

# The Cod Wars: Iceland's Victory Through Diplomacy and the Global Consequences of Their Success

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FROM 1958 TO 1976, Iceland incrementally expanded its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surrounding its coastline from three to two hundred nautical miles (nmi), violating international law and upsetting their substantially larger British neighbor. The British Royal Navy had never before suffered a maritime defeat, whilst the small nation of Iceland had neither an army nor a navy.

Iceland utilized diplomacy to achieve their ambitions of a larger EEZ, leveraging their important position in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and offering no concessions. Their two hundred nmi EEZ eventually became the worldwide standard and continues to direct offshore economic activity and geopolitical conflicts to this day.

## **Background**

In 1901, Britain made a fifty-year agreement with Denmark to restrict Iceland, a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, to a three nmi EEZ.<sup>1</sup> Iceland became an independent republic in 1944 after Germany occupied Denmark.<sup>2</sup> In 1952, the treaty concerning Iceland's EEZ expired<sup>3</sup> and Iceland, concerned about overfishing, unilaterally extended their EEZ to four nmis.<sup>4</sup> If the fish stocks around Iceland were depleted, the Icelandic economy, which was heavily reliant on fishing, would collapse. Thus, the Icelandic people had a large stake in the issue.<sup>5</sup>

Created in the 1880s, fish and chips are a staple of British cuisine. As cod is the most popular fish for fish and chips, cod fishing is an important part of the British economy.<sup>6</sup> In 1956, British distance-water fishing reached 8.5 million tons, largely consisting of cod.<sup>7</sup>

The 1957 Treaty of Rome allowed all European countries to fish in each other's waters. This meant Britain did not have exclusive access to its own fishing grounds,<sup>8</sup> making Icelandic waters "by far the most important of the United Kingdom distant water fishing grounds."<sup>9</sup>

Thus, Iceland's EEZ expansion was unwelcome amongst the British, who banned Icelandic fish imports<sup>10</sup> and looked to refer the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), beginning the Proto Cod War. However, Iceland refused to consent to a referral unless Britain repealed its ban on Icelandic fish. Britain did not agree to repeal the ban,<sup>11</sup> reasoning that it would be unfair for them to "remove their sanctions against Icelandic fish if the Icelandic government were not...willing to suspend the operation of their new fishery limits" while the ICJ deliberated.<sup>12</sup>

As this conflict began during the Cold War, the Soviet Union took the opportunity to gain a strategic ally by buying Icelandic fish.<sup>13</sup> Iceland was an important member of NATO, leading a German general to conclude, "whoever controlled Iceland held a revolver constantly pointed at Great Britain, Canada, and the United States."<sup>14</sup> Iceland held a base important to NATO at Keflavik, crucial for maintaining control of the Northern Atlantic.<sup>15</sup> If the Soviet Union gained control of the Northern Atlantic, it would severely hamper NATO.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, NATO membership was a controversial issue among Icelanders, so Iceland leaving NATO would not be unexpected.

On March 30, 1949, when Iceland's parliament voted on whether to join NATO, anti-NATO protesters had organized a rally in front of the parliamentary building, which was protected by a mass of citizens favoring NATO. As the Icelandic parliament voted to join NATO, every window on the front of the building was shattered by eggs and rocks. The Icelandic nationalist and socialist parties continued to stage anti-NATO protests for years to come.<sup>17</sup>

Not wanting to lose a valuable ally, the United States, followed by Spain and Italy, began purchasing Icelandic fish. Eventually, the British conceded the four nmi EEZ, ending the Proto Cod War.<sup>18</sup>

### **First Cod War**

In 1958, Iceland declared a new twelve nmi EEZ. Britain refused to recognize this new limit due to their reliance on continued fishing inside Icelandic waters. When the Icelandic Coast Guard began engaging British trawlers fishing inside their EEZ, the British Royal Navy was deployed to establish a protected zone where British trawlers could avoid Icelandic gunboats.<sup>19</sup> The crews of Icelandic gunboats boarded British trawlers that wandered out of the protected zone, and the British Royal

Navy intervened, forcing the Icelandic vessels to leave.<sup>20</sup> Although the conflict never escalated into a gunfight, tensions rose and the British and Icelandic ships rammed into each other on several occasions.<sup>21</sup>

The British government agreed to withdraw from the disputed area while a United Nations conference on a possible extension of Iceland's EEZ took place,<sup>22</sup> but decided to push hard for a four nmi EEZ over an extension to twelve nmis. However, they understood that there was "a very real risk that the conference will...accept twelve miles."<sup>23</sup>

Members of the Icelandic government, on the other hand, understood that backing down or adopting a lenient diplomatic position would be catastrophic for their political careers. Thus Iceland held steady,<sup>24</sup> and following the 1960-1961 Commission on the Law of the Sea, Britain finally conceded to the pressure, ending the First Cod War.<sup>25</sup>

