

U.S., Soviet Subs Scrape Hulls

By Jack Anderson

Two prowling nuclear submarines, one American, the other Soviet, sideswiped one another under the North Sea on Nov. 3.

The bizarre undersea collision, which came within inches of sinking both subs, has never been revealed. But we have obtained the details from on-the-spot sources.

The USS Madison, a Polaris submarine bristling with armed nuclear missiles, was patrolling beneath the North Sea when, to the utter astonishment of the crew, the two subs scraped hulls.

Both surged to the surface where they inspected one another warily from a short distance. It could have been an ugly incident, perhaps a naval confrontation on the high seas. But the skippers of both subs kept cool and moved away in opposite directions, without any communications exchange.

Not long afterwards, the Madison pulled into its base at Holy Loch, Scotland, with a nine-foot scrape along its hull. It wouldn't have taken much more impact to have ripped open the hulls of both subs.

There is confusion over who was to blame for the accident. Each sub should have been equipped with navigational gear, which should have detected the approach of the other.

The Madison was on its first shakedown patrol after an overhaul. But no defects had been discovered in the navigational equipment.

If the collision had ruptured and sunk the two nuclear subs, according to our sources, there should have been no nuclear

hazard. The nuclear gear in U.S. subs, they say, have enough protective encasing to prevent such a disaster.

Footnote: The Navy refused to comment on the incident.

Economic Survey—We have sent reporters to different parts of the country to seek the human side of the economic story.

On New York City's fashionable East Side, for example, our reporter Randy Fitzgerald watched fur-coated women shop for their pets while limousines, with chauffeurs idling the engines, stood by.

At one corner was a fancy shop, called Prestige Pets, which offered every imaginable grooming accessory for dogs. Just around the corner was another place, Animal Gourmet, which sold a variety of liver, lamb and other meats specially prepared for pampered pets.

A sign on the wall proclaimed: "We do not prepare dog and cat food. We prepare food for dogs and cats." Even birthday cakes were available for pets.

The place was crowded with fashionable women, tempting their poodles and terriers with the exquisite food selections. Fitzgerald talked to one of the customers, a woman from Park Avenue, whose large black poodles pulled at the leash as she inspected the counters.

She "just couldn't stand the street crowds," she told Fitzgerald, so she had her chauffeur drive the few blocks to the pet store.

Had inflation caused her to cut down on the quality of the

food she served her dogs?

"Heavens no," she said. "My pets deserve only the best."

She acknowledged, however, that she was buying less of the fancy foods. "Why," she exclaimed, "I didn't buy Frenchie (one of the impatient black poodles) a cake for her birthday!"

"Poor Frenchie," she added, and she ran her hand playfully through the dog's fur.

Not far away, Fitzgerald saw a policeman chase a stray dog, with a rat in its mouth. Both the dog and the rat were part of the street scene in Central Harlem, where some 173,000 people are crowded together in row after row of tenement houses.

The streets are filthy. The houses are infested with rats. The people are not as easy to interview as the Park Avenue woman. They are wary of strangers carrying notebooks.

Too often, men with notebooks turn out to be bill collectors or building inspectors. The residents know what it's like in those tenements; they don't need building inspectors to tell them.

Yet the people in Harlem aren't unfriendly; they are merely suspicious. One black man, in his mid-40s, unemployed for nearly a year, told Fitzgerald he had seen enough of reporters and researchers who ask questions about poverty and people's lives.

"They get told just what you will," he said. "What good are all the words?"

Watch on Waste—The Internal Revenue Service is planning to

spend a million dollars for new furniture to embellish its Detroit offices. Already \$538,000 has been laid out for factory-fresh desks and filing cabinets.

Yet the furniture that is being replaced is in excellent shape. An IRS spokesman explained that the old furniture will become part of "a government-wide redistribution."

This conjures up a picture of usable furniture being shipped from government office to government office to replace other furniture which is also usable.

Footnote: The man who has tried to block this waste, the IRS's Detroit administrator John Moffat, is now being hassled by his bosses for his effort to save the taxpayers' money.

© 1974. United Feature Syndicate