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Special Study

53-1

ANALYSIS OF UNIDENTIFIED VITAL INTELLIGENCE SIGHTINGS

FOR THE YEAR

1952

HEADQUARTERS

NORTHEAST AIR COMMAND

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SPECIAL STUDY

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ANALYSIS OF UNIDENTIFIED VITAL INTELLIGENCE SIGHTINGS

FOR THE YEAR 1952

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Prepared by

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FOREWORD

This Study was prepared by the Director of Intelligence, Northeast Air Command and is an analysis of the unidentified vital Intelligence sightings which occurred within or adjacent to the Command area during the calendar year 1952.

The standard evaluation table given below has been used to evaluate each incident reported in this study. This evaluation reflects NEAC's estimation of the reliability of the source and the veracity of the information. The possibility that each incident represents a Soviet reconnaissance effort is reflected by this evaluation.

SOURCE	INFORMATION
A - Completely Reliable	1 - Confirmed
B - Usually Reliable	2 - Probably True
C - Fairly Reliable	3 - Possibly True
D - Not Usually Reliable	4 - Doubtfully True
E - Unreliable	5 - Improbable Report
F - Reliability Cannot Be Judged	6 - Truth Cannot Be Judged

An "A" source rating was given in only two instances: first, when the base weather officer reported his own observations of contrails, and second, when a tower operator reported an unidentified voice contact. A "B" rating indicates an informant of known integrity. "C" "D" and "E" ratings indicate a proportionately decreasing degree of reliability. An "F" rating is assigned when nothing is known concerning the background or reliability of the observer.

The numerical ratings for items of information are independent and distinct from the letter ratings listed for the sources, since it is quite possible for a reliable source to submit a report of which the truth cannot be judged (A-6), or an unreliable source to submit a report which is probably true or confirmed by other sources (F-1).



FRED W. SIEBERT
Lt. Colonel, USAF
Director of Intelligence

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NEAC SPECIAL STUDY 53-1

15 March 1953

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I PROBLEM

To present an analysis of unidentified vital Intelligence sightings which occurred within or adjacent to the Northeast Air Command area during the calendar year 1952.

II FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

A. GENERAL

During the year 1952, the Director of Intelligence, NEAC received 46 reports of unidentified sightings. Of this number, five (4 aircraft and 1 submarine) were later identified as friendly. This left a total of 41 incidents still unidentified and needing further evaluation. (See Figure 1).

B. FLYING OBJECTS

Of this number, 14 by their very nature, could not be considered to have been caused by conventional aircraft or vessels. The reports in this category consisted primarily of unidentified aerial lights or flying objects. These incidents are not peculiar to the Northeast Air Command, as similar sightings are being reported from other areas of the world. While no satisfactory explanation has been established to explain all of these phenomena, each case is carefully studied and forwarded by expeditious means to the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. As yet, no evidence has been forthcoming from the NEAC area to prove that these phenomena represent a threat to the security of the United States.

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C. POSSIBLE SOVIET RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS

By thus eliminating from further discussion incidents in the flying object category and those which have been identified, a core of reports remain numbering 27 which do appear to be indicative of human activity, but which cannot be readily attributed to operations known to the Northeast Air Command.

It is with this category that we are primarily concerned. Twenty of these incidents concerned unidentified aircraft, and seven represented unidentified submarines. (See Figures 2 and 3).

D. UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT

Of the aircraft which were reported and have not been identified, only five were actually seen as aircraft by the naked eye. These aircraft were sighted at the following locations: (See Figure 3)

Eastern Iceland - 6700N/1350W
Doneborg, Greenland - 7410N/2030W
Thule Air Base, Greenland - 75 miles south - 7520N/6910W
North Atlantic - 5200N/2820W
Arctic Ocean - Ptarmigan route - 8304N/15100W

Five unidentified aircraft were heard in the darkness or overcast, passing over or near the following locations:

Danmarkshaven, Greenland - 7646N/1845W
Aputiteq, Greenland - 6755N/3215W
Angmagssalik, Greenland - 6530N/3733W
Jan Mayen Island - 7110N/0720W
Sondrestrom Air Base, Greenland - 6701N/5044W

Vapor trails were reported on six separate occasions over or near NEAC bases:

Thule Air Base, Greenland - twice - 7630N/6848W
Goose Air Base, Labrador - twice - 5319N/6025W
Narsarssuak Air Base, Greenland - 6140N/4610W
Between Sondrestrom Air Base and Narsarssuak Air Base -
6254N/4650W

An unusual radio contact with an unidentified aircraft was reported by the Iceland Defense Force - 6401N/2204W.

Further data on these aircraft sightings is tabulated in Figure 4.

