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# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Commercial Fisheries

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INTERIOR DEPARTMENT STUDIES PLANS FOR NUCLEAR POWERED RESEARCH SUBMARINE

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said today that a study sponsored by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries shows that it is feasible to build a specially designed nuclear powered submarine for fishery and oceanographic research.

The study was conducted by Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics Corporation, Groton, Conn., the pioneer submarine designer and builder that developed the Nautilus, Skipjack, George Washington and other nuclear submarines.

Secretary Udall noted that United States scientists have long desired an oceanographic underseas craft of a speed, range, and maneuverability that only a nuclear craft possesses. Such a submarine could study fish behavior, distribution of resources, disposal of atomic wastes, water temperatures, salinity, and many other oceanographic problems that are now attacked mostly by means of instruments lowered from the deck of a ship.

The Soviet Union has used a converted military submarine in fishery studies for several years, but the conventional underseas craft lacks speed, maneuverability and many scientific advances that an atomic submarine could have.

According to the preliminary study by the Electric Boat Division, the new research vessel would be 163 feet long, 23 feet in diameter, and carry a crew of 24, plus seven scientists. It would be able to operate at depths as great as 1,000 feet and while submerged be capable of 20 knots, a speed at which some of the swifter tuna swim. Fishery scientists believe most of the great fishery resources are located in the layer between the surface and a depth of approximately 1,000 feet. Throughout this range they would be able to observe fish and other marine organisms in their natural environment and collect samples at known depths. Such knowledge would permit man to undertake more sophisticated approaches to harvesting the resources of the sea.

Among scientific advances contained by the atomic vessel would be an observation sphere in the bow, remote controlled television cameras for areas not visible from the bow, and a complex system of sampling instruments providing oceanographic data to a computer aboard the vessel.

Donald L. McKernan, Director of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, said one of the principal advantages of an atomic craft, in addition to its advanced scientific equipment, would be its capability of making continuous scientific observations under sea conditions too rough for most surface oceanographic vessels, especially during the winter.

The research submarine would cost an estimated $25 million. Mr. McKernan said that while the cost may seem high, "bold new approaches to scientific problems, such as this type of vessel represents, are necessary if the United States' share of the world's fisheries is to be increased."

Director McKernan added that the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Oceanography estimated that the present contribution of United States fisheries to the gross national product is $1 billion annually. He said the committee also predicted that the $1 billion figure could be tripled in 10 years if ocean research were conducted on a sufficiently broad scale. And he pointed out that this does not include other scientific contributions which would result from the broad scale oceanographic research to be undertaken by an atomic submarine.

Mr. McKernan said he has asked the National Academy of Sciences to set up a special committee to assess various aspects of the study and to advise the Bureau how best to proceed.

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