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3 April 1980

Worldwide Report

LAW OF THE SEA

(FOUO 2/80)

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BRIEFS

JAPAN ON SOVIET TERRITORIAL ISSUE--Tokyo, March 10 (JIJI PRESS)--Foreign Minister Saburo Okita Monday harshly criticized Soviet Ambassador to Japan Dmitriy Polyanskiy for his reported [as received] last week to the effect that his nation would never return the four Japanese-claimed islands east of Hokkaido, northernmost Japan, to this country. Polyanskiy in an interview with the ASAHI SHIMBUN, a major national daily, last Friday said Moscow takes the stand that the territorial problems between Japan and the Soviet Union have been solved. There could be no reconsideration of this stand under whatever conditions would arise in the future, he added. Okita told the House of Councillors Budget Committee that Tokyo absolutely cannot accept such a unilateral position, pointing out the 1956 Japan-Soviet joint declaration has left no doubt that the territorial issue remains to be solved. The declaration ended a technical state of war between the two nations pending the conclusion of a formal peace treaty. [Text] [OW101431 Tokyo JIJI in English 1412 GMT 10 Mar 80 OW]

JAPANESE BOAT FINED BY USSR--Kushiro, Hokkaido, Feb 14 (JIJI PRESS)--A 349-ton Japanese fishing boat has been fined more than 400 million yen (about $1.6 million) by the Russian authorities for fishing Alaska pollack allegedly outside an authorized zone near the Kurile Islands, northeast of Hokkaido, northernmost Japan, it was learned here Thursday. According to word reaching the Kushiro Maritime Safety Office, the No 23 Fukucho Maru of Shiogama, Miyagi Prefecture, was searched by a Soviet patrol boat Monday morning, while operating in the Soviet 200-mile fishery zone near the islands. The Soviet investigators charged that the fishing boat was illegally catching Alaska pollack outside the authorized zone and ordered it to pay a 10,000-ruble fine and 400 million yen in reparation for the fish catch. The Fishery Agency dispatched the patrol boat No 12 Toshi Maru to the scene to receive a detailed account from the Russians. [Excerpt] [OW141507 Tokyo JIJI in English 1441 GMT 14 Feb 80 OW]

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ANGOLA

BRIEFS

CATCH STATISTICS--According to information from the commercial services office of the French Embassy in Luanda, fishing production is estimated at 2,500 to 3,000 tons per month. Of this total, 55 percent is consumed fresh; 25 percent is frozen, 15 percent is dried and 5 percent goes to the canning industry. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 1 Feb 80 p 275]

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GHANA

INTENSIVE FISHING MAY BE DEPLETING STOCKS

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 25 Jan 80 p 200

[Text] With more than 100,000 tons a year, in a reputedly poor region, Ghana's non-industrial fishing sector is an extremely important activity. These are the findings of the authors of an article published in the LA PECHE MARITIME magazine of 20 January.

The authors stress, moreover, that Ghanaian fishing was always a developing activity, with technique improvement a constant goal. Thus, motorization of fishing canoes was initiated in 1959, and at present, of a total of 8,470 canoes in use by approximately 81,500 fishermen in 200 villages over the entire coastal area, about 3,200, or 38 percent, are motorized. They also carry better fishing equipment, which allows for increased catches. These represent by now 60 percent of the total catch in the country, with 40 percent of it deriving from industrial fishing.

The authors of the article mention the variety of fish caught, mainly "sardinelles," anchovies, mackerel, trigger-fish, "merous," carp and "otolithes," but they also note the brutal disappearance of certain species which used to be abundant in the past. This disappearance may have some natural causes, the authors say, but it does point to the fact that non-industrial fishing, too large in Ghana for the available bio-mass of fish, has been unable to limit its activities to the quantities which would present no threat to the different species. The authors conclude by asking whether increased catches are advisable for a region which is witnessing the depletion of its stocks because of too-intensive fishing, and whether it would not be desirable to set up without delay some rules and regulations which would organize in rational fashion the last remaining stocks on the country's continental shelf.

