

In re:

~~As~~ the U.S. claim relies on existing customary law of the sea  
~~codified~~ by ~~the~~ previous conventions and the evolving history of  
 maritime law. <sup>Hence,</sup> it <sup>to</sup> claims a maritime regime <sup>are</sup> based <sup>to some extent</sup> largely on state  
 practices. Given the U.S. concern for the preservation of the  
 freedom of navigation of the high seas, <sup>170</sup> ~~the~~ long term <sup>benefits</sup> outweigh  
 the relatively slight increase in ocean area to be gained by an  
 archipelagic claim to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. <sup>171</sup> ~~the~~ If  
 it were to declare the Northwest <sup>even</sup> Hawaiian Islands an archipelago,  
 it would open claims to a number of other archipelagic island  
 groups <sup>that</sup> ~~which~~ have not yet been declared archipelagos. <sup>172</sup> ~~the~~  
 Moreover, the legitimacy of island groups that have already been  
 declared archipelagos <sup>e</sup> in contravention of the 1982 Convention --  
 notably Ecuador's Galapagos Islands and France's Kerguelen  
 Islands -- would be strengthened.