
But Canada, with its long coastline and its very special environmental conditions and physical hazards, considers that coastal states must retain the power to prescribe and enforce their own anti-pollution standards, to the extent necessary, over and above the internationally-accepted rules, not only in their territorial waters but also within their areas of jurisdiction beyond. It is on that basis that Canada adopted in 1970 the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act and related regulations under the Canada Shipping Act.

Pollution control will assuredly be one of the crucial problems to be resolved by the Law of the Sea Conference. Extensions of coastal-state jurisdiction automatically mean restrictions on some of the freedoms still cherished by many of the seafaring nations. But the marine environment is precarious and the disastrous consequences of unchecked abuses are beginning to be understood. Freedoms that have existed heretofore should be balanced by obligations. Of course, there should be guarantees on the part of coastal states not to overreact, not to over-control, so that legitimate activities are not interfered with unduly.

Marine scientific
research

Another question that the conference will be looking at is the rules governing research vessels. We recognize the need for intensifying world-wide research into the many secrets of the sea. Mankind is on the threshold of much greater involvement with the ocean areas of the planet, as population pressures and need for resources impel us into this vast new frontier region.

Knowledge of what it contains must be shared, and also put at the disposal of the Seabed Authority. But research also has commercial, economic and security implications that can give one nation advantage over another. We believe that states should have the right to control and even disallow research activities in waters adjacent to their coasts. Coastal states must have the right to participate in research conducted in areas adjacent to their coasts by foreign states, and must have access to data and samples collected, through prompt and full reporting of results and their effective dissemination.

With all these complex problems before it, we can have no illusion that the conference will be an easy one, or that it will readily resolve all the issues before it. But I have been struck by the universal seriousness with which nations have confronted these issues during the long preparatory sessions of the past years.