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REUNION

PROFIT FROM EXPLOITATION OF NODULES EXAMINED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 21 Jan - 3 Feb 80 p 33

[Article by Henri Delahaie, graduate of the Political Studies Institute in Paris and the Institute of Higher Legal Studies; spent two years in Reunion as technical assistance voluntary worker. His profound knowledge of the political and social relations in the island enables him today to present new scientific facts concerning Reunion in the light of a discovery which, in his view, could accelerate its political development: "Independence At the Tip of the Nodules"]

[Text] So far, Reunion has lived within a very special context. Ever since it became a department, those in charge of politics and economics, whether local or national, missed no opportunity to deplore the lack of the island's resources; the absence of a continental shelf seemed to even deprive Reunion from oceanic resources. It was accepted that its survival depended only on the assistance of the mother country. There was a certain liking in emphasizing such geographic and geological weaknesses, for everything seemed to be made to isolate the island from the area even further, by making it more dependent on France. The most extreme political position voiced did not go beyond calling for a type of autonomy which would preserve the financial support of the former mother country. How could some dare to speak of independence when, theoretically, the people of Reunion benefit from one of the highest incomes in Africa for a population of 500,000 with no real development possibility whatsoever?

Under those circumstances a total change of possibilities was necessary for the island to come out of its torpor and its inhabitants from their apparent resignation, disturbed merely by a few people and a few flashes. Nothing but a "gold rush" could disturb the social balance and compromises. That is precisely what has happened: Last October, the discovery of substantial deposits of polymetallic nodules was announced in the sea around the island, within the 200 mile zone; considering the exceptional density of the deposit, specialists may have to reconsider the possibility of commercial exploitation. This news makes a change in the factors and should affect the future of Reunion.

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The possibility of the commercial exploitation of nodules should allow the rational growth of the desire for independence; as a matter of fact, it is no longer a question of an idea of independence with all its Utopian aspects considering the limited political and economic conditions of the island, but of an irreversible movement which would bring to light a clash of interests existing between the majority of the local population and a minority which would like continued French assistance which is the source of a profitable financial circuit benefiting it alone, and which carefully avoids the development of a local agricultural and industrial infrastructure which would result in economic, followed by political, independence. Inevitably, a contradiction will surface between regional potential wealth and the development possibilities it conceals, on the one hand, and the social relations which remain colonial, on the other, French aid and assistance having occasionally concealed them without, nevertheless, eliminating them entirely. Thus local pressure will nip in the bud this germ whose social and political consequences would be uncontrollable. Letting it grow would mean for such a minority to pass a sentence on itself, with no redemption, for both technical capacities and necessary capital for such development are even partially unavailable locally. Such pressures have already manifested themselves in the past, for the failures of the development plans and various industrial projects were not due to happenstances.

As to France, it could consider that the value of the nodules is appreciable and that by sacrificing some local interests it would avoid an aid whose end is not in sight, while supplying its national industry with new resources. However, the private exploration companies which would take part in the extraction of the Reunion resources would contribute, over a more or less long period of time, to favor political independence, as has been the case elsewhere in the world. Would the French government, in such a case, have the possibility to restrain such irrepressible aspirations and to preserve the status of overseas departments within an entirely new economic context?

In any case, at this stage international considerations become involved. Reunion is the last French strategic point in the Indian ocean and could soon become the last Western bastion in this area of the Southern Hemisphere. It would be unnecessary to recall the importance of this transit zone. France will think first of its own security and the role it should play in terms of the other Western nations. Undertaking the exploitation of the nodules, with the inevitable consequences on the political level, would compromise this international influence. Under such circumstances, would some officials not be tempted to leave the nodules where they are? It would be no surprise if, after a while, we were told that, "the expectations based on this discovery were premature, and the deposits are not profitable in terms of the required investments." The interests of France, therefore, openly clash with those of Reunion.

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However, the state is important and it is no longer a question of a matter which could be settled by officials in Paris and Reunion as they wish. Through this discovery Reunion comes out of the Indian Ocean after having been kept under water for many years: It can no longer be relegated to the level of a colony whose potential would always be sacrificed for the benefit of the mother country.

For the people of Reunion the opportunity has come to dismantle the machinery of their dependence and to raise again the question of a policy which could only hinder their development.

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SPAIN-EEC NEGOTIATIONS ON FISHING STALLED

Madrid CAMBIO 16 in Spanish 2 Mar 80 p 39

[Text] Spanish negotiators have lost a crucial battle over fishing to the EEC, the repercussions of which are going to be felt for a long time. "We do not want Spain to join the EEC as Europe's leading fishing power," Raymond Simonnet, the community's director of fishing resources, slyly jokes.

