P.S. to the NEWS
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STEALING OUR FISH

With food becoming more expensive and sometimes even in short supply, many of us would like to get more of our protein from fish. Our tremendously long coastline and thousands of lakes and rivers should give Americans an abundant supply of cheap and nutritious fish. The trouble is that the price of fish has shot up as much as meat.

One of the principal reasons for this is that we have been permitting the Russians to steal our fish by the hundred millions of pounds. Giant Soviet fishing trawlers "overfish" our coastal waters; that is, they catch too many fish and especially the very young fish, so that certain species are permanently depleted. The Soviet vessels completely ignore the regulations which American fishermen must obey.

The Russians engage in what is called "pulse fishing." Scouting vessels, equipped by the Soviet Government with modern electronic gear, go ahead and locate the largest schools of fish. Then, the trawlers move in with scientific mass-production methods and, operating like huge vacuum cleaners, suck in the fish at all levels until the school is so depleted that it is uneconomic to continue.

When one area is fished out, the "pulsing" fleet moves on to a new location which has been discovered by the electronically-equipped scouting vessels which, incidentally, can serve double duty as espionage ships.

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This is the way the Soviets carried out what is known as the great haddock slaughter of the 1960s. In one year, the Soviets took $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the total annual catch, including most of the very young fish. The haddock supplies off the Atlantic Coast have been so reduced that the National Marine Fisheries Service has recommended that haddock fishing off New England be indefinitely suspended. Many biologists believe there is a possibility that haddock may completely disappear from New England's waters.

The Soviet Union is not the only nation which is overfishing in our waters, but it is taking the most fish. In the last ten years, the Soviets have reduced our supplies of herring by 90 percent, and severely reduced supplies of other fish including yellowtail flounder, hake, and red fish. This is also happening on our Pacific coast, involving all sorts of seafood from king crab to salmon.

Last year, the Soviet fleet harvested more than 50 percent of the total catch off New England, while American fishermen were limited to only 25 percent of the catch. Although we have the greatest coastline in the world, we now import more than half of the fish we consume.

Most of this fish-stealing takes place beyond the 12-mile limit but within the area of our continental shelf. It is just as ridiculous for us to allow giant Soviet fishing trawlers to prowl our coasts stealing our fish as it would be to allow Soviet oil companies to drill for oil on our continental shelf. We should protect our fish -- one of our great natural resources -- and also adopt a policy of Feed Americans First.

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