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5 August 1982

Worldwide Report

LAW OF THE SEA

(FOUO 5/82)

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WORLDWIDE AFFAIRS

USSR TO LIFT OKHOTSK HERRING FISHING BAN IN 1983

OW270456 Tokyo ASAHI SHIMBUN in Japanese 25 Jun 82 Morning Edition p 1

[Text] The Soviet Union has decided to lift the 1976 ban on the Okhotsk Sea herring fishing next year. The herring fishing in the northern sea, with an annual catch of tens of thousands of tons, had been a major part of Japan's fish industry, as the salmon fishing was until the USSR imposed the ban. It is unknown if the Soviet Government will allow Japanese fishermen to catch herring in the Northern Sea again; however, if a Japan-Soviet nongovernmental fishing enterprise similar to the current one on crab fishing is set up on herring fishing, fishery companies in this country will have access to it. This was disclosed by Sakhalinskiy Oblispolkom Chairman Zakharov to ASAHI SHIMBUN's top officials when he visited the daily's main office in Tokyo on 24 June.

Both the Soviet Union and Japan had been catching herring in the Okhotsk Sea until the arrival of the "200-mile sea limits" era. The resources were dwindling because of the reckless fishing and there was a threat of extinction. In 1976, therefore, Japan and the Soviet Union agreed to a total ban on the Okhotsk herring fishing; subsequently, in late 1976, the Okhotsk Sea was made an "inland sea" of the USSR by a unilateral 200-mile limit declaration issued by the Soviet Government.

The Soviet Union has since been monitoring the conditions of herring resources in the area by sending out laboratory vessels every year. "As a result of the total ban on fishing in the past 7 years," Chairman Zakharov said, "marked progress has been observed in the recovery of resources and, according to reports by scientists, the fishing can be resumed in another year." Fisheries officials of Sakhalinskaya Oblast, acting on recommendations, "have decided to lift the ban on the Okhotsk Sea herring fishing, effective next year," he said.

According to the Fisheries Agency, Japan's Northern Sea herring catch in 1970 was 500,000 tons. The Soviet lifting of the ban will pave the way for Japan to seek reinstatement of its fishing rights on the basis of the past record. Because of the 200-mile Soviet sea limits, however, the herring resources now belong to the USSR and, in this situation, it is unlikely that the Soviet Government will readily grant a Japanese request. Under the circumstances, Japan can consider a joint venture with the USSR similar to what it has on crab fishing. In this type of venture, Japan contributes what is called a fishing cooperation fund (a kind of fishing charge) to the USSR for the right to fish. Herring is a popular fish and relatively high-priced in Japan. Many fishery companies are expected to show interest in the deal if the "cooperation fund" payment is within a reasonable range. Their responses will be noteworthy.

Meanwhile, according to information obtained by the Fisheries Agency, the Soviet Government authorized herring fishing by Soviet fishermen in the Okhotsk Sea only for domestic use, up to 10,000 tons last year and 5,000 tons this year. While it is considered quite possible that the herring resources have made a good recovery as a result of the ban, it should be noted that the Japanese demand is mainly for the herring roe. Accordingly, even if the ban is lifted, the catch will be limited on herring with roe to prevent an unfavorable impact on the resources. This means that the Okhotsk Sea herring fishing, if it materializes, would have no significant impact on the domestic supply-demand situation in Japan, agency officials said.

Nevertheless, the Soviet Union has been trying to sound out Japanese officials on the possibility of private herring exports to Japan. This led to speculation that the Soviet Union, which is suffering from a foreign exchange shortage, is seeking an opportunity to earn foreign currency. Japan's herring catch last year was 20,000 tons. In addition, it imported 50,000 to 60,000 tons from foreign countries other than the Soviet Union.

CSO: 5200/2094

'ASAHI' ON JAPAN-DPRK FISHERY PACT EXPIRATION

OW021335 Tokyo ASAHI EVENING NEWS in English 1 Jul 82 p 5

[ASAHI SHIMBUN 30 June editorial: "Fishery Talks With North Korea"]

[Text] The temporary private fishery agreement between Japan and North Korea expired on June 30, and there is no prospect of its being renewed. Pyongyang Radio announced a statement demanding the withdrawal of Japanese fishing boats from North Korean economic waters until a new agreement is reached.

