

American Submariners Inc.
Silent Sentinel
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San Diego, CA 92120-3404

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The Silent Sentinel

April 2008

Our Creed

To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation towards greater accomplishment and patriotism to the United States of America



Joe Grievy, 14 June 1918 - 18 February 2008

U.S. Submarine Veterans San Diego Base

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Do not Miss Movement!

All submittals for the next Silent Sentinel must be received by the date indicated on page four. Entries received after the due date will be printed in the following month's issue, space permitting. Acceptable format for text files are TXT and DOC (not DOC1). Questions? Call me at 619-980-0846.

Mike, Editor

The Silent Sentinel via Email

To all of my Shipmates and families who currently receive our Great newsletter via the mail who would like it sent via email or continue to receive it via mail, please fill out the form and mail it to the base or myself. We are trying to cut the cost of the newsletter down from \$3700 to about \$1900 a year. By receiving the Silent Sentinel via email will cut down the printing and mailing cost. The other plus to receiving it via email is you can save it on your computer and not have the paper lying around the house.

A subscription to the Silent Sentinel newsletter will be available to surviving family members via internet email, at no charge, upon notification of the Membership Chairman. If a printed hard-copy is preferred, via US Post Office delivery, an annual donation of \$5.00 will be requested to cover costs.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

Would like the SILENT SENTINEL emailed: YES _____ NO _____

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USSVI Base Commander
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Commander's Corner

April 2008

Hope everyone had a great Easter weekend. Things have been pretty busy with Joe's Services on base and getting all the parade stuff together from CJ. By the way CJ is recovering very well. He looks much better that he did several weeks ago. He still can't talk well but he tries!! You know it's hard to keep CJ settle. I know Al Strunk in recovering well from the reports I have read. I hope a speedy recovery for both of our shipmates.

Well we have a lot going on in the next few months with several parades and a breakfast coming up. Well the breakfast will be done when this gets out to everyone. We have Old Timers Luncheon coming up and the Submarine Birthday Ball. We need to get our RSVP in ASAP. I will have a flier out. And not to far down the line is the 2008 USSVI Convention in Ft. Worth/Dallas TX. This is where we will be pushing hard for our convention in 2009.

Our next meeting will be held at the Sizzler off Roscrance and Midway drive. We will have dinner and a short meeting to just cover the business we need to cover. Then hopefully some sea stories and a good times by all. Fred is firming thing up and the info will be out before you get this message. Please RSVP Fred Fomby.

I hope this message find all my shipmates in good health and good spirits. See you soon.

Base Commander
Bob Bissonnette

SEE OR CALL MIKE HYMAN, 619-980-0846, FOR ALL YOUR SUBMARINE STORES NEEDS. ASK ABOUT THE SPECIAL OF THE MONTH. SHIPPING IS AVAILABLE FOR "ANY" SIZE ORDER. *Mike*

ALL INPUTS FOR THE MAY 2008 SILENT SENTINEL MUST BE IN MY HAND BY THE 22ND OF APRIL! IT HAS TO BE RECEIVED BY ME BY THIS DATE. I CANNOT ACCEPT SUBMITTALS FOR THE MAY ISSUE ANY LATER, SO GET THEM IN EARLY. MIKE

***Check us out on the World Wide Web
www.ussvisandiego.org***

APRIL Induction Dinner and Meeting

Our monthly meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month. **The location of the April meeting along with our yearly induction dinner will be at the Sizzler Restuarant on Midway Drive, just South of Rosecrans on 8 April at 7 p.m.** Please note that this is a one-time only meeting location. Our May meeting will be back at the VFW on Twain Ave.

HAVE FUN AND HELP SUBVETS SAN DIEGO AT THE SAME TIME!

HELP COLLATE THE SILENT SENTINEL IN ORDER TO KEEP COSTS DOWN.

THE MAY 2008 EDITION *SILENT SENTINEL* COLLATE PARTY WILL BE HELD ON **MAY 3rd, 0900, AT THE TWAIN AVENUE VFW.**

BINNACLE LIST

Mike Hyman
C J Glassford
Chuck George
Larry Freske
Al Strunk

Submitted by Mike Hyman



SUBMARINE FORCE LOSSES MARCH

PERCH [Bell] (SS 176) - 59 Men on Board:

Scuttled, on 3 March 1942, after Severe Damage suffered from Japanese Destroyers,
“ 59 POWs “ — “ SIX MEN DIED IN POW CAMP “

GRAMPUS [Bell] (SS 207) - 71 Men on Board:

Sunk, on 19 February 1943, by Japanese Naval Aircraft, Southeast of New Britain, or by Japanese
Destroyer, on the night of 5 March 1943, In Blakett Strait :
“ ALL HANDS LOST “

H – 1 [Bell] (SS 28) -

Foundered and Sunk, on 12 March 1920, Off Santa Margarita Island, California :
“ 4 MEN LOST “

TRITON [Bell] (SS 201) - 74 Men on Board:

Sunk, on 15 March 1943, either by Japanese Destroyer or by Submarine Chaser, North of Admiralty
Islands :
“ ALL HANDS LOST “

KETE [Bell] (SS 369) - 87 Men on Board:

Probably Sunk, on 20 March 1945, by a Mine or a Japanese Submarine, East of Okinawa :
“ ALL HANDS LOST “

F – 4 [Bell] (SS 23) - 21 Men on Board:

Sunk, on 25 March 1915, Following Battery Explosion. Off the Coast of Honolulu, Hawaii :
“ ALL HANDS LOST “

TULLIBEE [Bell] (SS 284) - 79 Men on Board:

Accidentally Sunk, on 29 March 1944, by Circular run of her own Torpedo, Off Palau, Islands :
“ 78 MEN LOST - ONE SURVIVOR “

TRIGGER [Bell] (SS 237) - 89 Men on Board:

Sunk, on 28 April 1945, by Japanese Patrol Vessel, and Coastal Defense Vessel, In the Nansei Soto Area
:
“ ALL HANDS LOST “



Submitted by C J Glassford

CJ Glassford in Continental Rehab Hospital

CJ Glassford is currently in Continental Rehabilitation Hospital, 555 Washington Street, San Diego. He still has a feeding tube since he cannot swallow. He does not have the breathing tube anymore; however, he is on oxygen. He can only whisper but he is fully capable of holding a conversation. He cannot speak on the phone. He likes visitors and hopes to see many of you by his bedside as soon as possible.

It takes a stubborn torpedoman to beat the odds--and CJ fits the bill. He has a long way to go before coming home--and the time required is still indeterminate--but as long as he keeps on moving in a positive direction, his doctors are hopeful. *M. Hyman*

UPCOMING EVENTS

“MONTHLY MEETINGS – SD BASE”

Tuesday = 8 Apr 2008 = E-board 6Pm = Base Meeting 7PM
 Tuesday = 13 May 2008 = E-board 6PM = Base Meeting 7PM
 Tuesday = 10 Jun 2008 = E-board 6PM = Base Meeting 7PM
 Tuesday = 08 Jul 2008 = E-board 6PM = Base Meeting 7PM

“OLD TIMERS LUNCHEON “

Friday = 18 Apr 2008 = Harbor Inn Sub Base Point Loma
 10:00AM = Opening Ceremonies
 10:30AM = Tolling of the Boats
 12:00PM = Luncheon
 13:00PM = Guest Speaker (Captain Patton)
 14:00Pm = Closing Remarks

“SUBMARINE BIRTHDAY BALL “

Saturday = 19 April 2008 = Airport Sheraton Hotel SD
 18:00PM = No Host Cocktails
 19:00PM = Opening Ceremonies
 19:30PM = Dinner
 20:00PM = Cake Cutting
 20:15PM = Guest Speaker – VADM “Big Al” Konetzni
 21:00PM = Dancing
 22:00PM = Closing Ceremonies

“ RIVERSIDE PARADE “

Saturday = 9 April 2008 = Riverside Community College
07:00AM = Meet in Parking Lot
* Details to be announced as received as to
Parade position in lineup

(continued next page)

“ SAILOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS ”

This event is usually held in April at the Harbor Inn on the Point Loma Naval Base. At this time there is no available information as to time and place. Information will be forwarded as soon as it is received

“ MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE ”

Monday = 26 May 2008 = Roncador Memorial, Sub Base SD
10:00Am = Opening Ceremonies
10:30Am = Tolling of the Boats
11:00AM = Guest Speaker Remarks
11:30AM = Wreath Laying Ceremony at Sea
12:00PM = Refreshments

“ LA MESA FLAG DAY PARADE ”

Saturday = 31 May 2008 = Downtown La Mesa. CA
09:00Am = Staging area (Same as last year)
09:30AM = Float judging contest
10:00AM = Parade kickoff

“ JULIAN 4TH OF JULY PARADE “

Thursday = 3 July 2008 = Downtown Julian, CA
10:00AM = Assemble at Julian High School
10:00AM = Float Judging Awards
11:00AM = Parade Kickoff
12:30PM = BBQ at American Legion Hall

PLEASE RETAIN A COPY OF THIS INFO
FOR YOUR PERSONAL REFERENCE
Submitted by CJ Glassford



Membership Corner: Membership 333

All Hands: If you know of any financial difficulty or communications problems regarding any of the men who have not paid their dues, please call me. The current issue of the Sentinel will be the last issue because of unpaid dues for the following number of our brothers: 8 Both Base & Nat'l due; 5 Base due; 3 National due.