It is significant to note that each of these areas reporting unidentified aircraft is within range of round trip missions by Soviet TU-4s operating from air facilities on the Kola Peninsula. (See Figure 5). All NEAC bases except those on the island of Newfoundland reported evidence of at least one unidentified aircraft during 1952.

Four additional aircraft sightings were reported in 1952 but were identified as friendly.

E. UNIDENTIFIED SUBMARINES

Submarine sightings during the year totaled eight, but one was later identified as a US Navy submarine. The remaining seven were reported by different sources of varying credibility. Two were sighted by Eskimos, two were visually observed by personnel aboard aircraft in flight, one was observed by airborne radar, one by Royal

Canadian Mounted Police, and one by a Danish police officer in a surface craft. The location of these sightings is as follows: (See Figure 3)

North Atlantic - 4621N/5005W
September Harbor, Labrador - 5633N/6143W
Main Harbor, Labrador - 5634N/6142W
Lower Davis Strait - 5730N/5300W
Wolstenholm Fjord, Greenland - Thule area - 7637N/6944W
Sondre Stromfjord, Greenland - 6640N/5150W
Davis Strait - 6600N/5500W

Further data on these submarine sightings is tabulated in Figure 4.

The Soviet Union has an estimated 101 high speed submerged and ocean patrol submarines which are capable of penetrating all areas of the Northeast Air Command (See Figure 6). In addition, an estimated 89 Soviet submarines of medium range could operate along Greenland's East Coast. By refueling at Spitzbergen or from the Russian fishing fleet positioned near Iceland, the range of these ships could be greatly extended.

III DISCUSSION

Turning now to a chronological analysis of these sightings, it is at once evident by a glance at the chart on Figure 2 that these sightings were not limited to any particular season of the year. It would appear, however, that spring (March, April, May and June) and fall (September, October, November and December) represent the peak periods of unidentified aerial activity. The chronological sequence of these aircraft sightings is listed in Figure 4.

It is significant to note that during the peak of NEAC activity - July and August, the months of optimum daylight - that no unidentified aircraft were reported. This fact lends strength to the possibility that the other reported incidents do represent enemy reconnaissance efforts, as the Soviets would be less likely to conduct aerial reconnaissance during the Arctic summer when the chances of being detected would be the greatest.

Another interesting factor is that during this lull in aircraft reporting, submarine sightings suddenly multiplied (See Figure 2). With the exception of a single possible submarine sighting in May, all of these incidents occurred within a 33 day period during August and September. The progression of these submarine sightings chronologically presents an interesting picture of possible Soviet reconnaissance patrols (See Figure 4).

IV CONCLUSIONS

A. 1952 SIGHTINGS

The sightings which have been the subject of this study reflect only possible Soviet reconnaissance patrols which have been detected. For each sighting which was reported, an undetermined number of aircraft and submarines could have come and departed completely undetected, because of the vast areas within the Northeast Air Command which are unpopulated and, as yet, unpatrolled.

