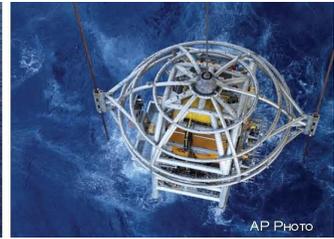


Why the United States Needs to Join the Law of the Sea Convention Now



Fact Sheet

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs
Washington, DC
March 21, 2012

Joining the Law of the Sea Convention will create American jobs and bolster U.S. national security. That is why U.S. companies, business groups, labor unions, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard, and a host of others support joining the Convention now.

- **Only as a Party to the Convention can the United States fully secure its sovereign rights to the vast resources of our continental shelf beyond 200 miles from shore**, an area likely to be at least 385,000 square miles—nearly 1.5 times the size of Texas. The U.S. oil and gas industry knows that joining the Convention will protect the investments needed to extract those resources. While we sit on the sidelines, over 40 countries have begun the process of fully securing their own continental shelf rights.

We believe that it is now time for action on the Law of the Sea [Convention]. The U.S. can no longer afford to wait to secure access to the vital resources that lie within [the U.S. extended continental shelf].

- American Petroleum Institute

Accession to the Law of the Sea Convention would protect U.S. claims to the vast natural resources contained on the ocean floor....

- U.S. Chamber of Commerce

While this country stands by, other nations are moving ahead in perfecting rights over resources on an extended continental shelf.... The United States should accede to the Law of the Sea Convention without delay to protect our national security interests: sovereignty, economy, and energy.

- Admiral Robert Papp, Jr., Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard

- **Only as a Party to the Convention can the United States sponsor U.S. companies to mine the deep seabed for valuable metals and rare earth elements.** Rare earth elements—essential for cell phones, flat-screen televisions, electric car batteries, and other high-tech products—are currently in tight supply and produced almost exclusively by China. While we challenge China's export restrictions, we must also make it possible for U.S. companies to develop other sources of these critical materials. Joining the Convention would allow U.S. companies to obtain secure rights to deep seabed mine sites and indisputable title to minerals recovered. While we sit on the sidelines, companies in China, India, Russia, and other Parties to the Convention are securing their rights, moving ahead with deep seabed resource exploration, and taking the lead in this emerging market.

Timing is critically important if U.S. industry is to undertake exploitation of the deep seabed for valuable rare earth and other mineral resources. Other countries are already moving quickly and aggressively to secure internationally recognized rights to these resources. However, until the Senate approves the Law of the Sea Convention, as modified by the 1994 Agreement, U.S. companies cannot use this country's technological leadership to pursue, with the sponsorship of the United States Government, a leadership position in this strategically important emerging market.

- Lockheed Martin Corporation

Chinese, Indian, and Russian companies are exploring deep seabeds for rare earth elements and valuable metals, but the United States cannot sponsor our companies to do the same. Joining the Convention will level the playing field for American companies so they have the same rights and opportunities as their competitors.

- Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State

- **Only as a Party to the Convention can the United States best protect the navigational freedoms enshrined in the Convention and exert the level of influence that reflects our status as the world's foremost maritime power.** Tensions are rising in the South China Sea. Melting ice in the Arctic is creating new risks, opportunities, and responsibilities. Locking in navigational freedoms for our military and commercial ships, which are increasingly being challenged around the globe, is essential to our national security and economy.

In the ongoing tensions over rights in the South China Sea, the United States will be in a stronger position of influence by joining the Convention.... Our friends and allies need our political leadership within [the Convention] to influence resolution of South China Sea disputes....

- Admiral Jonathan Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations

[The Convention] guarantees rights such as innocent passage through territorial seas; transit passage through, under and over international straits.... The Convention has been approved by nearly every maritime power and all the permanent members of the UN Security Council, except the United States.

- Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy

Every Arctic Nation except the United States is a party [to the Convention]. As our responsibilities continue to increase in direct proportion to the Arctic's emerging waters, it is more vital than ever that the United States accedes to the Law of the Sea Treaty.

- Admiral Robert Papp, Jr., Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard

Further delay serves no purpose and deprives the United States of the significant economic and national security benefits we will gain by becoming a Party to the Convention.

To oppose this Convention on economic grounds requires one to believe that U.S. industries as diverse as oil and gas, fishing, shipping, seabed mining, and telecommunications do not understand how best to grow their businesses and protect their bottom lines. To oppose this Convention on national security grounds requires one to believe that the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security do not understand how best to protect U.S. national security.

Now is the time to join.