

new proposal was distributed on April 13, which has in turn been revised in the form available to us this morning, the United States had supported our proposal, exactly the same in principle as that we now place before you. No such reservation in regard to fishing, as that I have just quoted, had been included and we made it very clear why it was not included and cannot be included. I regret very much that the United States has deemed it advisable to change their position. However, I naturally respect without any reservation the sincerity with which their changed position has been explained. It would indeed be a very sorry day for this conference, or any other conference, if disagreement in detail or in principle were to be interpreted as a challenge to the sincerity and good faith of any honourable delegate who expresses the opinions which he has been directed to express by his own government.

I do ask the distinguished delegates from every one of the 86 nations represented here, including the United States, to consider carefully what this reservation in the United States proposal does actually mean in practice. It would appear to me to mean that if any state has had a few small fishing vessels - it might perhaps be only two or three as there is nothing to indicate the number - fishing regularly within 12-mile from the baseline, that right would be extended in perpetuity in an area between the territorial sea and the outer edge of the fishing zone. It would enable a state to send any number of vessels no matter how large or what the size of their crew not only to a particular area but presumably to any area of water along the same continuous coastline. I am afraid that explicit statement in the proposal of the United States opens wide possibilities which, I hope, every distinguished delegate here will carefully consider. It would seem to be to mean for instance that if a few ships have been fishing in a particular area off the southern part of the coast of British Columbia, they will then have the right to fish between the 6- and 12-mile limit for the whole length of the coast of British Columbia. The same thing would apply along the eastern coast of Canada. That is how it would appear to me. Indeed I suggest that is what it does mean. The distinguished delegate of the United States made it clear that if the fishing vessels of a state had been fishing in the waters of another state for a period of five years, this would establish a right for that state to send any number of its nationals in any number of vessels of any size no matter what the size or character of the catch might be. Any coastal state which accepted the present United States proposal would be signing away its rights for all time to protect its own fishermen in a contiguous zone, if even a few small vessels of some other state had been fishing within their waters for the short period of five years continuously. I hope the full effect of this proposal will be recognized not only by those states with fishing areas but by all states who are seeking a basis of agreement which will be just and equitable for every nation represented here.