

Ulster PO seeks action on subs

THE Northern Ireland PO is seeking meetings with the Ministry of Defence following an incident last week where an Ulster trawler netted a US submarine in the Irish Sea (*Fishing News*, February 29).

The trawler *Summer Morn* was towed backwards for several hours by the sub before it was ordered to stop and she was able to cut her wires. PO chief executive Dick James described the navy's response at the time of the incident as "callous". When informed of what was happening, a MoD spokesman said a navy submarine would be ordered not to stop or surface. "When lives are at risk, this is an uncaring attitude," said Mr. James.

There have been a number of sightings by fishermen of submarines in the Irish Sea and many men have lost their nets. On the day of last week's incident five subs were reported to have surfaced.

It is believed the traffic there is so considerable because NATO submarines are making their way from Holy Loch on the Clyde to the Bay of Biscay.

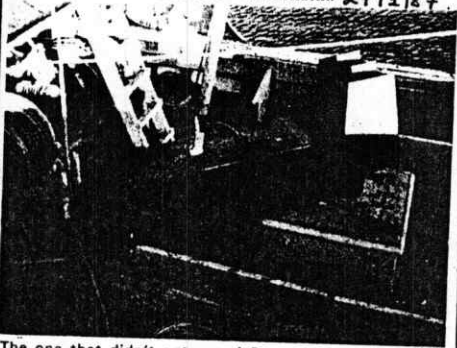
The new government in the Irish Republic is under pressure to ban all nuclear sub-

marine activity in their area of the Irish Sea. The Irish Fishermen's Organisation said there are now so many incidents that the government can no longer stay silent.

Another Irish fishing vessel, *Sharelga*, was towed under by a Royal Navy submarine in 1982 in the Irish Sea, after being dragged for some distance.

Her crew were saved by taking to their own lifeboats and the navy was for compensation. It took about two years for the compensation to be paid and for the navy to admit liability.

Mr. James said the US embassy had been very helpful following last week's incident and promised to deal quickly with any compensation claim. *Summer Morn's* lost gear included three bridle cod trawls and trawl warps and doors. The US consul told MR. James that an inquiry will be launched into the incident. 27/12/87



The one that didn't get away! Part of the US sub was brought aboard the fishing vessel *Transcend*.

Sub Wars Surface Off Scots Coast

DEEP under the sea off the west coast of Scotland, a top-secret cat-and-mouse game is played out every day.

On one side are the British and US submarines sailing from their Clyde bases. On the other, the Russian subs tracking their movements.

This underwater war only surfaces when civilians become involved, like last week's incident when an Irish fishing boat claimed it was dragged backward through the Irish Sea when its nets snagged on a sub.

But the submarine traffic is almost non-stop.

The British and US subs are based at Holy Loch and Faslane. There's also an occasional visit from Dutch and other NATO vessels.

When the subs leave the Clyde they head for the English Channel, through the Irish Sea, sail straight out into the Atlantic or head north for Russian waters, travelling through the Minch between Lewis and the mainland or west of Lewis.

Officially, no Russian subs have ever been spotted off Scotland. But it's known they lie off the mouth of the Clyde and also around

Cape Wrath.

There's also a Russian surface vessel permanently on station off Northern Ireland, monitoring ship movements.

According to defence expert Malcolm Spaven, of the Arms and Disarmament Unit at the University of Sussex, there are three types of submarine in the Clyde.

The SSBN — ballistic missile nuclear-powered submarines. There are thought to be eight Poseidon at Holy Loch, and four Polaris at Faslane.

They're constantly on duty off the West of Scotland, missiles trained on Russia.

They exercise in the Sound of Jura, and never travel farther than 200 miles west of the Orkneys.

The SSN nuclear powered, "hunter-killer" subs. Their role is to seek out and attack the enemy.

It was an SSN which sank the *Belgrano* during the Falklands war. These subs do not carry nuclear missiles.

There are thought to be three at Faslane and they can travel enormous distances, operating in Russian waters.

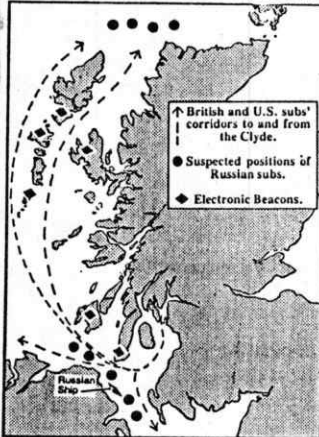
The SSK-diesel subs. There are thought to be three at Faslane.

They're mainly for training, generally around Arran and in the Sound of Jura.

An extra dimension is a system of electronic beacons being constructed in the West of Scotland and Wales.

Known as "Hyper-fix," their role is to find mines laid in times of war.

Beacons are known to be in place on Barra, Benbecula, Scalpay (off Harris) and Skye. There are others further down the coast, includingIslay.



Ghost of the Mhari L haunts the fishing fleet

AN URGENT Government inquiry is being sought into claims that submarines may have been responsible for sinking 11 fishing boats in the Irish Sea in recent years.

Relatives of four men drowned when the Scottish fishing boat *Mhari L* sank two years ago say that the wreck should be raised to find out what happened. George Foulkes, a Labour front-bencher, has written to John Moore, Secretary of State for Transport, demanding a new inquiry.

Monitoring of the unexplained disappearance of vessels in the Irish Sea, and of submarine-related accidents, suggests the toll could be much higher than first realised.

Bernard Moffat, a trade union officer on

By Andrew Marr, Political Correspondent

the Isle of Man who has monitored such incidents, yesterday listed 18, including 11 where the vessels disappeared or are known to have sunk.

The most recent incident was a week ago, when the *Summer Morn*, from Portavogie became entangled with a US submarine off the Isle of Man, but there is evidence of similar accidents throughout the 1980s.

Mr Moffat says a fishing boat, the *Celerity*, disappeared in 1981. In April 1982, *MFV Sheralga* was sunk by HMS *Porpoise*.

In the summer of 1982, the *Galvanor* disappeared off North Wales with the loss of

eight men. In June of that year, a Breton trawler, *La Course*, disappeared in calm seas in the Pembroke Strait with the loss of its crew of five. In December 1983, another Breton trawler, *Clite D'Aleth*, disappeared off County Wexford with her crew of ten.

The same year, Mr Moffat believes, two other boats, the *Zanlo* and the *Exuberant*, disappeared in the Irish Sea.

In May 1984, the *South Stack* disappeared with all hands in the Irish Sea somewhere between the Isle of Man and the mainland. And, in February 1985, the *Mhari L* went down in an accident eventu-

ally blamed on an underwater cable. The relatives of those drowned say they will pay for divers to be sent down if the Government does not reopen the investigation.

Peter Collyer, a marine engineer whose house overlooks Holy Loch, where US submarines are based, said there was an unusual number of them there the day after the sinking. The Americans explained that one had just returned damaged.

Helen Maxwell, whose 23-year-old son William was drowned, said: "We think the *Mhari L* should be lifted to prove to the other fishermen what happened. At the moment these other boys have to go out to their fishing every week and they don't know what it is they are up against."