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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 24, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: JIM CAVANAUGH
FROM: MIKE DUVAL
SUBJECT: LAW OF THE SEA

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I don't know who now has action on the Law of the Sea Conference, but I've been alerted that, once again, we need to face the trade-off question between our domestic interests and our foreign/defense policy objectives.

As I recall, several months ago agreement was reached (largely due to initiatives by Secretary Kleppe) among the Executive Branch agencies involved, that if the Law of the Sea Conference did not show clear and substantial progress by the middle of September, we would begin to develop legislation allowing U.S. companies to mine the seas unilaterally.

Based on the very limited information I have, I think we should resolve this issue quickly and not be in a position of letting it drag on.

There are obviously foreign/defense and domestic interests involved. I recall that the "center of gravity" of the issue fell in the international area, and thus NSC has had the ball. If the Law of the Sea Conference is faltering, I would assume that the major issue to be resolved is the U.S. interest, and thus it might be appropriate to have the EPB take this matter up.

In any event, I think someone should be put in charge quickly, with assurances that both the international and domestic interests are covered.

cc: Dick Cheney



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