

A-Warheads Believed Recovered

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The Central Intelligence Agency is believed to have recovered at least two nuclear warheads from torpedoes it retrieved last summer when it raised part of the hulk of a sunken Soviet submarine.

The nuclear-tipped torpedoes, according to sources, were in the one-third of the submarine raised from the floor of the Pacific Ocean by the Howard Hughes mining vessel Glomar Explorer, which spent part of last June, July and August attempting to salvage the submarine, which sank northwest of Hawaii seven years ago.

It is not known which pieces of the submarine were lifted from the ocean floor by the Glomar Explorer, but it would have to be the aft or forward part for the Explorer to have recovered torpedoes. Soviet submarines of the Golf (a NATO designation) class—the type that sank—are fitted with 10 torpedo tubes, six in the bow and four in the stern.

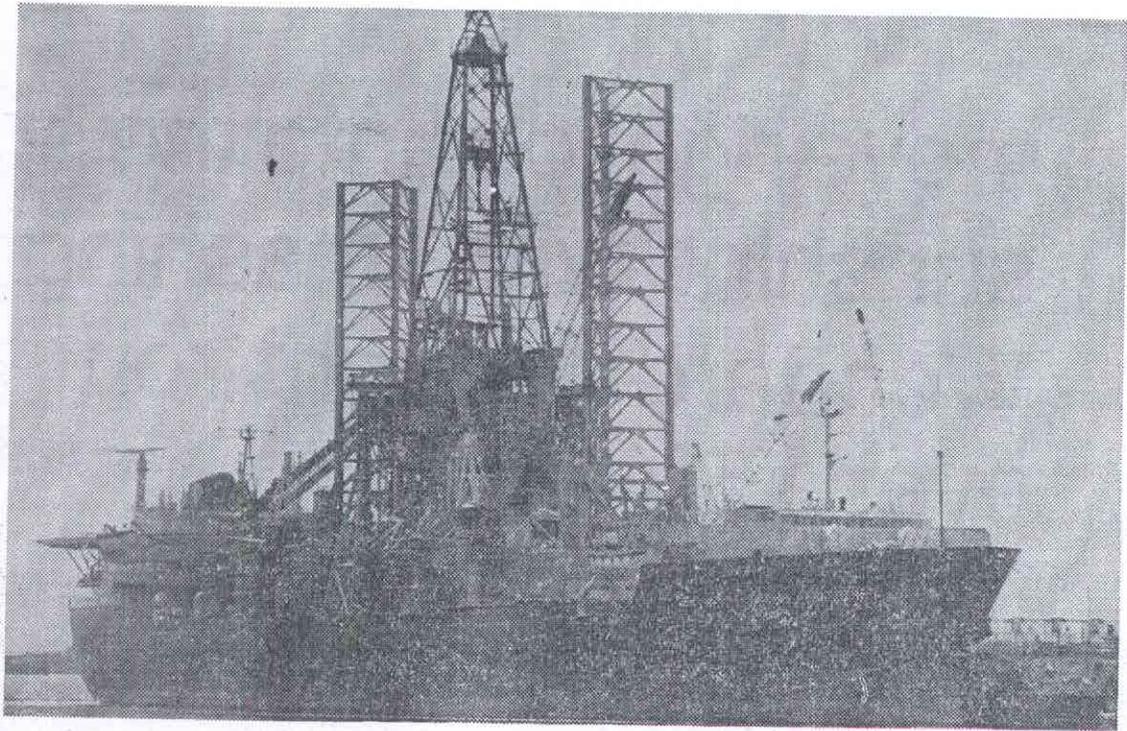
Retrieval of the torpedoes is regarded by the CIA as a major intelligence victory. It verified for the first time that Soviet submarines were carrying nuclear torpedoes. More important, it gave U.S. weapons experts a chance to examine and analyze a Soviet nuclear warhead.

"It makes no difference that torpedo warheads are relatively small compared to missile warheads," one source said. "Any kind of warhead gives us a priceless insight into their technology and their approach to solving nuclear weapons problems."