## Second Cod War

In September 1972, Iceland unilaterally declared a new fifty nmi EEZ.<sup>26</sup> Britain refused to recognize this new EEZ and British trawlers continued fishing inside of it. Tensions rose again and the Icelandic Coast Guard mobilized to chase the British out.<sup>27</sup>

This time, the Icelandic Coast Guard had a new weapon, the net cutter, which could be deployed to cut the nets of British trawlers fishing in the disputed waters. With no nets to catch fish, the trawlers would be forced to return to British docks.<sup>28</sup>

Starting after the declaration of the new EEZ, Icelandic Coast Guard vessels such as the *Ægir* drove out British trawlers still fishing in Iceland's self-proclaimed EEZ. In May 1973, the British Royal Navy was deployed to protect British trawlers.<sup>29</sup> Three months later, in August, the first and only fatality of the Cod Wars was suffered. Halldór Hallfreðsson, an engineer on the *Ægir*, was electrocuted by his welding equipment when a compartment flooded.<sup>30</sup>

The Second Cod War pushed Iceland dangerously close to leaving NATO. Although the party in control of the Icelandic government aimed to shut down the American base at Keflavik, the many NATO supporters made it difficult to do so. However, the Icelandic government's eagerness to do so made it difficult for the British to pursue their fishing rights through exercising their political and military power without providing the Icelandic government an excuse to shut down the American base at Keflavik. Iceland was aware of this advantage and wielded it, threatening to leave NATO should the Cod Wars not end satisfactorily for them.

While the British sought compromise, Iceland's key position in NATO and threats to leave gave them no need to, which often forced the British to give in to Icelandic terms.<sup>31</sup> NATO urged Britain to "exercise the utmost

restraint”<sup>32</sup> in dealing with Iceland during the Second Cod War. Tensions increased to the extent of complicating unrelated diplomatic talks that were supposed to occur in Iceland as neutral ground.<sup>33</sup>

Britain applied to the ICJ to settle the dispute. They ruled by an overwhelming majority that Iceland had no right to unilaterally extend their EEZ, but Britain should limit their catch within the fifty nmi zone to 170,000 metric tons of fish. The British moved immediately to comply with the new order, but Iceland defied the ICJ.<sup>34</sup> Since they were not met with immediate reprisals, this defiance weakened the legal respect of the ICJ. Over thirty nations began claiming fifty nmi EEZs, as Iceland’s success in defying the ICJ brought on global impacts.<sup>35</sup>

In October 1973, Britain offered to reduce the number of their trawlers in Icelandic waters. The Icelandic Prime Minister, Mr. Johannesson, favored compromise, but “said that it was politically impossible for him to give a public undertaking to stop interfering with the trawlers.”<sup>36</sup> Later that same month, Britain conceded the fifty nmi limit due to pressure from NATO concerning the Keflavik base, of which “a recent (NATO) review had emphasised the importance of...to the defence of the Atlantic.”<sup>37</sup> British diplomacy soon succeeded in allowing a limited number of British trawlers inside the fifty nmi zone, but only for the next two years, ending the Second Cod War.<sup>38</sup>

### **Third Cod War**

In May 1975, Iceland unilaterally expanded its EEZ to two hundred nmis. This followed some countries showing support for one hundred nmi EEZs in a 1975 United Nations Law of the Sea Conference (UNLOSC). As with previous expansions of Iceland’s EEZ, the British government did not recognize the expansion, and the Third Cod War commenced.<sup>39</sup>

The Icelandic public exerted an immense amount of pressure on their government to remain unyielding, while, to a lesser extent, the British fishing industry pressured their government to pursue favorable diplomatic settlement.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, Iceland’s two hundred nmi EEZ was poised to receive support at an upcoming UNLOSC, strengthening their case.<sup>41</sup>

The European Common Market had a policy of not imposing tariffs on Icelandic fish so long as there was no dispute between Iceland and its members. The Cod Wars forced Iceland to pay tariffs on their fish, so they threatened to disband an agreement with West Germany concerning their EEZ should the tariff not be removed. This further complication pressured both sides.

Iceland began diplomacy by offering Britain 50,000 tons of cod within the two hundred nmi EEZ.<sup>42</sup> Soon, Iceland offered 65,000 tons, but were “unwilling to make any move to bridge the gap,”<sup>43</sup> while Britain dropped their offer from 130,000 to 110,000 tons.<sup>44</sup>

The Third Cod War, involving more ocean, included more intense conflicts. Icelandic Coast Guard vessels clashed with British trawlers in incidents involving ramming and net cutting. On December 11, 1975, in a clash between three British trawlers and an Icelandic Coast Guard vessel, ramming escalated into the firing of an Icelandic cannon. This subsequently led to the deployment of over forty British Royal Navy ships to protect British trawlers. Members of the Icelandic government, pressured by the public, suggested acquiring ships for a navy, but were ultimately unsuccessful.

