

by  
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(Aboard the nuclear-powered icebreaker "Taimyr")  
(Kara Sea)

While proceeding at 7 knots a strengthened ice-class diesel-engined vessel displacing over 26,000 tons collided with the nuclear-powered icebreaker "Taimyr." The ship was struck in the side in the vicinity of its reactor. Sheets of high tensile steel were torn apart and crumpled... But the safety enclosures and shell of the steam-generating plant were not damaged. The "heart" of the icebreaker had been reliably protected.

It was not while at sea that I had occasion to witness the accident, but on a television screen in the cabin of N. Krylov, captain of the "Taymyr."

Finnish specialists, embodying in metal a joint project with the USSR, paid special attention to the reliable protection not only of those parts of the ship which are in direct contact with ice, but also of the sides in the region of the central compartment. This was not by accident. The Chernobyl' catastrophe graphically illustrated what can happen when reliability and safety are overlooked. Damage reports from the world's fleet have forced even more rigid requirements on the new icebreaker with its nuclear propulsion plant: "Taimyr, even in the event of the most serious collision, must stay afloat and its central compartment must remain insulated from the outside world.

If one is to believe the video film I saw of mock-up tests, then the goal has been achieved. Yet even after this, in discussions with crew members and