

FOREWORD

Excerpt: The Iron Curtain Speech

Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri - March 5, 1946

“ ... From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow.

“ ... From what I have seen of our Russian friends and Allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for weakness, especially military weakness. For that reason the old doctrine of a balance of power is unsound”

Winston Churchill



Thus, Churchill tossed the fat into the fire and war weary Allies had to rise from their comfortable seats upon the laurels so valiantly earned during World War II. The Soviet Union's admiration of military strength and their political behavior served as a warning about a huge effort on their part to exceed the future armament capabilities of the west. Allied insight into Soviet competence and planning became an immediate priority so available resources, badly depleted by the war, could be best deployed to oppose this emerging new threat.

Against the Soviets, the United States submariners had a great advantage while conducting critical surveillance; their platforms could remain unseen. Though their presences might be detected by acoustics and electronics, recorded visual contact evidence comprised the only means of positive identification, giving submarines an advantage of plausible deniability, a trump card in a dangerous intelligence gathering game of hide and seek.

The Soviets countered the American clandestine intelligence efforts by constructing new warship building facilities in areas inhospitable to submarine incursion. Most prominent, the shipbuilding yards in the Arctic at the city port of Severodvinsk, located on the northern coast of Russia along the White Sea.

Another advantage that favored the Soviets, the ability to conduct attacks on unidentified contacts within their territorial waters. This further reduced the likelihood of unwelcome visitors.

In spite of the disadvantages, American submarines in the late forties deployed often into the Arctic under simple, unclassified patrol orders that read:

PROCEED NORTH INTO ARCTIC WATERS AND
CONDUCT HYDROGRAPHIC RESEARCH AS
REQUESTED BY THE EMBARKED SCIENTISTS.
REMAIN IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS.

However, what is an aggressive commanding officer to do if the answers sought are not to be found in international waters?