

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject: Law of the Sea  
For Pd: May 80

Dear Margaret:

For years the international community has been striving to develop an agreement concerning the world's oceans. These negotiations are now at an important juncture. I want to share with you some of my country's concerns regarding the current draft treaty on the Law of the Sea.

After a long and detailed review we have concluded that the seabeds provisions of the draft treaty are seriously defective and that, as now written, the treaty would in effect discourage and perhaps prevent the development of deep seabed resources. These resources include not only manganese nodules but other minerals of potentially greater importance. The draft treaty would also subject your government and mine to very large financial obligations.

Western unity will be essential for obtaining improvements in the seabeds provisions of the text while protecting the valuable provisions in such areas as navigation and the continental margin. In the absence of unity of purpose the prospects for a generally acceptable Law of the Sea convention are dim.

If you and other key leaders make it clear to the conference that you are not prepared to conclude a Law of the Sea treaty without the United States, I am convinced that we can succeed in making the changes necessary to transform the draft convention into a widely accepted treaty. If on the other hand, the conference believes that your country and other major industrialized countries might join a treaty which falls short of the necessary improvements, there will be little chance of a successful treaty. I urge you to send your negotiating team back to the conference with full support for the United States position.

I am directing my Law of the Sea negotiators to work closely with your delegation in the weeks to come to achieve a treaty which is acceptable and promotes our common interests.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ronald

The Right Honorable  
Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
Prime Minister,  
London.

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T 31/82

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