

chilling realism by both sides. Here, for the first time, is what the chase is like.

The Hunt Begins. Cruising hundreds of feet below the surface, the Yankee that set out from Murmansk is only hours into its mission but already nearing the fringes of NATO's surveillance network. A P-3B Orion patrol plane of the Norwegian Air Force drones low over the sea. Hour after hour, members of its 11-man crew hunch over the scopes and dials of their delicate electronic equipment, waiting, listening, searching for a telltale sign. Suddenly, there it is: a scribble of jagged lines on the recording drums. No doubt about it: another Yankee has put to sea.

The information is flashed into the NATO communications network. From Iceland, which stands like a sentry barring the way to the Atlantic, a squadron of U.S. Navy Orions begins shadowing the submarine. As it moves south, sleek Nimrods of the Royal Air Force fly up from Scotland. The patrol planes can tell that the sub is a Yankee from the characteristic "signature" of the sound it transmits into the water. But the aircraft cannot yet locate the Russian precisely enough to swoop in for a simulated attack. Indeed, they might not have been able to find it at all were it not for a great advantage of geography enjoyed by the NATO partners. To reach the North Atlantic from Murmansk, a Yankee must move through a fairly narrow gap—a "choke-

point," in naval terms—between Iceland and the British Isles or, if it's heading farther west, between Iceland and Greenland.

As the Yankee moves steadily south from Murmansk, the information about its course from the Norwegians, Americans and British is fed into computers and displayed on a giant wall map in the Atlantic command headquarters for the United States and NATO in Norfolk, Va. The order goes out to an American anti-submarine warfare (ASW) task force: locate and track that Yankee.

The Trackers. The heart, brain and muscle of this task force is the aircraft carrier *Intrepid*, which

fought the Japanese during World War II and has since been refitted for ASW. Her flight deck and her great hangar deck are crowded with helicopters and patrol planes. Escorting the *Intrepid* are half a dozen destroyers and, off to port, what looks like a fishing trawler. Not until you get close to the stranger can you make out the forest of antennas rising from its decks and masts—a Russian intelligence-gathering ship out to learn how the *Intrepid* stalks Russian submarines.

One of the finest ASW pilots on the *Intrepid* is a stocky commander named Tony Bracken, who speaks Russian and once served a tour of duty as a naval attaché in Moscow.

Bracken likes to match wits with the Yankees. "You want to show them you can stay with them," he says. "And they want to show you they can get away."

Bracken eases his Grumman S-2 Tracker onto the port catapult of the *Intrepid*. The stubby, propeller-driven aircraft is built like a truck to haul a fully equipped electronics laboratory through the sky. Its two engines reach full power now and, with a great thud and whoosh, the catapult hurls the S-2 into the air. Two other S-2s follow.

Bracken knows that much of the ingenious equipment carried by the S-2 to find conventional, diesel-powered submarines is ineffective

