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For For: Law of the Sea: Pt 2.
PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE



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SERIAL NO. T 210/84 10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

12 December 1984

Dear Bob,

Thank you for your letter of 2 November about the UN Law of the Sea Convention.

We weighed the points you made very carefully. I agree with you about the importance of the provision of the Convention dealing with navigation.

Our main difficulty has, as you know, long been with the deep seabed mining regime. This was not acceptable to us in its present form. We went to considerable efforts at the Preparatory Commission to secure improvements. But there has only been a limited response to a few of the technical proposals we put forward.

In these circumstances we decided that we could not sign the Convention. This decision was announced to Parliament on 6 December. At the same time we made clear that we would agree to signature by the Community which only has limited competence in the subjects covered by the Convention.

We would still like to see a maritime regime which could be accepted by consensus. We hope that as the difficulties of the mining regime become clear to a wider range of countries it may still be possible to achieve such

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a Convention. There remains a considerable amount of time for further negotiations before commercial deep seabed mining becomes viable. I hope that our two countries can continue to work together in pressing for the improvements we both consider necessary in the seabed mining regime.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely
Raymond Stubbart

The Honourable Mr. R.J.L. Hawke, AC, MP