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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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March 4, 1976

National Security Decision Memorandum 320

TO: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of the Treasury  
The Secretary of Defense  
The Secretary of the Interior  
The Secretary of Commerce  
The Chairman, NSC Under Secretaries Committee

SUBJECT: Instructions for the U.S. Delegation to the New York  
Session of the Third United Nations Conference on  
the Law of the Sea

The President has reviewed the Chairman, NSC Under Secretaries Committee's memorandum of February 13, 1976, concerning instructions for the U.S. Delegation to the New York session of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea.

In light of growing pressures in the United States and in a number of foreign countries to move unilaterally on several important issues under consideration in the Law of the Sea (LOS) Conference, the President underscores the importance attached to gaining broad international acceptance during negotiations in 1976 of U.S. oceans policy positions on national security issues, marine resources, scientific research, marine pollution, the regime for the deep seabed, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

The President concurs in the recommendation of the NSC Under Secretaries Committee that NSDMs 260 and 288 continue to serve as the basic instructions for the U.S. Delegation to the UN Law of the Sea Conference.

The President reaffirms the importance attached to gaining international acceptance of law of the sea provisions accommodating U.S. interests on freedom of navigation; unimpeded transit through, under and over inter-

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national straits; and archipelagoes and other reasonable uses of the high seas. Subject to the consent of the senior Department of Defense representatives on the Delegation, the Chairman of the U.S. Delegation is authorized to exercise existing authority on these national security issues.

Recognizing the evolving nature of the negotiations in the LOS Conference on issues relating to the regime for the deep seabed and its resources, the President requests the Chairman of the U.S. Delegation to submit any requests for proposed new instructions or revisions to current instructions on this issue via the Chairman, NSC Under Secretaries Committee for consideration. In this context, the President has assigned responsibility to the Chairman, NSC Under Secretaries Committee for backstopping the UN negotiations on the law of the sea.

The Chairman of the U.S. Delegation is requested to submit a report on the results of the negotiations via the Chairman, NSC Under Secretaries Committee, to the President, upon completion of the March-May 1976 session of the Law of the Sea Conference.

  
Brent Scowcroft

cc: The Secretary of Transportation  
The Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Assistant to the President for Economic Policy  
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff  
The Director of Central Intelligence  
The Director, National Science Foundation

