

was reached under which the United States offered concessions and compensation. (Remarks to the same effect have appeared in several Russian press commentaries in recent days.)

One should also recall, that the *Kursk* incident occurred on the eve of the Democratic Party National Convention, and could have had a dramatic political impact, had the full circumstances of the incident become publicly known. Without being personally present at that Congress, Lyndon LaRouche was implicitly the hottest issue there, because LaRouche was the focus of the opposition to Al Gore inside the Democratic Party. Interestingly, the same LaRouche, as the intellectual author of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) adopted by Reagan, was at the center of the overall strategic conflicts which took place during Fall 1986. Previously the Soviet leadership had openly demanded, in the pages of *Izvestia* and *Pravda*, that the Reagan Administration “do something about LaRouche”—a demand pushed at the same time by LaRouche’s enemies inside the Anglo-American Establishment. Just *three days* after the Oct. 3 submarine collision and Reagan’s alleged urgent call to Gorbachov, an army of more than 300 FBI agents and other Federal, state, and local authorities raided the Leesburg, Virginia headquarters of several organizations connected with LaRouche, in an attempt to crush LaRouche’s political movement. This was the beginning of a process leading to the jailing of LaRouche and several associates. As the “Get LaRouche” task force made final preparations for that raid, Reagan was on his way to a summit meeting with Gorbachov at Reykjavik, Iceland.

Putin Under Attack

As is often the training of professionals such as Putin, the almost exaggerated coolness with which he spoke of the affair—witness his ironical formulation, “nothing extraordinary happened”—in fact reflects the opposite: The situation on Aug. 12-13 and the following days was very hot and very dangerous.

One should bear in mind, that 1) the whole affair occurred on the eve of the U.S. Democratic National Convention, a branching point for the world situation; 2) the *Kursk* sinking interrupted plans for a top-level summit of leaders of the Community of Independent States (CIS) in Yalta on Aug. 18-19, at which issues of vital strategic military importance were to be discussed; 3) as has now been revealed by Ukrainian officials, Putin himself was the target of an assassination plot, planned to occur in Yalta on Aug. 18; 4) according to Russian press sources, a “live” assassination attempt did occur on Aug. 31; 5) on the night of Sept. 11, almost exactly a month after the *Kursk* disaster, Putin was targeted by still another, very serious assassination attempt, as a speeding automobile attempted to ram into the Presidential convoy on a Moscow boulevard. Reportedly, the auto was fired upon by Putin’s security detail, before it collided with, and overturned a limousine carrying bodyguards of the President.

Documentation

Most Probably, a Foreign Submarine Rammed the Kursk

The following are excerpts from an article in Nezavisimaya Gazeta on Sept. 12 and 13, by Rear Admiral Valeri Ivanovich Aleksin. The author is a professor at the Academy of Military Sciences, and former chief navigational officer of the Soviet and Russian Navy. These excerpts were translated by EIR.

A month has passed since the terrible day of August 12, 2000, when the *Kursk*, the most modern nuclear submarine cruiser of the Northern Fleet, armed with 24 supersonic “Granit” anti-ship cruise missiles and the same number of modern torpedoes, and commanded by one of the best submarine commanders, Captain First Rank Gennadi Lyachin, was lost during tactical fleet exercises, at a depth of 108 meters on the floor of the Barents Sea. The 118 members of the crew perished. . . .