New Members:

- Tudor Davis, Qualified on Halibut (SS232) in 1943. past President of SubVetsWWII; Holland Club
- Clarence Scott, Qualified on Kraken (SS 370) in 1944, Nat'l President of SubVetsWWII; Holland Club
- Ed Block: Qualified on SS-139 in 1943
- Lawrence Glacy, Growler in '62; currently a member of the Bar.
- Jack Addington, Razorback in '58 (I welcomed him aboard)

Tom Warner has volunteered to assist in the awarding of welcoming packages to new members (Base patches, past newsletters, etc.)—a task I have not done well. My apologies to the neglected, and Thanks from the Base to Tom.

Be well,

Ron Gorence

From Buzz Lee (qualified in 1939 on Nautilus); hand typed on Dec. 15, 07 for the Silent Sentinel:

I would like to correct your story about the sinking of the Japanese submarine ENDO on 15 February 1944 when I was on the ASPRO. We sailed from the Pearl Harbor Subbase on February 8th and our captain told us our mission was to cover the area on TRUK which was now a staging area for the Japanese fleet. A day and a half before our arrival there our skipper called for a "trim" dive around 1300 which every submariner knows is a dive to ascertain if our tanks are properly trimmed fore and aft to prevent a "bad" dive in case of an emergency - that is to be too heavy forward or aft.

As soon as we dove to about 55 feet I went to the forward torpedo room to check with the sonar operator (a lookout normally) if his gear was okay? He took off his headphones, looked up at me, and said, "Lee I have pinging on the starboard bow!" I took the head phones, put them on, and confirmed what he had heard. I immediately called the conning tower and told the captain what I had just heard on our sound gear. He raised his periscope and saw nothing and then told the diving officer to bring him up 5 more feet. The captain took a quick look, ordered down scope, and told all of us it was a Japanese submarine with a red meat ball on his bridge and had a 'tank' forward. The captain and Executive Officer immediately went through "JAYNES FIGHTING SHIPS" and found their target was the ENDO and the tank forward was a small aircraft hangar which nested a small seaplane with folded wings. Merely let the submarine sink and the seaplane could float away through a moveable door.

Minutes of San Diego Submarine Veterans Meeting for March 2008 appear on page 17.

Checking account balances appear on page 19 and 20.

The enemy submarine was all alone without any escort and making a three legged zig-zag course. He was pinging using his own sound equipment and I couldn't imagine any skipper announcing to the world his presence in this most dangerous part of the Pacific Ocean.

There was no closing of the range with his surface speed and our underwater speed. Our skipper immediately set up a tracking crew on the table under the conning tower one deck below. We immediately headed away for ten miles and then surfaced when the enemy was just out of our sight, but we had him on radar. He was exactly on our starboard beam. As night approached we discovered there was no moon and the sea was dark with hardly more than a ripple of a wave and most importantly the enemy had no radar.

At around 2100 we began to close the range and got into a torpedo range at 2200. But at that moment the Japanese helmsman made a mistake which our tracking team caught and our captain pulled out for about 5 minutes until he had a 90 degree shot. He fired four torpedoes and two hit with tremendous explosions in about 4 minutes. I immediately switched over to my sonar gear to listen to the ENDO have his final moments. There was severe whistling' and many strange sounds. In my story to the LIBRARY OF CONGRESS I named these sounds "A Symphony of Death" - the crew was going to their deaths in ~3 miles of water.

My Executive Officer came below at that moment and asked me to make a fathometer reading which I did and confirmed the depth. ---- *End of Submission*

US Engineer Gets 24 Years For Exporting Military Data To China Agenc[y]

France-Press, March 24, 2008 LOS ANGELES – A Chinese-born US engineer convicted of conspiring to smuggle sensitive technology about US Navy submarines to China was on Monday jailed for 24 years, justice officials said.

Chi Mak, who worked for a US company with several Navy contracts, was convicted last May of trying to export intelligence about silent submarines in a plot that involved four members of his family.

Mak, whose age was given as 65 by justice officials, was also fined 50,000 dollars by US District Judge Cormac Carney, who said the lengthy sentence was intended to send a message to China's intelligence services.

"We will never know the full extent of the damage that Mr Mak has done to our national security," Carney wrote in a statement of reasons filed in conjunction with the sentencing.

“A high-end ... sentence will provide a strong deterrent to the PRC (People’s Republic of China) not to send its agents here to steal American military secrets.”

Mak was convicted following a trial in Santa Ana, 33 miles (53 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles, last year.

He was found guilty of two counts of attempting to send sensitive material to China, acting as a foreign agent without notifying the US government and making false statements to federal agents.

Mak was arrested in October 2005 after agents swooped on two relatives at Los Angeles Airport as they prepared to board a flight to Hong Kong.

Prosecutors said the duo were caught with a disk containing sensitive encrypted data on US submarines hidden in a English-language CD course.

Mak’s relatives, including his wife, Rebecca Chiu, his brother, Tai Mak, sister-in-law, Fuk Li, and their son, Billy Mak, pleaded guilty following Mak’s trial and conviction.

Tai Mak and Chiu, both California residents, are scheduled to be sentenced in April and May. Fuk Li and Billy Mak were previously sentenced to time served and now face deportation to China.

Although prosecutors accused Mak of spying for China during his trial, the engineer was not formally charged with espionage because the information was not officially deemed classified.

However prosecutors said the data, which related to silent submarine technology known as the Quiet Electric Drive (QED), was extremely sensitive and was marked NOFORN, meaning it should be barred from view of foreign nationals.

Mak, a naturalized US citizen who was born in Guangzhou, China, denied the charges.

The 18-month investigation into Mak began in early 2004, when federal agents began audio and video surveillance of the engineer and his family.

Although technically not an espionage trial, prosecutors painted a shadowy world of intrigue, revealing Chinese intelligence’s use of code names such as Red Flower, Winter Chrysanthemum and Autumn Orchid.

After raiding Mak’s home, prosecutors said they also discovered a “wish-list” of US military technology, including information on missile defense and torpedo systems.

China’s foreign secret service is among the “most aggressive” in trying to steal sensitive US military technology and information, US Director of National Intelligence Michael McConnell charged recently.

Chinese and Russian spies, he said, were stalking the United States at levels close to those seen during the tense espionage duels of the Cold War.

Last month, a US defense official, an ex-Boeing engineer and two others were charged with spying for China involving sensitive military and aerospace secrets, including on the space shuttle.

‘China Factor’ In The 2008 Election

Lancaster Eagle Gazette, Lancaster, OH, March 24, 2008

BILL Clinton, during his 1992 presidential campaign, accused George H. Bush of “kowtowing to butchers from Baghdad to Beijing” and vowed to take a tough position on China if he were elected. Eight years later, presidential candidate George W. Bush termed China as a “strategic competitor” rather than a potential “strategic partner.”

So far this year, “the presidential primaries,” noted Jing-dong Yuan of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, “have left China more or less unscathed. The candidates have focused on issues such as the Iraq war, health care, the housing slump and the impending economic recession.”

Sooner or later, however, candidates will have to take the issue of how to “deal with the dragon” more seriously. As Paul Krugman of New York Times noted, “right now, we’re having the wrong discussion about foreign policy. Almost all the foreign policy talk in this presidential campaign has been motivated, one way or another, by Sept. 11 and the war in Iraq. Yet, it’s a very good bet that the biggest foreign policy issues for the next president will involve the Far East rather than the Middle East. In particular, the crucial questions are likely to involve the consequences of China’s economic

growth. Turn to any of several major concerns now facing America, and in each case it's startling how large a role China plays."

Start with the security front. The U.S. Department of Defense's latest annual report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China, released on March 3, called attention to a heightened effort by China to challenge America's supremacy in a wide variety of military capabilities, especially naval, missile and space warfare.

In particular, the report warned of China's "continued development of advanced cruise missiles, medium-range ballistic missiles, anti-ship ballistic missiles designed to strike ships at sea, including aircraft carriers, and the January 2007 successful test of a direct ascent, anti-satellite weapon." The report further chided the Chinese leadership for shielding the details of its military budget from scrutiny, "The lack of transparency in China's military and security affairs poses risks to stability by increasing the potential for misunderstanding and miscalculation."

To "invest in the strategic modernization necessary to meet current and future land, sea, air and space threats from a peer competitor," President Bush has announced a baseline military budget of \$515.4 billion for the fiscal year 2009, the largest one-year Pentagon request in real, un-inflated dollars since World War II. The figure represents a 7.5 percent increase over the 2008 appropriation.

Such "strategic modernization" weapon systems, including F-22 Raptor air-superiority fighter, CVN-78 advanced aircraft carrier, DDG-1000 Zumwalt-class destroyer and Virginia-class submarine, said Michael Klare, the author of the forthcoming "Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet." "(It) indicates that the principal sources of future budget growth are not the 'war on terror' or other such low-intensity contingencies but rather preparation for all-out combat with a future superpower. And only one potential superpower emerges to justify this vast spending: the People's Republic of China."

On the economic front, China factor could loom large in the 2008 election and debate would likely be focused on China's role in some of the economic ills that America is suffering today: skyrocketing trade deficits, loss of manufacturing jobs in America, Beijing's currency manipulation, violation of intellectual property rights and safety of China-made goods.

Economically, at least in the short run, the conclusion seems clear: Either China grows more slowly, or the U.S. will have to.

But these are just the most "obvious" bilateral economic problems that lie ahead. In addition, China's surging oil consumption-in recent years China has been responsible for about more than one third of the growth in world oil demand-has made the soaring price of oil in U.S. market largely a "made-in-China" problem.

Perhaps also most important, there is the issue of climate change. As Paul Krugman has asked, "Why is climate change a China issue? Well, China is already the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. And as with oil demand, China plays a disproportionate role in emissions growth. In fact, between 2000 and 2005 China accounted for more than half the increase in the world's emissions of carbon dioxide."

