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Hughes Ship Said Ready For Mission

SAN DIEGO, Sept. 3 (AP)—The next mystery assignment of the spy ship Highs Glomar Explorer involves neutralizing Soviet sensors planted near a U.S. Navy-run island 50 miles off California, the San Diego Evening Tribune reported today.

"The sensors were planted in the sea beds by Soviet submarines and intelligence ships and are in an area that the Navy will be using in upcoming tests of its newest strategic missile, the Trident I," the newspaper said.

The newspaper said the Navy "wants the Soviet sensors removed before the missile tests start later this year" near San Clemente Island, off the coast between Los Angeles and San Diego.

There was no immediate comment on the report from Global Marine Inc., operator of the Hughes Glomar Explorer, or the Pentagon.

The Explorer raised the forward third of a long-sunken Soviet nuclear submarine northwest of Hawaii last year. The ship is registered to billionaire recluse Howard Hughes' Summa Corp., but the government has recently claimed ownership of the ship and its companion vessel, the submersible barge HMB-1.

In nine days of training exercises for its reported new counterspy mission, the Explorer lowered a submersible barge to the wreckage of a 16th century Spanish ship sunk in 180 feet of water near Santa Catalina Island, northeast of San Clemente Island.