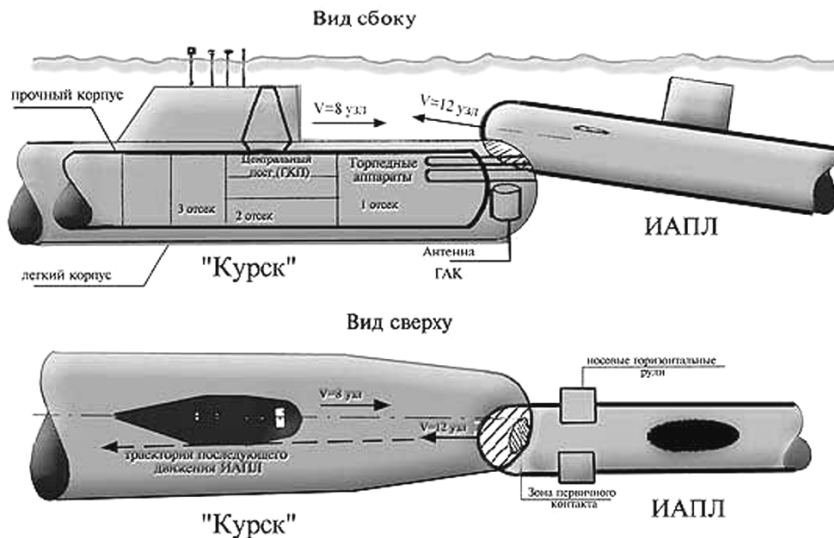
The crew had no time. Just as there was no time for the 98 crew members of the Pacific Fleet submarine K-129, when, on the night of March 7 to March 8, 1968, on duty in the northern sector of the Pacific Ocean, it received a terrible blow from the sail of the U.S. submarine “Swordfish,” in the area of the bulkhead between the second and third compartments (the central post and main command point are located in the third compartment, where the command functions of the submarine are concentrated and where all the command personnel were located). The blow cut our submarine nearly in half. All the members of the submarine crew, who were located in the second and third compartments, were killed in the first 5-10 seconds. The rest were crushed by the pressure in the compartments in the course of 1-1.5 minutes, when the submarine sank to five kilometers depth in the ocean

In April 1970, the Northern Fleet’s nuclear submarine K-8 sank after a fire, while returning from combat duty, with the loss of its 52 crew members.

But, on orders from the top leadership of the country, nothing was said about these catastrophes, which were tragedies on a national scale, nor was the public informed about the heroism of the dead sailors, nor were their relatives told the true causes of their death.

The tragic situation of the *Kursk* was amplified by the unprecedented openness, with which domestic and foreign media reported on literally every minute of the unfolding disaster, the actions and statements of all Russian and foreign officials, as well as of other individuals, colleagues, relatives of the dead submariners, and ordinary citizens of Russia and the entire world. There had never been anything like it. True, both in the statements from officials, and in those of numerous

Схема предполагаемого столкновения АПЛ "Курск" с иностранной АПЛ (ИАПЛ)



In the 20 years that the model 949 (there were two, both now decommissioned) and 949A (of which the Russian Navy had 11, including the *Kursk*) nuclear submarines have been in operation, there has never been a single such accident with a practice torpedo, during about a thousand torpedo firings.

The second version of the primary cause is an external impact on the body of the *Kursk* in the area of its bow. For this to have occurred, it is not at all necessary for the external action to involve a mass, close to that of the *Kursk*. A dynamic force of 1,000-2,000 tons would be enough, to crush the cover of the torpedo apparatus and cause an explosion of the warheads in the torpedoes. The author has observed this with his own eyes (in the absence of torpedoes and at a relative closing velocity of the two objects of about 0.5 meters per second). . . .

New information has come to light about the situation in the ocean, where the tactical exercises of the Northern Fleet were being held, about the condition of the *Kursk* itself, and about the

Nezavisimaya Gazeta illustrated Admiral Aleksin's article with this drawing, labelled "Diagram of the presumptive nuclear submarine collision." The top drawing is a side view, under it a view from above. The large submarine is the *Kursk*, depicted at periscope depth with its retractable apparatus extended, while the approaching smaller ship is identified as a "Foreign Nuclear Submarine." The speeds of the *Kursk* and the foreign sub are indicated as 8 and 12 knots, respectively. The double hull of the *Kursk* is pointed out at the left of the side-view diagram. The top-view picture shows the "initial contact zone" where the two subs overlap.

(not always very professional) experts, based on information from the mass media, there have been so many contradictory evaluations and conclusions, that it has served only to confuse the situation. This continues up to the present time. . . .

We shall not deal here with the question of the assistance, offered by several NATO member-countries, first and foremost because no rescuers could have gotten there on time. . . . I cite the statement of Vice Premier Ilya Klebanov, chairman of the government commission to investigate the *Kursk* disaster, on Sept. 6: "The entire crew of the *Kursk* perished in the first few minutes of the accident." . . .

What Caused the Explosion on Board the *Kursk*?