Simonnet's sarcastic words conceal the bitter truth: 3 months of hot and cold talks, four work sessions, two flat refusals by Spain and a veiled threat of violence in the Basque Country only prompted the "nine" to ultimately offer proportionately less in February than last November.

And that was after Raimundo Bassols, our ambassador to the EEC, had played his bluff at the most opportune moment by suddenly breaking off the negotiations on 15 January. "We are without a fishing program for 1980. The fleets will remain tied up on 1 February, and let them suffer the consequences," he stated at the time.

Mutual "Provocations"

In the opinion of Simonnet, a very French Frenchman, with his pipe and rosy face, "Spain is playing poker, and that is dangerous." He accused the Madrid authorities of "provoking Europe," cautioning that the door should not be shut. The Council of Ministers of the community could get angry, and everyone knows what would happen in that case. Bassols countered: "We are all provoking each other."

All of the cards, even the marked cards, were already on the table. As a last recourse in a mismatch in which the EEC had all of the trump cards, the Spanish delegation brought out the weapon of the Basque Country. What would happen if, in fact, the negotiations broke off and the northern fleet could not fish for the entire year?

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Simonnet knew quite well. "We must not underestimate the political problem that the fishing agreement represents for Spain, above all in the Basque Country," he said. The EEC representative gave assurances that he would do whatever he could to make the ministers of the "nine" aware of how important the issue was.

In using very harsh terms to describe Spain's intransigence, Raymond Simonnet was alerting the EEC so that a catastrophe would not come about. To a certain extent, Madrid was threatening one.

But the fishing ministers of the "nine" are no ignoramuses. They are thoroughly familiar with the situation in the Basque Country and the economic and human problems of the northern fleet. Therefore, they were not intimidated. They knew that Spain was not going to take the risk of not signing an agreement and since time was on their side, they even cut the Spanish hake quota from what they previously offered. The bluff was called.

On 3 December, the Council of Ministers of the nine cut the total allowed catch of hake in community waters from 43,000 to 30,000 tons. Their decision was based on a scientific report from the CIEM [International Committee for Sea Exploration] concerning the stocks of certain species and the need to guarantee their survival. Another factor was the absence of a clear-cut fishing policy; while France stressed the rights of the member countries, Great Britain reserved an exclusive 50-mile zone for itself and was trying to expand the size of the mesh from 70 to 80 millimeters, which would mean a reduction of the catch.

Rule of Three

The Spanish quota in 1979 represented 32 percent of the community total (or 36 percent if the base figure were 15,500). Since the EEC had decided on a 30 percent cut for this year, in accordance with a rule of three the initial November offer to Spain, 9,800 tons and 126 permits, was rescinded. The proportion of the overall cutback was maintained, but Spain asked for the same status as in 1979. In January, the dialectic exertions boosted the number of permits to 153, without altering the hake quota.

The EEC delegation accepted a Spanish argument to the effect that the cutback suggested by the scientists should not be doubled and that it was enough to increase the mesh. Therefore, the "fishing efforts" did not have to be diminished, and we thus secured a few more permits.

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On 4 February, the Spanish and EEC delegations met again in Room 3 of the Berlaymont Building, the headquarters of the executive branch of the EEC, the European Commission. When after numerous cups of coffee and many cigarets the "agreement" was unveiled, we found out who the better poker player was. With regard to permits, they agreed on 168, exactly 7 percent fewer, based on the original figure of 180, not 200 as Spain wanted. But there was a unpleasant surprise when it came to the quota: it was set at 11,970 tons, in other words, 29 percent of the community's total allowed catch, a 15 percent cutback from 1979.

What was worse, the EEC had lopped off 2,130 of the 3,000 tons that Spain had been assigned for the entire zone, a 71 percent reduction.

In principle, the community's argument is irreproachable. There has to be reciprocity in all negotiations, and Spain fishes 9 or 10 times more in EEC grounds as the French fleet does in Spanish waters. Therefore, succeeding agreements ought to aim at a gradual reduction of the quota. Madrid's protests to the effect that a candidate country is involved were brushed aside by Raymond Simonnet in these words: "The fact is that if it were not, the northern fleet would not be able to visit our waters this year."

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