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AGR			COM			FROM			DATE: February 10, 1968		
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INT			LAB			SUBJECT			FISHERIES: Australian Twelve-Mile Fishing Zone in Force		
7						CERP D, (a) Canberra's A-307 of March 23, 1967			Pal 33-4 Austl S/FW		
TR			XMB			REF			(b) Canberra's A-341 of February 2, 1968		
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<p>The Embassy reported (ref. a) the Government's announcement of March 15, 1967, to establish a 12-mile exclusive fishing zone. A bill to amend the Fisheries Act 1952-1966 to accomplish this was introduced into Parliament on October 24. The resulting Act has effect from January 30, 1968. After that date any foreign boat apprehended in the 12-mile zone while fishing without a license will be liable to a fine not exceeding A\$10,000* with the possibility of imprisonment of the crew and forfeiture of boat, fishing gear and catch.</p> <p>Minister for Primary Industry, Mr. Anthony, has stated that the issue of a license to a foreign boat would be considered only where a phase-out agreement has been negotiated between the Australian and the foreign governments concerned on the basis of previous fishing operations within the new zone or where a joint-venture arrangement had been approved. The Fisheries Act 1967 (enclosed) also applies to the Territories of Papua and New Guinea and the Ashmore and Cartier Islands.</p> <p>*Approximately US\$11,200</p> <p>Enclosure:</p> <p>Fisheries Act 1952-1967 (2)-action only</p>											
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Processing vessels are included under the licensing provisions of the Act, thus affecting the operation of foreign factory ships operating within the exclusive zone. Mr. Anthony has stated that this provision would facilitate the rational development of fishery resources, particularly the prawn resources in the north, and would enable the Government to limit undesirable competition between factory ships and shore processing plants.

Previous to this Act the Commonwealth Government exercised control over fishing to the 12-mile limit but only over vessels registered in Australia. This first effective jurisdiction over foreign fishing in the waters up to 12 miles will affect mainly Japanese fleets. A Japanese mission has already made representations over the foreseen effects during talks which began January 30 in Canberra. The talks involve representatives of the GOA Departments of External Affairs and Primary Industry and Japanese representatives of the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Fisheries. The mission is still in Canberra at this writing. Although the new zone affects to a lesser extent Soviet and Indonesian fishing, no opposition has yet been registered with the GOA by any governments other than Japan. Mr. Anthony, in connection with fishing off the coasts of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea and the Ashmore and Cartier Islands mentioned that subsistence fishing by foreign fishermen in waters of these territories would not be immediately affected.

Comment: An official of the Fisheries Branch, Primary Industries, informed the Embassy that the talks with the Japanese have thus far concerned a phasing-out agreement relating to tuna long-line fishing. Regarding joint Australian/Japanese fishing ventures he said that one was approved in 1967 for the Territory of Papua and New Guinea and four or five applications for joint ventures in Australian waters are presently under Government consideration.

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