A dozen different versions of the causes of the disaster of the *Kursk* have been mentioned during the past month. One or two of them remain. Actually, just one: The main cause of the loss of the ship was an explosion of torpedo warheads, located in the forward torpedo apparatus in the prow, and possibly also on the racks of the first torpedo compartment. But, there are two versions of what caused the catastrophic explosion. One is that there was an explosion inside the torpedo apparatus, of the propulsion system of a defective practice torpedo during a torpedo firing exercise, leading to the flooding of the first compartment, electric short-circuits, loss of control of the ship, and its catastrophic sinking with an increasing tilt to the prow, until it collided with the sea bottom.

reactions of certain foreign officials and official institutions. Let us to make a preliminary analysis of the causes of the *Kursk* catastrophe on the basis of this new, more complete information. . . .

Being a submarine officer and a professional investigator . . . of the most dangerous naval events and crimes, I personally took part, during my 25 years of service in the Navy (until retiring in 1998), in the investigation of about 70 accidents and disasters involving vessels of the Soviet (Russian) Navy, the Merchant Marine, the Fisheries Ministry, and other marine agencies of our country, and the navies of NATO countries. I have also analyzed the causes of around 1,000 accidents at sea, using the collected descriptive reports, published by the Soviet Navy beginning in 1931.

Among these accidents there are several dozen submarine collisions, including 20 collisions of Navy submarines with foreign submarines while submerged. Out of these, 11 occurred in combat training zones at the approaches to the main bases of the Northern and Pacific Fleets; 8 of them were in the North and 3 in the Pacific Ocean. The Northern Fleet experienced the 1968 collision of the nuclear submarine K-131 with an unidentified U.S. Navy submarine. Assuming that our submarine had sunk, the Americans painstakingly concealed this fact from the public in their own country. . . . In 1969, there was the collision of the nuclear submarine K-19 with the U.S. Navy nuclear submarine *Gato*; in 1970, the collision of the nuclear submarine K-69 with an unidentified

U.S. Navy submarine; in 1981, the collision of the nuclear submarine K-211 and, in 1983, of the K-449 (of the same class as the K-211) with unidentified U.S. submarines; in 1986, the collision of the nuclear submarine TK-12 with the British Royal Navy's submarine *Splendid*; in February 1992, the collision of the nuclear submarine K-276 with the U.S. Navy submarine *Baton Rouge* in our territorial waters; and, in March 1993, the collision of our nuclear submarine *Borisoglebsk* with the U.S. Navy submarine *Grayling*.

In the Pacific Ocean, there was a collision in June 1970, in the combat exercise zone, of the nuclear submarine K-108 and the U.S. Navy nuclear submarine *Tautog*; in the same region in 1974, the nuclear submarine K-408 collided with the U.S. Navy nuclear submarine *Pintado*; and, in 1981 in the Gulf of Peter the Great (at the approaches to Vladivostok), the nuclear submarine K-324 collided with an unidentified Los Angeles-class submarine of the U.S. Navy.

Thus, nearly all the collisions in combat training zones have occurred with U.S. Navy submarines, conducting reconnaissance at the approaches to our naval bases and recording hydro-acoustical sound "portraits" of our submarines. . . .

As a rule, the American subs were located in the dead zone (zone of shadows) of the sonar apparatus of our submarines and could not be observed by them. During maneuvers, involving changes of course or the depth of submersion, our submarines were unable to avoid a collision, even when there was momentary mutual sonar contact—chiefly due to the lack of time and, especially, information on the spatial orientation of the two submarines relative to each other.

Unacknowledged Collisions

Thus, submarine collisions took place under practically uncontrollable conditions and led to severe damage. . . .

Not one of these collisions was ever acknowledged by the Americans or the British, neither through Foreign Ministry channels nor at the level of the Navy staffs. Sometimes, however, the American submarines were more severely damaged. This was the case in February 1992, when our nuclear submarine K-276 . . . collided with the American Los Angeles-class nuclear submarine *Baton Rouge* in the combat training zone, within our territorial waters.

It is interesting, that the majority of the above-mentioned 20 collisions occurred in years of aggravated international tension: 1968-1970, 1979-1981, 1983, 1986.

