

For Immediate Release
September 24, 2007

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101 PROMINENT U.S. LEADERS URGE THE UNITED STATES TO JOIN THE LAW OF THE SEA CONVENTION

Former Secretaries of Defense, State, Commerce, Interior, Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Members of Congress, Shipping, Energy and Fishing Industry Executives, Governors, National Academic and Environmental Organizations Leaders Among Signatories

September 24, 2007 – Washington, D.C. – Today, a highly influential bipartisan coalition of 101 prominent leaders urged the U.S. Senate to approve U.S. accession to the Law of the Sea Convention. Their recommendation supports President Bush's statement on May 15, 2007, which asserts that joining the Convention is essential to protect U.S. national security interests, secure sovereign rights over extensive marine areas, and promote U.S. interests in the environmental health of the global oceans.

"It is clear that accession to the Law of the Sea Convention will protect and enhance our country's sovereign military, economic and environmental interests," stated the coalition in a letter sent to Majority Leader Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) and Minority Leader Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) today. "U.S. accession to the Convention would send a clear message in support of our efforts to foster international approaches, while significantly furthering our own national interests."

Joining the Convention would secure many benefits for the United States, including freedoms of navigation for U.S. domestic and military vessels, greater economic stability and opportunity for ocean-related business ventures, conservation and preservation of important marine resources and habitat, and increased influence in international forums guiding implementation of the Convention.

"All of the major ocean industries, including offshore energy, commerce, fishing and shipbuilding, support U.S. accession to the Convention," said Leon Panetta, former Congressman, White House Chief of Staff, and current co-chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. "The time has come for the United States to return to its role as an international leader in ocean policy and support this important treaty."

Currently, there are 155 parties to the Law of the Sea Convention. Yet, despite broad bipartisan support, the United States remains the primary industrialized nation that has not joined the Convention.

"The Law of the Sea Convention is critical to U.S. national security interests, ensuring legal certainty and maximum mobility for the deployment of our armed forces through the world's largest international zone," said Admiral James D. Watkins, former Chief of Naval Operations under President Reagan, now co-chair of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative.

Included among the many supporters representing diverse, bipartisan interest in the Senate's swift accession to the Law of the Sea Convention are:

- James A. Baker, III, Co-Chair of Iraq Study Group and Secretary of State (Bush 41)
- Red Caveney, President, American Petroleum Institute
- Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State (Clinton)
- George P. Shultz, Secretary of State (Reagan)
- Donald Evans, Secretary of Commerce (Bush 43)
- Lee Hamilton, Co-Chair, Iraq Study Group, and President, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- James Mulva, Chairman, ConocoPhillips
- Alexander Haig, Secretary of State (Reagan)
- Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of Interior (Clinton) and Chairman of the Board, World Wildlife Fund
- Robert McFarlane, National Security Advisor (Reagan)
- Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor (Ford and Bush)
- William Ruckelshaus, Administrator of EPA (Nixon and Reagan)
- Colin Powell, Secretary of State (Bush 43)
- Carter S. Roberts, President and CEO of the World Wildlife Fund
- Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of California
- Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Reagan)
- Timothy Wirth, President, UN Foundation and Better World Fund
- Thomas Dammrich, President, National Marine Manufacturers Association
- Eileen Claussen, President and Chair of the Board, Pew Center of Global Climate Change
- John Connelly, National Fisheries Institute
- Robert Ballard, President, Institute for Exploration
- Joseph Cox, President, Chamber of Shipping of America
- Walter Cronkite, CBS News
- Michael Kantor, Secretary of Commerce and US Trade Representative (Clinton)
- Jack Gerard, President, American Chemistry Council
- Carla Hills, U.S. Trade Representative (Bush 41)
- Stephen J. McCormick, President and CEO of The Nature Conservatory
- Peter J. Robertson, Vice Chair of the Board, Chevron Corporation
- Donald Kennedy, Editor in Chief, Science Magazine
- Sean O'Keefe, Secretary of the Navy (Bush 41), Chancellor, Louisiana State University
- Michael Nussman, President, American Sportfishing Association
- Governor Eliot Spitzer, Governor, State of New York

To view the full text of the letter sent to Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) and Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY), in addition to a listing of its more than 100 supporters, please visit www.jointoceancommission.org.