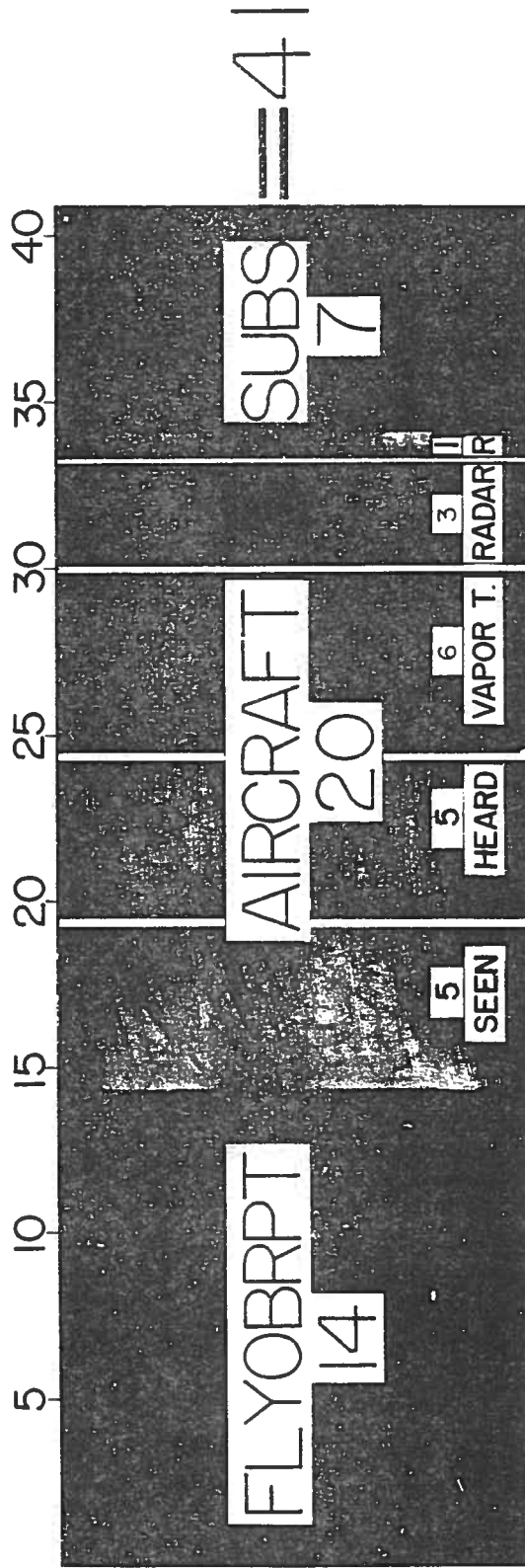
B. FUTURE SIGHTINGS

Reports of unidentified sightings can be expected to continue on an increasing basis. There are indications that the Communist world is becoming increasingly apprehensive about the intentions of the new United States administration. This apprehension should tend to increase Soviet reconnaissance activity. Although it is admitted that some of these incidents are based on inconclusive and unconfirmed evidence to positively identify them as representative of Soviet activity, judging from the pattern established in 1952, it is to be expected that this unidentified air activity will increase as Spring approaches.

APPENDIX

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UNIDENTIFIED SIGHTINGS NEAC 1952



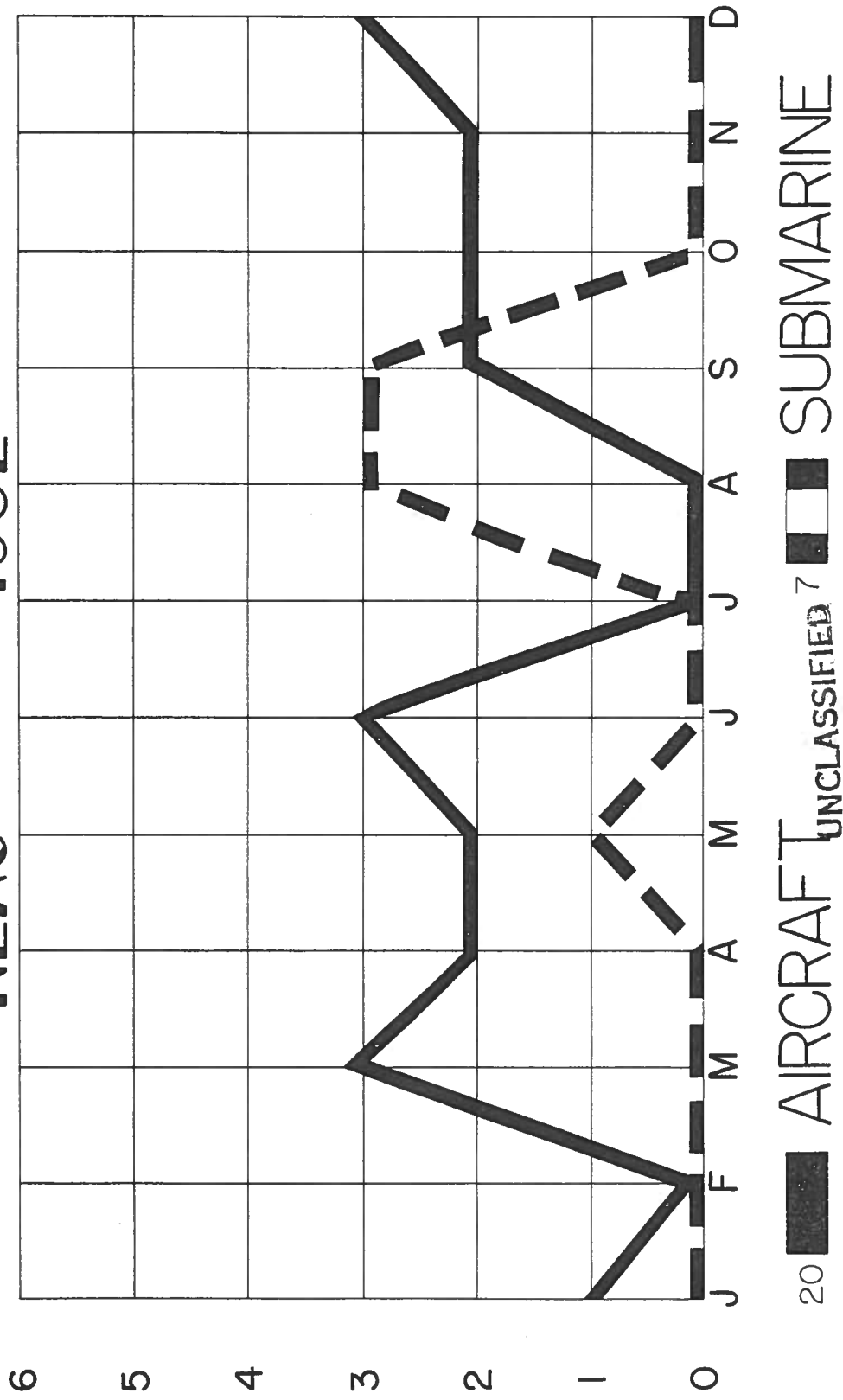
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FIGURE 1

