

# They're Not Yelling Wolf Any More About Red Subs

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**L**IKE THE BOY who cried wolf too often, the Navy is having some difficulty getting people to believe hard new evidence of a real and growing Russian submarine threat.

More often than not, the beginning of spring has been accompanied by news reports of Russian submarine "contacts" off our shores in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Skeptics noted that the reports coincided with congressional consideration of the defense budget.

Except during the Cuban crisis of October, 1962, when several Soviet craft were photographed on the surface, their presence for the most part was detected only on sonar and hence was subject to doubt.

Now, however, there is positive evidence that Moscow is permanently maintaining one or more nuclear missile subs about 1000 miles off both our Atlantic and Pacific coasts. They could move within missile range of major cities in the seaboard area.

They could be reinforced by a sizable number of other missile submarines that have been built in recent years under a greatly stepped-up Soviet effort in this field.

## 45 Red Nuclear Subs

**T**ODAY, Navy sources report, Russia has about 45 nuclear-powered subs—11 less than the United States has in service. Of these, 25 are missile craft and the rest are attack boats, designed for sinking surface ships or submarines, such as the United States Polaris types. Ten of the 25 fire ballistic mis-

siles, the rest air-breathing cruise missiles.

In addition, Russia has 75 missile-firing, conventionally-powered subs—35 carrying ballistic weapons and 40 armed with guided weapons. The over-all Soviet undersea fleet totals about 400 subs. According to recent congressional testimony by Adm. David L. McDonald, more than half are "modern long-range types." The Russian postwar diesel subs have considerably more underwater speed and endurance than World War II-built United States craft.

As significant as the buildup is the fact that during the past year, Russian submarines, which generally operated close to Eurasia, have extended their patrols all over the world.

Many military men previously discounted the threat of a submarine missile attack on the United States on grounds that if numbers of Russian submarines began moving toward this country from Baltic and Barents Sea ports and other bases, they would be detected well before they got within range—providing warning against a surprise attack, which is the main danger from Russia's missile force.

If the trend toward extensive worldwide patrols continues—as the Navy predicts—prospects of much advance warning will be lessened.

The threat of Soviet undersea power has often been discounted because their missile submarines each carry only three ballistic missiles or two to six cruise missiles; the range of their missiles is no more than 350 miles; and they can't fire while submerged. American Polaris subs carry 16 missiles each, with ranges of 1200 to 2500 miles, and fire while submerged.

However, Polaris missiles would have to reach deep into Eurasia to hit main Soviet targets, whereas many key targets in America are on the seaboard and there is evidence that Russia is working on longer-range missiles.

Moreover, United States policy rules out surprise missile attacks by our submarines—but Russia has no such announced policy. It is estimated that from 15 to 45 million Americans would be killed in a surprise submarine attack by existing Soviet forces. The threat, therefore, is much greater than that posed during the Cuban missile crisis.

The United States has 34 Polaris subs in service, plus 22 nuclear-powered attack subs designed to fight enemy submarines. There are 99 conventionally powered United States submarines in service.

The approved United States nuclear submarine goal is 68 attack craft and 41 Polaris craft. Russia is believed to be laying down 10 to 20 new craft annually, while the current American program calls for four to six new attack craft yearly beyond those now being built or authorized.

## Antisubmarine Program

**T**O GUARD AGAINST the Soviet threat, the United States is spending about \$3 billion annually on the over-all antisubmarine program, and could make it difficult for conventional Russian submarines to get into position to attack. Nuclear craft are more difficult targets.

Because Navy chiefs repeatedly said that antisubmarine warfare is their No. 1 program, Congressmen are asking questions about the defense budget for next year. It calls for mothballing

one of the Navy's present antisubmarine aircraft carriers as an economy measure—thus cutting back the number of operational antisubmarine task forces from nine to eight.