In 1992, when the Cold War would seem to have ended and the adversarial geopolitical and ideological relationship between Russia and the United States to be over (at least from our side), . . . we pulled our submarines back from American shores, but the operational mode of U.S. Navy submarine forces practically did not change. . . .

In order to understand what happened with the *Kursk*, let us show yet another typical example of a nuclear submarine collision between the Russian and U.S. Navies, in 1993.

The strategic ballistic missile submarine *Borisoglebsk* was practicing military training missions in [the Barents Sea].

Reaching the northern perimeter of its assigned zone, the *Borisoglebsk* set a return course, at four knots. Approximately 25 minutes later, a strong external shock was felt on board the submarine, followed by a grinding noise, and only afterwards did the sonar indicate registration of the sound of a foreign nuclear submarine, which had accelerated to 23 knots, in order to get away from our submarine. Investigations established that the U.S. nuclear submarine *Grayling* had been following the *Borisoglebsk*, at a relative bearing of 155-165 degrees to port, and a distance of 60-70 cable's lengths (11-13 km). When our submarine changed course, the *Grayling* lost it, and was heading to the point of lost contact at 8-10 knots, in order to re-establish sonar contact. . . .

There is a hydro-acoustical phenomenon, however, . . . whereby in a 30- to 40-degree sector from the heading of the prow, the sound-emitting mechanisms of a submarine (propellers, turbines, pumps, automatic turbogenerators) are masked by the body of the ship. . . . The *Grayling* made sonar contact with our submarine in a passive sonar mode . . . at a distance of around one km (6-8 cable's lengths). . . . At a closing speed of two cable's lengths per minute, . . . the commander realized that a collision was inevitable. His attempts to change course and begin to surface, failed due to the great inertia of the submarine, and did not avert the collision. But, the blow came on the deck of the bow section, and the *Borisoglebsk* escaped with only light damage. If the blow, after this kind of a "blind approach," had fallen 30-40 meters closer to the stern, in the area of the missile shafts loaded with ballistic missiles, the consequences could have been most unpredictable.

Who Sank the K-219 in the North Atlantic?

. . . There are some mysterious stories here, wherein the Americans tried to hide the evidence underwater. The most striking is the sinking of the Northern Fleet's strategic missile submarine K-219 in the Sargasso Sea on Oct. 6, 1986, as a result of a fire in a missile shaft on Oct. 3 of that year. The Soviet leader at that time, Mikhail Gorbachov, first learned of this accident from a telephone conversation with U.S. President Ronald Reagan, even before the Soviet Defense Minister and the Supreme Commander of the Soviet Navy reported it to him, and even before the reception of the report from the commander of the K-219 to shore, concerning the accident on board the atomic sub. We ask the readers to pay attention to this fact, since it will be repeated again in August 2000. . . .

During the investigation of this disaster by a government commission, spectral analysis of the recorded hydro-acoustical sounds of a submarine diving established that they were from a Los Angeles-class U.S. Navy nuclear submarine. . . . In November of that year, it became known that the U.S. nuclear submarine *Augusta*, of precisely that class, had undergone emergency repairs after a collision with an unidentified object. It followed, that this was the submarine that collided with the K-219.

In December 1986, when a naval commission under Ad-

miral Grigori Bondarenko was investigating the collision of a different Northern Fleet missile submarine, the K-457, with the fishing trawler *Kalininsk* during surfacing in the combat exercise zone . . . it discovered, that besides the damage to the front part of the conning tower railing, that the missile tube covers had marks on them, like those on the K-219, running from stern to prow. . . . Investigation of the recorded acoustical signals showed, that these were traces of a collision on Oct. 30 of that year, after a course change by our submarine, but in a different region of the Atlantic, where intelligence earlier had observed the *Augusta*. Who, then, rammed the K-219? Why did the leaks from the CIA and the U.S. Navy staff concern only the *Augusta*? In my opinion, the answer is clear. It is because the consequences of the two collisions were completely different. And they used the *Augusta* to mark the submarine, which ripped open the missile tube of the K-219, and secretly repaired that other sub in another location. Incidentally, the same kind of marks were left on the missile tube covers of the Pacific Fleet's missile submarine K-408 as it sailed in a combat exercise zone, by the U.S. Navy nuclear submarine *Pintado*.

