

prepared by the Department of Commerce and now before the Regional Fishery Management Councils for review. Those Plans, if adopted by the Secretary of Commerce, would deny foreign access to fisheries where surpluses actually exist.

Canadian Boundary Dispute

Our position in litigation or negotiation with Canada over the disputed boundary in the Georges Bank area of the Gulf of Maine could be prejudiced by our remaining in ICNAF under arrangements that recognize Canada as a coastal state for the whole of ICNAF Area 5. On the other hand, should we leave ICNAF and be unable to negotiate fisheries arrangements to replace it by March 1, we could have a fishery conflict with Canada.

Agency Positions

In arriving at a decision whether to withdraw now or continue our membership for another year, the major considerations are the foreign policy implications, the possible effects on the conservation and management of fishery stocks, and the impact of our action domestically. Having reviewed the problem in light of those considerations, which are discussed in Attachment 1, the following agency positions have been developed:

The lead agencies in the implementation of the fisheries law are State, Commerce and Transportation (Coast Guard). These agencies favor our withdrawal from ICNAF at the end of this year essentially because we have no assurances in writing that all four conditions set by the U.S. for remaining in ICNAF will be met. Also, the acceptance of allocations by ICNAF which are at variance with the current estimated allocations of the PMP's, challenges the role of the Regional Management Councils as set by our law.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), involved because of environmental and conservation considerations, believes that any environmental problems created by withdrawal are manageable and favors withdrawal.