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POSSIBLE SOVIET RECONNAISSANCE EFFORTS

NEAC 1952



20

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■ AIRCRAFT ■ SUBMARINE

FIGURE 2

POSSIBLE SOVIET RECONNAISSANCE EFFORTS

UNCLASSIFIED

NEAC 1952

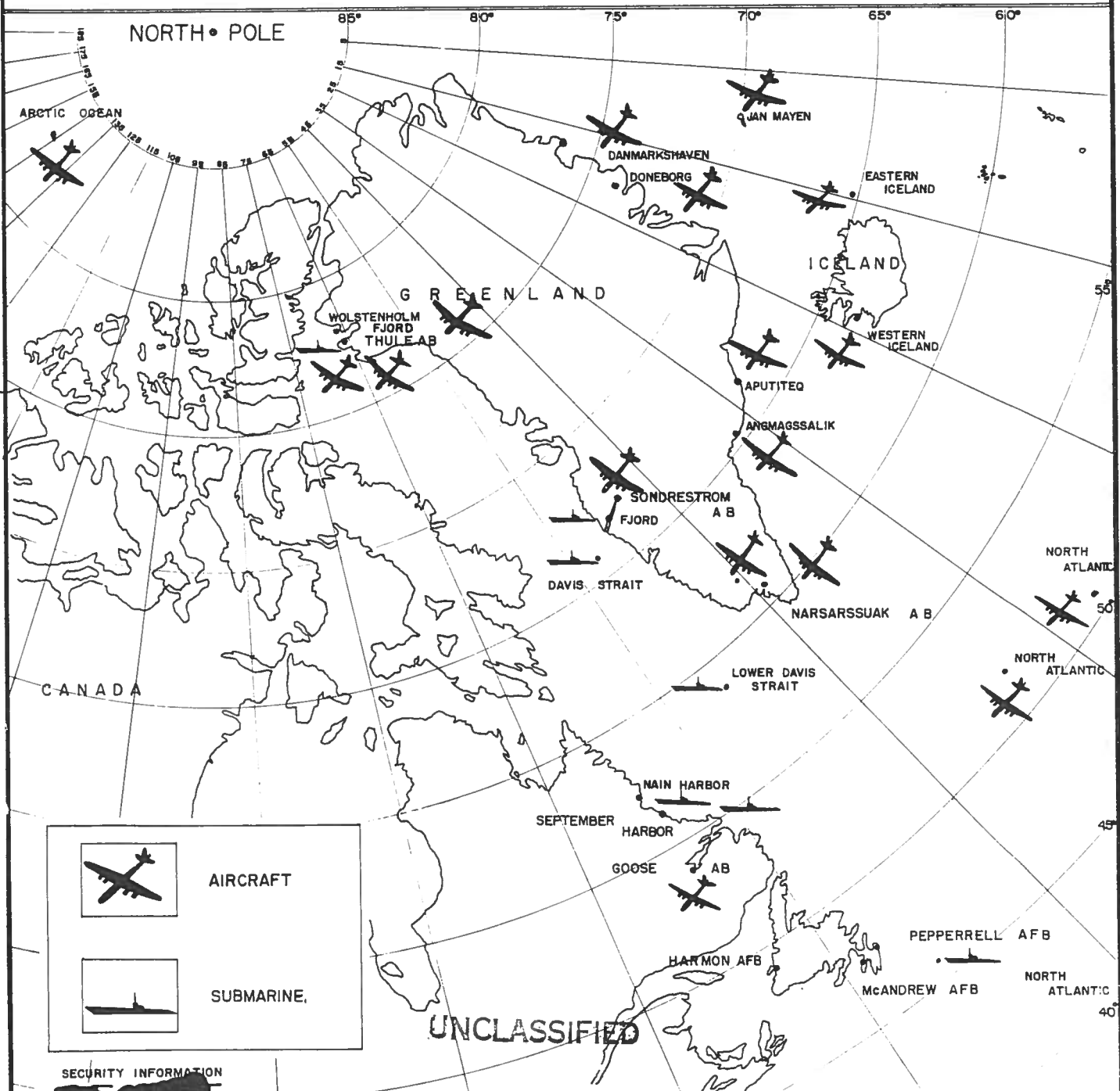


FIGURE 3

TABULATED LIST OF UNIDENTIFIED SIGHTINGS-NEAC 1952

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A I R C R A F T

INCIDENT	REPORTED FROM	LOCATION	DATE	TYPE SIGHTINGS	REMARKS
Vapor Trails	Thule AB	Thule AB 7630N, 6848W	January 1952	Visual/ground	In a report received from Thule Air Base on the 25 April 52 sighting of vapor trails, it was also reported that a similar incident was alleged to have occurred in Jan 1952. F-6
Vapor Trails	Goose AB	Goose AB 5319N, 6025W	011544Z-Mar 52	Visual/air	Vapor trails of one aircraft were sighted forming very fast, traveling in a NE direction over Goose AB. B-2
Unidentified Aircraft	Air Defense Command	Western Iceland 6400N, 2204W	0772 to 0809Z 13 March 1952	GCA Radar	GCA operator at Keflavik reported 6 plots unidentified flying object. Estimated air speed 250 knots, altitude above 8000 feet. B-2
Unidentified Aircraft	Air Defense Command	NE of Iceland 6700N, 1350W	1900 to 2015Z 14 March 1952	Visual/air	Left and right corners of SAC B-50 acft sighted unidentified 4-engine aircraft believed to be B-29 type. No lights visible, aircraft descend into undercast. B-2
Unidentified Aircraft	Thule AB	D-marknaveh, Grnd 7646N, 1815W	010400Z-Apr 52	Audible/ground	Danish civilian weather observer reported hearing aircraft flying overhead. Attempt was made to contact the aircraft on 220Kcs, but no answer was received. C-3
Vapor Trails	Thule AB	Thule AB 7630N, 6848W	250430Z-Apr 52	Visual/ground	Trail was reportedly being formed from SE to NW, originating from about 30,000 feet above Thule Air Base. Visibility unlimited. B-3
Unidentified Aircraft	Ocean Station Coxa	North Atlantic Ocean 5421N, 3556W	050200Z-May 52	Radar	Apt 2 flights of 3 acft each heading of 325° at 225 MPH. 64th Air Division stated that the targets were believed to be radiation interferences and were not moving. B-6
Unidentified Aircraft	Karsarsuak AB	Aputitec, Greenland 6753N, 3215W	130945Z-May 52	Audible/ground	Plane was heard through an overcast by weather personnel at Aputiteq. C-3
Unidentified Aircraft	Karsarsuak AB	Donsborg, Greenland 7410N, 2030W	092230Z-June 52	Visual/ground	Unidentified aircraft was reported by personnel at Donsborg to be at high altitude. C-2
