

LISTENING AT SEA: A COMMON PURSUIT

Soviet Trawlers Maintain
Watch Off U.S. Coast

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24—A converted Soviet trawler stands off the southern California coast monitoring the First Fleet.

Another listens a few miles off Charleston, S. C., a Polaris submarine base.

Guam, used by the Strategic Air Command, is watched by still another Soviet vessel.

Listening at sea, as the intelligence ship Pueblo presumably was doing, is an international pursuit almost as common as fishing, which has often been used as a disguise.

Soviet ships not only shadow United States Navy vessels during maneuvers but sometimes, deliberately or accidentally, get into the formation, or get in the way of aircraft carriers when they are maneuvering into the wind.

Last May, Soviet destroyers twice grazed the American destroyer Waler off northern Japan in United States-Japanese exercises.

A week later, Soviet warships and aircraft harassed United States and South Korean vessels conducting joint anti-submarine exercises in the Sea of Japan. The South Korean Navy said that, at one point, Soviet craft came within 300 feet of the United States submarine Razorback.

Carrier Was Shadowed

The carrier Hornet, flagship for the exercise, was shadowed by two Soviet destroyers, which displayed numbers 012 and 025.

The Gulf of Tonkin is a regular station for Soviet electronics ships, which keep watch on United States carriers.

There are also a couple of converted trawlers in the Mediterranean monitoring the United States Sixth Fleet, one near Holy Loch, Scotland, and another off Rota, Spain, both Polaris submarine bases.