

sink one

will not impose sanctions on a NATO-allied nation.

"We had exhausted every legal and political means of making Iceland come into compliance with the law.

"Then I made the decision to send two engineers, Rob Coronado and Dave Howitt, to Iceland. They infiltrated the industry and got jobs at a whale processing plant. They were there for two months. After completely researching the issue, they destroyed the whale processing plant and sank two of their ships." The two 430-ton vessels were sunk by unscrewing fourteen bolts that fastened steel plates to the inside of the hull. "They could have sank three but they searched the ships and found a watchman on board one of them," says Watson.

Sinking the third ship was ruled out because of the risk to human life. The two environmentalists then escaped Iceland, to bring out two briefcases full of evidence of illegal whale killing.

"Immediately afterward, Greenpeace and Iceland started calling us criminals." Watson then defied them to lay charges. There were many allegations, and the incident received a lot of publicity. At one point a story

We defended ourselves with flares—firing over their heads

appeared in *The Globe And Mail* saying the RCMP was investigating the possibility of laying conspiracy charges against Watson, but very little came of it.

In a show of bravado, Watson even went to Iceland on January 20, 1988, where he was interrogated by the police. Even though Watson admitted the part he played in the incident, no charges were laid. Watson was deported, without any reason given.

Watson is proud of the educational effect of his antics and the subsequent media coverage. "Everyone called us names, but that's just fine. The bottom line is that, all over North America and Europe, in every bloody pub, everyone was talking about whaling where before they were talking about hockey."

The Faroe Islands Incident.

Residents of the Danish Faroe islands, an archipelago 500 kilometers north of Scotland, "have been killing pilot whales for about a thousand years. The average kill has been about 900 per year up until 1980. It was a cultural thing - they killed for sport - there were no economic reasons for it.

"They enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world in the Faroes. There is no unemployment and no poverty there. There are 45,000 people and their average income is 12 thousand pounds per year. Twelve thousand pounds is a lot of money for an average income for a country. That's given them a lot of leisure time, and they're escalating the number of whales they kill, so their average is now 3000 per year."

"What happens is that they find pilot whales and they send out small boats. They splash sticks and stones on the end of ropes in the water. They drive the whales into the shore with the splashing. Then they lance the whales with long spears — driving them up on the beaches. The whales are then killed

What are you going to do? Shoot me?

with saws — sawing through the back of their necks and breaking their spinal cords.

"This is done purely for sport — they can't eat all the meat they take." Whale meat is only allowed to be consumed once a week in the Faroes because of the high mercury content in the meat. To focus attention to the issue, Watson and the *Sea Shepherd* went to the Faroes in 1985. He disrupted the hunt by getting in between the drivers and the whales, allowing the whales time to escape. When he returned again in 1986, the police were waiting.

"In 1986 five of my crew members were arrested, but I knew they were going to be



arrested, so I made a point of making sure they were of five different nationalities. I got a lot of embassies involved and it was quite ticklish for a while; but then we got them back."

Two of the men were beaten, but eventually they were freed, and they left the Faroes. The arrests did not daunt Watson. "We started travelling around the southern islands...eventually the police pulled up alongside, in three inflatable boats with automatic weapons mounted. One of them stood up.

"I asked if we were under arrest. He aimed a rifle at me," said Watson.

Watson then asked, "What are you going to do? Shoot me?"

"Then the policeman pulled the trigger, and the bullet narrowly missed me, by three inches... The next thing you know, there are bullets all over the place. We defended ourselves with flares - firing over their heads. We used a couple of rocket throwing lines. We laid the lines down in front of their inflatables so they would get tripped up on the ropes, and we actually managed to deprop one of them. We had water hoses to keep them from coming on board.

"They pursued us for a number of hours, but we kept them from boarding us. This was extremely embarrassing for the Faroe police - they had commandeered the coast guard gun boats to chase us. The Coast Guard captain had been opposed to it, but they [the police] did it anyways. They came back empty handed and made total fools of themselves."

The drama of this situation was conveyed to the world by a BBC documentary film crew that was travelling with Watson. Watson's group took advantage of the airing of the documentary to promote a boycott of Faroese fish products in Britain. "It's having an effect - but a lot of these things you can't win in one season," says Watson.

