay astern the ship, and its main and auxiliary mechanisms always operated without a hitch.

The cruiser entered the search area.

Now it is the business of the aviators. One after another the helicopters rise above the sea and depart in search of the submarine. One of such machines carries the outstanding crew of pilot "high class" Maj. L. Dmitrienko. Flying under any conditions, this crew always distinguishes itself with high military skill. And that time it was equal to the occasion--and was the first to establish contact with the submarine.

After this followed the attack, shattering and inevitable. The enemy nuclear submarine was destroyed.

Excellent! So was evaluated the exact and coordinated assignment carried out by sailors and aviators of the cruiser. Having fulfilled an orderly training problem, the cruiser set a new course.



The moral effect of an omnipresent fleet is very great, but it cannot be weighed against a main fleet known to be ready to strike and able to strike hard.

Sir John Fisher: To Lord Stamfordham, 25 June 1912