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## Boats pose terror threat, U.S warns

By JEFF SALLOT

Saturday, January 26, 2002 – Page A11



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OTTAWA -- Osama bin Laden's terrorist network has boats that could be used to sabotage critical installations on the Great Lakes and along the St. Lawrence Sea, a senior U.S. Coast Guard officer says.

Bridges, locks, nuclear power plants, and oil refineries are attractive targets for the terrorists, Rear Admiral James Hall said yesterday.

"You don't have to have a big boat to be a weapon of mass destruction. A 30-foot boat would do it."

He said the U.S. Coast Guard, an armed law enforcement agency, recently caught two men trying to cross the Detroit River by small boat.

Suspicious characters have also turned up at Coast Guard stations asking how they could learn to steer lake freighters and other large vessels, inquiries that were ominously similar to those by the suicide hijackers who took flying lessons before crashing jetliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon Sept. 11.

Rear Adm. Hall, who commands the U.S. Coast Guard fleet on the lakes and seaway, said the water border between Canada and the United States will be tightened up in much the same way as the plans for increased security at land border crossings and airports.

President George W. Bush, who toured a Coast Guard ship tied up at Portland, Maine, yesterday, announced that the guard will get an additional \$282-million (U.S.) in the next fiscal year to help patrol ports, coastline and the Great Lakes.

There is no shortage of terrorist targets on the lakes, Rear Adm. Hall said. For example, there are no fewer than 17 nuclear power plants on their shores.

Terrorists could also damage the North American economy by sabotaging locks and other choke points through which thousands of transport ships pass each year.

U.S. and Canadian authorities plan to work together to establish

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international maritime enforcement teams on the Great Lakes this summer.

The countries will also make greater efforts to share timely intelligence about suspicious activity on the lakes.

"We have intelligence all over the place. It's all there. But it isn't coordinated," Rear Adm. Hall said.

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Why is it that amorous actors not only avoid the missionary position but generally embrace sideways? Otherwise one of them is bound to complain, again and again, 'That should be me up there.'

Jim Maloy, Barrie, Ont.

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