According to John McMahon, the Norwegians were "not intimidated," and the boat operation produced "great intelligence." Included were data on launches out of the White Sea, on air-to-air and air-to-ground missile launches, and on Soviet practice firings from the Barents Sea. The operation also provided "good COMINT coverage."[93]

OEL also sought to improve its ability to monitor missile tests emanating from Tyuratam and antimissile activity at Sary Shagan. In 1965 and 1966, OEL established a second telemetry intercept station in northeastern Iran at Kabkan, forty miles east of Meshed. Code-named TACKSMAN II, the station was only 650 miles southwest of Tyuratam.[94] As with the TACKSMAN I facility at Beshahr, it was a strictly U.S. operation, with no Iranians permitted inside the facilities. It also had, as did the Beshahr site, a communications intercept capability to permit monitoring of test range communications.[95]

TACKSMAN II was located in a remote mountainous area inhabited by nomads, and although the station became home to advanced electronic equipment, living conditions were primitive for those on the site survey team and the initial permanent contingent.[96] Bob Phillips was among the seven people who established the site in 1965, and he returned in 1966 to spend a year as chief engineer. The nine or ten individuals who spent that year at TACKSMAN II had to dig a slit trench to serve as the latrine, carry water up the mountain, and have their supplies flown in from Tehran. It was "like camping out for a year," Phillips recalled, except camping out usually does not involve "sitting on a slit trench [in freezing weather] in the middle of the night." The site was devoid of trees, a factor Phillips believed influenced his later decision to buy a house in an area of northern Virginia that had "trees everywhere."[97]

But the hardships endured by the CIA's personnel on an isolated mountain in Iran paid huge dividends for the FMSAC analysts who were trying to crack the Soviet missile and antimissile programs. At their peak, the Iranian stations provided about 85 percent of the hard intelligence on the Soviet ICBM program. The sites could do what no other U.S. intercept sites could do—monitor the last moments of the firing of the missile's first stage, which meant a greater degree of confidence in determining missile dimensions and throw weight. The material, according to Phillips, came in "pure" and required no exotic processing. To FMSAC chief Duckett, it was "pure gold."[98]

The Norwegian and Iranian stations (along with other stations operated by NSA or its military components) had an assortment of operational and test firings to monitor between 1964 and mid-1966. In 1965,