The Sino-U.S. relationship is one of the most important bilateral relations in the world today. How to "deal with the dragon" has never been easy, but its successful handling is critical not only for America's strategic and economic interests, but for global peace, security and long term development. Absurd posturing during the presidential campaigns will make it difficult for the next president to chart a new course, so maybe silence is golden, but the American people need to hear what if any are the real differences between candidates.

(Dr. Xiaoxiong Yi is a professor at Marietta College and Director of the China Institute.)

The US Navy And Citgo

Designation Of Venezuela As A Terrorist-Sponsoring State Would Put Into Jeopardy The Billions Of Dollars In Oil Sales To The United States.

By James Roberts, Opinion, Latin Business Chronicle, March 24, 2008

When U.S. Navy and Marine personnel purchase gasoline at their local Navy Base Exchange, they might be unknowingly supporting America's enemies. This is happening because the Navy Exchange buys its gasoline from a

company owned by Venezuelan Dictator-President Hugo Chávez. A designation by the Bush Administration of Venezuela as a terrorist-sponsoring state would allow the Navy to end this awkward situation.

Hugo Chávez is on an arms-buying spree. He has already bought \$3.4 billion worth of Russian weapons, including “100,000 AK-103s and AK-104 assault rifles, a munitions factory, 53 helicopters—including a dozen Mi-17 military helicopters—and 24 SU-30MK fighter jets.” Venezuela is negotiating a multi-billion dollar, multi-year contract to purchase from Russia “five Project 636 Kilo-class diesel submarines and four state-of-the-art Project 677 Amur submarines....and several Tor-M1 air defense missile complexes.” A Chávez military adviser boasts that the Russian submarines will “make Venezuela’s navy the strongest in the region,” potentially putting the U.S. Navy in harm’s way.

CHAVEZ TERRORIST CONNECTION

In addition to this military buildup, new evidence is emerging that documents Chavez’s sinister intentions and actions in the region. The government of Colombia, assisted by the U.S. government and Interpol, is analyzing the contents of a laptop belonging to the second-in-command of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Raul Reyes, who was killed by the Colombian military in an attack two kilometers inside Ecuador’s border on March 1, 2008.

The U.S. Secretary of State designated the FARC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1997. In 2003, President George W. Bush designated the FARC as a “significant foreign narcotics trafficker pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act due to its extensive narcotics trafficking activities.” The FARC has also been designated as a terrorist organization by the European Union, Canada, and the Latin American Parliament.

Evidence from the three captured FARC laptops reveals that Chávez was planning to send \$300 million to the FARC and was pressuring European governments to drop FARC’s terrorism designation. With political legitimacy, FARC could then mount a political campaign against Colombian President Álvaro Uribe’s party in the 2010 national elections. There is also evidence from the laptops that Chávez funneled money to his Chavista ally, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa, during Correa’s 2006 election campaign.

AWKWARD CONTRACT

Surprisingly, part of Chavez’s oil-based financial windfall comes from the U.S. Navy. Its Navy Exchange (NEX) Service Command has a contract, running until 2010, which specifies that Citgo will supply gasoline to all NEX service stations.

Formerly known as Cities Service, an American-owned refiner and gasoline retailer, Citgo was sold in the 1990sand is now owned by PDV America, Inc., an indirect, wholly owned subsidiary of the state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PdVSA), which is in turn wholly owned and controlled by the Hugo Chávez-led government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Citgo’s refineries are the only ones in the U.S. (and among the few in the world) built specifically to refine Venezuela’s heavy, dirty, and high-sulfur crude oil, so the Chávez regime is heavily reliant on them for income.

Given Chávez’s aggressively anti-American actions, it is at the least a great irony that the U.S. Navy is buying gasoline from him. A Navy press spokesman says that “Citgo’s competitively bid \$60 million-a-year contracts to supply the Navy Exchange with gas run through 2010....Citgo’s relationship with the exchange dates back to 1989.” The spokesman reported that any action to prohibit Citgo from bidding on future contracts could be taken only by Navy headquarters in Washington. The Navy did demonstrate its sensitivity about the issue in 2006, however, when it replaced Citgo signs with “NEX” signs at all of its service stations after Chávez’s speech in September of that year before the U.N. General Assembly, where he called President Bush “the Devil.”

STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM?

The Bush Administration is reportedly investigating whether the actions taken by the Chávez regime to support and promote the FARC could lead to Venezuela being placed on the U.S. government’s list of state sponsors of terrorism. This action would result in the imposition of four main sets of U.S. government sanctions:

- (1) A ban on arms-related exports and sales;
- (2) Controls over exports of dual-use items for goods or services that could significantly enhance the terrorist-list country’s military capability or ability to support terrorism;

- (3) Prohibitions on economic assistance; and
 - (4) Imposition of miscellaneous financial and other restrictions, including:
 - (a) Requiring the United States to oppose loans by the World Bank and other international financial institutions;
 - (b) Lifting diplomatic immunity to allow families of terrorist victims to file civil lawsuits in U.S. courts;
 - (c) Denying companies and individuals tax credits for income earned in terrorist-listed countries;
 - (d) Denial of duty-free treatment of goods exported to the United States;
 - (e) Authority to prohibit any U.S. citizen from engaging in a financial transaction with a terrorist-list government without a Treasury Department license; and
 - (f) Prohibition of Defense Department contracts above \$100,000 with companies controlled by terrorist-list states.
- Designation by the U.S. of Venezuela as a terrorist-sponsoring state would put into jeopardy the billions of dollars the Chávez regime takes in annually from the sale of oil to the United States. It would also give the Navy a way out of its awkward contract with Citgo.

High-Tech Submarine Uses Old-Fashioned Navigation

By Kate Wiltrout, The Virginian PilotOnline.com, March 23, 2008

ABOARD THE NORTH CAROLINA – It cost more than \$2.5 billion, is powered by a nuclear reactor and has sonar systems so advanced they can detect the snapping sound of shrimp.

But for all its hundreds of computers and automated systems, the Navy’s newest submarine still relies on three old-fashioned things when navigating the deep: people, pencils and paper.

At least for now.

On a recent overnight cruise - the North Carolina’s first since leaving the Newport News shipyard in February - Chief Petty Officer Shawn Mason stood in front of a paper chart spread across a console in the submarine’s control room.

Colored markers indicated the contours of the sea floor; longitude and latitude readings adorned the side of the 3-foot-long chart showing the nautical features east of Port Canaveral.

Huddled over the chart in the darkened control room, Mason used what’s called a divider – similar to a compass students use to draw circles – to measure small increments of longitude and latitude. With nothing more advanced than a pencil and a straight edge, the chief drew a line projecting the submarine’s course on this overnight trip in Florida’s warm coastal waters.

Mason used dead reckoning – “DR,” in control room lingo – to figure out precisely where the submarine was at the moment, and where it was headed if it stayed on course.

That would be easy, except for all the precautions a sub takes when it’s transiting on the surface.

When Lt. Anderson Perez, the navigator, called out an adjustment to steer the sub away from a boat, Mason flipped over his pencil and erased the line.

From there, it was back to Square One, with the divider, the pencil and the ruler.

Mason is among the last generation of military mariners who will rely on paper charts to ply the ocean.

The Navy has begun equipping submarines with a computerized program called VMS, or voyage management system. The program will do with microprocessors what Mason does by hand, allowing navigators to spend less time estimating where they are and more figuring out what’s ahead.

The switch, which began last year on the Norfolk-based submarine Oklahoma City, will redefine one of the most basic tasks of mariners for centuries: determining, or “fixing,” a ship’s position using various environmental clues.

Mason looks forward to the change. According to Capt. Mark Davis, the commanding officer, it will probably happen in 18 months to two years.

Mason insists he won’t be nervous relying on a computer. Submariners aren’t much for nostalgia; their very survival depends on technology.

“I love VMS. I’m a big VMS fan,” said Mason, who has served aboard three other submarines in his 12 years in the Navy. “I will be glad to get rid of paper.”

In 2005, the Cape St. George, a Norfolk-based cruiser, was the first surface ship to be certified in electronic navigation. Eventually, the Navy plans to have all of its 270 ships and subs outfitted with the system.

But submarine navigation is the riskiest of all, simply because sailors are essentially driving blindly. Periscopes are useless underwater; sonar provides a picture – in a way – of nearby obstacles. Piloting a submarine is like driving a car at night with all the windows blackened. Knowing where you are on a map is essential to figuring out when to brake and where you can safely speed up.

Electronic navigation will calculate location by using GPS data and inputs from other navigation sensors. Changes will be reflected in real time on the digital navigation chart, making Mason’s eraser expendable.

Cmdr. Terry Takats, the submarine force’s top navigator, said VMS makes navigating easier and also simplifies the laborious planning process.

“Voyage planning is a lot simpler and more straightforward in the electronic world than on paper, where a lot of manual effort is involved,” Takats said in an interview.

“Electronically, it’s a lot simpler. Click, move the cursor, click. It draws a line between the two.”

Takats said electronic navigation will increase safety because sailors will take less time figuring out their current position.

“Electronic navigating will allow us to spend more time focusing on where we’re going,” Takats said.

One example of a navigation nightmare: In 2005, the submarine San Francisco was cruising at top speed when it hit an undersea mountain in the Pacific. The mountain’s existence, which had been detected by satellite, wasn’t reflected on a paper chart. The crash killed one sailor and injured 60 others, almost half the total crew.

