

Salvage of Russian sub may exceed \$100 million

■ Experts say options include sawing the vessel or using balloons to float it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands - Raising a sunken nuclear sub is a highly precarious endeavor, but on Monday experts said there's a good chance the 14,000-ton Kursk can be lifted safely from the floor of the Barents Sea.

Now that Norwegian divers have peered into the flooded vessel and found no trace of survivors among the 118 crew members, what is left is a salvage effort. Moscow is seeking international help in funding the operation, expected to cost in excess of \$100 million.

The submarine, lying about 350 feet under water, was ripped open by two powerful blasts on Aug. 12 during naval exercises off the Norwegian coast.

Although salvage crews would be hampered by the extensive damage, believed caused by the blasts, experts said the Kursk's accessibility could work in their favor.

The Oscar II-class sub is resting in an upright position on the flat bottom of the continental shelf, noted Richard Sharp, who captained a British nuclear sub in the 1970s.

"It will be surprising if they do not salvage it," he said. "Three hundred fifty feet of water is not that deep."

The Kursk is the sixth nuclear sub to sink since the introduction of underwater nuclear propulsion revolutionized naval warfare in the mid-1950s.

Two of the sunken subs were American, the other three Russian - buried at depths of up to 16,000 feet. Most of them have been left on the seabed because of the huge expense of lifting them, said Sharp, now editor of Jane's Fighting Ships.

However, the Kursk could be a different story: It "is sitting in the middle of the Russian Northern Fleet's exercise area, and they will also want to know exactly what happened," he said.

Although they never confirmed it, the Soviets salvaged a nuclear sub that went under in the 1970s near the Northern Fleet's base in Murmansk, according to Dutch navy reserve officer and

nuclear expert Hugo Van Dam.

Another covert operation, mounted in 1974 by Washington and involving the CIA and industrialist Howard Hughes, tried to raise a Russian sub that sunk 750 miles northwest of Hawaii in 1968. The CIA later confirmed that the submarine cracked in two, and half of it slipped away as it was pulled to about 5,000 feet with a giant claw from the Glomar Explorer rescue ship.

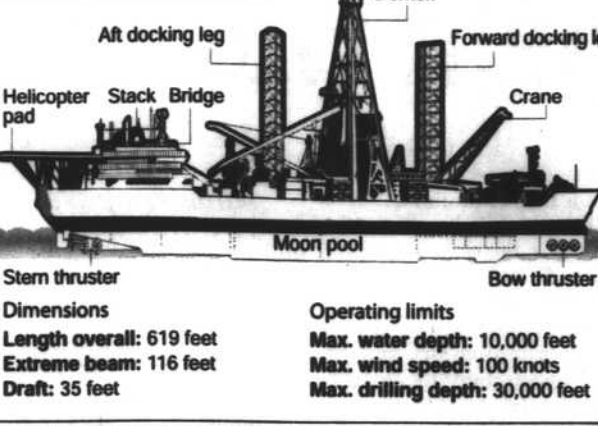
Before the Kursk sinking, the shallowest wrecked nuclear sub was the Komsomolets, which caught fire in 1989 and sank north of Norway, killing 42 of the 69 sailors aboard. A team of international experts established that the Russian sub could be salvaged from 4,900 feet under water, but the cash-strapped Russian government was unable to finance the operation.

Experts said possible methods for raising the Kursk included sawing the wreckage into pieces to be hoisted individually or, if it was reasonably intact, strapping balloons along the hull and pumping air into the vessel to achieve flotation.

The cost of the operation could exceed \$100 million,

Glomar Explorer

Before any attempt is made to raise the Kursk, the Russian submarine lying at the bottom of the Barents Sea, many factors have to be considered - the state of the nuclear reactors and explosives on board, the current, extent of damage to the hull and retrieval of the crew's remains. Here is American deep-sea mining exploration vessel, the Glomar Explorer, used in 1974 to bring up a sunken Russian submarine in the Pacific Ocean.



Source: Federation of American Scientists

Wm. J. Castello, S. Hoffmann/AP

according to Daan Koornneef of Wijsmuller Salvage in the Dutch port of IJmuiden.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov was quoted by the ITAR-Tass news agency in Moscow as indicating it would

take weeks just to draw up plans for a salvage operation. "Not a single country on its own can handle such an operation," he said.

Offers by the Clinton administration to assist in the rescue effort have been turned down.

Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, prepares to enter the Federal Reserve Building on Tuesday. The central bank decided not to raise interest rates again because the economy appears to be slowing down.



Mark Wilson/Newsweek

Federal Reserve keeps current rates

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - The Federal Reserve, amid signs the supercharged economy is finally beginning to slow, decided Tuesday to leave a key interest rate unchanged.

