

Test base being built

U.S. itching to claim Arctic shortcut

by Eleanor Brown

OTTAWA (CUP) — The United States seized two Canadian fishing trawlers this summer to lay claim to a 20-kilometre strip of water it wants as a shortcut to Alaska for nuclear attack submarines, an NDP politician is charging.

Jim Fulton says the submarines will use the shortcut through British Columbia to get to a testing base now under construction in Alaska.

The \$35 million base will do sound testing on nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed Trident ballistic missile submarines and, critics charge, the Seawolf 'stealth' attack submarine.

At \$1.7 billion per vessel, the Seawolf is expected to be the most sophisticated and silent submarine ever. In wartime, the subs are to attack the Soviet navy, to keep the seas open for U.S. troop transport to Europe and Asia.

The base, to be completed in 1991, is in Alaska's Behm Canal, just north of Prince Rupert, B.C. The shortest route to it is through Dixon Entrance, a 20 km deep water stretch awarded to Canada by a turn-of-the-century international tribunal.

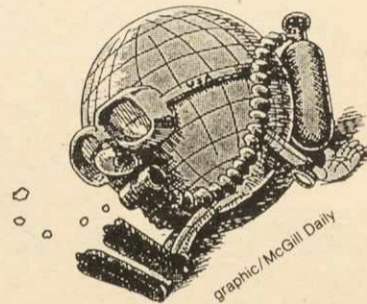
But the U.S. government now says it has jurisdiction over the seaway and Fulton says the U.S. seized the trawlers to stake its

claim.

"There wasn't any logic behind the arrest and seizure of trawlers in Canadian waters," Fulton's aide David Garrick said.

"There's lots of resources under there that are certainly worth protecting, or trying to make a grab for," he added. "But it's not logical, going across a friendly border. There must be another reason."

While the U.S. navy has not confirmed that it will test the Sea-



wolf at the Behm Canal base, it told a U.S. District Court judge it needed the base "to measure the radiated noise of the new generation of quiet U.S. submarines which commence with the SSBN-726 (Trident) class..."

"Some of the evaluation criteria, specifically those relating to submarine performance characteristics and acoustic measurement environment, are necessarily classified."

A Washington-based coalition of American peace and environ-

mental groups tried unsuccessfully to stop construction of the base in November.

A Washington newspaper recently quoted unnamed sources saying the Navy was referring to the Seawolf. It said the navy needs a site far enough away from the "noise" of civilization to test the ultra-quiet Seawolf properly.

In a recent interview, American navy Senior Chief Gene Romano said the Alaska site "would also be capable of testing attack submarines," but he refused to comment further.

In November, U.S. District Court Judge Joyce Green ruled that the navy may have violated U.S. environmental protection laws and scheduled further hearings, although she did not stop the base's construction.

The Foundation on Economic Trends, a coalition of five groups, wants a permanent injunction against the base.

The base's opponents include the Tongass Indian tribe, sport fishing groups and the tourism trade. They say the navy's restricted access policy will ruin the area.

Others warn of the potential damage of a nuclear accident.

I'm not sure we can have a wilderness Eden with nuclear submarines and underwater cables, moorings and blinking beacons," foundation lawyer Andrew Kimbrell told the judge.

A nuclear accident in Dixon Entrance, just north of the Queen Charlotte Islands, would put 38,000 B.C. residents at risk, said Fulton, who is the NDP environmental critic.

It is U.S. Navy policy to neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear missiles aboard their craft.

External Affairs public relations officer Patricia Low-Bedard said the Canadian government isn't worried about a nuclear accident in Alaska.

"There is a system of port visits where Canadian authorities can board and satisfy safety measures (are being met) ... but the American safety record is excellent. They haven't had an accident with a nuclear powered vessel

such as the Russians (have)," she said.

In 1985, the U.S. Navy released a list of accidents involving its nuclear weapons since 1965. There were an average of 30 a year.

And, in November, the U.S. navy ordered an unprecedented 48-hour halt in operations for all vessels.

"We've had this recent rash of accidents which makes me say, 'Is there something we're overlooking? Are people getting careless?' It's our responsibility to take a careful look," said Admiral Carlisle Trost, chief of U.S. naval operations.

As of mid-November, 101 people had died this year in U.S. navy accidents.

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"Destructive cult" at U of T?

by Hilary Bain and Wanda Stride

TORONTO (CUP) — A University of Toronto Christian student group has been called a "destructive cult" by a cult awareness group.

Helga Tucker of the Council on Mind Abuse said 'Christian Advance,' which has about 60 members at U of T, is a branch of the Boston-based International Church of Christ.

Tucker said the group was harmful.

"In my experience with support groups (for ex-members of the church) there is not one person who doesn't have a great amount of self-destructiveness when they leave," she said.

One former member, a fourth year student who did not want to be identified, said the group did not want her to quit, and they harassed her for several weeks after she did.

"As I tried to get out I was getting calls at two and three in the morning. They were very persistent."

She said she went without a phone for a year after dropping out to avoid further harassment.

But Clovis Grant, the president of the group, said he has trouble believing this story.

"To me that doesn't strike a logical note," he said. "No one is bound by chains to stay in."

But the former member said leaving wasn't easy.

"There is a lot of guilt involved," she said. "If you leave they say you'll go to hell because they are the only ones who live under God's word."

"They manipulate the teaching of the Bible to back up their teachings," she added. "They win you over gradually. And when you go through it, it all makes sense. Through the process of conversion you're told everyone you know isn't a Christian."

Grant said the group is as committed to God as Christ was, and he is not surprised people have trouble accepting them.

"Christ demands total commitment," he said. "Jesus would offend many people today."

Tucker said the group is recruited for targeting vulnerable people, particularly young students from other countries. "Especially those susceptible, needing friendship."

"They call it love-bombing,"

she said. "It's very hard to push away someone who is offering something."

Grant said the group is always trying to find new members.

"That's what Christ taught," he said. "Our purpose is to save people, and that means interacting. It's all part of being a disciple."

"But we're not trying to impose our doctrines on anyone," he added. "God has given us all a choice. And we call on everyone to make a decision to obey the scriptures."

Tucker said other Church of Christ groups were recently banned from Guelph and York universities, but it is doubtful this would happen at U of T.

"I can understand the university's difficulty," she said. "Does the group have the right to religious freedom?"

U of T Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs David Neelands, said U of T has no way to deal with these situations.

"Their tactics of recruiting are insidious and it's hard to see them infringing on the law," he said. "Society is not totalitarian, and we do recognize their freedom of religion."

MAUREEN McTEER

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