As for other groups' handling of the Faroese situation, Watson has some harsh words: "A lot of organizations are making a lot of money off this issue, but we are the only ones that have gone there. It really irritates and angers me that these groups can pull in hundreds of thousands of dollars to protest an inhumane whale kill, and yet never go there. And now that we haven't gone there for two years you never hear about it... Greenpeace has 12 ships and not one of them has ever gone to the Faroes. But if we were to go back, you would get a big direct mail campaign by Greenpeace and everybody else."

"Unfortunately, we had to put the Faroes on the back burner — very reluctantly. We can't dismiss the death of 3000 pilot whales

that easily, but we have only so much energy and so many resources. The reason we haven't gone back is because of priority issues - the tuna situation and the driftnets."

American Tuna Fishing

"The tuna situation is an American responsibility," says Watson referring to the 130 thousand dolphins killed by the San Diego tuna fleet yearly. "There is a relationship between dolphins and tuna that we don't understand. You find the dolphins and you know the tuna are there. If you catch the dolphins you catch the tuna. And in the process the dolphins die."

"Using helicopters, they find dolphins and herd them into a tight circle using seal bombs to harass them," says Watson. Seal bombs are miniature sticks of dynamite

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about a sixth of the power of a normal stick. After herding, the fishermen then use a one mile long net to catch the dolphins and the tuna underneath them.

According to Watson, "this method only represents eight per cent of the tuna caught in the world, and it's only done by the American industry. Longlining is the best way to catch tuna without this destructive impact. It's not going to break the three major companies involved: Starkist, Chicken of the Sea, Bumblebee. They are owned by Heinz, Ralston-Purina and Pilsbury. It's a formidable opposition."

"Other groups are attempting to organize boycotts - but to do that we have to dramatize the issues. That's where *Sea Shepherd* is involved. This summer we were able to board two of the ships and get a lot of good information. We chased three of them out - but we really have to sink one if we are to achieve the level of publicity needed to put this over the top and make everyone aware of the issue."

Japanese Monofilament Driftnet Fishing

Watson's current prime priority is the driftnet fishing in the Pacific by the Japanese. This kind of fishing, which has been called "strip-mining" of the sea, is only done for the rapacious appetite of the Japanese fish market.

The Japanese are not renowned for their environmental consciousness. Watson claims that, "if you're an environmentalist in Japan, you're a traitor. Japan is the number one public enemy when it comes to the environment. They are the biggest buyers of wildlife products, the biggest buyers of tortoise, elephant ivory, fur coats." And the pollution of Japanese rivers and beaches will attest Watson's opinion to an extent. In Tokyo, there are vending machines that promise a breath of fresh air.

Watson describes the driftnet fishing as: "1700 Japanese, Taiwanese, or Korean vessels setting nets that are 40 miles long apiece. 22,000 miles of net is set every day during June, July, and August. A quarter of a million sea mammals, a million seabirds killed, an incredible decimation of the fish population each year." The sea mammals and the birds are killed because they get caught up in this vast expanse of net.

"They are literally raping the North Pacific. The Japanese have destroyed the fish population in their inland seas and around Japan, so they are going everywhere else in the world to get the fish." Unlike the tuna fishing, there is no alternative to this kind of fishing. It is the only way to supply the insatiable Japanese appetite for fish.

According to Watson, with driftnets, "you have two choices: Tell them to cut it out, or allow them to go and destroy the oceans... and that's what they'll do if it continues."

And the current political climate isn't helping any, says Watson. "The Canadian Government does nothing about it. The U.S. Government just sits on its hands. The Japanese run the world economically and nobody is going to go and get too heavy with them."

Getting Attention for the Environment

Watson is going to go out and take on the driftnet fishing fleet next year and he has no fear of risking his life in this dangerous pursuit. "I'm not afraid of taking those kinds of risks - what I am afraid of is what this world will look like in one hundred years."

Watson is going to keep trying to use the media to educate the world. He is blunt about the fact that he manipulates the media. "The media wants drama. The media wants celebrity. It doesn't matter what your story is - if you've got a good film clip you're going to get it on television."

"We have to look at the world in a completely different way. We are no longer lords and masters of creation. We share this planet with 30 million other species, and we have to accept that."