

Students mock Star Wars

VANCOUVER (CUP) — A programme of the U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative Organization to get universities involved in "mission-oriented basic research" for Star Wars has campus disarmament groups jumping at the chance to join it.

Students for the University of B.C., Simon Fraser University and Langara College have joined forces to form the Students' Committee to Assist Military Madness (SCAMM). SCAMM is sponsoring a contest aimed at supplying "innovative and even outrageous" abstracts to the SDI.

Because the SDIO would like to

get researchers involved as quickly and easily as possible in Star Wars, they are initially sparing researchers "the laborious task of preparing a formal proposal." Instead, they are soliciting short preproposals called "white papers".

"It's a perfect opportunity for us. They're begging for ridicule," say Mark Fettes, a SCAMM organizer at UBC.

The idea of the contest was started by the *November 11th Committee* at Cornell University in response to the SDIO program.

In May of this year, representatives from 150 U.S. universities

attended a SDIO briefing in Washington, where U.S. Secretary of Defense officials outlined how to apply for SDI research funding, and asking for a 10-page "white-paper."

Cornell administrators who'd attended the briefing in turn briefed Cornell academics on how to apply for funding.

Responding to concern over the program, Lisbeth Gronlund, a graduate student in physics at Cornell, co-wrote a pledge listing concern and committing researchers not to work on SDI.

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Owen Wilkes Photo by Dal Photo

Wilkes speaks on peace

By DAN FELDSTEIN

"THE WHOLE OF THE Pacific is regarded by the superpowers as a free-fire zone where they can do anything they want because there isn't enough of a population to make a fuss."

New Zealand peace activist Owen Wilkes, speaking on the military exploitation of the Pacific, says continuing military presence has been detrimental to the region.

Wilkes talked about the long history of the military uses of the Pacific on his Oct. 31 presentation in the SUB. He also gave an update on the current military uses of that region.

Wilkes says the militarization of the Pacific started with the Americans when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. Since then the British, French, Chinese and Russians have all jumped on the bandwagon, not wanting to be outdone by the other military powers, says Wilkes.

He says the region is currently used for nuclear and missile testing, military exercises, chemical weapons storage and testing, and surveillance by all of the previously mentioned military powers, the United States and the Soviet Union being the major players.

"These islands are highly militarized," say Wilkes, "but the populations are too small and isolated to have any political impact and thus the problems go unnoticed."

He says nuclear testing in the region has had long-term consequences for the ecology and the people of the region.

"We're left with a legacy of the nuclear testing in the form of islands that are too contaminated for people to live on, people who have been permanently displaced, and people who are suffering from unusually high instances of leukemia and other cancers," Wilkes says.

Wilkes suggests Canada could learn from the nuclear-free example of New Zealand, noting that 75 percent of New Zealanders support the nuclear-free policies of the Labour government in that country.

He says this could be accomplished by starting at the municipal level, initiating a process that would make the cities nuclear-free zones.

"Declaring cities nuclear-free is an extremely effective way of mobilizing and influencing public opinion," he says.

Wilkes also says Canada should take steps to ensure its northern regions are not used for military purposes.

He says Canada's economic interdependence with the US would serve as a bargaining chip towards this end rather than a means of US retaliation. He adds that since New Zealand instituted its nuclear-free policy there has been no economic retaliation from the US.

An enthusiastic crowd of about 35 people were on hand to hear Wilkes' lecture and ask him questions on the material.

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