There is more to the matter than the ban on Japanese fishing boats. Although Japan and North Korea are separated by a body of water, the two nations still do not have diplomatic relations, and the fishery agreement was the only link between them. Should the agreement be allowed to lapse?

This private fishery agreement was signed on Sept. 5, 1977 between the Japan-North Korea Fishery Council and the Chosen Tokai (Japan Sea) Fishery Cooperatives Federation after North Korea declared the establishment of a 200-mile economic zone in August 1977. The term of validity of the agreement was extended in 1978 and again in 1980.

Under this temporary agreement, Japanese fishing boats of less than 200 tons were permitted to operate in the northern economic waters outside the 50-mile military line east of the Korean Peninsula. North Korean fishing boats are not operating off the Japanese coast, and Japan has been allowed to fish in North Korean waters without having to pay charges; in other words, Japan alone has been benefiting.

Japan had been requesting the extension of the agreement since last year, but North Korea objected on the grounds that Japanese fishing boats had violated the agreement, in particular by entering waters inside the military line. The fate of the agreement was finally sealed in late March this year, when the government refused to allow Hyon Chun-kuk, the leader of the North Korean team invited to Japan by the Japan-North Korea Friendship Promotion Dietmen's League, to enter Japan.

The reason given for the refusal was that when Hyon visited Japan in the summer of 1981, he made political statements that violated the entry permit conditions. Hyon referred to the confrontation on the Korean Peninsula and South Korea, which is very sensitive about such matters, protested to Japan.

Nevertheless, allowing this agreement, which had been kept in force for five years through the efforts of both Japan and North Korea, to lapse arouses fears that the private friendship which has been built up through the years will be returned back to the starting point. For the present, we should like to ask North Korea to adopt a broader view of the matter and to approve of the automatic extension of the temporary agreement, on the premise that eventually the agreement will be changed to a private agreement between equals that guarantees mutual benefits.

There have been no diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea in the 37 years since the end of World War II. Seventeen years have passed since Japan established diplomatic relations with South Korea, but the only links between Japan and North Korea are the private trade and fishery agreements. This is an unnatural state of affairs in an age of international interdependence.

The government's position is that it cannot allow political exchanges with North Korea unless the latter modifies its virulently anti-South Korea and anti-U.S. policies. But if the present situation is frozen for this reason, the problems of the immediate postwar period between Japan and North Korea will not have ended. In addition, the hopes for peaceful coexistence in northeast Asia, which will have to be based on mutual dependency, will be dashed.

At a time when the desire for greater unity between North and South is growing, Japan would be justified in studying the possibility of establishing cooperative economic relations with the whole of the Korean Peninsula. The Japan-North Korea fishery agreement should be a link toward creating such a peace plan.