Physically, there are other advantages to electronic charts. Submarines go to sea with thousands of paper charts, which take up precious space.

“You can take these stacks and stacks of hundreds of pieces of paper, and convert all of that to a handful of CDs,” Takats said. “You can imagine how that simplifies things.”

Davis said planners originally were going to build all Virginia-class subs with VMS. Instead, the fifth boat of the class - now being built in Connecticut - will be the first to leave the shipyard with electronic navigation capabilities.

Five older submarines – Ohio, Florida, Houston, Buffalo, and Oklahoma City – have been retrofitted and are now certified to use VMS.

How realistic is the possibility of the navigation system crashing and imperiling a crew?

Booster Club

Total for calendar year 2007: \$559
Mike Hyman 619-980-0846

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San Diego, CA 92120-3404
Attn: Booster Club**

*Make checks out to USSVI and write Booster Club
in the memo!*

“There are risks involved with any transition you do,” Takats said. “We are taking effective measures to mitigate the risks. We need it to be highly reliable, highly accurate, and we also need redundancy. We have a backup, and we have a backup to the backup.”

For all the digital system’s advantages, Mason might be a little sad to see the old way go.

“Right now, this is kind of an art,” he said. “People come over here kind of wondering what you’re doing and look at you like, ‘What are you doing?’ And you explain it to them, and they still don’t understand it until they stand here for at least a couple hours.”

Us Navymen Help Spruce Up Centre

Dailyexpress.com, Malaysia, March 23, 2008

Kota Kinabalu: Some 15 crew, including officers, of the USS Pasadena, a US submarine, which docked at the Sepanggar Container Port, Wednesday, spent their day off to provide charity work here, Friday.

The officers and crew were invited by the Kota Kinabalu Rotary Club to do charity work for the Sabah West Coast Single Mothers’ Association, at its centre, near the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, here.

Kota Kinabalu Rotary Club Community Service Director Andrew Chong Hock Yee said the club often enlists the help of navy men to provide charity works.

“We often work together with foreign navy personnel to provide this sort of charity work,” Andrew said.

Captain of the Boat of the USS Pasadena, Jim Lyle, led the volunteers at the charity event. He said it was his first time in Malaysia and so far has enjoyed his brief stay.

“We like to help people and so we enjoy doing this kind of work,” Jim said.

They did some cleaning works around the compound at the Association’s Phoenix Centre (meeting & gathering centre), as well as painted the interior of the house.

The Association’s Deputy President Norhanida Annol said it was very nice of the navy to come and help them do some cleaning around the Centre.

They cut the grass and painted the inside of the Centre.

Also at the event to lend his support was Kota Kinabalu Rotary Club President James Jupinon.

The Club, well known for its active involvement in welfare activities, also organised some charity work last year at Sekolah Seri Mengasih in Tanjung Aru, at SMK Tenggilan and river clean-up activities at Likas, among others.

General Dynamics Wins \$324.9M Navy Deal

Associated Press, March 20, 2008

WASHINGTON – A division of General Dynamics Corp. has won a \$324.9 million Navy contract boost to procure materials for the construction of two Virginia Class attack submarines, the Defense Department said late Thursday.

General Dynamics Electric Boat division will procure materials for steam and electric plant components, miscellaneous hull, mechanical and electrical system components and the main propulsion unit and ship service turbine generator set.

Shares of General Dynamics, based in Fall Church, Va., rose 62 cents to close at \$85.66.

Lockheed Wins \$25M Navy Missile Contract

Thomson Financial delivered by Newstex, <http://money.cnn.com>, Mar. 20, 2008

WASHINGTON (AP) – Lockheed Martin Corp. (NYSE:LMT) was awarded a \$25 million contract boost to provide design, modeling and testing work on a component for the Navy’s Trident II D5 Fleet Ballistic Missile system, the Defense Department said late Wednesday.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Co. is the prime contractor and program manager for the Navys Trident II D5 Fleet Ballistic Missile. The missile, which is placed aboard an Ohio-class submarine, has range of 4,000 nautical miles.

Shares of Lockheed Martin, based in Bethesda, Md., were down \$1.81 at \$98.90 Thursday.

San Diego Submarine Veterans Meeting for February 12, 08

1855 Meeting called to order by Base Commander Bob Bissonnette.

Conducted opening exercises: Pledge of Allegiance

Tolling of the Boats

USS BARBEL SS 316

USS SHARK SS 174

USS AMBERJACK SS219

USS GRAYBACK SS208

USS TROUT SS202

USS POMODON SS486

All hands observe a moment of silent prayer.

E-Board members present and presenting new members and guests by the

Junior Vice Commander:

We have 3 guests this evening: David Nelson, Jim Dunon and Capt Patton.

Secretary reported members attend 29 with 3 guests.

Base Commander introduced special guest speaker: Captain M. Patton, Commanding Officer, Point Loma Submarine Base, San Diego, Ca.

1945 Meeting adjourned for break...

2000 Meeting called to order and conducted 50/50 drawing.

Treasures report: Report will be published into the Sentinel.

Secretary minutes have been published in the last Sentinel if no questions minutes are accepted.

Cmdr requested base Chaplin present the Binnacle list:

Chaplin reported we had two shipmates depart on eternal patrol.

John Wayne Philpot, 1 Feb 2008, he was 87 years old.

George Franceschiello, RMC(SS)

Binnacle listed posted:

Mike Hyman, Chuck George, Larry Freske, and Al Stunk.

Joe McGrievy, is seriously ill, he is unable to eat or take medication. He has limited mobility and he has been checked in to the hospital. Please join us in prayer for Joe.

Parade Chairman, no update.

Membership committee:

At the present time we have seventeen members behind in dues payment. I will be publishing the list in the next Sentinel. We plan to write a letter to each individual giving them a chance to bring their dues current before they are removed from the active member list.

Scholarship Committee:

We have not received any applications for Scholarship funds. If anyone knows of a candidate please have them submit applications.

Convention Committee: (Mike Hacking)

We have begun the planning stage and will have another planning meeting in Escondido with the Scamp Base. The next focus will be on budgeting for the convention. Mike Hyman has submitted a primary drawing for the conventions official patch. Fund raising is now in focus. We have obtained a great deal from the Town and Country for rooms and convention support. However, we are being hit hard on the catering service. We continue to need volunteers for different committees.

Breakfast Committee:

Next Breakfast will be on the 5th Sunday of the month. We need volunteers to help serve and cook the breakfast.

Unfinished Business:

Charlie Marin opened the floor for new elections. There was no new nominee for existing offices. Charlie called for nominations to be closed, since there is only one candidate for each office with not objections a voice vote is authorized. Each candidate was passed with a voice vote.

Unfinished Business:

A Savin printer has been given to the base by Point Loma Nazarene University. The base Commander went over the cost for maintaining this unit. This is only information for the membership and did not require a vote or approval. It was point out that the base has no secure location for this printer. Fred Fomby has volunteered his garage to maintain the printer.

New Business:

The base Commander suggested we have a dinner meeting to indoc new nominees. It was suggested we have the dinner here at the VFW. Ron Gorence suggested we go to dinner at a nice location and opened the floor to any suggestions. Fred said he would check the Sizzler in Point Loma area. The Harbor Inn was suggested. Ron will check the club at Miramar.

Good of the Order:

Don Philpot has been nominated to the Holland Club.

Reminder: New rules now allow veterans to salute the flag during the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bill Earl stood and thanked the membership for their concern and sympathy for the death of his wife.

2025 Meeting was adjourned by the Base Commander.

Sailing list:

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| FRED FOMBY | MANNY BURCIAGA | MD PATTON |
| CJ CLASSFORD | BOB BISONNETTE | CHUCK BABCOCK |
| CHARLIE MARIN | EVERETT MAUGER | PAUL HITCHCOCK |
| PHILL RICHESON | PETE BERG | CHRIS SULTANA |
| CLIFF BRITT | FRED DEWITT | |
| BOB FARRELL | JACK KANE | |
| ED FARLEY | GR PRINCE | |
| BILL EARL | RJ FULLEN | |
| JOE DUBOIS | JIM TREGURTHA | |
| DICK MCGUIRE | RONGORENCE | |
| MIKE HACKING | HARLAN DEGOOD | |
| DAVID NEILSON | JIM DOONAN | |
| RAY FERBRACHE | MATT BAUMANN | |

Checking Account Balance @ 12/29/2007 **\$ 1,398.97**

INCOME for JANUARY 2008

Christmas Party	60.00
Booster Club	70.00
50/50	49.00
Calendar Sales	10.00
Ship's Store (Patches)	10.00

Membership 410.00

Scholarship Income for January 10.00

Total Income for January (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 619.00**

EXPENSES for JANUARY 2008

January Silent Sentinel Printing	131.46
January Silent Sentinel Mailing	48.71
USSVI December 2007 Final Membership	120.00
Christmas Party & 2008 Calendars	70.00

Total Expenses for January (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 370.17**

Checking Account Balance @ 01/30/2008 **\$ 1,647.80**

ASSETS

Base Checking (1/30/08)	\$ 1,647.80
Base Savings (1/30/08)	9,318.36
Scholarship Fund Included in Base Savings	10.00
Convention Account (1/31/08)	3,977.74

TOTAL ASSETS **\$ 14,943.90**

Checking Account Balance @ 1/30/2008 **\$ 1,647.80**

INCOME for FEBRUARY 2008

Booster Club	0.00
50/50	0.00
Calendar Sales	0.00
Ship's Store	0.00

Membership 400.00

Scholarship Income for February 0.00

Total Income for February (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 400.00**

EXPENSES for FEBRUARY 2008

Silent Sentinel Printing	0.00
Silent Sentinel Mailing	0.00
USSVI December 2007 Error Correction	90.00
USSVI 2008 Membership	60.00

Total Expenses for February (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 150.00**

Checking Account Balance @ 02/28/2008 **\$ 1,897.80**

ASSETS

Base Checking (2/28/08)	\$ 1,897.80
Base Savings (2/28/08)	9,318.36
Scholarship Fund Included in Base Savings	10.00
Convention Account (2/29/08)	3,977.74

TOTAL ASSETS **\$ 15,193.90**

NOTES to REPORT

Treasurer was on vacation during much of February and missed meeting so no deposits were made nor checks written. These will show up in March Report.

Queenfish: A Cold War Tale

(NEW YORK TIMES 18 MAR 08) ... William J. Broad Atop the globe, the icy surface of the Arctic Ocean has remained relatively peaceful. But its depths have boiled with intrigue, no more so than in the cold war.

Although the superpowers planned to turn those depths into an inferno of exploding torpedoes and rising missiles, the brotherhood of submariners — the silent service, both Russian and American — has worked hard over the decades to keep the particulars of those plans hush-hush.

Now, a few secrets are spilling through a crack in the wall of silence, revealing some of the science and spying that went into the doomsday preparations.

A new book, “Unknown Waters,” recounts the 1970 voyage of a submarine, the Queenfish, on a pioneering dive beneath the ice pack to map the Siberian continental shelf. The United States did so as part of a clandestine effort to prepare for Arctic submarine operations and to win any military showdown with the Soviet Union.

In great secrecy, moving as quietly as possible below treacherous ice, the Queenfish, under the command of Captain Alfred S. McLaren, mapped thousands of miles of previously uncharted seabed in search of safe submarine routes. It often had to maneuver between shallow bottoms and ice keels extending down from the surface more than 100 feet, threatening the sub and the crew of 117 men with ruin.

Another danger was that the sub might simply be frozen in place with no way out and no way to call for help as food and other supplies dwindled.

The Queenfish at one point became stuck in a dead end. The rescue took an hour and tense backtracking out of what had threatened to become an icy tomb.

“I still dream about it every other week,” Dr. McLaren, 75, the book’s author, recalled in an interview. “It was hairy.” The University of Alabama Press is publishing his recollections of the secret voyage.

Sylvia A. Earle, an oceanographer and the former chief scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said such feats in perilous waters made Dr. McLaren a genuine hero. “The sub could have disappeared, and nobody would have known anything about it,” she said. “But they came through. That’s exploration at its most exquisite.”

After Dr. McLaren’s mission, the Arctic became a theater of military operations in which the Soviets tried to hide their missile-carrying subs under the fringes of the ice pack while American attack subs tried relentlessly to track them. The goal was to destroy the Soviet subs if the cold war turned hot, doing so quickly enough to keep them from launching their missiles and nuclear warheads at the United States.

Norman Polmar, an author and analyst on Navy operations, called the polar environment “very very difficult” for subs. He said ice dangling from the surface in endless shapes and sizes made the sub’s main eyes — sonar beams that bounce sound off the bottom and surrounding objects — work poorly.

Mr. Polmar added that the submarine community nonetheless considered the Arctic “a big deal,” because it had a near monopoly on operations there.

Dr. McLaren commanded one of the Navy’s most advanced warships, a jet-black monster the length of a football field.

It was the first of a large class of submarines specially designed for year-round operations in polar regions. As such, it boasted an array of special acoustic gear meant to help it visualize the complex world beneath the pack ice.

For instance, the sub had a special sensor to detect icebergs jutting downward with threatening spikes. From bow to stern, it had a total of seven acoustic sensors pointing upward to help the crew judge the thickness of ice overhead.

As Dr. McLaren recounts in “Unknown Waters,” the Queenfish, in preparation for its Arctic voyage, was stripped of all identifying marks and picked up a full load of torpedoes.

It arrived at the North Pole on Aug. 5, 1970, rising through open water. On the ice, an impromptu Santa Claus in a red suit frolicked with crew members.

The submarine then sailed for the Siberian continental shelf, where it began its mission of secret reconnaissance.

Moscow claimed seas extending 230 miles from its shores, including most of the shelf, whose waters averaged a few hundred feet deep. But Washington recognized just a 12-mile territorial limit, and Dr. McLaren was instructed to play by those rules.

As the book recounts, the sub repeatedly ventured within periscope range of Soviet land. In the Severnaya Zemlya archipelago, its crew examined the October Revolution and Bolshevik Islands.

The Queenfish also spotted a convoy. “I was able to see and identify all six ships as Soviet,” Dr. McLaren writes. “They consisted of an icebreaker leading a tanker and four cargo ships on an easterly course that slowly weaved back and forth through the chaotic ice pack.”

The main mission was to map the seabed and collect oceanographic data in anticipation of the Arctic’s becoming a major theater of military operations. The sub did so by finding and following depth contours, for instance, by locating the areas of the Arctic Basin where the seabed was 600 feet below the surface. A result was a navigation chart that bore the kind of squiggly lines found on topographic maps.

The goal of mapping the bottom contour also sent the Queenfish into the dead end. The crew was watching a favorite Western movie, “Shane,” when a messenger touched Dr. McLaren on the shoulder and whispered that the sub had ground to a standstill.

“Heart in my mouth, I ran up to the after-port side of the control room,” he writes. “Saturating the iceberg detector scope was bright sea-ice-return in all directions.”

Dr. McLaren ordered all crew movement to cease as he and other watch standers worked the propeller, rudder and stern planes to move the Queenfish slowly backward. Finally, he writes, the boat entered deeper water, and the crew “gave out a huge collective sigh of relief.”

The two-month voyage ended in Nome, Alaska, where the sub and crew encountered a chilly reception. The mayor and other people on the town dock had mistaken the sinister-looking sub without markings as Soviet.

In 1972, Dr. McLaren won the Distinguished Service Medal, the military’s highest peacetime award.

Historians say cold war maneuvering in the Arctic picked up after his mission, with the two sides deploying more submarines beneath the ice. The United States built a total of 36 sister subs to the Queenfish, known as the Sturgeon class.

Little is known publicly of the polar exploits. But every so often the icy world erupted in a foretaste of war. In 1984, an American satellite observed a Soviet sub breaking through the ice of the Siberian sea to test fire missiles.

Military and legal experts said Dr. McLaren’s book, while providing a glimpse into a hidden world of cold war planning, might also make political waves today.

That is because of the sub’s repeated penetrations of what Moscow considered its territorial waters, defying boundaries that Washington refused to recognize. The disclosure of that boldness could bolster the case in international forums for American navigational rights, legal experts said in interviews.

Bernard H. Oxman, a specialist in maritime law at the University of Miami School of Law, called the 1970 voyage “an indication of state practice and a refusal to acquiesce in Russian claims over navigation.” Although Moscow has in recent years relaxed such claims, he added, the legal precedent remains.

So too, Dr. McLaren sees his spy mission as a milestone for freedom of navigation, whether in Russian waters or elsewhere in the contested wilds atop the globe.

Today the issue is hot, because melting polar ice is opening up new shipping lanes and exposing potentially vast deposits of natural resources, including oil. A modern gold rush is getting under way.

“It’s important to maintain freedom of the seas,” Dr. McLaren said in an interview. “That’s something our country has fought for literally from its inception.”

Global warming and the shrinking polar ice pack are creating new opportunities and responsibilities, he said, adding, “We’ve got to stand our ground.”

GAO Blasts Weapons Budget

Cost Overruns Hit \$295 Billion

By Dana Hedgpeth, *Washington Post*, April 1, 2008

Government auditors issued a scathing review yesterday of dozens of the Pentagon’s biggest weapons systems, saying ships, aircraft and satellites are billions of dollars over budget and years behind schedule.

The Government Accountability Office found that 95 major systems have exceeded their original budgets by a total of \$295 billion, bringing their total cost to \$1.6 trillion, and are delivered almost two years late on average. In addition, none of the systems that GAO looked at had met all of the standards for best management practices during their development stages.

Auditors said the Defense Department showed few signs of improvement since the GAO began issuing its annual assessments of selected weapons systems six years ago. “It’s not getting any better by any means,” said Michael Sullivan, director of GAO’s acquisition and sourcing team. “It’s taking longer and costing more.”

Chris Isleib, a Pentagon spokesman, said in a written statement, “We’d like to look at what GAO has said, and then at the appropriate time make an informed comment.”

The Pentagon has doubled the amount it has committed to new systems, from \$790 billion in 2000 to \$1.6 trillion last year, according to the 205-page GAO report. Total acquisition costs in 2007 for major defense programs increased 26 percent from first estimates. In 2000, 75 programs had cost increases totaling 6 percent. Development costs in 2007 for the systems rose 40 percent from initial projections, compared with 27 percent in 2000. Current programs are delivered 21 months late on average, five months later than in 2000.

“In most cases, programs also failed to deliver capabilities when promised – often forcing war fighters to spend additional funds on maintaining” existing weapons systems, the report says.

The GAO chose 72 of the 95 systems to examine, based on high-dollar value and congressional interest. The various systems were at different stages of the acquisition process over the last year.

The report details such projects as the Navy’s \$5.2 billion Littoral Combat Ship, which has had such extensive troubles that the service expects the cost of its first two ships to exceed their combined budget of \$472 million by more than 100 percent. The Navy canceled construction of the planned third and fourth ships by Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics, the prime contractors on the project.

The government is facing higher development costs on eight major programs, including Lockheed Martin’s Joint Strike Fighter and Boeing’s Future Combat Systems, a technology to connect unmanned aircraft and vehicles. The prices for those two programs have

risen 36 percent and 40 percent, respectively, from the initial contracts, the GAO said, partly because the government wants “new and unproven technologies” and did not undertake early analysis to make sure its requirements could be met.

In a statement, Lockheed said that the Joint Strike Fighter “is performing solidly, making outstanding technical progress in the context of the most complex aircraft ever built” and that “the bedrock and the cornerstone” of the F-35 program have been “affordability and cost containment.”

In another case, the initial contract target price of Boeing’s program to modernize avionics in the C-130 cargo plane is expected to skyrocket 323 percent, to \$2 billion. Another Boeing program, for a radio system, is up 310 percent, to \$966 million.

“Boeing’s commitment is to deliver on our promises to our military customers and meeting their requirements in the most cost-effective way possible,” the company said in a statement.

The GAO’s Sullivan said the reasons for the cost overruns and delays are threefold: There are too many programs chasing too few dollars; technologies are often not mature enough to go into production; and it takes too long to design, develop and produce a system.

“They’re asking for something that they’re not sure can be built, given existing technologies, and that’s risky,” Sullivan said in an interview.

Costs of some systems were driven up as much as 72 percent when changes were made to the program requirements after development of the system had begun, the report says. Half of the programs studied had 25 percent increases in the expected lines of code in their software.

Steven L. Schooner, co-director of the government procurement law program at George Washington University, said the GAO’s report reveals the recurring problems the Pentagon faces with its costly procurements.

“The nature of major weapon systems development is that you have to expect that the initial estimates, and typically the initial contracts, are overly optimistic and unrealistic,” he said. “Unfortunately the purchaser – the government – typically lacks the discipline to freeze the configuration such that the contractor has any reasonable chance of developing what it promised on time and for the price promised.”

Defense Department officials have tried to improve the procurement process, the GAO said, by doing more planning and review in the early stages of a contract. But “these significant policy changes have not yet translated into best practices on individual programs,” Gene L. Dodaro, acting comptroller general of the GAO, wrote in the report.

“Flagship acquisitions, as well as many other top priorities in each of the services, continue to cost significantly more, take longer to produce, and deliver less than was promised,” Dodaro said. “This is likely to continue until the overall environment for weapon system acquisitions changes.”

James Fisher Passes On Sub Rescue Service

Baton Evening Mail, UK, March 31, 2008

IT will be the end of an era when the UK’s Submarine Rescue Service ceases to be managed from Furness after 17 years.

But at James Fisher Defence, which incorporates the former Rumic company that outfitted, managed and manned the rescue service for all that time, the mood is far from downbeat.

In fact Roger Chapman, Rumic founder and now vice chairman of James Fisher Defence, specifically doesn’t want any hearts and flowers or violin music when the end comes.

The company, which got a world-sized feather in its cap in 2005 when it used its undersea robot Scorpio to save the lives of seven trapped Russian submariners, is up to its neck in both contracts and negotiations to supply submarine rescue services for foreign navies.

It is building and supplying two submersible rescue craft – in effect mini submarines with space on board for rescued sailors – and will supply one to Korea, complete with a two-year commissioning deal.

It will also deliver the other to Singapore together with a new ship, and then run the standby rescue service for them under contract, as it has for the Royal Navy.

James Fisher Defence is also doing work with the Spanish navy and is in meaningful negotiations with another, so far undisclosed navy, for which it would supply the LR5 submersible rescue sub and the Scorpio, once they are released from the Royal Navy control.

The LR5 and Scorpio are due to come off station at Renfrew, in Scotland, where they are based, in the summer or late this year.

The sub rescue baton will finally pass from James Fisher Defence to a new Nato-backed system headed by Rolls Royce Power Engineering and initially serving three navies, the UK, France and Norway.

It has been developed over the past three years since that consortium beat one headed by Rumic for the £157m contract to procure and operate a Nato successor to the LR5 for 10 years.

The new system “can go a bit faster and a bit deeper than LR5” and has the very latest technology, but it essentially does the same job and can rescue the same amount of 16 sailors at a time.

The RN rescue service has evolved over 25 years. Rumic took it over from BT Marine 17 years ago.

When the Rolls Royce System takes over James Fisher Defence will stay involved because it is contracted to supply a team of five pilots, who drive the mini sub, and engineers, so the link will not be severed, although Rumic is no longer in charge.

Mr Chapman recently met the First Sea Lord, Sir Jonathan Band.

He said: “I stressed to him that LR5 should not be stood down until all the boxes have been ticked and the new system has full operational capability.

“With a new submarine (Barrow’s Astute) coming out on trials they are very supportive.

“We have a lot at stake here because there are three nations involved. If they jump the gun too quickly there is that risk unless everything is perfect.

“I think they have still three hoops to go through and my guess at when the earliest the handover will be is late this year.”

Whatever the change, Mr Chapman says it will not lead to redundancies. New contracts mean there will be plenty for everyone to do.

Its Renfrew base, where the two new submersibles are being assembled, once had 15 staff. Now it has 70, who are a mix of Scots and Cumbrians.

Six of the eight-man team which rescued the Russians were from Furness and Mr Chapman says their skills will be needed for other contracts too.

He said: “There are so many slots to operate. To be honest we have got the best of both worlds.

“The big plus is that we are currently building a ship in Singapore and a submersible in Scotland for Singapore which will be under contract early in 2009.

“We have another submersible for delivery to Korea with a two-year commissioning contract, so we are extremely busy. We are hoping to find a home for LR5 and we have been talking to several navies for a time.”

LR5 briefly saw life and death service when it was airlifted to the Barents Sea in 2000 after the giant Russian nuclear sub Kursk sank with 118 sailors aboard.

The Russian authorities held off rescue for so long that it was too late for LR5 to be of help when it got there.

The Nato Submarine Rescue System successor system took part in a major trial in a Norwegian fjord in February in which it successfully “mated” with the Norwegian sub Uredd 87 metres down.

Rescue vessels can put out flexible connections which cover a submarine hatch and provides a dry passage between the two vessels.

Its deepest dive so far is 610m and Tom Heron, the senior pilot contracted from James Fisher Defence, said he was delighted with the craft’s stability, manoeuvrability, and power, and how solid it was at 610m.

He said there were “none of the usual creaks and groans heard at great depth”.

Sonar Limits Frustrate Navy

‘Marine Mammal Issues’ Complicated Exercise Off Hawaii, Fleet Says

By William Cole, Honolulu Advertiser, March 28, 2008

The Navy yesterday raised concerns about new sonar restrictions as it finished three days of anti-submarine warfare training off Hawai’i — the first such training under a recent federal court order on sonar use that is meant to better protect whales and dolphins.

The USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group, which conducted the training before its expected deployment to the Persian Gulf region, also included a cruiser, three destroyers and two submarines, the Navy said.

“(The court order) adds up to a very complicated situation that forces the sailors aboard those ships to devote more time and attention to marine mammal issues than to the anti-submarine warfare training that’s the point of the exercise,” said Capt. W. Scott Gureck, a spokesman for U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Marine mammals were spotted during the exercise, Gureck said, but no incidents involving those animals were reported. Gureck said it will be several weeks before final reports are completed.

Paul Achitoff, an Earthjustice attorney representing several groups that sued the Navy over sonar use in Hawai’i waters, said the Navy’s claim that it had to devote more time to whale watching than sonar training is “nonsensical.”

“There are a bunch of vessels in each exercise, so you’ve probably got 1,000 personnel out there on the water, and probably only about six of them have to even think about marine mammals, or maybe 10, or whatever, and the rest of them are doing completely other things,” Achitoff said.

“So the (Navy) statement is absurd on its face.”

Navy sonar use and its effects on marine mammals have become an extremely contentious and worrisome issue for the Navy, which trains by using active sonar “pings” to be able to detect an increasing number of quiet diesel electric foreign submarines.

Two recent federal court rulings on the West Coast also increased restrictions on the Navy’s use of active sonar.

U.S. District Judge David Ezra in Honolulu said in his late February ruling that “this is an extremely complex issue on which there is still much uncertainty.”

U.S. aircraft carriers are possible targets of submarines from potentially hostile nations, and the inability to train using mid-frequency sonar would “put thousands of American lives at risk,” Ezra said.

But while the Navy disputed the factors associated with marine mammal strandings, Ezra said “there is little disagreement that (midfrequency active) sonar can cause injury, death and behavioral alteration to these animals.”

Ezra’s order noted that at least 26 species of marine mammals frequent Hawai’i waters. The use of midfrequency Navy sonar was determined to be a “plausible, if not likely” contributing factor to the mass stranding of up to 200 melon-headed whales in Hanalei Bay during Rim of the Pacific naval exercises in 2004.

The Hawai’i case stems from a May 2007 lawsuit seeking to stop the sonar exercises for carrier and amphibious strike groups heading to the western Pacific from the West Coast that stop in Hawai’i’s waters for sonar training.

Additional anti-submarine exercises are planned for May and June, Achitoff said.

Among the ships that took part in this week's exercise were the Pearl Harbor-based destroyer USS Russell. Submarines that participated included the USS Cheyenne out of Pearl Harbor, and the USS Seawolf, the Navy said.

The Seawolf, one of just three subs in the Seawolf class, was moved to Bremerton, Wash., last summer as the Navy shifts the balance of submarines to 60 percent in the Pacific and 40 percent in the Atlantic.

Before it left the West Coast, the Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group conducted certification training off Southern California involving a separate set of sonar training restrictions imposed by federal courts there.