The Cod Wars were an important topic to the Icelandic public, as their entire economy was based on fishing. In contrast, the British public, aside from those in their small fishing communities, cared little for the Cod Wars. Consequently, the Icelandic government was pushed to secure the two hundred nmi EEZ, while the British government was pushed towards concession.<sup>45</sup> It was partly pressure from the Icelandic public that forced both parties to conduct negotiations in secret and partly the prime minister's fragile position in a coalition government; if the Icelandic public discovered their prime minister compromising with British demands, he could be ejected from office. Additionally, if the Icelandic Prime Minister "had to make a choice between breaking apart his coalition government and ceasing to be Prime Minister...or breaking off relations with the United Kingdom...he would prefer the latter,"<sup>46</sup> putting Britain and NATO in a fragile position.<sup>47</sup> The precarious situation also hardened Iceland's diplomatic stance, lengthening negotiations.<sup>48</sup>

On June 1, 1976, Britain and Iceland agreed to allow twenty-four British trawlers fishing a total of 30,000 tons inside Iceland's new EEZ, finally ending the Third Cod War.<sup>49</sup>

## Impact

The Cod Wars and Iceland's diplomatic success caused the United Nations to agree to a worldwide two hundred nmi EEZ,<sup>50</sup> which plays a big role in maritime activities.<sup>51</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the Cod Wars, foreign fishing in Icelandic waters diminished (**Appendix A**). Loss of access to these waters devastated many British fishing communities, and thousands of workers in the fishing industry lost their jobs.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, Icelandic cod stocks recovered, tripling in size over the next five years (**Appendix B**).

Before the Cod Wars, there was no international agreement on the subject of EEZs. In 1973, shortly before the Third Cod War, each nation was granted a twelve nmi EEZ by the United Nations, the same distance Iceland had established for itself in the previous Cod War.<sup>53</sup> The Third

Cod War and Iceland's successful proclamation of a two hundred nmi EEZ led to the passing of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which gave each nation a two hundred nmi EEZ and a twelve nmi sovereignty zone.<sup>54</sup> UNCLOS declared that:

in the exclusive economic zone, the coastal State has...sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources.<sup>55</sup>

Over 95% of fishing worldwide now occurs in EEZs, which contribute to positive economic prospects.<sup>56</sup> In a sample of two hundred thirty fish stocks across the globe, around one hundred were assessed to be overfished. EEZs are important in the fishing industry because they help countries regulate their own fish stocks to prevent overfishing,<sup>57</sup> protecting and directing the over one hundred fifty billion-dollar global fishing industry.<sup>58</sup>

The fishing industry is not the only industry affected by the two hundred nmi EEZ. For example, EEZs are central to the over thirty billion-dollar offshore drilling industry.<sup>59</sup> The two hundred nmi EEZ directs offshore oil drilling by setting rules for where drilling rigs can venture, and is increasingly important as technology advances, allowing drilling rigs to venture out further into the ocean.<sup>60</sup>

In an attempt to exploit the EEZ that UNCLOS gave to every country, many countries in the South China Sea are building new islands near the existing Spratly Islands. By creating a small island, they can claim a two hundred nmi EEZ. As the seas around the Spratly Islands contain many natural resources, the economic prospects for such a venture are great, reinforcing the military benefits of claiming a twelve nmi sovereignty zone. While it is highly disputed if and how UNCLOS allows for such a thing, it provides an excuse to claim sought-after waters.

Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, and the Philippines maintain long standing, yet slow, practices of building islands in the South China Sea. Starting in 2014, China began building islands in the South China Sea at a speed and scale much greater than that of any of the previous countries in the area.

In the process of moving and displacing sediments to create these new islands, many reefs are destroyed and large plumes of sediment are washed back into the water, harming nearby marine life.<sup>61</sup> Chinese artificial islands also cause issues for the other nations in the area. Through its artificial islands, which function as military bases in addition to being stakes for China's claim to surrounding waters, China has coerced its neighbors into allowing it to increase its economic and military control over the South China Sea. Southeast Asian countries and the United States oppose the Chinese territorial expansion, but have not stopped it, leading only to increasing tensions.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusion

When the Icelandic public pressured their government into extending their EEZ further and utilizing their power of debate in each of the Cod Wars, they laid the framework for a new international standard. Codified in UNCLOS, this framework has extended far beyond the waters of Iceland and their dispute with their British neighbors over cod, directing maritime economic activity for decades to come.

