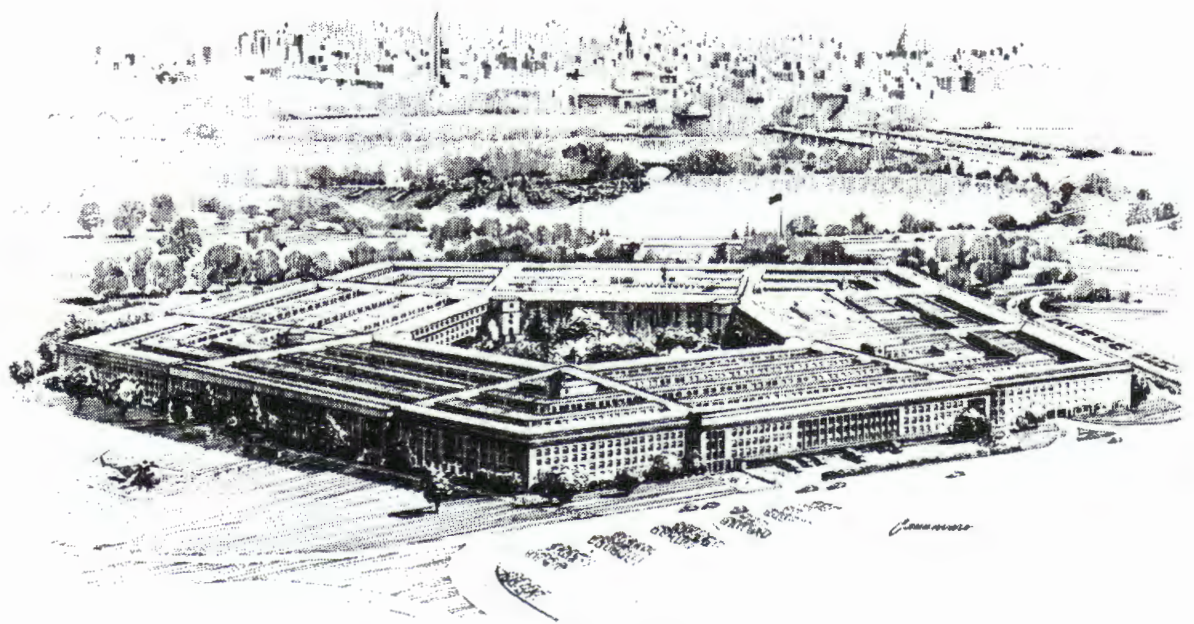


Annual Report

to the
President
and the
Congress



William S. Cohen
Secretary of Defense



1998

FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION

For 18 years, the U.S. Freedom of Navigation program has ensured that excessive coastal state claims over the world's oceans and airspace are repeatedly challenged. By diplomatic protests and operational assertions, the United States has insisted upon adherence by the nations of the world to the international law of the sea, as reflected in the UN Law of the Sea Convention. A significant majority of countries (over 120) are now Parties to the Convention, and there is an encouraging trend toward the rolling-back of excessive maritime claims. Nonetheless, some coastal states continue to assert maritime claims inconsistent with international law, which left unchallenged would limit navigational freedoms vital to U.S. national security and essential to peaceful uses of the world's oceans.

assertions challenging the excessive maritime claims listed in the accompanying table. In addition, military vessels and aircraft frequently conducted routine transits through international straits, such as the Straits of Gibraltar, Hormuz, and Malacca. Air and surface units also transited the Indonesian Archipelago in archipelagic sea lane passage on 73 occasions and transited the Philippine Archipelago by exercising high seas freedoms, transit passage, and innocent passage, as applicable, on 47 occasions. Combined with robust and highly visible routine operations by U.S. forces on, over, and under the world's oceans, and scrupulous adherence by the United States to the navigational provisions of the UN Law of the Sea Convention, Freedom of Navigation operations have continued to underscore the U.S. commitment to a stable legal regime for the world's oceans.

In FY 1997, U.S. armed forces conducted operational

FY 1997 DOD OPERATIONAL ASSERTIONS	
Country	Excessive Claims Challenged
Albania	Prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea
Algeria	Prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea
Bangladesh	Excessive straight baselines; claimed security zone; claimed territorial airspace beyond 12 nm
Burma	Excessive straight baselines; claimed security zone, claimed territorial airspace beyond 12 nm
Cambodia	Excessive straight baselines; claimed security zone, claimed territorial airspace beyond 12nm
Cuba	Require state aircraft to comply with directions from air traffic control within flight information region
Djibouti	Excessive straight baselines
Egypt	Excessive straight baselines, prior permission to enter the territorial sea
India	Prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea
Iran	Excessive straight baselines; prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea
Libya	Excessive straight baselines; prior notification for warship to enter the territorial sea
Maldives	Excessive straight baselines; prior permission to enter the territorial sea
Malta	Prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea
Oman	Excessive straight baselines; prior permission to enter the territorial sea
Philippines	Excessive straight baselines; claims archipelagic waters as internal waters
Somalia	200nm territorial sea; prior permission to enter the territorial sea
Sri Lanka	Prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea
Sudan	Prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea
United Arab Emirates	Prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea
Viet Nam	Excessive straight baselines; claimed security zone
Yemen	Prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea