



Statements and Speeches

No. 79/4

AN AUSPICIOUS DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Remarks by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, in Announcing the Agreement on Atlantic Coast Fisheries and Boundaries, Ottawa, February 14, 1979.

On this occasion, I wish to release a joint statement by myself and my colleague Cyrus Vance, and to comment on an auspicious and promising development in Canada/U.S.A. relations. Before doing so, it may be useful to give some background by way of introduction. In doing so, I shall make no secret of the fact that the two agreements I shall be discussing are of a highly technical nature, but I shall try to convey to you, and through you to the public, my own understanding, as a non-expert, as to the outcome of long and complex negotiations.

Urgent problems between Canada and the U.S.A. on maritime boundaries and fisheries arose with the extension by both countries of fisheries jurisdiction from 12 to 200 miles early in 1977. The extension of jurisdiction created two distinct problems. The first was how to draw boundaries between the fishing-zones of the two countries and how to deal with fishing in the disputed areas pending agreement on boundaries. It was agreed by both sides that these boundaries would apply for all purposes, including delimitation of the continental shelf. The second problem resulted from the fact that large areas that had previously been high seas, and in which both countries had fished, now fell under the exclusive jurisdiction of either Canada or the U.S.A. This raised the question of whether fishing by one country off the coast of the other should continue and, if so, under what kind of arrangements.

Secretary Vance and myself agreed that, in order to maintain and promote good relations between our two countries, it was important that these issues be resolved as quickly as possible. We therefore appointed two special negotiators, Marcel Cadieux on our side and Lloyd Cutler on the U.S. side, who were mandated to look into these questions on an urgent basis and to make recommendations to the two governments as to how they could be resolved. We had first hoped that these negotiations could be completed within a matter of months. As you know, it soon became clear that this would not be possible because the economic interests involved were substantial, the legal and resource issues were very complex, and careful consultation was required with interested groups in both countries, including the provinces and states.

In October, 1977 the negotiators made an initial report to governments in which they recommended the machinery and general principles for the management of fish-stocks of common concern off our coasts — in particular the establishment of a Joint Fisheries Commission.

Although it was then hoped by both governments that we could work out a global agreement encompassing fishing arrangements off the east and west coasts and the
