

UNCLASSIFIED
FM MOSCOW
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 625
OF 110748Z APRIL 89
AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK
INFO PRIORITY OSLO, UKMIS VIENNA

SIC EMA/EMC/EME

MODUK FOR DI(WP) AND TECHINT NAVY

OUR TELNO 618 (NOT TO ALL): SOVIET SUBMARINE ACCIDENT

IZVESTIYA OF 10 APRIL PUBLISHED AN INTERVIEW WITH SOVIET DEFENCE MINISTER, YAZOV, ABOUT THE LOSS OF THE SUBMARINE.

2. YAZOV SAID THE BOAT'S LOG HAD BEEN RECOVERED AND WAS BEING STUDIED. A SEPARATE LOG HAD BEEN OPENED ON THE REACTOR. 'IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT THE REACTOR WAS SHUT DOWN IN A STANDARD PROCEDURE BEFORE THE SUBMARINE SANK. IT HAD BEEN SHUT DOWN RELIABLY (SIC). WE CAN RULE OUT ITS HOUSING (KORPUS) BREAKING UP.

3. THE MINISTER CONFIRMED THAT THE SUBMARINE HAD CARRIED TEN TORPEDOES, TWO OF THEM WITH NUCLEAR CHARGES. 'THESE TORPEDOES POSE NO THREAT EVEN WHEN SUBMERGED TO A GREAT DEPTH'.

3. AS TO THE CAUSES OF THE ACCIDENT, YAZOV SAID THAT 'IF ONLY THE SEVENTH COMPARTMENT HAD BURNT OUT THE BOAT WOULD HAVE REMAINED SEA-WORTHY. BUT, AS IS KNOWN, THE SIXTH COMPARTMENT HAS ALSO BURNT OUT COMPLETELY. THE CREW HEARD SEVERAL EXPLOSIONS TWO OR THREE HOURS LATER. IT MAY BE SUPPOSED THAT WITH THE INCREASED PRESSURE ON THE SUBMARINE, SPECIAL DEVICES BEGAN TO EXPLODE. THERE WERE SEVEN OF THESE ON BOARD. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE HULL HAS CRACKED IN PLACES.

4. YAZOV CONFIRMED THAT FOUR MEN DIED IN THE COMPARTMENTS. THE OTHER CASUALTIES WERE PRESUMABLY DUE TO EXPOSURE IN THE ICY SEAS.

5. THE NORTHERN FLEET POLITICAL DIRECTORATE TOLD IZVESTIA THAT ACCORDING TO INITIAL REPORTS THE FIRE STARTED IN AN ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT. THE BOAT SURFACED TO DEAL WITH IT, AND ALL SOVIET VESSELS IN THE AREA WERE DIVERTED TO THE SUBMARINE'S AID.

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