CSO: 5200/2094

PREPARATIONS FOR GETTING DEEP-SEABED MINING UNDER WAY IN 1990'S

Milan EUROPEO in Italian 24 May 82 pp 52-53, 55

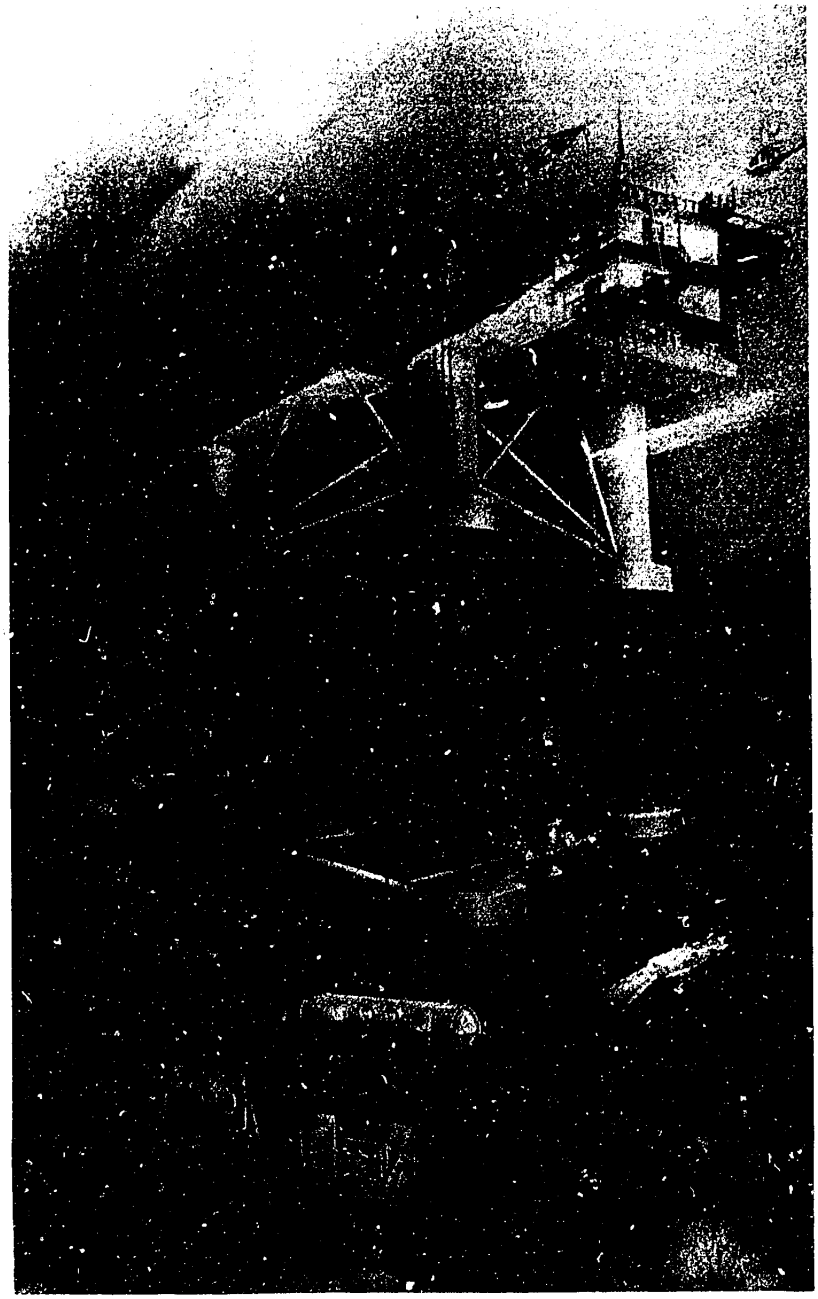
[Article by Massimo Morello: "The Future Is a Dive into a Mine"]

[Text] Is it a good idea to go down to a depth of 1,000 meters to collect the precious nodules of manganese, cobalt, nickel and titanium? Italy has decided to do so. Here is the why and how of it.

A violent depression rages in the Strait of Sicily. The wind blows at Force 9, raising 10-meter waves that break on the pylons of the Italian oceanographic platform Marelab 9. The spray goes all the way to the bridge, but on the third level of the control tower, the technicians on duty sip their coffee calmly. A complex counterweight system keeps constant tension on the formidable anchoring system that ties Marelab 9 to the bottom, 500 meters, down, avoiding oscillations.

The technicians await a message from Phoenix III, a research submarine used to sift the bottom of the trench (1,000 meters deep) that separates Sicily from Africa. Phoenix III is driven by two diesel engines that run in a closed circuit and can stay on the bottom for 3 weeks with 22 persons on board: navigation personnel, technicians, researchers. Complex electronic instrumentation enables the technicians to detect the presence of valuable minerals; this is the mission of Phoenix III, on which the success of the "Deep Mining" program depends.

While an inertial-piloting system guides the submarine on the canyon bottom at a speed of 9 knots, with maximum safety, its headlights illuminate the surrounding area to daylight brightness. In a darker area, the magnetometer indicates an abrupt variation in the magnetic field. The pilot reduces speed and a technician sends out an articulated arm with a television camera on it: the macro lens gives an elargement of a kind of dark nut, the diameter of which is actually no more than a centimeter. The spot on the bottom is a carpet of these "nuts," and a second arm, carrying a collection basket, takes a few of them on board. The analysts are able to establish immediately the composition of these metallic nodules: iron and manganese. The bottom sand is actually richer, with high percentages of cobalt and titanium-magnetite.



This is what Tecnomare's Italian base for recovery of metallic nodules, in accordance with the "Deep Mine" program, will be like: a platform will remain anchored to the bottom and will coordinate the work of deep-diving submarines, with or without crew.

