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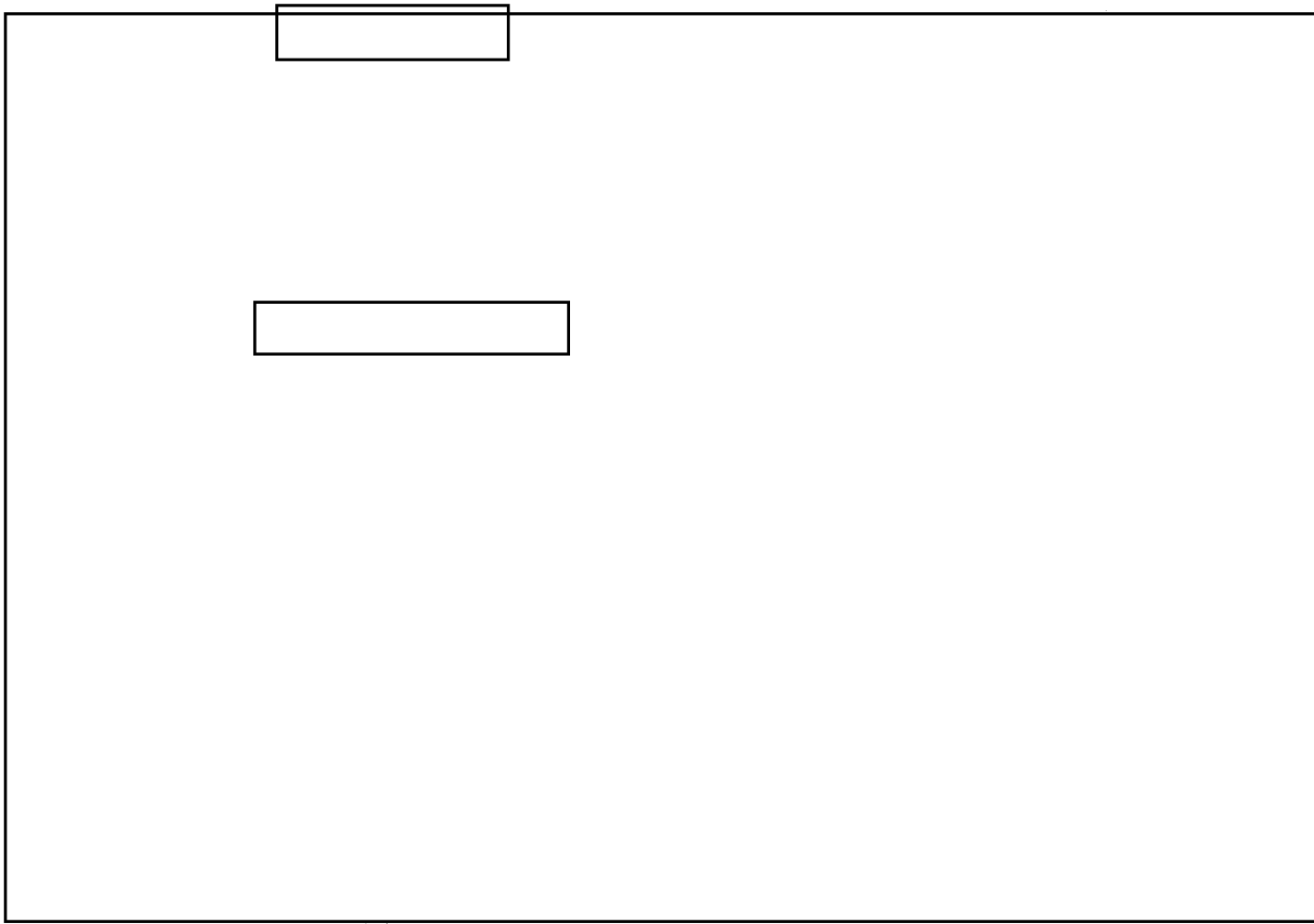
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11. [redacted] Captain Ed Bauser, Staff Director, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, called and asked if he could get a briefing this afternoon on the latest information on the naval construction at Nikolayev. Bauser had seen the Beecher article in the New York Times today and this had sparked his renewed interest in the subject he has been following rather closely. He also mentioned interest in any new information on the "Lenin" and any new information on Soviet submarines. I told Bauser it would be difficult to set this up this afternoon, but made arrangements for a briefing tomorrow morning at 11. 25X1