The Navy said the aircraft carrier will not pull into Pearl Harbor for a port call.

U.S. Pacific Fleet said even before the recent litigation, the Navy had been employing 29 protective measures to minimize the potential for injury to marine mammals.

Among the requirements ordered by Ezra were "safety zones" including the need for the Navy to power down active sonar by 6 decibels when a marine mammal is spotted within 1,500 meters of a sonar-emitting vessel.

The sonar power must be stepped down the closer the animal is, and within 500 meters, all sonar transmission must cease.

U.S. Pacific Fleet said in a statement afterward that the restrictions "could seriously impact our ability to train effectively."

The preliminary injunction put in place by Ezra required the Navy to implement eight mitigation measures.

Ezra also had ordered the use of three dedicated lookouts in addition to normal watch components. The plaintiffs subsequently asked that those lookouts be "specialist marine mammal observers," but Ezra said having non-Navy personnel as lookouts was impractical and potentially dangerous.

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Reviewed By House Armed Services Committee Chair

By Clare Kittredge, Union Leader Correspondent, The Union Leader - Manchester, NH, March 28, 2008

PORTSMOUTH – The powerful Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee expressed strong support for the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard yesterday after two Congressional Democrats took him on a whirlwind afternoon tour of the facility.

"This is a world class shipyard," said Ike Skelton (D-Mo) during a press conference outside the yard's bustling main gate with Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter and Congressman Tom Allen (D-Maine).

"There is a lot of old-fashioned patriotism that goes into keeping our Navy the finest in the world," Skelton said. "This is a national treasure. I'm impressed."

Shea-Porter, an Armed Services Committee member, said she invited the influential congressional leader to tour the yard to highlight the need to fund critical upgrades to the shipyard.

"The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard has been here since the 1800s and generations have worked here," said Shea-Porter, thanking Skelton for his visit. "This whole area is full of true patriots and you can see it in the work they do."

Yesterday's tour of the 207-year-old yard included meetings with top brass and union workers. It also included a visit to Drydock #3, that is undergoing upgrades to service the Navy's new Virginia class attack submarines. Shea-Porter said she helped secure \$13 million for the project in the fiscal 2008 military construction budget.

During the press conference, Shea-Porter announced that she and Allen will apply for \$21 million more in military construction funds for fiscal 2009 to refurbish Building 174 so the yard can work on Virginia class submarines.

"I'm very optimistic," Shea-Porter said. "This is a very good first step." Shea-Porter's office has been saying that the Navy has not asked for new military construction money for years, relying instead on Congress.

Questioned about the propriety of funding yard upgrades with earmarks, Skelton said Congress decides the fate of all funding requests. "Many projects are not funded by the Army or Air Force, but we're tickled to death to do it," he said. "Our job is to authorize this spending."

New ethics rules make the process more transparent, Shea-Porter added.

"Congressman Allen and I don't do this lightly. Under the new earmark system, you've got to have transparency," she said. "We have to put our names to it and show that we have no financial interest in it. That should reassure taxpayers that we are doing it for the good of our country."

Paul O'Connor, president of the Metal Trades Council, deemed the visit a success, calling Shea-Porter and Allen "tremendous fighters for our shipyard."

The yard will be working on Los Angeles class submarines until 2020, and the Virginia class submarines are due in 2010, but the project will benefit both, O'Connor explained.

"We need to upgrade the World War II-era building to work on both of them," said O'Connor. "This will give us a tremendous shot in the arm."

Planning For America's Security

The High Cost Of An Inadequate Defense Budget

By Elizabeth Dole, Washington Times, March 31, 2008

What nation's Air Force is flying aircraft more than 50 years old? What nation's Navy has the smallest fleet since before World War II? And what nation's military transports are banned from the airspace of a South American country because they are notoriously unreliable? Most Americans would be shocked to learn the answer is none other than the United States.

For far too many years, our military has been trying to stretch dollars by repairing aging equipment. Can you imagine the public outcry if commercial airlines were flying 50-year-old planes? Clearly, this is unacceptable — especially to the brave men and women who defend our country. The least we can do is ensure they have the best equipment when in harm's way and the best health care, housing and benefits upon their return.

Our projected defense spending falls short of meeting our military's critical needs. That's why I have introduced a resolution recommending that our nation commit no less than 4 percent of our gross domestic product to the annual defense budget, a measure supported by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the secretary of defense. Today's defense budget is at one of the lowest levels since World War II— 3.3 percent of GDP, exclusive of supplemental war funding.

Following the Cold War, our nation cut the size of the Army, Navy and Air Force by almost one-half and took an extended "procurement holiday," purchasing only one-half to one-tenth the average number of helicopters, ships, fighters, bombers, tankers, transports and armored vehicles purchased annually from 1975 to 1990.

The current Bush administration planned to "transform" the military through further cuts in manpower to pay for advanced weapon systems; however, September 11 changed everything. The cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan forced the administration to defer modernizing an already aging inventory of weapons.

It remains important for the Army to develop its Future Combat Systems, a networked family of manned and unmanned vehicles to replace many tanks and armored vehicles. Yet at existing funding levels, we risk developing these vehicles only to find that we can afford to equip just a small portion of the force.

In addition, the Air Force must replace aging fighters and tankers. Presently, only one-half of the funding is budgeted to purchase the 381 F-22 stealth fighters that the Air Force needs to replace the F-15As/C Eagles built in the 1970s. The need for new fighters became more obvious last November when the fuselage of an F-15 broke in half during a training flight.

The Air Force also must replace more than 500 KC-135 tankers, many of which were built in the late 1950s. At the current rate, we will procure 12 to 15 new tankers per year, which means the great-grandchildren of the original aircrew members will be flying them in the late 2030s! The same holds true with our B-52 bombers, which were built in the early 1960s.

No less telling, today's Navy includes 280 vessels, down from President Reagan's Navy of 568 ships. Additionally, we are building only one Virginia-class attack submarine per year, compared to China's annual production of four to five advanced subs.

Furthermore, an inadequate defense budget will erode military pay, health care and housing. Personnel costs have doubled since 2001 and are expected to double yet again by 2015. These funding constraints will jeopardize the sorely needed expansion of the Army and Marine Corps.

Military construction projects will be delayed, and military readiness, which took a nosedive in the late 1990s, will again decline due to aging equipment and limited training funds. Military research, which supports the development of next-generation weapons, force protection capabilities and medical technologies that save lives on the battlefield, will be further cut from already insufficient levels.

Given the major challenges that we face around the globe, we must invest generously in the future of our nation's defense. Our service members stand ready to put their lives on the line for us. The very least we can do in return is ensure they have the training, equipment and benefits they obviously deserve.

Sen. Elizabeth Dole, North Carolina Republican, is a member of the Armed Services Committee.

China's Strike May Be Coming Soon

By Richard Halloran, Taipei Times, March 29, 2008

China has aimed far more missiles at Taiwan than previously reported, according to US officials with access to military intelligence. This disclosure comes as China enters a troubling and potentially dangerous time intensified by recent anti-Chinese protests in Tibetan areas.

The officials say China has 1,400 ballistic missiles targeting Taiwan.

That is 40 percent more than earlier reports that gave an approximate figure of 1,000 missiles. The Defense Department, in its recent report on Chinese military power, said 990 to 1,070 missiles were pointed at Taiwan, including variants "with improved ranges, accuracies, and payloads."

The commander of US forces in the Pacific and Asia, Admiral Timothy Keating, told Congress earlier this month: "The threat that China poses is increasing, in my opinion, for the folks who are our friends in Taiwan."

In response to a question from a congressman, he said China's forces are developing capabilities causing "concern as it presents itself as a threat to Taiwan."

While not delving into operational plans to respond to the threat from China, Keating said his Pacific Command was "adequately resourced" to meet US requirements.

He pointed to two aircraft carrier battle groups, six B-52 and three B-2 bombers deployed to Guam in the western Pacific, and a new addition to the Pacific Fleet, the submarine Ohio, which is armed with 150 Tomahawk cruise missiles.

Before the incidents involving Tibetans, a period of relative calm had been expected until the Olympic Games in Beijing in August since China sees that event as proclaiming its arrival as a world political, economic and military power.

After the Olympics would come a time during which China might take advantage of Taiwanese and US preoccupations to move against Taiwan.

The violence in Tibet and consequent international criticism of China's crackdown on human rights may have already opened that window of danger.

Said a longtime China watcher: "It depends on how bloody-minded the Chinese will be."

In the minds of Chinese leaders, Tibet and Taiwan are linked as they are both seen as separatists seeking to escape the rule of Beijing.

To a lesser extent, the same is true of Muslims in the western province of Xinjiang and of ethnic Koreans north of the Yalu River in northeastern China. Any move toward autonomy or independence would be crushed ruthlessly.

Wallace Gregson, a retired Marine lieutenant general and former commander of Marine forces in the Pacific, said in an e-mail message: "The Chinese regime will take whatever action is necessary to stay in power."

After president-elect Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) is inaugurated on May 20, it will take him several months to organize his government, giving China a chance to move against Taiwan. Of the basic policies Ma has already set, most will displease the Chinese. While he had promised not to seek independence for Taiwan, he has also ruled out unification with China and demanded no use of military force by either side.

Ma wants China to give Taiwan "international space," meaning not to interfere with Taiwan's efforts to gain diplomatic recognition from other nations and to enter international organizations such as the UN.

"I believe the world is big enough to accommodate both Taiwan and the mainland," he said.

He has proposed a peace agreement with China, which would require Beijing to recognize the government in Taipei as legitimate.