What Happened With the Kursk?

The Northern Fleet exercise, during which the *Kursk* was lost, was the final preparation for the dispatch of an aircraft carrier group to the Mediterranean, led by the carrier-cruiser *Admiral Kuznetsov*. Ships from the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets were to join the group, in accord with President Putin's April 4 decree on "The basis of RF naval policy till the year 2000," initiating Russia's return to "this key region of the World Ocean," after a ten-year absence. The mission was, therefore, under intense scrutiny from the NATO leadership, and U.S., British, and Norwegian naval intelligence, which sent more than the usual reconnaissance forces into the region of the exercises, which had been announced in the manner established by international practice.

Among these forces were the U.S. Navy submarines *Memphis* and *Toledo*, and the British Navy's *Splendid*, for all of which the Barents Sea has been their main region of deployment for some time. U.S. and Norwegian surface ships were also on the scene to monitor the Northern Fleet's surface ships, while these three, sophisticated ASW subs shadowed the Russian submarines. . . . On Aug. 12, the *Kursk* was supposed to carry out a torpedo "attack" on the missile cruiser *Pyotr Veliki* and accompanying ships. . . . The *Kursk* was located 15-20 nautical miles away from them.

The next events are described, based on the pattern for such combat exercises, developed over decades. . . . Taking up a position in his assigned area, reporting on having done this, and indicating his readiness to fire torpedoes, the commander made a preliminary scouting run through the area, sailing to its southern boundary. Then, the submarine turned back in a northwesterly direction, surfacing to periscope depth. The "enemy" battle group was 30 miles (55 km) away, to the northwest.

From that direction, the foreign nuclear submarine (FNS), which had been tailing it for two days, headed toward our submarine, having lost hydro-acoustical contact with it due to the above-mentioned maneuvers, and hurrying to reestablish contact. Ten, twelve minutes passed, and the *Kursk* was not located. Then, the commander of the FNS decided to surface, in order to determine what the situation was at periscope depth (he would have presumed, that the *Kursk* might have surfaced). Submariners of the entire world pass rapidly, at around 12 knots, through the depth from 50 m up to periscope depth, which is most dangerous for being rammed. Coming to periscope depth (about 14-15 m for them), the FNS unexpectedly struck the upper region of the *Kursk*'s prow on the starboard side, with the lower overhang of its prow at an acute angle of approach right where the torpedo apparatus (TA) is located, which was armed with an USET-80 combat torpedo. Of our ship's six TAs, only two were loaded with practice torpedoes, while the other four were armed with combat torpedoes: two USET-80s and two 65-76s, because the *Kursk* was a ship on permanent combat-ready status. In addition, another 18 torpedoes of the regular combat arsenal were in their racks in the first compartment.

A submarine collision is not like a car crash, with twisted wreckage left at the site. . . . The *Kursk*, with a mass of 24 thousand tons, and the other, either 6,900 tons (Los Angeles-class) or 4,500 tons (the *Splendid*), would have kept moving at their combined speed of approach of 5.5 m/second, tearing into everything in their path. . . . Insofar as U.S. and British navy submarines are traditionally built with a single hull, 35-45 mm thick, while ours are double-hulled and the outer skin is only 5 mm thick, other conditions being equal our submarines sustain greater damage. One second after the first contact, the starboard TA with its combat USET-80 was crumpled down half its length, leading to the detonation and explosion of its warhead, blowing off the back cover of the TA. Water flooded in through a hole half a meter in diameter, shorting out the electrical networks. . . . The commander of the *Kursk* may have ordered an attempt to surface . . . as the *Kursk* began to nosedive, but there was no time to carry out the order. The short-circuits would have triggered emergency shutdown of the reactors, depriving the ship of power for movement or guidance. With an increasing tilt to the bow, the submarine sank faster and faster, until the bow hit the bottom, in approximately one minute.

. . . On impact, possibly more torpedoes exploded. . . . There is a six-square-meter hole blown out over the first compartment. . . . The bulkheads up to the fourth, maybe the fifth compartment were broken through. From 78 to 90 crew members died in those 90 seconds. . . .

