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Bridging boat beats competitors in world markets

The powerful, highly-maneuvrable, shallow-draught boat, the *SeaLander*, developed by Versatech Products of Vancouver, British Columbia, has out-performed similar vessels from other countries to win the company a contract with the Canadian armed forces.

The prototype prepared by Versatech for the competition and four more *SeaLanders* were initially purchased by the armed services and more recently they have placed a \$2.5-million order for ten more craft.

Export contracts

In addition to negotiations with Canada's Department of National Defence, Versatech has made a bid to supply its military *SeaLander* to five countries in South America and Southeast Asia. Although the company has not identified the countries, Mehdi Adib, vice-president of marketing, said that "the smallest order would be for more than Canada has ordered and the South American country wants 60".

The company is also hoping to sign a contract to supply the vessel to China. Representatives from China State Shipbuilding Corp. of Peking and Shanghai, a Chinese company engaged in the manufacture of all types of marine-related equip-

ment, recently visited Versatech to discuss requirements, terms and conditions. The Chinese left with the draft of a basic agreement, and Versatech hopes that a firm contract will be settled in the near future.

"Initially, we will manufacture most of the parts here and supply parts which we now obtain from other manufacturers. Some of the equipment will be produced by the Chinese themselves," said Mr. Adib.

The military version of the *SeaLander* is an outgrowth of vessels that the company has produced since 1972 as workboats for the oil industry. More than 150 have been sold world-wide.

The oil industry uses the vessel to carry cargo to offshore platforms and to transfer cargo and personnel to various drilling locations. Because the vessel is strong, has a shallow draft and can be used in most water conditions, other industries also find it useful — the forest industry, for example, uses it for logging operations.

Military applications

The Department of National Defence will use the *SeaLander* Model 27/4 to build floating bridges on tow sections of bridges to carry tanks and soldiers across fast-



The combat-support bridge-erection boat is a versatile vessel that can be adapted for many jobs.



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