

# Hughes' Spy Barge Unveiled

By Jack Viets

The Howard Hughes-CIA submersible barge, whose massive claw fished up a Russian submarine in 1974, was unveiled in Redwood City yesterday by the U.S. government — which in the past had very little to say about it.

But yesterday, the federal government's Energy Research and Development Administration was in charge of the barge, not the CIA.

"This is the flagship of our navy," quipped Don Reardon, deputy manager of the administration's San Francisco operations office.

The administration took over the barge April 1, and during the next four months will determine if it can be used to test equipment and pilot plants for converting ocean thermal energy into electricity, Reardon said.

Ocean thermal energy conversion uses the temperature differential between cold, deep ocean water and the sun-warmed surface waters as a source of heat to power a generator.

The giant barge, Reardon cautioned, no longer has the same "configuration" it did when it was used by "another agency."

H. (Snuffy) Smith, the barge's operations manager since its launching in 1972, put the delicate matter another way.

The barge, he said, has been stripped of its "capture vehicle hardware."

The domed roof of the hangar-like barge slowly opened, and a horde of newsmen saw for themselves.

On the floor of the massive barge — about the length of a

football field and five stories high — lay the stripped-down steel spine of the transfer boom.

"Yes, it did have a lot of attachments," said Smith, noting that before cutting torches were put to work, the transfer boom weighed 1900 tons.

"What you see here is about 825 tons."

Smith said the sole mission of the huge barge was to carry the highly sophisticated transfer boom from Redwood City, where it was designed and built by Lockheed Missiles and Space Co., to the relatively calm waters off Catalina Island.

There, he said, the barge was submerged, and the 1900-ton boom attached to a steel bridle lowered from the Hughes Glomar Explorer.

The Glomar Explorer then

sailed away, Smith said, and the barge came back to Redwood City.

Although the boom's exotic attachments are gone, the steel spheres that housed its control equipment — built to withstand ocean depths of 20,000 feet and deeper — are still being stored in heavily guarded buildings next to the barge.

The spheres contained optical, acoustical, power, lighting and TV equipment, he said.

"Yes," he conceded, "there probably are some good pictures."

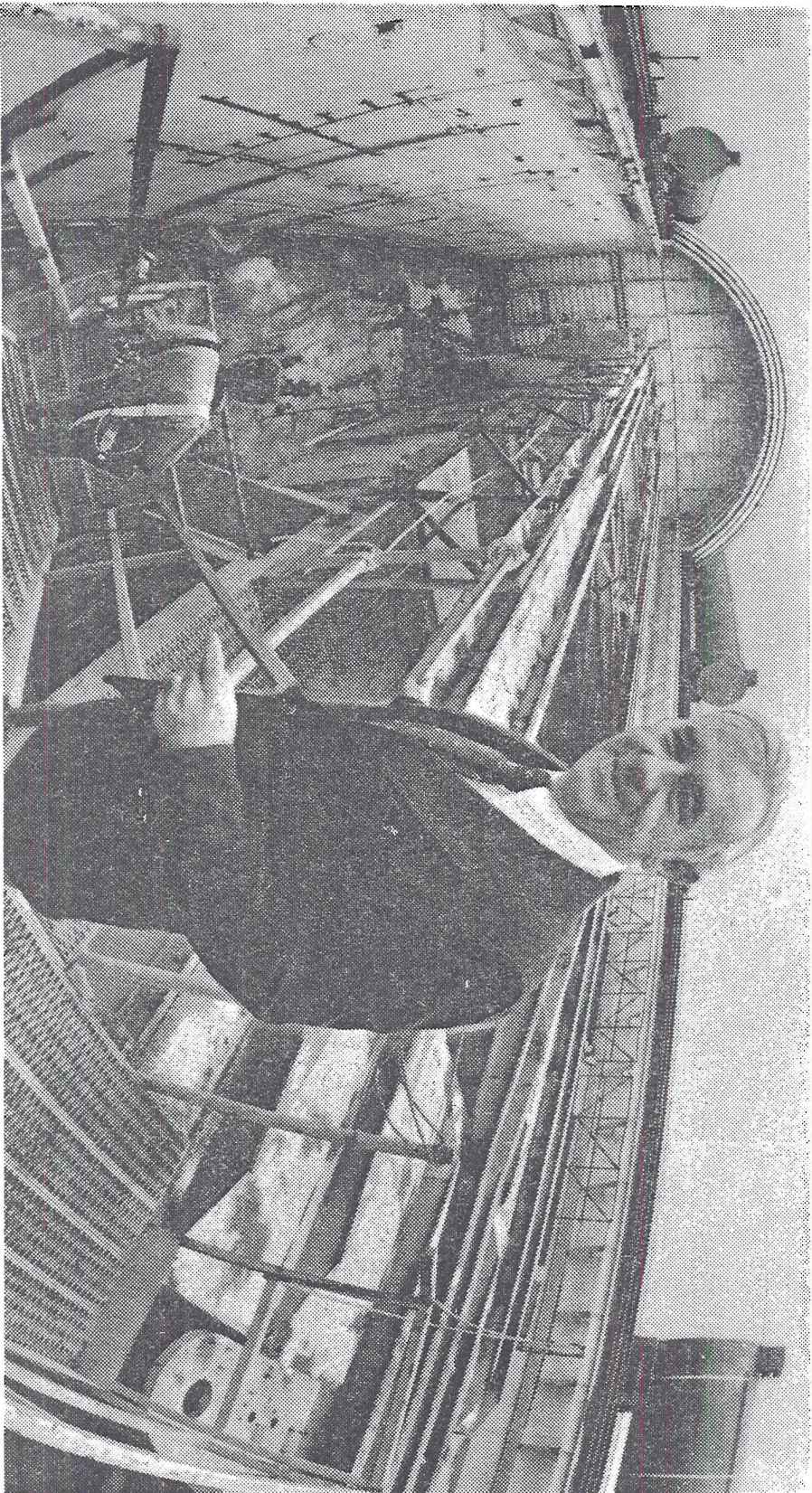
## Less Grain for India

Washington

The Indian government has indicated it will slow its grain imports in the marketing season beginning July 1 because the government running out of storage space.

Associated Press





The barge, said operations manager H. (Smuffy) Smith, has been stripped of its 'capture vehicle hardware.'

Photo by Peter Breinig