

C.I.A. LINK TERMED A GOAL OF HUGHES

Maheu, Ex-Aide, Testified on
His Employer's Interest at
1974 Defamation Trial

By WALLACE TURNER

A former high aide to Howard R. Hughes has said that the reclusive industrialist had been looking for years for a Central Intelligence Agency connection that would expand his influence with government before the agency signed his company to try to recover a sunken Soviet submarine.

Robert A. Maheu, once the manager of the Hughes operations in Nevada, made the statement last year in testifying in his successful defamation suit against the Hughes interests. Documents introduced at the trial showed that Mr. Hughes had a considerable interest in manipulating Federal agencies and politicians.

Mr. Maheu said that, as far back as 1961, Mr. Hughes showed a desire to become involved somehow with the

A corporate profile of Global Marine, Inc., appears on Page 57.

C.I.A. And in 1968, Mr. Maheu testified, Mr. Hughes asked him to "try to work out some kind of an arrangement with the C.I.A. whereby either he or the Hughes Tool Company would become a front."

Mr. Maheu said he had asked Mr. Hughes for an explanation and was told that if the industrialist "ever became involved in any problem with the Government, either with a regulatory body or with an investigative arm of the Government, he thought it would be very beneficial to him of being in a position of being a front" for some C.I.A. enterprise.

Mr. Maheu said he had refused to do what Mr. Hughes asked.

And as it happened, it was the C.I.A. that initiated the discussions that led to the project making Mr. Hughes's Summa Corporation, the successor to Hughes Tool, a front for the intelligence agency, according to high Government officials.

In late 1970 or early 1971, these officials said, the agency contracted with Summa to finance the construction of a multimillion-dollar deep-sea salvage vessel and used it last summer in a secret but unsuccessful effort to recover hydrogen-warhead missiles and codes from a sunken Soviet subma-



United Press International

Robert A. Maheu, former
aide to Howard R. Hughes.

rine that lay three miles deep in the Pacific Ocean.

Summa, wholly owned by Mr. Hughes, supposedly built the ship for commercial mining of ocean minerals.

The officials said Mr. Hughes's organization was chosen to provide the cover for the project because of his liking for secrecy, his known interest in deep-sea mining and the fact that that Summa had had experience in large-scale construction. Also, they noted, the Hughes Aircraft Company has long been involved in building space satellites for intelligence purposes and employs a number of former high-ranking C.I.A. and military men.

The trial of Mr. Maheu's defamation suit also produced other indications of the 69-year-old industrialist's penchant for trying to acquire influence with the government.

Hughes Memorandum Cited

Among messages from Mr. Hughes to Mr. Maheu that were introduced into evidence, Mr. Hughes in one memorandum mused that it might be good to get Paul Laxalt, Governor of Nevada while the industrialist lived there, now a Senator, under obligation by rescuing a failing company. Neither the company's name nor its connection with Mr. Laxalt, if any, was given.

Mr. Laxalt, Mr. Hughes said, could repay the obligation by "making a polite request of the Government to return the Federal lands to the state"—a move Mr. Hughes favored because it would have made land available for expansion

of some of his projects.

Mr. Hughes also wrote of relationships with other politicians, such as Senator Albin Bible of Nevada and Richard M. Nixon, then running for President.

In April, 1968, he told Mr. Maheu that "I want you to go see Nixon as my special confidential emissary." Mr. Hughes believed that the Re-

publicans might win the Presidency and observed that "if that could be realized under our sponsorship and supervision every inch of the way, then we could be ready to follow with Laxalt as our next candidate."

Mr. Hughes' apparent efforts to influence governmental action were evident, too, in correspondence indicating that in 1968 the industrialist sought to disrupt the Atomic Energy Commission's plans to test a nuclear weapon and underground at the Nevada Test Site. The correspondence, put into evidence in the defamation suit trial, indicated the billionaire's deep concern as he sat in his penthouse on the Las Vegas Strip as the time for the detonation approached.

"Please watch me carefully and don't let me go to sleep at all," he wrote in a note to his personal staff.

To Mr. Maheu he wrote, "The Government is not omnipotent and always right, as witness the episode with the sheep." He referred to a chemical and biological warfare experiment with nerve gas that went wrong at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, with the result that hundreds of sheep grazing outside the reservation were killed.