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# A SOVIET CARRIER IN '73 IS INDICATED

Russians Said to Be Testing  
Vertical Take-off Jets

By WILLIAM BEECHER  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 16—American military analysts say there is increasing evidence that the Soviet Union is preparing to deploy its first aircraft carrier.

A vessel of 30,000 to 35,000 tons under construction at the Nikolayev Nesenke shipyard in the Black Sea appears destined, the analysts said, for a full flight deck about 800 feet long.

Previous speculation on this new ship, the largest in the Soviet Navy, was that it might be either a petroleum super-tanker or some sort of "air-associated" warship, possibly an aircraft carrier. But recent information, the analysts say, has all but ruled out the super-tanker theory.

### Sea Trials Likely in Year

"I don't think there's much doubt any longer that what we're seeing is an aircraft carrier, roughly the size of our old Essex-class carrier," a senior Pentagon official said. "I would expect it to be completed and in sea trials within a year and operational in about a year and a half."

The Soviet Navy, the analysts said, has also begun active flight tests of a vertical-take-off jet fighter. Previous tests of such planes have been conducted exclusively by the Soviet Air Force.

American military analysts suspect that the Russians will first employ vertical-take-off jets from their carrier, avoiding the complications of building steam catapults to launch the planes and folding wings to enable them to be lowered in elevators from the flight deck to maintenance shops below.

### Long-Range Plan Seen

Officials generally express no alarm at this development, estimating that it will take the Russians 10 years or more to produce advanced carriers and high-performance aircraft that would approach American capability. But they point to the moves as but the latest indications that the Soviet Union is embarked on a long-range program to extend its power and influence far from home.

Until recent years the Soviet Navy had been essentially designed to defend coastal waters against attack. In the mid-nineteen-fifties it even had 1,500 to 2,000 short-range fighters at land bases to defend its ships.

But as Norman Polmar points out in a recent study, "Soviet Naval Power: Challenge for the 1970's" (National Strategy Information Center, 1972), the Soviet leaders apparently became convinced of the inadequacy of their naval power following the landing of American marines in Lebanon in 1958 and the United States naval quarantine during the 1962 Cuban missile confrontation.

### Patrols in Mediterranean

Two years after the Cuban crisis Soviet warships began regular patrols in the Mediterranean. The size of the Mediterranean fleet has grown steadily. With increasing frequency Soviet ships have ventured into the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the Caribbean Sea.

The size and quality of its submarines and surface ships have kept pace with this outward deployment.

In 1967 the Russians deployed the first of the 15,000-to-18,000-ton helicopter carriers, the Moskva and Leningrad, each with a half deck used for anti-submarine helicopters.

Soviet military writers have usually denigrated the value of Western aircraft carriers, insisting that they were highly vulnerable to destruction in a nuclear war.

### Carrier Value Noted

Western analysts will argue that point but insist that in any crisis short of a nuclear war there is little debate over the value of the carrier in protecting a nation's fleet far from its territory, in projecting air power ashore and in providing a means to search distant waters for enemy missile submarines.

Thus the interest over Soviet Navy flight tests of vertical take-off and landing jets. But such planes normally use so much fuel in lifting off that their range is short. American planners believe, therefore, that the Russians are likely to follow the Western pattern in later carrier developments.

"It's still possible we will see steam catapults and an angled flight deck in this first carrier," one analyst said.

He noted that a new class of heavy missile cruisers—three are now under construction—may be designed as part of future carrier task forces. The first of the new cruisers, the Kara, is expected to make her maiden voyage from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean this year.