## Notes

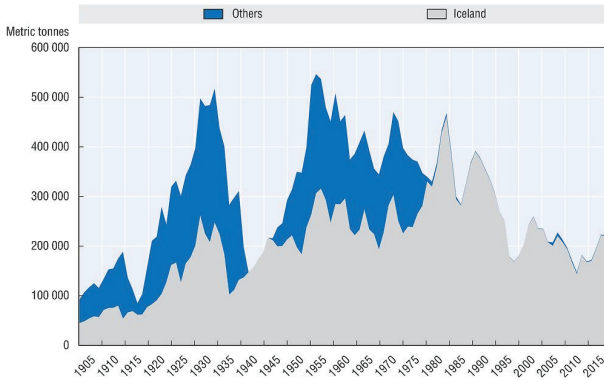
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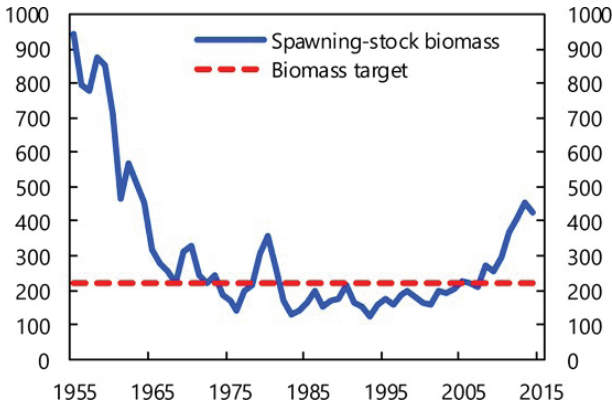
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### Appendix A



This is a graph on foreign and local fishing in Icelandic waters. After the second and Third Cod Wars in 1972 and 1975, major foreign fishing in Icelandic waters came to an end. “The Political Economy of Biodiversity Policy Reform,” OECD iLibrary, 25 April 2017. <[https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment/the-political-economy-of-effective-biodiversity-policy-reform\\_9789264269545-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment/the-political-economy-of-effective-biodiversity-policy-reform_9789264269545-en)>.

### Appendix B



This is a graph on cod stocks in Icelandic waters, measuring them in the thousands of tons. After the Third Cod War in 1976, cod biomass increased significantly. “Iceland: Selected Issues,” IMF eLibrary, 14 November 2018. <<https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2018/319/article-A001-en.xml?ArticleTabs=fulltext>>.

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This source is a note by the British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs concerning the importance of negotiating with Iceland. From this note, I was able to better understand Britain's willingness and desire to negotiate with Iceland. I used this source in my "Second Cod War" section to explain how Britain was willing to compromise but Iceland had no need to; thus Britain was forced to give more and more ground.

A.D-H, J.G. *Fisheries Dispute Between the United Kingdom and Iceland: Draft White Paper: Note by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*, National Archives United Kingdom, 18 June 1973. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-170-cp-70.pdf>>.

This source is a paper about the Cod Wars and the ongoing situation at the time of its writing. This paper helped me understand how the Icelandic government would not budge, and little progress was made in negotiations. I used this source in my "Second Cod War" section to explain how the Icelandic government defied an order by the ICJ.

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street on THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY 1976 at 10.15 am*, National Archives United Kingdom, 12 February 1976. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-128-58-cc-76-5-5.pdf>>.

This source is a set of conclusions from the British cabinet about various topics during a meeting, one of which was the Cod Wars. This set of conclusions by the British cabinet on the Cod Wars helped me understand how there was a lot of civilian pressure on the Icelandic prime minister not to negotiate or give any ground to the British, and so negotiations were difficult and conducted in secret. I used this source in my "Third Cod War" section to explain how the Icelandic government was limited in negotiating power and drawn to secrecy.

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street on THURSDAY 29 JANUARY 1976 at 11.30 am*, National Archives United Kingdom, 29 January 1976. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-128-58-cc-76-3-3.pdf>>.

This source lists the conclusions of the British cabinet during a meeting about the topic of the Cod Wars. This set of conclusions by the British cabinet helped me better understand how long the negotiations were and all the different factors that had to be taken into consideration. I used this source in my "Third Cod War" section to explain how the Icelandic prime minister's weak position in his coalition government made negotiations more difficult.

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street on THURSDAY 30 OCTOBER 1975 at 11.00 am*, National Archives United Kingdom, 30 October 1975. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-128-57-cc-75-45-15.pdf>>.

This source lists the conclusions of the British cabinet during a meeting about many topics, including the Cod Wars. From this source I was able to better understand how the Icelandic public, the Icelandic government, the British government, and the British

fishing industry were all separate groups in the negotiation with different stances. I used this source in my “Third Cod War” section to explain how pressures from their fishing industries drove both governments to stand stronger in the Cod Wars.

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street on TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 1975 at 2.30 pm*, National Archives United Kingdom, 18 November 1975. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-128-57-cc-75-49-19.pdf>>.

This source lists the conclusions of the British cabinet during a meeting about many topics, including the Cod Wars. From this source I was able to better understand the specifics of the negotiations, in addition to how the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference (UNLOSC) factored into the situation. I used this source in my “Third Cod War” section to explain the negotiations and how UNLOSC strengthened Iceland’s position.

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street on TUESDAY 2 OCTOBER 1973 at 10.30 am*, National Archives United Kingdom, 2 October 1973. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-128-53-cm-73-43-4.pdf>>.

This source lists the conclusions of the British cabinet during a meeting about many topics, including the Cod Wars, in October 1973. This source helped me understand the pressure from NATO for the British to give in. I used this source in my “Second Cod War” section to explain how the Icelandic prime minister was blocked from compromise by politics.

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street S.W.1, on Thursday, 22 June, 1972, at 10.30 a.m.*, National Archives United Kingdom, 23 June 1972. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-128-50-cm-72-31-32.pdf>>.

This source lists the conclusions of the British cabinet during a meeting about many topics, including the Cod Wars, in June 1972. From this source I was able to understand how the British government needed to reach an agreement because diplomatic relations with Iceland were fragile, and Iceland held an important base in Keflavik. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain the importance of Iceland’s base in Keflavik.

Eden, Anthony. *Icelandic Fisheries Dispute: Memorandum by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs*, National Archives United Kingdom, 17 December 1952. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-57-c-52-444-44.pdf>>.

This source is a memorandum of the Cod Wars by the British secretary of foreign affairs, detailing the situation and the choice the British government had. This source helped me understand how unwilling to budge the Icelandic government was and how the British government could also not easily convince British fisheries to lift the ban on Icelandic cod during the proto cod war. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain the ban on Icelandic fish during the proto cod war.

Hattersley, Roy. “Don’t Mess with Iceland,” *The Guardian*, 10 October 2008. <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/oct/11/iceland-foreignpolicy>>.

This source is a newspaper article written by a British ambassador recounting their experience during one of the Cod Wars. From this article I was able to better understand how the negotiations were conducted and what happened in between negotiations.

J.H. *Law of the Sea: Iceland: Memorandum by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*, National Archives United Kingdom, 19 February 1960. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-100-c-32.pdf>>.

This source is a memorandum about an offer by the fishing industry to withdraw from Icelandic fishing grounds while the Law of the Sea Conference took place. From this source I was able to understand how complicated every move was.

Kilmur, Viscount. *Fishery Dispute with Iceland: Memorandum By the Lord Chancellor*, National Archives United Kingdom, 25 July 1960. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-102-c-121.pdf>>.

This source is a memorandum by the British Lord Chancellor about the possibility of negotiating with the Icelandic fishing industry. This source helped me understand some of the difficulties the British faced. I used this source in my “First Cod War” section to explain how the British fishing industry agreed to withdraw from the disputed area for the duration of a conference on the issue.

L.J.C. *Icelandic Fisheries: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs*, National Archives United Kingdom, 10 February 1976. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-187-c-12.pdf>>.

This source is a memorandum by the British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs about where the negotiations ended up. From this source I was able to understand how Iceland basically got their way, and the agreement that was reached at the end of the Third Cod War.

S.L. *Icelandic Fisheries Dispute: Memorandum by the Minister of State*, National Archives United Kingdom, 11 May 1953. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-61-c-53-153-3.pdf>>.

This source is a memorandum of diplomatic relations during the Cod Wars by the British Minister of State. This source helped me understand how diplomacy was at a standstill because Iceland was unwilling to compromise. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain how some of the diplomacy during the proto-cod war went.

S.L. *Territorial Waters: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs*, National Archives United Kingdom, 25 February 1958. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-92-c-58-52-2.pdf>>.

This source is a memorandum by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs attaching a report by the Attorney General. This source helped me understand what the British were trying to accomplish and what the different options were. I used this source in my “First Cod War” section to explain how the British understood they had a large chance of losing the debate.

S.L., J.S., D.H.A. *Iceland Fisheries Dispute: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food*, National Archives United Kingdom, 21 February 1956. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-79-cp-56-45-45.pdf>>.

This source is a memorandum of a proposed agreement from the British government to the Icelandic government by many British secretaries. This source helped me understand the diplomatic exchanges that were going on, and what the British offered as a compromise.

T.L.D. *Icelandic Fisheries Dispute: Memorandum by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries*, National Archives United Kingdom, 5 January 1953. <<http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-58-c-53-4-4.pdf>>.

This source is a memorandum of the Cod Wars by the British Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, explaining a meeting about the Cod Wars. From this I was able to learn the discussions within the British government and fishing industry, in addition to the views on referring the case to the ICJ. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain why the British fishing industry did not agree to lift their ban while the ICJ contemplated a resolution to the issue.

“United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,” *Oceans and Law of the Sea*: Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, 10 December 1982. <[https://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/closindx.htm](https://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/closindx.htm)>.

This source is a copy of the text in the Law of the Sea. Reading this article helped me understand what specifically the Convention on the Law of the Sea dictates. I used this source in my impact section to explain the Law of the Sea.

## Secondary Sources

Beckmen, Robert and Davenport, Tara. “The EEZ Regime: Reflections after 30 Years,” *Law of the Sea Institute*. <<https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Beckman-Davenport-final.pdf>>.

This source is a reflection written on the Law of the Sea in tandem with the Law of the Sea Institute Conference in 2012. This source helped me understand what had preceded UNCLOS established after Iceland’s victory in the Cod Wars. I used this source in my “Impact” section to explain global policy on EEZs before the end of the Third Cod War and the agreement to UNCLOS.

*The Billings Gazette*. Billings, Montana, Newspapers.com, 29 May 1973. <<https://www.newspapers.com/image/412213241/?terms=cod%20wars&match=1>>.

This source is a newspaper issue about the Cod Wars complicating President Nixon’s diplomatic trip to Iceland, which was planned at a time when Iceland would have been considered neutral ground. From this source I was able to understand exactly how Iceland was explaining their threat to leave NATO, and the pressure that was consequently placed upon the British to concede. I used this source in my “Second Cod War” section to explain pressure in the Second Cod War and how that affected other diplomatic discussions.

Chambers, Jewells. “The Cod Wars-Iceland vs. Britain,” *All Things Iceland*, 7 December 2019. <<https://allthingsiceland.com/the-cod-wars-iceland-vs-britain-ep-36/>>.

This source is a podcast on the Cod Wars generally, including the situation out at sea and Iceland’s political leverage. This source helped me understand the background of the Cod Wars. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain the ban on Icelandic fish during the proto cod war and how it ended up, and in my “Third Cod War” section to explain the conflicts and resolution.

“The Cod Wars,” *British Sea Fishing*. <<https://britishseafishing.co.uk/the-cod-wars/>>.

This source is an article on the Cod Wars and the diplomacy behind it. Reading this article helped me understand how the Cod Wars devastated British fisheries and caused so many to lose their jobs. I used this source to explain Iceland’s motives in my “Background” section, to help explain the start of the Second Cod War in the “Second Cod War” section, and in the “Impact” section to explain the effect of the Cod Wars on British fisheries.

“The Cod Wars,” The Cabinet Papers. <<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/themes/cod-wars.htm>>.

This source is an article overviewing the Cod Wars. Reading this article helped me understand the different disputes in the Cod Wars and the agreements that were met. I used this source in my “Background” section to provide a figure for British distant water catch, in my “First Cod War” section to give a general overview, my “First Cod War” section to explain rammings, to explain the end of the First Cod War, to introduce the “Second Cod War” section, to explain the end of the Second Cod War, and to introduce my “Third Cod War” section.

“The Cod Wars,” Ross Revenge Plans. <<https://www.rossrevengeplans.co.uk/About/GY718/codwars.html>>.

This source is an article providing an overview of the Cod Wars. Reading this article helped me understand each of the different Cod Wars and the specific dates that went along with them. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain the start of the proto cod war, and in my “Second Cod War” section to explain the different skirmishes that occurred.

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This source is an article about EEZs and their effect on deterring unauthorized fishers. This source helped me better understand how important EEZs are to fishing all over the globe. I used this source in my “Impact” section to disclose the percentage of global fishing that goes on inside EEZs.

Gaddis, John. *The Cold War: A New History*. 2005.

This source is a book on the Cold War. This source helped me better understand the Cold War generally, and then more specifically, how it shaped the Cod Wars.

Geaney, David. “China’s Island Fortifications are a Challenge to International Norms,” Defense News, 17 April 2020. <<https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2020/04/17/chinas-island-fortifications-are-a-challenge-to-international-norms/>>.

This source is an article explaining the controversy and military impacts behind the Chinese island building efforts. The article helped me understand China’s ambitions in the South China Sea and the power they project from their artificial islands. I used this source in my “Impact” section to explain the negative consequences China’s artificial islands have had and will have on other nations.

Gibson, R. P. “The Infamous Cod Wars,” Exploring History, 16 November 2020. <<https://medium.com/exploring-history/the-infamous-cod-wars-c85708e59d7f>>.

This source is an article about debate and highlights of the Cod Wars. Reading this article helped me understand some important events during the Cod Wars, in addition to helping me understand diplomacy during the Cod Wars. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain the pressure on the Icelandic government, and in my “Second Cod War” section to explain who the only casualty of the Cod Wars was.

“History of Fisheries,” Government of Iceland. <<https://www.government.is/topics/business-and-industry/fisheries-in-iceland/history-of-fisheries/>>.

This source is a document written by the Icelandic government on the history of their fishing industry. This document helped me understand how large the Icelandic fishing industry was and still is. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain why the Cod Wars were so important to the Iceland population.

“Iceland and NATO,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization. <[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified\\_162083.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_162083.htm)>.

This source is an article on Iceland’s stance on NATO membership. From this article I was able to understand how controversial an issue NATO membership was to many Icelanders, and how Iceland’s threats to leave NATO helped them win the Cod Wars. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain how Iceland’s threats to leave NATO were credible.

Karlsson, Kristinsson, Matthiasson. “Iceland,” Encyclopedia Britannica. <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Iceland/European-integration#ref662251>>.

This source is an article about Icelandic history in general. This source helped me understand how Iceland also had to restrict its own catch to prevent overfishing, both inside and outside of its waters.

Kelly, Paul L. “Evaluating the Impact of the Law of the Sea Treaty on Future Offshore Drilling,” 19 April 2005. <<https://www.unclosdebate.org/news/1126/evaluating-impact-law-sea-treaty-future-offshore-drilling>>.

This source is an article on ratification of UNCLOS and its effect on the offshore drilling industry. This source helped me better understand why UNCLOS and the EEZ it established are so important to the offshore drilling industry. I used this source in my “Impact” section to give the offshore drilling industry as another example of an industry directed and majorly impacted by UNCLOS.

Lineker, Gary. “Little Known History of Fish and Chips.” <<https://www.rescue-uk.org/article/little-known-history-fish-and-chips>>.

This is an article about the history of fish and chips, explaining how both parts of the dish were brought to England by refugees, and they were combined in the 1880s. This article helped me understand how important fish and chips are to the British population. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain the importance of fish and chips to the British economy.

*The Miami Herald*. Miami, Florida, Newspapers.com, 1 September 1972. <<https://www.newspapers.com/image/625811649/?terms=cod%20wars&match=1>>.

This source is a newspaper issue about Iceland’s uneasy relations with NATO, and how the Cod Wars affected that. From this source I was able to understand how many people in Iceland already wanted out of NATO before the Cod Wars, making their threat to leave NATO credible. I used this source to explain Iceland getting close to removing the Americans from their military base in the Second Cod War.

Mills, Walker D. “The Cod Wars and Today: Lessons From an Almost War,” Center for International Maritime Security, 28 July 2020. <<https://cimsec.org/the-cod-wars-and-today-lessons-from-an-almost-war/>>.

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measures can be an advantage in diplomacy. I used this source in my “Second Cod War” section to explain Iceland’s threat to leave NATO.

Nelsson, Richard. “Iceland v Britain: The Cod Wars Begin-archieve, September 1958,” *The Guardian*, 7 September 2018. <<https://www.theguardian.com/business/from-the-archieve-blog/2018/sep/07/first-cod-war-iceland-britain-fish-1958>>.

This is an article about the First Cod War. Reading this article helped me understand how the battles in the Cod Wars were fought, and how they came to be. I used this source in my “First Cod War” section to explain an incident where the British royal navy clashed with the Icelandic government.

*The Ottawa Citizen*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Newspapers.com, 17 December 1975. <<https://www.newspapers.com/image/463034394/?terms=cod%20wars&match=1>>.

This source is a newspaper issue about the Cod Wars and Germany’s role in it. From this source I was able to understand Icelandic politics and dependence on cod, in addition to Germany’s deal to buy fish from Iceland. I used this source in my “Third Cod War” section to explain how an Icelandic agreement with the European Common Market and an Icelandic agreement with Germany complicated the Cod Wars.

*The Ottawa Citizen*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Newspapers.com, 24 March 1976. <<https://www.newspapers.com/image/462937301/?terms=cod%20wars&match=1>>.

This source is a newspaper issue about Iceland’s threat to leave NATO and the difficult situation it put the British in. From this article I was able to better understand the European Common Market agreement, and how that made Icelandic waters critical fishing grounds. I used this source in my “Background” section to explain how the common fisheries agreement increased Britain’s dependence on Icelandic waters.

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Pimm, Stuart L. “Conservation,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 16 November 2021. <<https://www.britannica.com/science/conservation-ecology/Overharvesting>>.

This source is an article about conservation of different ecosystems. I used just the “overharvesting” section to help me understand the benefits of an EEZ. I used this source in my “Impact” section to explain the effect of the EEZ put in place by UNCLOS on fishing operations.

Piper, Grant. “What Were The Cod Wars?” *Exploring History*, 22 December 2020. <<https://medium.com/exploring-history/what-were-the-cod-wars-28ccea9c4dc2>>.

This source is an article about the Cod Wars, in addition to what led up to it and some of its results. This helped me understand the limited combat during the Cod Wars, and the previous arrangement between Iceland and Britain before the Cod Wars. I used this source in my “Background” section, explaining the previous arrangement between Britain and Iceland, and in my “Impact” section, explaining how the Cod Wars led to the global 200 nmi exclusive fishing zone.

*The Province*. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Newspapers.com, 20 December 1975. <<https://www.newspapers.com/image/501351609/?terms=cod%20wars&match=1>>.