Unidentified Aircraft	Thule AB	Thule AB 7600N, 6848W	281738Z-June 52	GCA Radar	Three blips were picked up between the grid headings of 140° and 160°. Estimated alt 9000 ft, speed 175 knots. Blips were tracked for 35 miles. C-3
Unidentified Aircraft	Thule AB	Greenland 7520N, 6910W	291710Z-June 52	Visual/air	Unidentified B-29 type aircraft sighted on a grid heading of 200°. Altitude 5000 to 6000 ft. Speed 200 MPH. No markings were noted, but aircraft had a red tail. B-2
Unidentified Aircraft	Karsarsuak AB	Angmagssalik, Grnd 6530N, 3733W	02040Z-Sep 52	Audible/ground	Danish colonists reported unidentified aircraft travelling from west to east. C-3
Vapor Trails	Goose AB	Goose AB 5319N, 6025W	141925Z-Sep 52	Visual/air	Vapor trails sighted from aircraft inbound to Goose AB, about 40 miles SSW of Goose. Appeared to be formed by an aircraft flying in a SW direction. Unrestricted visibility. B-2
Unidentified Aircraft	Sander Oceanic	North Atlantic Ocean 5200N, 2820W	100230Z-Oct 52	Visual/air	Pan American pilot rpt sighting of unidentified acft at 16-17,000 ft altitude, heading SE. As flight approached unidentified acft did 180° turn and departed in a NW dir edon. B-2
Unidentified Aircraft	OTULAIT	Jan Mayen Island 7110N, 0720W	142300Z-Oct 52	Audible/ground	Unidentified aircraft reportedly heard by weather station personnel on Jan Mayen. C-3
Unidentified Aircraft	Sondrestrom AB	Sondrestrom AB 6701N, 5044W	141527Z-Nov 52	Audible/ground	Reported hearing aircraft estimated to be a jet heading in a Easterly direction. No visual or GCA contact was made. C-6
Unidentified Aircraft	Aleaskan Air Command	Præmigan Route 8304N, 15100W	160325Z-Nov 52	Visual/air	Unidentified aircraft reported heading 235°, sighted 2000 feet below mission acft. Observed by left scanner one red light and one white light. B-2
Unidentified Aircraft	Iceland Defense Force	Keflavik, Iceland 6401N, 2204W	040026Z-Dec 52	Radio contact	Contact made with unidentified aircraft tower radio at Keflavik. Acft identified itself as AF Jet 679, and requested latest Keflavik weather. Possible numerals 697. A-6
Vapor Trails	Sondrestrom AB	Greenland 6254N, 4650W	101600Z-Dec 52	Visual/air	Estimated altitude of contrails 50,000 ft, heading 019°, with definite point of origin, and could be seen forming. B-2
Vapor Trails	Karsarsuak AB	Karsarsuak AB 6140N, 4610W	121607Z-Dec 52	Visual/ground	Reported vap shaped contrail, direction of flight either S or SSE. Both ends of contrail reported to be visible and described as being "clear cut". A-2

