

CANADA-KOREA FISHERIES RELATIONS (NAFO)

ISSUE

Korean fishing in the Regulatory Area of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO).

BACKGROUND

Northwest Atlantic fish stocks, notably stocks straddling our 200-mile limit which are of major importance to Canada's Atlantic fishing industry, are being depleted by foreign overfishing contrary to the NAFO conservation regime. While EC vessels are mainly responsible, unregulated fishing by non-members of NAFO is extensive, notably by Korea and Panama which have no internationally recognized quotas for the NAFO stocks.

Korean vessels have been fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area since the early 1980s, but activity increased substantially in 1987. While the focus has been on redfish stocks, there appears to be a new interest in cod. For the five vessels licensed by the Korean government to fish in the Regulatory Area, catches were reported of approximately 35,000t in 1989 and 25,000t in 1990. Five other vessels of various registries owned or crewed by Koreans were observed fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area in 1990.

Within NAFO the problem of non-NAFO fishing has received increasing attention. At the 1990 annual meeting, Canada and the EC jointly sponsored establishment of a Standing Committee to consider measures aimed at eliminating fishing activity by non-Contracting parties. This summer, as result of the Committee's work, joint NAFO member demarches were undertaken on non-members whose vessels have fished in the Regulatory Area. At the 1991 annual meeting in September, it was agreed, inter alia, that the Committee would have to pursue other measures, including a landing declaration system to collect data on non-NAFO catches as well as options to address the problem of reflagged vessels.

CANADIAN POSITION

Since 1986, Canadian ports have been closed to vessels which do not respect conservation rules of international fisheries organizations, in particular NAFO, and access to fish, including over-the-side sales, in Canadian waters is denied to them. Canada is concerned about Korea's disregard of the NAFO conservation regime and its duty to cooperate with the coastal state in the conservation of straddling stocks. We have requested that the necessary