

Mexico's Marine Fisheries Enforcement

Mexico, along with many other coastal states, is rapidly building up a capability to patrol its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by increasing foreign purchases and domestic construction of fishery patrol vessels and aircraft. In addition, air strips are being constructed to monitor important sectors of Mexico's EEZ. The Government's present policy was highlighted by the April 1979 visit of President Lopez Portillo to Clarion Island, in the Eastern Pacific (Fig. 1).

Mexico established its 200-mile EEZ on 31 July 1976. This was considered the last major achievement of former President Luis Echeverria's fisheries policy. Mexico's extended jurisdiction covers nearly 4 million km² of adjacent ocean, requiring greatly increased capabilities to enforce fishery regulations.

Mexico's Navy

Mexico's Secretariat of the Navy (11,000 persons) is charged with maintenance of Mexican sovereignty over its 12-nautical-mile territorial sea and 200-mile EEZ. The Secretariat began to expand its marine enforcement capabilities with Mexico's extension of its fisheries jurisdiction to 200 miles. The main force used to patrol the EEZ is the Navy's 31-vessel Azteca fleet. The Azteca is a British-made patrol vessel, 33-m long, which was originally designed for fisheries enforcement. The vessel was chosen for its efficiency, simplicity, and low cost. A total of 21 of these vessels was built in the United Kingdom. Mexico received the last of these vessels in late 1976. An additional 10 of these vessels were built later in Mexico's Veracruz and Salina

Cruz shipyards. The Mexican Navy was not completely satisfied with the Azteca's performance at high speeds and decided to build only 10 vessels instead of the planned 54. The Azteca force currently forms the backbone of Mexico's enforcement fleet, which is supplemented by regular Navy units consisting of two destroyers, seven frigates, 35 minesweepers, and 10 older patrol boats. Many of these vessels were built in the United States. Mexico has also contacted Spain about the purchase of patrol boats, but the results have not been made public.

Mexico's Navy is developing a new patrol vessel, the Olmeca class. The prototype is currently undergoing testing. If the Navy is satisfied, nine of these fast, long-range vessels will be built.

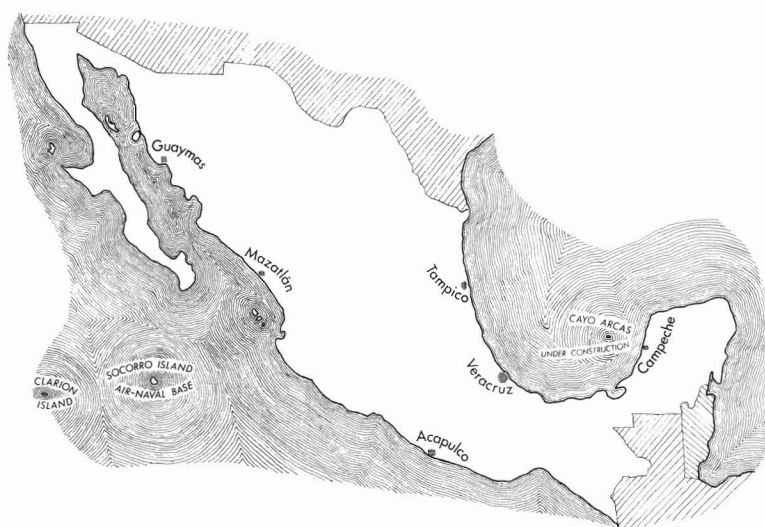
Mexico relies on 36 U.S.-built Albatross aircraft for aerial surveillance of its EEZ. With the inauguration of the Socorro Island airbase, surveillance activities on the Pacific coast are expected to increase significantly.

Gulf Coast Enforcement

The Gulf of Mexico is especially rich in shrimp resources. Mexico has had major problems with illegal foreign fishing on the Campeche Bank, especially by Cuban vessels. United States and Cuban shrimp fishing off Mexico's Gulf Coast is scheduled to terminate on 31 December 1979, although the United States and Cuba are attempting to renegotiate fishing arrangements after 1979.

Cuba and Mexico signed a fisheries agreement in July 1976 permitting Cuban access to the Mexican EEZ. Shrimp fishing was restricted to the Campeche Bank. Mexican shrimp fishermen have been very critical of the agreements allowing foreign shrimp fishing and have demanded more stringent enforcement measures. The Mexican Navy plans to establish a seaplane base on Cayo Arcas to monitor the Campeche Bank. This new base was expected to become operational in late 1979 or 1980. The Mexican Navy seized a total of eight Cuban vessels inside

Figure 1.—Offshore bases in Mexico's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).



Mexico's 12-mile territorial seas during the first half of 1978¹.

The United States and Mexico also signed a fisheries agreement in November 1976 which allowed U.S. fishermen access to the Mexican EEZ for snapper/grouper and shrimp. United States shrimp fishing was confined to the area off Tampico and Contoy Island. The majority of the seizures of U.S. shrimp trawlers since the signing of the agreement occurred because the U.S. vessels allowed to fish in the EEZ strayed into Mexico's territorial sea.