The central bank's decision came after a closed-door meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee, the officials, including Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, who sets interest-rate policies.

As a result, the key federal funds interest rate - the interest banks charge each other on overnight loans - will stay at 6.5 percent, the highest level in nine years.

Wall Street, which had widely anticipated a stand-pat action by the Fed, surged a bit after the decision was announced but dropped back to pre-announcement levels, with the Dow Jones industrial average up about 75 points for the day.

"It's good news because the Fed is content and it is content for a reason," said William Cheney, chief economist for John Hancock. "The U.S. economy, the largest economy in the world, is behaving awfully well. It is slowing down on cue without any inflation."

The Fed had passed up the chance to

"The U.S. economy, the largest economy in the world, is behaving awfully well. It is slowing down on cue without any inflation."

William Cheney
chief economist for John Hancock

raise rates at its last meeting on June 27-28. Before Tuesday's announcement, economists said there were more reasons for the central bank to leave rates unchanged as evidence of a slowdown grows.

In a statement, explaining its decision, the Fed said recent economic data had indicated that the "expansion of aggregate demand is moderating toward a pace closer to the rate of growth of the economy's potential to produce."

The central bank left the door open for future increases, saying it believed "the risks continue to be weighted mainly toward conditions that may generate heightened inflation pressures in the foreseeable future."

Without a boost to the key funds rate, commercial banks won't feel the need to raise their prime lending rate, a benchmark for millions of loans, including home-equity and unpaid credit card

balances and short-term loans for businesses.

The prime rate stands at 9.5 percent, its highest level since January 1991, when the country was in its last recession.

Since June 1999, the Fed has raised rates six times in an effort to slow economic growth enough to keep inflation under control without retarding the economy so much that it brings about a recession.

The Fed's last rate increase, a bold half-point, was in May. That pushed the funds rate to 6.5 percent. In June 1999, before the central bank starting raising rates, the funds rate stood at 4.75 percent.

Many analysts believe the economy, which grew at a surprisingly strong 5.2 percent annual rate in the April-June quarter, has slowed to a growth rate of around 3.5 percent to 4 percent in the current quarter.

Fuel-tank explosion led to TWA crash

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Despite all the fears and conspiracy theories, the conclusion is "inescapable" that an explosion of vapors in a fuel tank is what brought down TWA Flight 800 four years ago at a loss of 230 lives, a top federal investigator concluded Tuesday.

The physical evidence "leads to the inescapable conclusion that the cause of the in-flight breakup of TWA Flight 800 was a fuel-air explosion inside the center wing tank," said Bernard S. Loeb, aviation safety director of the National Transportation Safety Board.

He said investigators "cannot be certain" what ignited the blast, but the most likely cause was an electrical short in wiring inside the tank.

There was no evidence that metal fatigue, corrosion, recent repairs of the plane, a bomb or a missile was involved in the disaster off the coast of New York's Long Island, he said.

"The crash of Flight 800 graphically demonstrates that even in one of the safest transportation systems in the world things can go horribly wrong," said NTSB Chairman Jim Hall, opening a two-day meeting to study investigators' reports on the crash and its cause.

At the session, teams of investigators set forth their findings in detail, an effort to show that the agency has made every possible effort to determine what happened and how it could be prevented in the future.

Indeed, the center fuel tank came under suspicion early and the agency has made several recommendations for improvements.

The Federal Aviation Administration, in turn, has issued 37 directives to airlines and aircraft makers for improvements and is working on other possible changes including introducing non-flammable gas into partly full tanks and eliminating any possible source of sparks.

The NTSB findings, however well documented, are unlikely to find acceptance among dissenters with theories ranging from bombs to a Navy missile to air turbulence.

Some contend the government is trying to cover up the real cause, and one group, calling itself the TWA 800 Eyewitness Alliance, ran a full-page ad in Tuesday's Washington Times insisting missiles brought the plane down.

Those theories drew a rebuke from Hall, who said the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and his investigators all failed to find evidence of a bomb or missile blast.

"It is unfortunate that a small number of people, pursuing their own agendas, have persisted in making unfounded charges of government cover-up in this investigation," Hall said.

World/Nation Briefs

The Associated Press

■ Netherlands CIA documents, cables requested in bombing case

CAMP ZEIST - Defense lawyers demanded full access to a batch of classified CIA cables as the trial of two Libyans accused of bombing Pan Am Flight 103 resumed Tuesday following a three-week summer recess.

But Scotland's chief prosecutor insisted that information censored from the cables was not relevant to the 1988 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people, including 189 Americans.

