

KPFA-FM, Berkeley

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6 p.m. news

Washington columnist Jack Anderson reported on the Mutual Radio Network last night that the Central Intelligence Agency, in cooperation with billionaire industrialist Howard Hughes, attempted to raise a sunken Soviet submarine from the Pacific Ocean, 750 miles off Hawaii. The submarine, which sank in 1968 and was not located by the Soviet Union, was tracked down by the U.S. Navy shortly after its demise. Apparently the CIA, in consultation with the Pentagon, decided it would be a great intelligence coup to recover the Soviet communication code books and missiles carried on that submarine. Final approval for the reclamation project was granted by the so-called 40 Committee of the National Security Council headed by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Once the CIA had approval for the top secret operation, Howard Hughes was approached to provide a cover for the project, which had been named Project Jennifer. The Summa Corporation, owned by Hughes, then began work on a recovery vessel named the Glomar Explorer, the ship equipped with a huge claw which could be lowered to the sea floor, grasp the submarine and bring it to the surface. Also constructed was a huge covered barge that could be used to bring the submarine to port so that it could be studied. The Hughes Corporation publicly said that the Glomar Explorer was to be used to extract minerals from the ocean floor. The effort to raise the submarine was begun on July 4, 1974. The submarine was successfully grabbed by the huge claw of the recovery ship, but half way to the surface split into three pieces, and only one part of the submarine was recovered. Plans to continue the operation were ongoing until last night when the disclosure of the project was made by Jack Anderson.

So far the CIA project to raise the Soviet submarine has cost an estimated \$350 million. According to the New York Times, the operation was highly controversial within the CIA, with some officials arguing that an outdated Soviet code book and missiles were not worth the amount of money it would take to recover them. Columnist Anderson said the first indication that the operation was taking place came from a comment made by former White House aide Charles Colson. Later, the offices of Howard Hughes in Hollywood, Calif. were burglarized, with documents relating to the deal between Hughes and the CIA being taken. According to the Los Angeles Times, the burglar then tried to sell the documents back to Hughes for a price of \$1 million. That deal fell through, but then last fall the FBI became involved by offering the Burglar a million dollars to return the documents. That deal also failed. The Los Angeles Grand Jury has indicted a man named Donald Woolbright for the burglary. Woolbright is not in custody now, however, and cannot be found. At this time there are conflicting reports as to whether or not the recovery operation will be continued, although CIA director William Colby, who strongly favored the operation, is reportedly still in favor of repeating it. So far there has been no official comment from the Soviet Union on the CIA attempt to reclaim their submarine. Congressional reaction has been mixed, with some feeling that the project was a great idea, while others, like Sen. Frank Church of Idaho, consider it to be a massive waste of money. The strongest response to the disclosure came from delegates to the U.N. Law of the Seas Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, who stated that continued secrecy in military shipping by ~~between~~ the United States and the Soviet Union could lead to a major ecological ~~disaster~~ disaster.

A majority of the nations at the conference support an increase in territorial limits that would bring much larger areas of the seas under national jurisdictions.

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