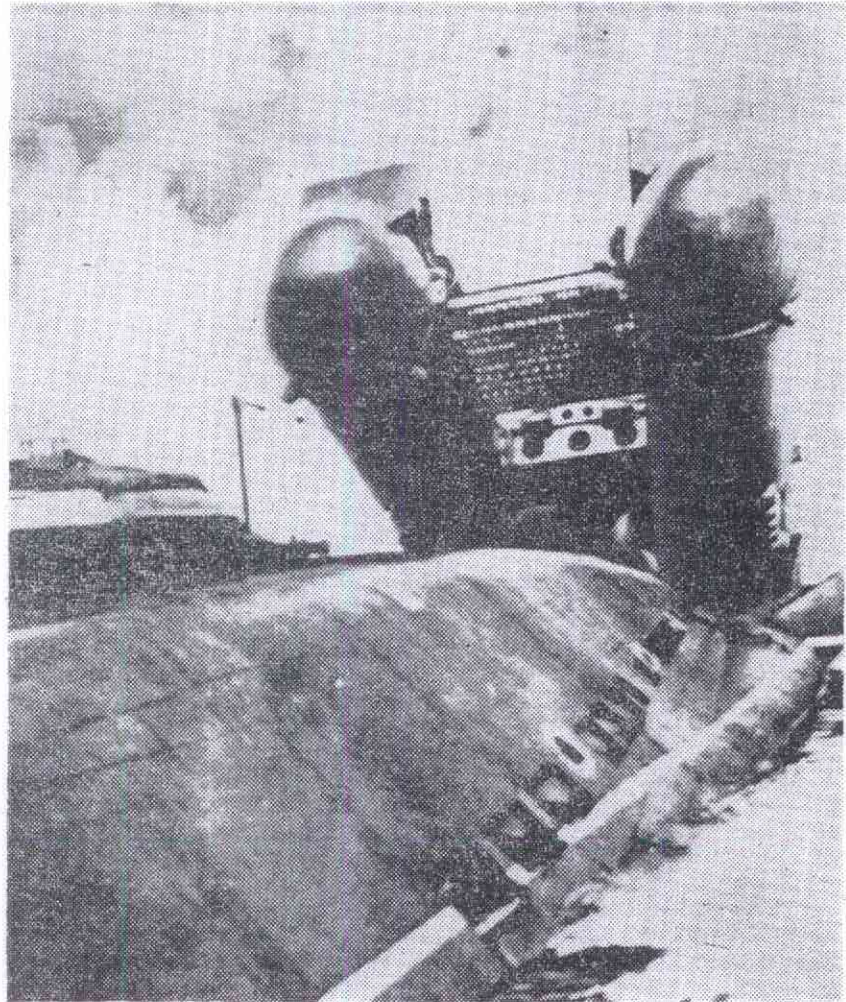
Substantial sums are being spent on developing defense against submarine-launched ballistic missiles, along with the Army's Nike-X anti-ICBM program. Discarded Army 200-mile ballistic Redstone missiles are being used for targets. No antiballistic missile system officially is deemed ready for production and deployment, however—though defenses against cruise missiles exist.

Red China reportedly has about 30 conventionally powered submarines, all Russian-built—including one missile-firing craft—and there are indications they are building submarines.

Unlike the Russians, who have had submarines since Czarist days, China has little experience in this field. However, Adm. McDonald recently told a Senate committee that one torpedo, fired by an unidentified submarine in Southeast Asia, could "radically change the entire concept of our operations" on both land and sea.

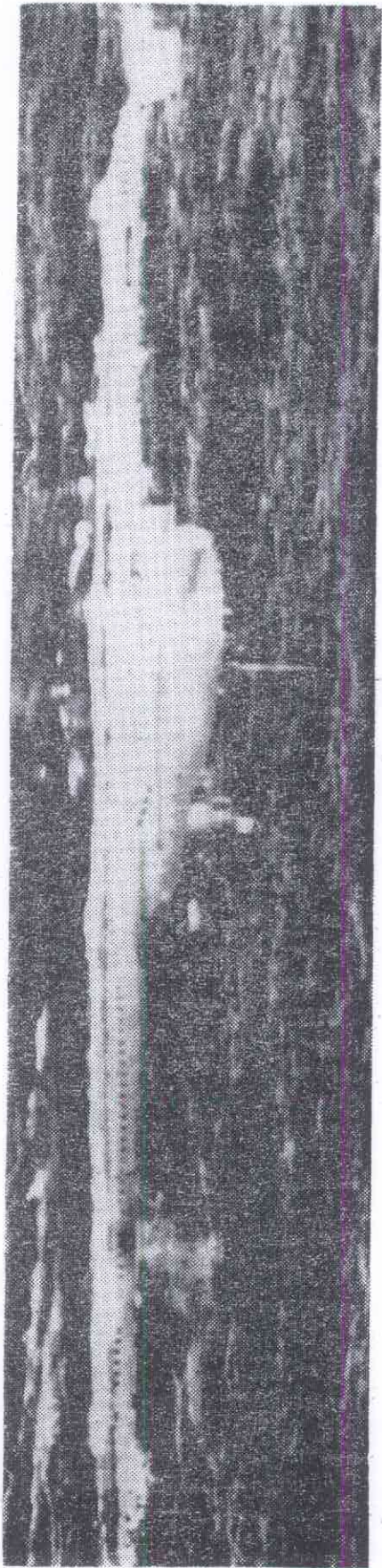
Despite Russia's long submarine experience, the record of its undersea force in war has been negligible, and entirely confined to coastal or interior sea operations. However, for the past decade, the Soviet navy has been exploring the ocean depths—off United States coasts and worldwide—with trawlers, and probably submarines.

The next step is likely to be regular patrols of nuclear missile subs comparatively close to United States coasts, just as we maintain Polaris craft around Russia. This could affect the United States defense system to a major degree.



United Press International

*This photo of a Russian missile submarine appeared in a Soviet paper.*



*This is a United States Navy photo of a nuclear-powered Russian submarine operating "somewhere in the Pacific."*

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E 3