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March 10, 1983

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 83

UNITED STATES OCEANS POLICY, LAW OF  
THE SEA AND EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (C)

Having reviewed the Senior Interagency Group's report and recommendations on the above subject, as forwarded by the Department of State on February 1 and 27, I have decided that:

- o The United States is prepared to accept and act in accordance with the balance of interests reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention relating to traditional uses of the oceans, such as navigation and overflight. In this respect, the United States will (1) recognize the rights of other states in the waters off their coasts, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention, so long as the rights and freedoms of the United States and others under international law are recognized by such coastal states; and (2), as indicated in National Security Decision Directive 72, the United States will exercise and assert its navigation and overflight rights and freedoms in a manner that is consistent with the results reflected in that Convention. (C)
- o The United States will establish an Exclusive Economic Zone in which it will exercise sovereign rights in the living and non-living resources, except as qualified below, within 200 nautical miles of its coast. (U)
- o Within this zone all nations will continue to enjoy the high seas rights and freedoms that are not resource related, including the freedoms of navigation and overflight. (U)
- o The establishment of such a zone will not change existing U.S. policies with respect to marine mammals, the continental shelf and fisheries, including highly migratory species of tuna. (U)
- o The United States will continue efforts to reach agreements among concerned countries for the effective management of highly migratory species of tuna. (U)

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These policy directions will not affect the application of existing United States law concerning the high seas or existing authorities of any U.S. government agency. (U)

The Senior Interagency Group on Oceans Policy and Law of the Sea is responsible for overseeing implementation of these decisions. It will oversee and coordinate efforts to work with Congress to achieve legislation to implement the Exclusive Economic Zone in a manner that will be fully within the guidance established by this directive and other related U.S. policies and not otherwise go beyond the Law of the Sea Convention. This effort will include priority consideration to introducing an Administration bill or package of amendments to bills introduced in Congress. (U)

No agency will advance or seek to establish any new jurisdiction beyond 200 nautical miles, prior to review of any such proposals by the Senior Interagency Group and, if there are significant policy implications, review by me. (C)

With respect to deep seabed mining, the United States will continue to give priority attention to achieving an alternative arrangement outside the Law of the Sea Convention and to having our allies and others not accept the deep seabed regime in that Convention. (C)

*Ronald Reagan*

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