The data, processed by the on-board computer, are transmitted to Marelab and, after an initial evaluation, are communicated to the CENRADO (National Center for Collection of Oceanographic Data) at Trieste. There, the information is checked and its importance is verified. Just a few hours after a find that proves promising, the Ministry of the Sea in Rome is already in a position to give the go-ahead for a new phase of study for possible exploitation. The arrangements are transmitted to the third maritime department, which controls the Strait of Sicily, from which they are forwarded to the men on Marelab 9. In the cortrol room, the technician on duty turns on his terminal and sees the time and date appear: 0800 hours/8 May 2002.

All this, then, will happen in 20 years. But it is not fantasy: the technical and scientific foundations already exist, and there is already the will to get to the bottom. Marelab 9 and Phoenix III are only the future devlopments of Marelab 1, which is presently in the preproject phase in Tecnomare, and of PH 1350, the first of the Phoenix class, which will descend into the sea at Gaeta in a few months for Sub Sea Oil Services of Milan, one of the most important underwater-engineering companies.

The projections toward the future arise from the purpose-directed "Oceanography and Marine Bottoms" project of the CNR [National Research Council], which has just concluded its 5-year period of activity. The biggest results come from the "Marine Technologies" project: upgrading of the existing equipment, and the working-out of a standard method for the analyses.

Above all, the basis has been prepared for the creation of a National Center for Collection of Oceanographic Data. The CENRADO will serve to create a bank of data on the marine environment and will be responsible for evaluating the quality of the information, to extract from it, with successive processings, all possible knowledge about the sea.

Meanwhile, another data bank has been proposed within the operational framework of the law on protection of the sea (submitted last year); its nerve center would be shifted to the Ministry of Merchant Marine, and its terminals to the various maritime departments. The ministry's computer would also monitor all movement on the sea, and it will therefore be possible to coordinate, from a single operational center, all the activity of work, transport and, as necessary, rescue and protection.

The researchers of the "Oceanography and Marine Bottoms" project have stressed the absolute necessity of finding mineral resources within the limits of the Italian continental shelf. Or, at any rate, of possessing a mining site in international waters: for example, in the Atlantic zone, off Central America, called the Clarion Clipperton Area. That bottom contains, indeed, the equivalent of all the proven reserves of nickel and manganese known today on land, in addition to the equivalent of a quarter of the copper reserves and six times those of cobalt.

In November 1980, SAMIM [expansion unknown] (a company of the ENI [National Hydrocarbons Agency] group) acquired a 25-percent share of Ocean Mining Associates, a very big holding company that is among the giants of mining exploration.

In a recent study, ENI foresees that industrial-scale mining of the polymetallic nodules will begin in the 1990's.

According to the most probable hypothesis, the nodules were formed from the metals present in the seawater. The micronodules that can be found on the Italian continental shelf are composed 33 percent of manganese. Our real Eldorado, though, seems to be the metal-bearing sands, rich in titanium, cobalt, zirconium, magnetite. Wide-radius reconnaissance of the Italian shelf and development of the related technologies are therefore more than justified. It will, indeed, be no small matter to open up this new mining frontier, because the environment is the toughest and most hostile that can be imagined.

Platforms and ships equipped with unmanned robot submarines for gathering the minerals from the bottoms, sometimes at great depths, and also ships for transport of the materials extracted, are needed for mining of the underwater deposits. But before this operational phase is started up, preliminary work is necessary: surveying the topography of the bottoms; determination of the geological characteristics of the bottom (with a view especially to the anchoring of the platforms); compilation of an accurate map of the mean and extreme meteorological conditions; drawing of a map of the marine currents. All this work will be done by platforms such as Marelab and submarines such as the Phoenix.