"The United States considers all of this material highly confidential," said Lord Advocate Colin Boyd. He added that Scottish prosecutors were shown the full text last June "in conditions where copies could not be made and would not be allowed."

Boyd said the deleted text referred to CIA agents' real and code names, as well as locations and methods of intelligence gathering.

The 25 cables, dated Aug. 10, 1988, to Aug. 31, 1989, were sent to Washington by CIA agents who interviewed a Libyan spy who has since defected to the United States.

■ Puerto Rico Hurricane Debby hits Caribbean; U.S. warned

SAN JUAN - Compact, quick-moving Debby became the first hurricane to make landfall this season, hitting several small Caribbean islands on a northwesterly route that menaced Puerto Rico and the Bahamas archipelago.

Forecasters said it was too early to gauge the threat to the U.S. mainland but urged residents to monitor the storm.

With winds up to 75 mph, Debby was a minor hurricane, apparently causing little damage on Antigua, Anguilla and other small islands Tuesday morning.

It then made a slight - but crucial - turn to the north that meant populous Puerto Rico and the vulnerable Dominican Republic could be spared the worst.

Still, the threat was sufficient to disrupt life throughout the northern Caribbean as residents, tourists, businesses and authorities sprang into the routine - terrifying to some, exhilarating to others - of bracing for a storm.

The U.S. Virgin Islands declared a curfew and requested federal help, and a major oil refinery was partially shut down.

The storm's center will likely approach Florida by Friday morning, Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Center in Miami, told AP Network News. "If it stays on our track, we've got Wednesday and Thursday to prepare."

■ Tennessee Japan to help replace recalled Firestone tires

NASHVILLE - Bridgestone/Firestone Inc. said Tuesday it will fly tires from its Japanese plants to speed the replacement of the 6.5 million Firestones recalled in the United States.

The first shipment will leave today, and at least 10 more are planned through Sunday.

A spokeswoman said the company has not determined how many tires will be flown from Japan.

Earlier this month, Bridgestone/Firestone recalled all P235/75R15 ATX and ATX II tires as well as Wilderness AT tires in the same size made at a Decatur, Ill., plant.

Most of the tires were on Ford trucks and sport utility vehicles, including the Explorer.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is investigating 62 deaths and more than 100 injuries in connection with the tires. In many cases, the tread separated from the tire, causing a blowout and a rollover accident.

The recall created an apparent shortage of 15-inch replacement tires.

DailyNebraskan
Editor: Sarah Baker
Managing Editor: Bradley Davis
Associate News Editor: Dane Stokney
Associate News Editor: Kimberly Sweet
Opinion Editor: Samuel McKewon
Sports Editor: Matthew Hansen
Copy Desk Co-Chief: Josh Nichols
Copy Desk Co-Chief: Lindsey Young
Copy Desk Co-Chief: Danell McCoy
Photo Chief: Heather Glenboski
Art Director: Melanie Falk
Design Chief: Andrew Broer
Web Editor: Gregg Stearns
Assistant Web Editor: Tanner Graham
Questions? Comments? Ask for the appropriate section editor at (402) 472-2588 or e-mail: dn@unl.edu
General Manager: Dan Shattil
Publications Board Chairman: Russell Willbanks
Professional Adviser: Don Walton
Advertising Manager: Nick Partsch
Assistant Ad Manager: Nicole Wolta
Circulation Manager: Nikki Bruner
Imtiyaz Khan
Fax Number: (402) 472-1761
World Wide Web: www.dailynebr.com
The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, 20 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board. Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.
Subscriptions are \$60 for one year.
Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, 20 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE. ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 2000 DAILY NEBRASKAN

Typhoon slams Taiwan, kills 1

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TAIPEI, Taiwan - Typhoon Bilis slammed into Taiwan on Tuesday with raging winds that topped 118 mph and knocked out power, stranded residents and killed a construction worker.

As the eye of the storm passed over

land, forecasters said the typhoon might become even more intense.

The storm may have already reached significantly higher wind-speeds, according to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Satellite intensity estimates indicated the storm could have sustained winds as high as 161 mph, with gusts of nearly 200 mph, said Capt. Chris Cantrell, a spokesman at the center.

Chien Kuo-chi, a forecaster at Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau, said that as of early Wednesday morning, the center of the storm was 87 miles northwest of Taitung City located in southern Taiwan.

The Taiwanese estimates of the typhoon's speed, based on actual wind measurements, were lower, sustained winds of 118 mph with higher gusts. Taiwanese forecasters said the storm was expected to get stronger.

Weather
TODAY
Partly cloudy
high 92, low 70
TOMORROW
Partly cloudy
high 90, low 69