Meanwhile, one report was being circulated by intelligence sources on the fringe of the CIA that the Glomar Explorer had in fact retrieved the entire lost submarine, not just one-third of it. This report had the Glomar Explorer bringing up so many pieces of the lost boat that they comprised just about all of the 2,800-ton submarine.

If true, this should mean the CIA recovered the warheads on the torpedoes, the

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Associated Press

The Hghes Glomar Explorer tied up in dock in Long Beach Harbor. It was used to recover sunken Soviet sub.

Soviet A-Warheads Seen Recovered

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warheads on the three ballistic missiles the submarine carried and the code machine that unscrambled all the secret naval messages the submarine would have received.

The same code machine presumably could be used to decode other military messages the Soviet Union had sent during the decade that began in 1960, which was the most intense period of the Cold War. It included the U-2 affair, the building of the Berlin wall and the Cuban missile crisis.

Sources said it was their understanding that the Soviet Union had already assumed that the Glomar Explorer was able to retrieve the entire lost submarine, not just a piece of it. Thus, the Soviets would have to assume that the United States has gained an unusual insight into Soviet weapons design and may have found a way of decoding secret Soviet messages.

"When the other side runs you over with a truck like this one you always assume the worst has happened to you," one intelligence source said. "It's automatic reaction in this business."

Beyond the lost submarine, its warheads and its code machine, the Soviets must also

assume that the United States now has the wherewithal to retrieve almost anything the Soviets lose at sea. This includes space vehicles that fail to go into orbit and fall into the ocean and long-range missiles routinely fired from the Soviet Union into the deepest parts of the Pacific and Indian oceans in test exercises.

"This is the real implication of this one," an intelligence source went on. "The Glomar Explorer has made it a whole new ball game."

The CIA refused comment on the reports that warheads had been recovered and that the entire submarine had been retrieved. The White House maintained silence on the entire affair.

On Capitol Hill, Sen. John C. Stennis (D-Miss.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, praised the CIA salvage operation.

"I fully supported this project from the beginning," Stennis said. "It was a highly valuable undertaking and of the highest interest. It invaded no one's privacy."

"Although this effort was not a total success," Stennis went on, "it was nevertheless a partial success, and the results that were obtained have proven to be of value in our intelligence knowledge. Rather than being criticized, the CIA should be commended for

this undertaking. This is the type of job for the security of the United States for which the agency was created."

The Navy reported yesterday that an ocean-going Soviet tugboat had been spotted north of Hawaii, less than 500 miles from the site where the submarine sank and was salvaged by the Glomar Explorer. The tugboat was of the type that carries electronic gear in support of an intelligence mission.

If the Soviets are on their way to explore the salvage site, the tugboat would presumably be accompanied by a submarine that would do the real exploring with underwater electronics. The tugboat would act as a reference point, a pylon to guide the submarine to the right spot.

Former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird told The Chicago Daily News yesterday that he believed the Soviets were fully aware of the CIA's salvage attempt last year.

"I guarantee the Soviets knew about it the day we lifted it," Laird said. "I'll bet you Soviet trawlers watched the whole operation."

One source said that in fact Soviet trawlers followed the Glomar Explorer each time it put to sea from its Hawaiian port and were actually around it when the Explorer located the Soviet submarine and attached cables to it for the first time. This source said the

trawlers left even as the Explorer was grappling to raise a piece of the lost submarine.

The retrieval of the torpedoes confirmed a long-held suspicion that Soviet submarines had nuclear torpedoes. The United States also has nuclear torpedoes on its attack submarines, which would use them in time of war to destroy opposition submarines.

Nixon Had Refused To Christen Vessel

SAN DIEGO, March 20 (AP) —Former President Nixon inspected a giant barge without knowing the vessel was destined to salvage part of a sunken Soviet submarine, The San Diego Union reported today.

Nixon inspected the 324-foot submersible barge in 1972 while on a tour of the National Steel & Shipbuilding Co. yards, where it was built, the Union said.

But he refused an invitation to christen the auditorium-sized vessel because no one at NASSCO would tell him what it was or what it was intended for, said NASSCO president John Murphy.

"He said that if we wouldn't tell him what it was, he was darned if he would have a thing to do with it," Murphy said.