

reported in 1984 that a study undertaken during the previous year envisioned development of an "Arctic hovercraft" to "carry out a variety of missions, including anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare against opposing hovercraft, logistical support for the Navy's submarines, and environmental monitoring."¹¹⁹ The same source noted that the Soviet Union already had some 10,000 hovercraft operational in Siberia. Most of these, presumably, are for civil rather than military applications. However, the latest edition of the International Institute for Strategic Studies' *Military Balance* lists 74 surface-effect ships in the Soviet Navy's inventory,¹²⁰ while the latest such vessel — sighted in the southeast Baltic in July 1986 and codenamed "Pomornik" — has an estimated displacement of 350 tons and a top speed of 50-60 knots.¹²¹

All of these developments and prospective developments suggest that military use of the ice and surface waters of the central Polar Basin, especially for ASW, may not be as far-fetched as once thought, and that their demilitarization could thus have real value as a preventative measure of arms control. Its primary effect, of course, would be to hamper anti-submarine warfare operations in the area, confining them to the water column and the airspace above the zone, the use of which would in any event be far more restricted by ice cover. Such a measure would thus dovetail nicely with the proposal for an SSBN sanctuary referred to earlier. Most of the activity in question should be readily observable by the so-called national technical means (NTM) of verification already employed by most of the circumpolar states. As proposed by Griffiths, this could be supplemented by provisions for the mutual inspection of Arctic drift stations and other activities of the states parties, following the precedent of the 1959 Antarctic Treaty.

119. Jan S. Breemer, "Battleground North: The U.S. Navy Plans for a Different Type of Cold War," *Sea Power*, August 1984, p. 26.

120. IISS, *The Military Balance 1986-1987*. London, 1986, p. 40.

121. "IDR analyses latest Soviet air-cushion vehicle," *International Defense Review* 9/1986, p. 1203.