

Subject: Russia denies report of Chinese sub accident

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MOSCOW (Reuter) - A Russian military official denied a Japanese newspaper report Tuesday that a Chinese nuclear submarine sank after a collision with a Soviet nuclear submarine off Vladivostok in 1983.

"Not a single case of a Chinese nuclear submarine entering the territorial waters of the Primorsky Krai (far eastern region of Russia) has ever been registered," Itar-Tass news agency quoted Viktor Ryzhov, Pacific Fleet spokesman, as saying.

The Tokyo Shimbun said all 70 crew on the Chinese submarine drowned in the accident in June 1983 which left the vessel lying on the seabed in waters from 2,625 feet to 3,281 feet deep.

The newspaper said that six years after the sinking, Soviet scientists "detected extremely strong radioactivity at the collision site" some 60 miles southeast of Russia's far east port of Vladivostok.

The newspaper gave no indication that radioactivity was still a problem.

But Ryzhov said the commander of the Pacific Fleet would later issue a statement on the report, which he called "a red herring."

A spokesman for the Russian navy in Moscow could neither

confirm nor deny the report.

The Tokyo Shimbun said the submarines involved were the K324, a Victor III class Soviet submarine, and a Han class Chinese submarine, the nation's first such nuclear vessel.

After colliding with the stern of a then unidentified submarine at a depth of some 52 ft., the Soviet vessel surfaced urgently and returned to port.

The newspaper said parts of the other submarine's propeller and rudder were found on the severely damaged bow of the Soviet submarine, leading to its identification as a Chinese Han class vessel.