More than 100 Hughes memorandums were introduced into the Los Angeles trial where Mr. Maheu won a judgment of \$2.8-million on the basis that Mr. Hughes had defamed him by saying in a telephone news conference that he had dismissed Mr. Maheu because "he stole me blind."

In those memorandums setting out his concerns about the A.E.C. test, Mr. Hughes said he would go to President Johnson, or that he would write messages that Vice President Humphrey would personally deliver, or that if the A.E.C. did not knuckle under, "I am going to the public immediately."

He told Mr. Maheu to handle the A.E.C. negotiations "as if we were buying a hotel."

"If the A.E.C. does not grant the extension and goes ahead

with the blast, I definitely will be forced to line up with the total antibomb faction throughout the U. S.," Mr. Hughes wrote to Mr. Maheu in 1968. "This group has only been waiting for a strong leader, and I am ready to dedicate the rest of my life and every cent I possess in a complete no-quarter fight to outlaw all nuclear testing of every kind and everywhere."

A Key Defense Contractor

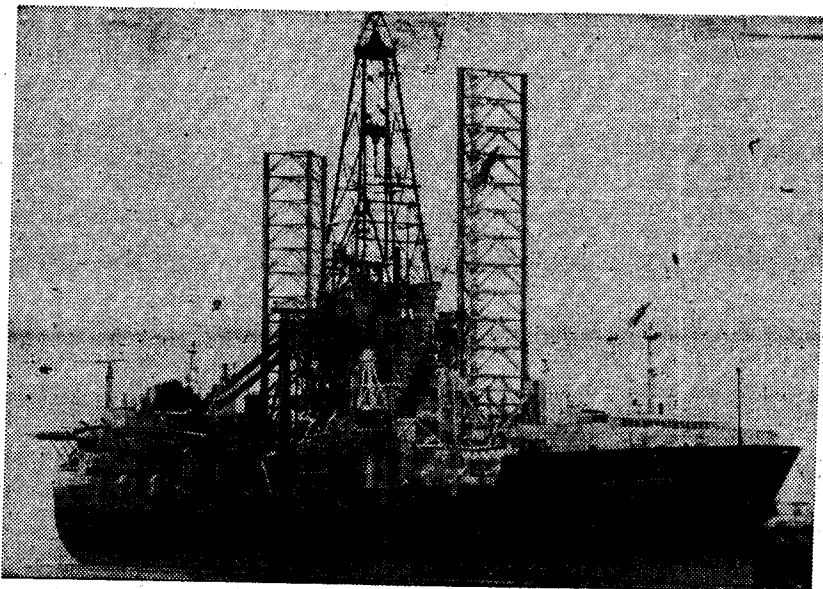
As he wrote this, Mr. Hughes had complete control of an industrial empire that he owns totally. It has roles in such defense production as manufacture of rockets, satellites and fire control systems. In the fiscal year 1974, the Hughes companies contracted to provide \$825-million in defense materials, which made him the eighth-largest defense contractor.

"I can tell you, based on actual Defense Department technical information legally in my hands," Mr. Hughes said in a handwritten memorandum to Mr. Maheu, that certain A.E.C. statements, which he did not specify were untrue. "We must be careful not to place ourselves in the position of disclosing military secrets" while resisting the bomb test, he said.

"I think the A.E.C. must be made to understand that if they want to continue their tests in the continental U.S., Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, any of the U.S. Pacific islands or the Philippines, they damned well better get down off their high autocratic horse and start talking compromise to us," he told Mr. Maheu.

On April 26, 1968, the A.E.C. detonated a bomb code-named Boxcar beneath the Nevada desert at Paiute Mesa, about 100 miles northeast of Las Vegas. It was equivalent to 1.2 million tons of TNT, and did no serious damage in Las Vegas, although the shock wave was felt there.

Thereafter the A.E.C., at a cost of more than \$100-million, shifted its tests for big bombs to Amchitka Island in the western Aleutians.



The Hughes Glomar Explorer, used in the salvage of part of a Soviet submarine last summer, tied up yesterday in Long Beach Harbor, near Los Angeles.

Associated Press