S U B M A R I N E S

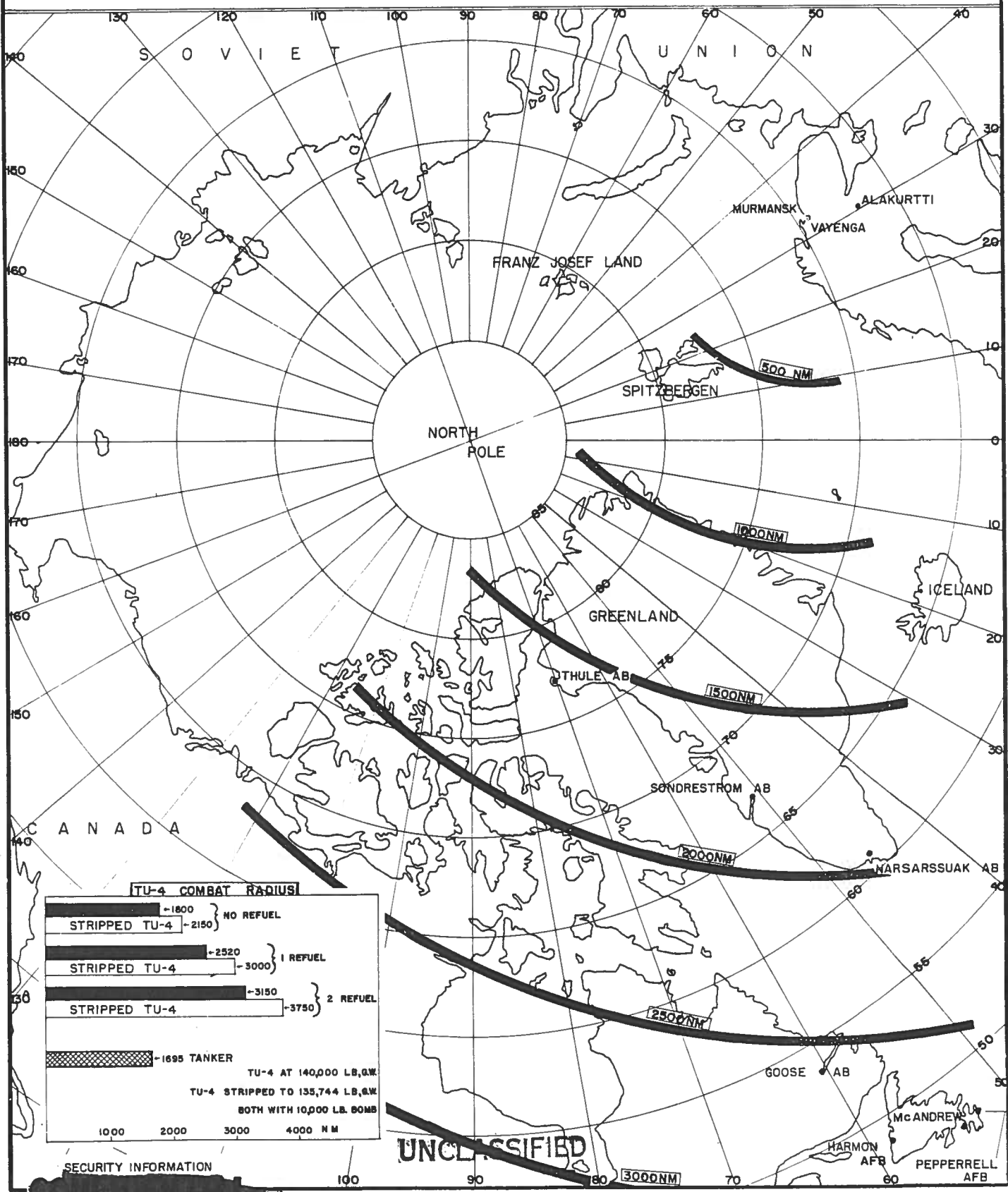
Unidentified Submarine	Baron AFD	North Atlantic 4621N, 5005W	131650Z-May 52	Visual/air	Reported sighting 2 surface objects which submerged and 7 ships of the cargo and tanker type. Excellent visibility. Run was made but no sun or ships, other than fishing ves were seen. C-3
Unidentified Submarine	Goose AB	September Harbor 5633N, 6143W	Few days previous to 27 Aug 52	Visual/ground	Observed for 2 hours by RMP personnel with field glasses. B-2
Unidentified Submarine	CAHARTEN	Main Harbor 5634N, 6124W	27130Z-Aug 52	Visual/ground	Reported by Eskimos that the submarine surfaced for a short period and then put out to sea through the only chartered run. B-2
Unidentified Submarine	Karsarsuak AB	Lower Devle Strait 5730N, 5900W	310200Z-Aug 52	Visual/air	Sighting was made from 9000 ft by airman while in flight from Goose AB to Karsarsuak AB. Sub rpt. surfacing in a SE direction, cabin and superstructure avash. C-3
Unidentified Submarine	Thule AB	Wolstenholm Fjord 7637N, 6944W	20 Sep 52 (apprx.)	Visual/ground	Sighted by an Eskimo hunter who said that object believed to be a sub was sighted about 400 yd from shore, but turned and submerged before closer observation was made. F-6
Unidentified Submarine	Sondrestrom AB	Sondrestrom Fjord 6640N, 5150W	222120Z-Sep 52	Visual/surface	Reported by Danish Policeman who stated sub surfaced for approx 2 min, submerged and resurfaced believed to be of the Soviet P-2 type. No marks visible. B-2
Unidentified Submarine	Sondrestrom AB	Davis Strait 6600N, 5900W	301710Z-Sep 52	Radar/air	Observed by radar from MATS aircraft. Estimated course 050° magnetic. B-2