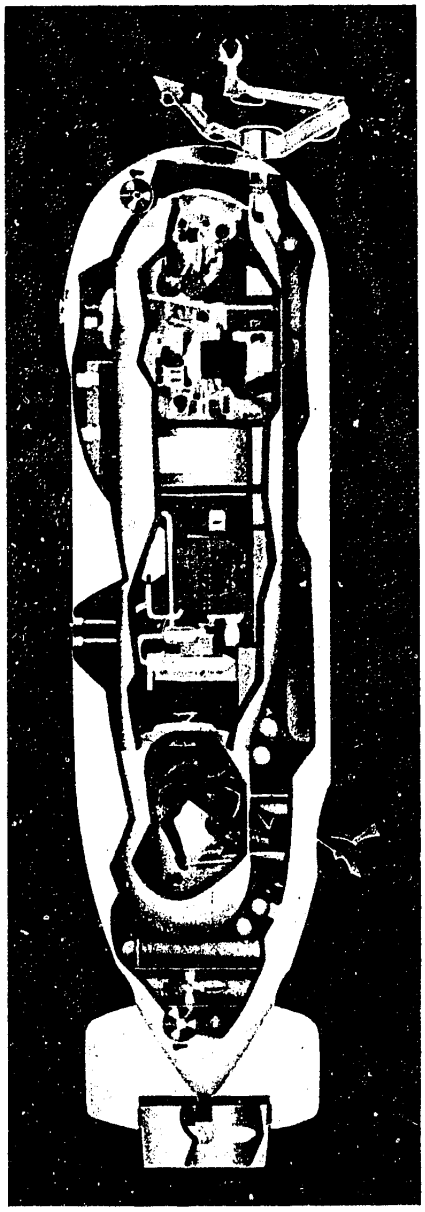
Marelab 1 will be a semisubmerged platform of 5,000 to 6,000 tons, capable of anchoring on bottoms of 2,000 to 3,000 meters or of setting down on shallower bottoms. It will have a deck of 60 m^2 and will have equipment for moving very heavy loads at different depths, as well as for producing all necessary energy autonomously. It will house about 100 persons, including technicians and researchers who will have multidisciplinary laboratories at their disposal.

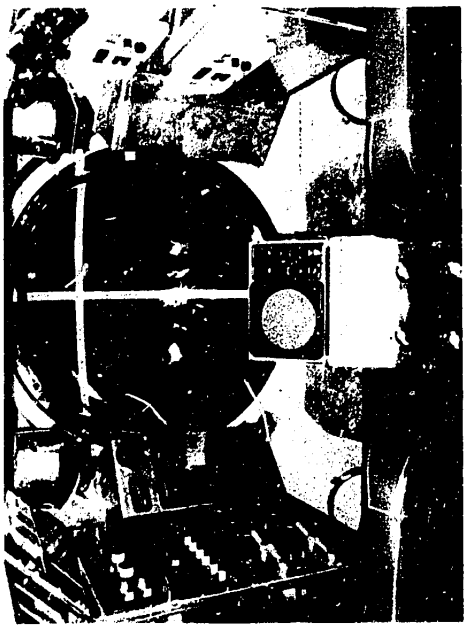
Marelab will have to work in different fields simultaneously: oceanographic research, verification of data collected by the Seasat satellites, geological and geophysical study of the bottoms, diving and work by humans at great depth, recovery of energy from the sea, extraction of minerals and of geological samples, monitoring of and protection against environmental pollution. Marelab 1, whose first installation will be in the Strait of Sicily, should then be followed by other operational bases in the open sea, to be used in missions financed by the CNR and by private industries.

Marelab's "arm" will be Phoenix, the "multipurpose submarine" that will soon begin its sea trials: 11.45 meters long and 3 m wide, it weighs 30 tons and can reach a depth of 350 meters, staying there for 24 hours and covering 250 miles. The crew will consist of four men, plus four divers housed in a hyperbaric compartment from which they can exit for research on the bottom or for any other operation.

The revolutionary characteristic of PH 1350 is its engine, a 130-HP Fiat Aifo diesel that functions in a closed circuit: the fuel supplied is a mixture of oxygen and gasoil, as determined by a computer, and the exhaust gases are cooled, scrubbed, and subdivided into their components, which are partly recycled and partly expelled.

A series of successors to the PH 1350 is planned also--bigger and more powerful and capable of reaching greater depths. Thus technology, which today already has a good start toward results that seemed impossible, will reach the "science fiction" of the forecasts for 2000.





[top] Long section of the PH 1350 multipurpose submarine. The numbers indicate: 1 and 6--maneuvering propellers; 2--conning tower; 3--crew quarters; 4--engine; 5--divers' quarters; 7--trim tanks; 8--ballast.

[bottom] Control room.

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