

Those states that favor a supra-national approach to a seabed regime tend to press for strong international machinery, while states which favor a national approach tend to resist anything but the most limited machinery. On this issue there is a rather extreme polarization of views between many developing countries and certain developed countries -- the Soviet Union in particular. The U.S.S.R. strongly opposes the supra-national overtones of the seabed question, and has resisted the study of international machinery in the United Nations.

The Canadian Government's position on these matters, is still developing. We agree that there is an area of the seabed beyond national jurisdiction. We want this area to be reserved for peaceful purposes. We consider that a workable legal regime must be developed if the seabed is to be exploited in an effective, equitable and orderly manner. And we assume that some form of international machinery will be required. In our view, the seabed regime and machinery should provide some revenue for international community purposes, while protecting the legitimate interests of entrepreneurs and coastal states. We intend to be flexible and open-minded in examining all possible systems, but we have serious reservations about the more extreme proposals for international ownership and control.

I should now like to turn to the question of reserving the seabed exclusively for peaceful purposes. The basic Canadian position is that the widest possible range of arms-control measures should be extended to the widest possible area of the seabed and ocean-floor.

We have argued from the beginning that this objective should be understood in the light of the United Nations Charter and other principles of international law. Use of the seabed for offensive military uses should be prohibited, and especially the deployment of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. However, its use for purely defensive purposes, especially in areas adjacent to the coast, should not be precluded. We were the first country to call for the widest possible area of the seabed to be reserved for peaceful purposes, irrespective of the area which will eventually be subjected to an international legal regime.

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament which has been considering this question reached an early consensus on the desirability of extending arms-control measures to the continental shelf as well as the area beyond national jurisdiction. There was also early agreement that there should be a narrow coastal band to which the proposed seabed arms-control measures would not apply, largely on the grounds that states have sovereignty over their territorial sea. The United States and the Soviet Union, co-chairmen of the Disarmament Committee, eventually agreed on a limit of 12 miles for this coastal band. This corresponds to the breadth of the territorial sea claimed by the U.S.S.R. and some 55 other states.

The United States and the U.S.S.R. also agreed that this coastal band, or "maximum contiguous zone", should be measured in the same way as the territorial sea. Allowance will be made for the use of the straight-baseline system which Canada has applied to long stretches of its coast, and for the status of historic waters such as Hudson Bay.

The results so far of negotiations on arms control on the seabed have now been incorporated in a draft treaty tabled by the United States and the