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CAPABILITIES — TU-4



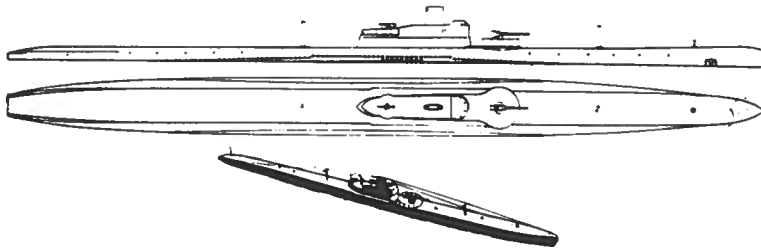
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FIGURE 5

SOVIET SUBMARINES CHARACTERISTICS AND CAPABILITIES

OCEAN PATROL

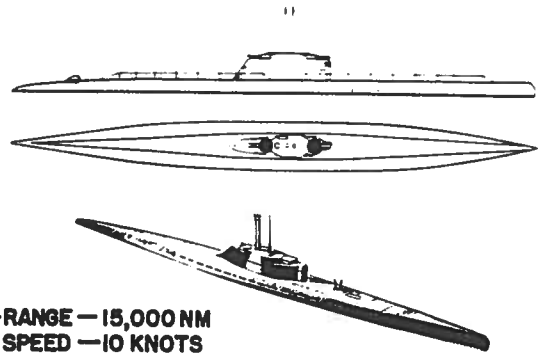
L-2 CLASS



RANGE — 10,000NM
SPEED — UNKNOWN

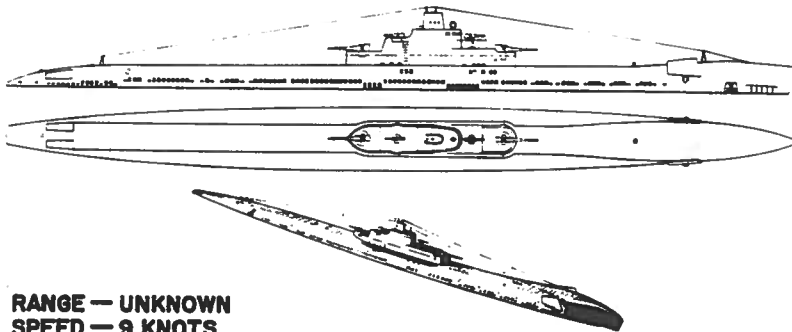
HIGH SPEED SUBMERGED

TYPE XXI CLASS



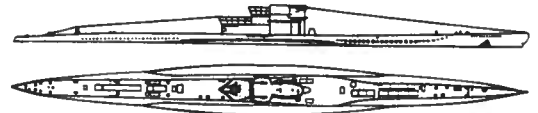
*RANGE — 15,000 NM
SPEED — 10 KNOTS

K CLASS



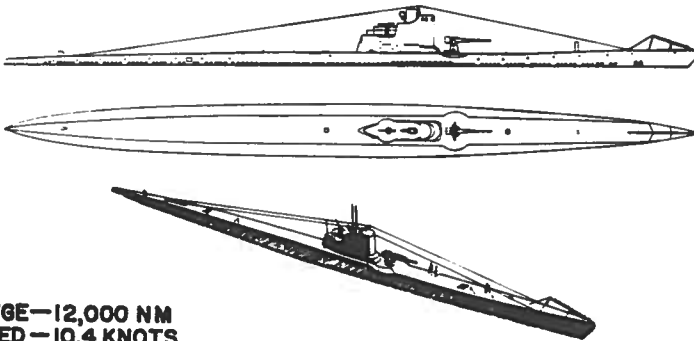
RANGE — UNKNOWN
SPEED — 9 KNOTS

TYPE VII-C CLASS



RANGE — 8,850 NM
SPEED — 10 KNOTS

S-1 CLASS



RANGE — 12,000 NM
SPEED — 10.4 KNOTS

TYPE IX-C CLASS



RANGE — 16,300 NM
SPEED — 12 KNOTS

* ALL RANGES AND SPEEDS ARE MAXIMUM FOR ECONOMICAL. SURFACE OPERATIONS ABSOLUTE MAXIMUM SURFACE SPEEDS ARE FROM 5.6 TO 13 KNOTS GREATER, BUT SACRIFICE ENDURANCE BY AS MUCH AS 2/3. ECONOMICAL SUBMERGED SPEEDS ARE CONSIDERABLY LOWER THAN THE INDICATED SURFACED SPEEDS THE TYPE XXI, TYPE IX-C, TYPE VII-C AND K CLASSES ARE SNORKLE EQUIPPED.

DISTRIBUTION

USAF	5	4th AF	1
NEAC	35	14th AF	1
AAC	2	AMC	1
ADC	2	ATIC	2
EADF	2	CAIRC	1
CADF	2	AirA, Ottawa	1
WADF	2	First Army	1
MATS	2	11th Abn Div	1
AWS	2	82nd Abn Div	1
