

15. Johnson and the officials with him at no repeat no time adopted a truculent or threatening attitude. At the same time they made no repeat no effort to hide their concern and agitation at the consequences which they saw flowing from our decision. I believe our efforts should now concentrate on emphasizing our concern on the security aspects of the Soviet incursions into North American waters and our concern for the interests of the Canadian and in the long term American fisheries industries. I would recommend therefore that, before any public announcement is made, we explain as fully as possible to the State Department the broad purposes of our decisions as well as answer the specific questions that were raised (paragraph 8 above).

16. In giving this initial statement of their views neither Johnson nor his colleagues directed any specific comment whatsoever towards the suggestion in your telegram L-30 that USA join with Canada in an initiative for a new international conference on the territorial sea under UN auspices. Their concern seemed to be focused solely on the decision to enclose waters off our coasts.

[C.S.A.] RITCHIE

750.

J.G.D./MG01/XII/F/293

*Note du sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures
pour le premier ministre*

*Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs
to Prime Minister*

SECRET

[Ottawa], March 2, 1963

LAW OF THE SEA

Mr. Green has not seen the attached telegram 672 of March 1, 1963, from our Embassy in Washington, which outlines the initial United States Administration substantive comments on the recent decision of the Canadian Government to claim certain bodies of water as internal Canadian waters, and to suggest a new international conference to determine the breadth of the territorial sea and fishing rights in the contiguous zone. Mr. Green was, however, given the gist of the message over the telephone, and he directed that departmental comments be sent to you immediately. (A copy of this Memorandum is also being sent to him in Vancouver at his request.)

2. As you will note, the United States reaction has been not only faster, but more vigorous and more negative than had been expected. It has always been recognized that the establishment of these claims is to a very large extent dependent upon United States acquiescence in them. An adverse public United States reaction to an announcement of these claims would not only undermine the whole legal basis of certain of the claims, however, but could have serious repercussions in the financial field. This would almost certainly create a new area of controversy in Canadian-United States relations, which could affect firstly, fisheries exports from Canada to the United States, and could also extend to other important items, such as oil and lumber. It is even possible that the whole basis of our trading relations could be adversely affected, at a time when they are particularly important and sensitive.

3. The United States reaction seems to make clear also that the United States is not willing to acquiesce in the Canadian claims even if substantial fisheries concessions were made, since their main objections are on other and broader grounds. In these circumstances, it may be important to convey to the United States very soon the willingness of the Canadian Government to review the matter in the light of the United States views, in order to head off a deliberate leak by the United States Administration. This could result in an adverse public