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Aspin Worried

CIA Will Pay Glomar's Taxes

Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.) asked the Central Intelligence Agency yesterday for assurances that it will not pay the \$3.1 million property tax bill levied this week on the Glomar Explorer.

Ostensibly built for and owned by billionaire Howard Hughes' Summa Corp., the Glomar Explorer—a huge research ship—raised part of a sunken Soviet submarine from the Pacific Ocean floor last summer in a top-secret CIA operation.

Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Philip E. Watson said he had been assured by CIA representatives early this year that the agency owned the ship, but the CIA would provide no documentation. As a result, he billed the Summa Corp. this week for \$3.1 million in property taxes.

Aspin, who apparently is convinced the CIA owns the ship, voiced fears that the agency would keep that a secret at the expense of taxpayers by letting Summa Corp. pay the bill and then reimbursing the Hughes organization.