ConAC	1	Sr, AF Mbr, Jt Int Gp	1
TAC	1	9th AF	1
FEAF	1	18th AF	1
ARDC	2	USAF A/Cnd Opns Sch	1
USAFE	2	USNS Argentinia	1
ATRC	2	Hq, 64th Air Div	10
USAFSS	1	Hq, 1805th AACs Gp	9
US Army	1	Hq, 6th AR Gp	6
RCAF	1	Hq, 8th Wea Sq	6
CANAIRDEF	1	6600th AB Gp	2
CANAIRNEW	1	6602nd AB Gp	2
USN-ONI	2	6603rd AB Gp	2
COMICEDEFOR	2	6610th AB Gp	2
CINCLANT	2	6611th AB Gp	2
SAC	2	6612th AB Gp	2
ATLD/MATS	1	6621st AB Sq	2
CNTLD/MATS	1	6620th IG SIS	6
PACD/MATS	1	6622nd Air Trans Sq	2
AACS/MATS	1	11th Photo Flt	1
1st AF	1	950th Eng Av Gp	2
Air Univ	2	TOTAL	154

DISTRIBUTION

USAF	5	4th AF	1
NEAC	35	14th AF	1
AAC	2	AMC	1
ADC	2	ATIC	2
EADF	2	CAirC	1
CADF	2	AirA, Ottawa	1
WADF	2	First Army	1
MATS	2	11th Abn Div	1
AWS	2	82nd Abn Div	1
ConAC	1	Sr, AF Mbr, Jt Int Gp	1
TAC	1	9th AF	1
FEAF	1	18th AF	1
ARDC	2	USAF A/Cnd Opns Sch	1
USAFE	2	USNS Argentia	1
ATRC	2	Hq, 64th Air Div	10
USAFSS	1	Hq, 1805th AACs Gp	9
US Army	1	Hq, 6th AR Gp	6
RCAF	1	Hq, 8th Wea Sq	6
CANAIRDEF	1	6600th AB Gp	2
CANAIRNEW	1	6602nd AB Gp	2
USN-ONI	2	6603rd AB Gp	2
COMICEDEFOR	2	6610th AB Gp	2
CINCLANT	2	6611th AB Gp	2
SAC	2	6612th AB Gp	2
ATLD/MATS	1	6621st AB Sq	2
CNTLD/MATS	1	6620th IG SIS	6
FACD/MATS	1	6622nd Air Trans Sq	2
AACS/MATS	1	11th Photo Flt	1
1st AF	1	950th Eng Av Gp	2
Air Univ	2	TOTAL	154