The Gulf of Mexico coast currently has a system of coastal radars for fisheries enforcement. The system has 10 stations with detection ranges up to 145 km located along the coast. The first part of the system was activated in June 1977, and new stations are being steadily added.

Pacific Coast Enforcement

Mexico's Pacific Coast EEZ includes major tuna fishing grounds and extends to the islands of the Revillagigedo Archipelago (Fig. 1). Mexican 200-mile claims include the inhabited islands² in this group. The Revillagigedo Archipelago islands important to Mexican enforcement efforts are Socorro and Clarion.

Socorro is over 500 km from Baja California, and the island's EEZ interlocks with the mainland's EEZ. Clarion is located 400 km west of Socorro, and its EEZ also interlocks with Socorro's zone. Socorro Island is the site of a new \$1.5 million air-naval base. President Lopez Portillo inaugurated the base complex during his April 1979 visit to the island. The base, begun in 1977, will be the center of aerial fishery surveillance operations in the eastern Pacific.

President Lopez Portillo also visited Clarion Island in April to reaffirm Mexican sovereignty. A small garrison of 33 marines is assigned to the island. It is

not currently known what enforcement activities, if any, will be conducted from Clarion.

The Navy has announced plans to construct 14 radar stations on the Pacific Coast. These coastal radars will be connected to the naval operations center in Mexico City, along with the Gulf of Mexico radar stations.

ICNAF/NAFO Members Okay Grand Bank Cod Closure

Because of concern about the state of the Grand Bank cod stock, member countries of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF) will refrain from fishing for cod on the Grand Bank in 1980, Canada's Fisheries and Oceans Minister James McGrath has announced.

McGrath made the announcement in releasing the results of the 1979 annual meeting of ICNAF/NAFO, which met in Halifax from 30 May to 7 June, to consider conservation measures for 1980 for stocks partly or entirely outside the Canadian 200-mile zone. "I am pleased that ICNAF and NAFO reached agreement on matters of concern to Canada and I am sure that the closure of the Bank will allow for rebuilding of this stock," he said.

Canada was allocated, for 1980, approximately 70 percent of the ground-fish stocks which are partly or entirely outside the 200-mile limit. On the Grand Bank, Canada received 84 percent of the allocations.

Agreement was also reached to institute an international scientific observer scheme for vessels fishing beyond 200 miles. This program will reportedly provide better scientific and statistical information on the fisheries in the area beyond Canadian jurisdiction.

This meeting was the last annual meeting of ICNAF and the first annual meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization which replaces ICNAF. The NAFO Convention provides that conservation measures for

stocks partly outside the Canadian zone must be consistent with those taken by Canada inside the zone and also recognizes Canada's special interest in allocations beyond 200 miles.

NAFO will meet again in early March 1980 to deal with 1980 conservation measures for capelin and squid and to review again the cod quotas for the Flemish Cap and the Grand Bank. McGrath also announced that the 1980 annual meeting of NAFO will take place in September of that year in St. John's, Newfoundland.

CALIFORNIA HERRING, ALASKA RED SALMON ROE SOLD IN JAPAN

The first 1979 shipment of semi-processed herring roe originating from the catches off San Francisco, Calif., totaling 5.9 tons, was placed on auction at Sapporo Central Wholesale Market on 24 May by Taiyo Fishery company. The prices settled on that day were ¥9,300-9,310/kg (US \$19.30-19.32/pound at ¥219=US\$1) for grade 1, up 82 percent from last year, for which the asking price was ¥9,200/kg (\$19.10/pound); ¥3,320/kg (\$6.89/pound) for grade 4; ¥2,870/kg (\$5.96/pound) for grade 5; and ¥2,380/kg (\$4.94/pound) for grade 6. Sales for grades 2 and 3 were not concluded that day as the cautious processors held off their buying decisions on these grades whose asking prices were respectively ¥8,500/kg (\$17.64/pound) and ¥7,000/kg (\$14.53/pound). (Source: FFIR 79-7).

The first shipment in 1979 of air-freighted red salmon roe (sujiko) from Alaska, totaling 400 cases, were placed on auction to wholesalers on 8 June at Tokyo and seven other Central Wholesale Markets in Japan. The prices settled on that day were reported to be ¥9,000/kg (\$18.68/pound at ¥219 = US\$1) for grade 1, ¥8,500/kg (\$17.64/pound) for grade 2; and ¥7,800/kg (\$16.19/pound) for grade 3. The season-opening price in 1978 of red salmon roe grade 1 was ¥8,500/kg (\$17.60/pound). (Source: FFIR 79-7.)

¹There were also reports of Soviet factory vessels in Mexico's EEZ, but no seizures were made as far as is known.

²The main inhabitants of both islands are military personnel.