Ma says that he will reform Taiwan's defenses, including rebuilding ties with the US that have been strained under President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁). Chen has defied Washington's pleas to improve their military forces and not to provoke China.

US President George W. Bush, in a message congratulating Ma on his election last Sunday, said: "Once again, Taiwan has demonstrated the strength and vitality of its democracy."

A pillar of US bipartisan foreign policy for decades has been to stand by other democracies.

Bush is a lame duck whose administration is consumed with Iraq and the war on terror, with little attention on China and Taiwan.

That will become more so with the coming US election. After the new president takes office on Jan. 20 next year he or she will need several months to organize an administration.

All told, while Taiwanese and Americans have their attention on internal politics, the Chinese, goaded by Taiwanese and Tibetan resistance, may decide they have an opportunity to strike. That could turn out to be a monumental mistake, a miscalculation that would trigger unpredictable consequences.

Coke Boats Winning Their War

Strategy Page, March 29, 2008

South American drug gangs are apparently having considerable success with their use of submarines to move cocaine to North American and Europe. Based on current trends, the U.S. Coast Guard expects to encounter six or seven of these craft a month this year, and more next year.

These are not submarines in the true sense of the word, but "semi-submersibles". They are fiberglass boats, powered by a diesel engine, with a small "conning tower" above the water, providing the crew, and engine, with fresh air, and permitting the crew to navigate the boat. A boat of this type is the only practical kind of "submarine" for drug smuggling. A real submarine would be much more difficult to build, although you can buy commercial subs for a million dollars or so. These, however, can carry only a few hundred pounds of cargo, and not for long distances.

The semi-submersibles are built, often using specially made components brought in from foreign components, in areas along the Colombian coast, or other drug gang controlled territory). Russian naval architects and engineers have been discovered among those designing and building these boats. Some of these subs cost a million dollars to construct, and carry over ten tons of cocaine. As many as half of them are captured or lost at sea. But this is apparently more successful than other types of transportation.

Some subs have been caught while being towed by a larger ship. Apparently this enables the semi-submersibles to cover long distances, and then be cut loose for the final approach to the shore of California or some area in Europe or on the east coast of North America.

These subs are not stealthy enough to avoid detection all the time. However, it appears that these semi-submersibles do work, because the drug gangs keep using them. Most of them are apparently getting through. Delivery by sea is now the favored method for cocaine smugglers, because the United States has deployed military grade aircraft detection systems, and caught too many of the airborne drug shipments. The smugglers did their math, and realized that improvised submarines were a more cost-effective way to go.

Submarine Community Mourns Fallen Shipmate

By Mass Communications Specialist Seaman Apprentice Luciano Marano, COMSUBPAC Public Affairs



(PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii) – Stanley “Stan” K. Nicholls (pictured here participating in last year’s Memorial Day ceremony in the Submarine Memorial Park at Naval Station Pearl Harbor) departed on Eternal Patrol Friday, February 29 at the Disabled American Veterans Center in Honolulu. Nicholls was a life-long member and active volunteer in the submarine community. In a true testament to the quality of his character, the funeral service was attended by so many people that some were forced to stand outside the chapel to hear the eulogy. Services were held Friday, March 21 at the Pearl Harbor Submarine Base Chapel. Photo courtesy of Navy Chaplain Lt. Douglas McIntosh.

(PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii) – Memorial services were held Friday, March 21, for retired Navy Lt. Cmdr. Stanley “Stan” K. Nicholls, 86, at the Pearl Harbor Submarine Base Chapel.

Nicholls departed on Eternal Patrol Friday, February 29 at the Disabled American Veterans Center in Honolulu. Born in Oakland, Calif., he is survived by his wife Diane, son Michael, daughter Karen Thorp, stepsons John and Bob Trinka, and grandson Justin.

Nicholls joined the Navy in 1941 and during his 31 years of service he would reach the enlisted rank of Master Chief Petty Officer. He served on USS Segundo (SS398), USS Greenfish (SS351), and USS Pompon (SS267) making numerous successful war patrols during WWII. Nichols also had the distinction of being a certified Diver 1st class.

He accepted a Limited Duty Officer (LDO) commission and would serve the latter years of his military career as a naval officer. Nicholls would eventually retire in 1972, at the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Having retired on a Friday, Nicholls returned to work as a General Schedule (GS) employee the following Monday and would serve an additional twenty years as the Command Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC) Force Personnel and Manpower Officer, earning numerous civilian awards and retiring for the second time in November 1990.

Not one to be slowed down by retirement, Nicholls remained active in many facets of the submarine community around Pearl Harbor. He was a life member of both the United States Submarine Veterans of WWII and United States Submarine Veterans Inc. (USSVI). Nicholls was heavily involved in local volunteer work at the Navy Retired Activities Office (RAO) Hawaii, Community Association, and the Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association.

“Anyone dealing with the Pacific Fleet submarine personnel or billet management in the past 50 years, will have run across and known one of the finest gentlemen ever serving in the submarine force,” said memorial coordinator Lt. Almond Smith, COMSUBPAC Executive Officer (XO).

The ceremony at Pearl Harbor included several guest speakers and music provided by organist LaVona Schlicher and vocalist Katie Doyle.

“I never heard him say a bad word about anybody,” friend and speaker Jerry Drum said of Nicholls. “He’d go out of his way to help anybody.

“We got back about a half a century, and he was truly a Sailor’s Sailor and a gentleman’s gentleman,” said Drum.

“Stan excelled at everything he ever did,” recalled fellow speaker Ken Joiner. “He truly is the last of a breed that is disappearing too quickly, he should be honored.”

Following the ceremony, Nicholls was interned at the Punchbowl National Memorial Cemetery in Honolulu. Then, friends and family gathered together for the reception at Lockwood Hall back at Pearl Harbor.

“Men like Stan come around once in a lifetime,” said Joiner. Obviously many people agree with the statement. The ceremony was attended by so many people that seats quickly filled, and some were forced to stand outside the front door to hear the eulogy.

NATO's Submarine Rescue System

Defense Industry Daily, March 26, 2008

A new submarine rescue system, owned jointly by France, Norway and the UK, has completed trials off the coast of Norway. The "SRV1" system is managed by the UK MoD's Defence Equipment & Support team on behalf of the 3 nations. When in service it will be managed by In Service Submarines Integrated Project Team, and based at Faslane on the Clyde. Like its predecessor, the "SRV1" can be loaded into aircraft for fast response. Once it is declared operational, the existing LR5 rescue submersible and Scorpio remotely operated vehicle will leave operational service, and SRV1 will provide future rescue capability at an expected whole-life cost of GBP 157 million over 30 years.

The system consists of a free-swimming rescue vehicle with an A-frame portable launch and recovery system, a transfer-under-pressure facility to safely decompress personnel from a pressurised submarine, and an intervention system for survey and rescue preparation...

"SRV1" is designed and built by Perry Slingsby System Ltd of Kirkbymoorside. It will have a crew of 2 pilots and an attendant, can rescue 15 people at a time and will normally operate a 4-hour cycle, with an expected cycle of no more than 72 hours from notice received to deployment anywhere in the world. Once on station, it can operate in sea state 6 (5m/16 ft high waves) and remain on station in 10m/30 ft seas. SRV1 is powered by advanced sodium nickel batteries with higher power-to-weight/space ratio than the lead acid batteries used in current rescue vehicles, and a fibre optic umbilical provides video, communications and data link to the command team on the mother ship.

The NATO Submarine Rescue System will complement the new US Submarine Rescue Diving and Recompression System based in San Diego, which is also due in service in 2008. As the Kursk incident proved, these vehicles are available for use worldwide, on behalf of any country who asks for them. UK MoD release.

Events and Updates:

March 20/08: The UK MoD announces that SRV1 has successfully linked up with the Norwegian submarine Uredd while 87 metres underwater in Husnes Fjord, just south of Bergen in Norway. It also completed a deep dive to 610 meters. The UK MoD admits that some of the deep water acceptance trials were not fully completed, but the trial was declared a success anyway. This is the final stage of a 3-year design and manufacture period, under a 10-year contract with Rolls-Royce Power Engineering that includes support and operation.

Future tests will include hatch operations at depth, angled 'mating' up to 60 degrees, and the ability to recover the vehicle from rough seas. April 2008 will include a 2-day medical exercise with the French MV Argonaute, air-portability trials will continue in the summer, and there may be full participation in NATO's exercise 'Bold Monarch' off Norway in late May and early June 2008.

India's undersea missile test can trigger arms race: Pak

MSN India, 26 Mar 2008

Karachi: Pakistan on Wednesday said India's test launch of a nuclear-capable undersea ballistic missile could trigger a fresh arms race in the region. A day after India tested the new missile from waters off its Vishakhapatnam coast, Pakistan Navy chief Admiral Muhammad Afzal Tahir described the development as a "very serious issue" as it was aimed at deploying nuclear weapons at sea.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function at the shipyard here, Tahir said: "Well my reaction is that this is going to start a new arms race in the region. We are aware of these developments (which) are taking place with a view to putting nuclear weapons at sea and this is a very serious issue."

He said the testing of the new missile would have an impact on the entire region. The Pakistan Navy is tracking India's missile development programme and will take steps to counter the impact of the testing of the undersea missile, he said.

The Indian undersea missile, codenamed K-15, has a range of 700 km and was fired from a pontoon immersed in the sea as India did not have a submarine for such an exercise.

India is the fifth country after the US, Russia, France and China to possess such a capability. The launch of the K-15 will enhance India's nuclear deterrence, as sea-launched missiles will be a crucial part of the country's second-strike capability.