This source is a newspaper issue about the two sides of the Cod Wars. This source helped me understand the problem of overfishing in the sea around Iceland, how cod was extremely important to Iceland, and how British fishing communities were devastated after the Cod Wars. I used this source in my “Third Cod War” section to explain how the difference in public opinion on both sides of the Cod Wars weakened the stance of the British government.

Shahbandeh, Masha. “Forecast Seafood Market Value Worldwide from 2019 to 2027,” Statista, 5 October 2020. <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/821023/global-seafood-market-value/>>.

This source is an analysis on the seafood industry’s economic value. From this source I was better able to understand the importance of fishing in the world economy. I used this source in my “Impact” section to explain the scope of the fishing economy that was being impacted and directed by EEZs.

*The Spokesman-Review*. Spokane, Washington, Newspapers.com, 8 June 1973. <<https://www.newspapers.com/image/571128529/?terms=cod%20wars&match=1>>.

This source is a newspaper issue about how the Cod Wars were weakening the power of international law. This newspaper issue helped me understand how Iceland was disregarding the ICJ’s ruling, and how lots of other nations began claiming their own exclusive offshore rights. I used this source in my “Second Cod War” section to explain how Iceland’s success implored other countries to expand their exclusive fishing zones.

Sönnichsen, N. “Market Value of Offshore Oil Drilling Worldwide in 2018 and 2026,” Statista, 15 July 2021. <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/737373/global-offshore-drilling-market-size/>>.

This source is an analysis on the economic value of offshore drilling. This source helped me understand how important offshore drilling is to the world economy. I used this source in my “Impact” section to explain the scope of the offshore drilling economy that was being impacted and directed by EEZs.

Steinsson, Sverrir. “Why did the Cod Wars Occur and Why Did Iceland Win Them? A Test of Four Theories,” Skemman, 1990. <<https://skemman.is/handle/1946/20916>>.

This source is a master’s thesis written at the University of Iceland, explaining how Iceland won the Cod Wars. Through this source, I was better able to understand the different factors that contributed to Iceland’s victory in the Cod Wars.

Watkins, Derek. “What China Has Been Building in the South China Sea,” *The New York Times*, 27 October 2015. <<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/30/world/asia/what-china-has-been-building-in-the-south-china-sea.html>>.

This source is an article about China artificially building an island in the South China Sea. This helped me understand how China attempted to exploit the Convention on the Law of the Sea by building a small island and laying claim to the waters around it. I used this source in my “Impact” section to explain how many countries are claiming waters in the South China Sea in an attempt to exploit UNCLOS for economic gains.

## Process Paper

I discovered my topic, the Cod Wars, a while ago and noted it as a possible National History Day topic should it align with the theme one year. When the theme, Debate and Diplomacy, was released for this year's National History Day, it fit well with the Cod Wars. Although I brainstormed many other topic ideas, I determined the Cod Wars to be the best due to its connection to the theme and profound yet largely unexplored impact on maritime activities. The Cod Wars fit with this year's theme because Iceland utilized debate and diplomacy in its struggle against Great Britain. Iceland's success in their diplomacy, and conversely, Great Britain's failure, have had major consequences, directing maritime economic activity all over the globe for five decades and counting.

I conducted my research by first looking for broader secondary sources online, then looking for narrower secondary or primary sources on parts of my topic where I needed additional focus or lacked coverage. Most of the sources were secondary sources, so I next turned my attention to specifically finding primary sources in order to get a more direct and detailed account of the Cod Wars. It was difficult to find primary sources, especially Iceland sources, but I eventually found many accounts, memorandums, and other primary sources from the British government in the United Kingdom National Archives. During the process of writing my paper, I added more sources to provide necessary additional information and enhance understanding of a narrower subject.

To create my project, I began in outline format, as it helped me organize my thoughts and divide each section into subsections that I wanted to cover. Once I finished my rough draft, I moved everything, including my annotated bibliography, into a paper with official NHD formatting. With this new formatting, I edited my paper, adding to and rewording parts of it.

My historical argument is that the Cod Wars demonstrated how diplomacy can be utilized by a small nation such as Iceland without an army or navy to triumph against a nation such as Great Britain, which had never before lost a war at sea. Additionally, Iceland, or another small nation, can have major impacts on the larger world. Through UNCLOS, the two hundred nautical mile (nmi) standard for Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) that Iceland set has gone beyond the scope of Iceland to shape maritime industries all over the globe, becoming essential for the current nature of these maritime industries.

My topic is significant in history because of the effect the Cod Wars have had on the modern world, driving maritime economic activity by setting the standard for how large an EEZ can be, and thus directing where such maritime activities may take place. The Cod Wars are also significant because they give an example of how diplomacy can play a major role in war, causing a country with no navy to triumph against a country with one of the strongest navies in the world in a war fought at sea.



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