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CANADA-U.S.A. TUNA AGREEMENT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Mark MacGuigan, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Roméo LeBlanc, announced that an exchange of notes took place in Washington today between Canada and the U.S.A. relating to the reciprocal fishing of albacore tuna off the Pacific coast. This exchange of notes averts a resumption of the conflict which occurred last year when Canada arrested U.S. tuna fishing vessels operating without authorization in Canadian waters.

The dispute has its roots in the different attitudes of the two countries towards fisheries jurisdiction over highly migratory species of fish, including albacore tuna. Canada has consistently maintained that its fisheries jurisdiction extends over all species of fish within its 200 mile zone, a position in keeping with the regime developed by the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and shared by virtually all coastal states in the world except the U.S.A. and Japan. Those two countries, each with extensive long-distance fishing fleets, contend that the highly migratory species are not subject to fisheries jurisdiction.

A further complication arose when, as a result of last year's arrests, U.S. legislation required an embargo to be imposed on Canadian tuna products. Canada considers this measure to be inconsistent with international trade commitments and has submitted its case to the GATT (Secretariat of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) in Geneva for a ruling.

Albacore tuna migrate into U.S. waters every year but into Canadian waters only once every few years. Certain warm water cycles and other biological conditions determine their path. Their return to Canadian waters for a second consecutive year is unusual, so the arrangements which

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have been made for 1980 have been made with a view to accommodating the situation for this year within a broader context of on-going negotiations for a long-term solution to the tuna dispute.

The arrangements for 1980 will give tuna fishermen of each country access to this resource and to the highly favourable market conditions that prevail this year. Although the U.S. embargo will be removed, Canada will pursue its action before the GATT for a ruling against measures of this nature.

U.S. fishing vessels authorized to fish tuna in Canadian waters will operate in keeping with any applicable Canadian laws and regulations while in the Canadian zone.

Within six weeks, negotiations will be initiated on a bilateral treaty to apply in following years which will provide for reciprocal access to both fisheries and designated ports of the other country. Both sides have agreed that such a treaty should be in place by June 1, 1981.