

## Sub-Sinking Proposals Not Denied

The Pentagon yesterday, without denying there is a budget-cutting proposal to sink 10 of the 41 Polaris submarines, said the "sustained strength" of the present fleet is essential.

Jerry Friedhelm, in response to a story on the Polaris proposal in Friday's Washington Post, said "all forms of proposals and alternatives are developed for consideration" during the current review of the Pentagon budget.

He declined to confirm or deny the story on the secret proposal to sink the 10 oldest Polaris subs. Instead, he read this prepared statement:

"The present strength of the Polaris fleet will be maintained, subject, of course, to approval by Congress of our funding request.

"The sustained strength of the Polaris fleet of 41 ships is essential. This is so particularly at a time when the Soviet Union rapidly is building up its submarine-launched missile capabilities.

"I am, of course, and I want to express it, the Department of Defense has been studying and is continuing to study various alternatives to determine where reductions in defense costs can be made without impairing national security.

"The studies are being conducted in normal staff procedures by various elements of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the services."