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## SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY IS OBSERVED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

During December 1980, Soviet naval activity in Southeast Asia was highlighted by the port call of two Soviet naval vessels at Kompong Som, Kampuchea, and by the establishment of a naval ship degaussing area at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. The port visit by these Soviet naval combatants to Kompong Som was the first port call by the Soviet Union to that facility since the initial call in February 1980. During the first half of December 1980, an OKEAN Class intelligence collection ship accompanied by a KRIVAK I Class frigate began conducting operations in the Gulf of Thailand. Arrival of the ships at Kompong Som on approximately 12 December was confirm-

ed by overhead photography. The ships are believed to have departed on approximately 20 December. Soviet naval authorities also visited the installation during this port call, which may indicate that Soviet naval combatants will use the port in the future.

A degaussing area delineated by four buoys in a rectangular pattern has also been placed approximately 3 nautical miles southeast of the Cam Ranh Bay naval facility. Such an installation is typical of a degaussing range, used to record the strength of a ship's magnetic field. A ship of any type with an excessively high reading would be more vulnerable to mines

with magnetic influence exploders. Also, submarines with high magnetic fields are more susceptible to tracking by magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) equipment. Configurations similar to that seen at Cam Ranh Bay have been noted at Petropavlovsk and other shipyards in the Soviet Union; it may be associated with submarine degaussing activity. A recently arrived Soviet transporter dock is moored in the immediate vicinity of the area; it could contain the range terminal signature equipment. A separate deperming installation to physically reduce the magnetic signature would not necessarily be collocated with the de-

gaussing range, but generators for the large amount of electrical power required might also be housed in the transporter dock. Historically, various types of Soviet submarines have made visits to Cam Ranh, and this degaussing facility may be related to future Soviet submarine activity within the area.

These recent developments represent additional examples of the growing Soviet interest in Southeast Asia. The USSR's capability to support the Soviet fleet within the region may be increasing.

HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM

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