The culprit . . . lay on the sea-bottom, approximately 700 meters from the *Kursk*. Its damage was limited to the impact of the collision, and the first explosion of one torpedo. . . . The FNS was able to rise to a depth of 40-50 meters, and to hobble out of the area.

At that time, on Aug. 13, two land-based anti-ship Orion

aircraft made an unscheduled flight into the region. Evidently, they were covering for the beginning of the submarine's transit to a NATO naval base, or standing by to report, if it were unable to move.

The Politicians' Reactions

Now, it is time to recall Ronald Reagan's telephone call to Mikhail Gorbachov on Oct. 3, 1986. Likewise, Bill Clinton now phoned Vladimir Putin on Aug. 13, 2000. The content of their conversation is unknown, but two days later, the Director of the CIA visited Moscow incognito. As one popular newspaper wrote, a high-ranking Foreign Intelligence Service officer paid with his job, for the fact that this visit became public. Almost immediately after that conversation and visit, Bill Clinton announced that he would not sign the bill to launch NMD, which Russia had opposed so strenuously this year. Isn't that strange? To provide an alibi to the U.S. Navy in the *Kursk* disaster, they showed to the whole world the American submarine *Memphis*, entering a NATO naval base in Norway whole and undamaged. And for a month, there was not a word about the condition of the modern American atomic submarine *Toledo* . . . and the British *Splendid*, which were also following our submarines during the Northern Fleet exercises.

During the Millennium Summit of the UN General Assembly in New York, U.S. National Security Adviser Samuel

Berger handed to his Russian colleague Sergei Ivanov a letter from the new U.S. Navy Chief of Staff Vernon Clark, addressed to Russian Navy Commander-in-Chief Vladimir Kuroyedov, as well as a communication from Secretary of Defense William Cohen to Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev, in which "the opinion is expressed, that there were explosions on board the submarine," and which underscore the non-complicity of American submarines or surface ships in this accident.

Very nice letters. But, it would have been rather more useful for the matter at hand, to hand over to our side the magnetic tape recordings of those explosions, so that experts in spectral analysis could decipher the nature of each of them. Especially the first, since such seismic fluctuations could have been caused by the collision of massive submarines. . . .

It would be a good thing for Vladimir Putin, the leadership of the Russian Federal Assembly, chairman of the government investigatory commission Ilya Klebanov, Russian Ministry of Defense Igor Sergeyev, and Navy Commander-in-Chief Vladimir Kuroyedov, to ask their colleagues in the United States and Great Britain to show our specialists two nuclear submarines, within a week: the *Toledo* and the *Splendid*. The damage they sustained could not be removed very quickly. If they turn up undamaged, then friendship and trust among our countries will grow even stronger. . . .

In 1992, after the collision of the *Baton Rouge* with the K-276, we prepared a draft "Agreement between the Government of the RF and the Government of the U.S.A. on Preventing Incidents with Submarines Under Water, Outside Territorial Waters." . . . Beginning in the Fall of 1992, there were talks between the navy staffs of the two countries, in which the author of this article represented the Russian side for some time. Then, the negotiations were taken to a higher level. According to eyewitnesses, in 1995, in Washington, RF Minister of Defense Pavel Grachov and First Deputy Commander of the Navy Admiral Igor Kasatonov were told, "Let this remain between us. We will not sign any agreements. You will never have any questions to put to us on this problem."

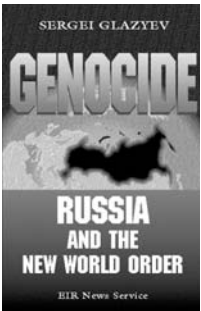
Shortly after this, however, then-Chief of Staff of the U.S. Navy Admiral Boorda shot himself, and NATO submarines continued to enter the Barents Sea, as if it were their kitchen garden, subjecting the submarines of the Russian Navy and the lives of their crews to danger, and threatening all Northern Europe with ecological disasters. . . .

I presume that our Supreme Commander-in-Chief, President of Russia Vladimir Putin, . . . will now appeal to the President of the U.S.A. and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, . . . and will recommend . . . the drafting and signing of bilateral agreements to prevent incidents with submarines while submerged. The necessary texts of an agreement exist in the hands of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff, the Navy, the Foreign Ministry, and the editorial board of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. . . .

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