

# Blue Collar Muse

Thinking in Print – Cogito Ergo Blogito

**Word arrived yesterday from Jim DeMint's (R-SC) office that four more Senators had signed on to the letter opposing ratification of the Law of the Sea Treaty (LOST)**

written by DeMint and James Inhofe (R-OK). The latest four, Mike Johanns (R-NE), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Rob Portman (R-OH) and Johnny Isakson (R-GA), bring the total number of Senators opposing LOST to 34. Neither Senator Corker or Senator Alexander from Tennessee were among them.

The 34 figure is significant because treaty ratification requires a 2/3 majority in the Senate; 67 votes. With 34 Senators on record as opposing LOST it means the treaty will not be ratified this year.

DeMint's notification of crossing the threshold for preventing the ratification included several bullet points as to why LOST is a bad deal for the United States. These points have been out there and well known for years. President Reagan had the opportunity to sign it and, while there were many good things he could find in it, rejected it bluntly, forcefully and publicly.

**Ed Meese, Reagan's Attorney General, remembers:**

President Ronald Reagan so strongly opposed the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea that he didn't just not sign the treaty, he very publicly refused to sign it. He also dismissed the State Department staff that helped negotiate it. And in case anyone didn't get the message, Reagan sent special envoy Donald Rumsfeld on a globe-trotting mission to explain his opposition and urge other nations to follow suit.

Meese still opposes ratification of LOST. As does **Donald Rumsfeld**. And the **Heritage Foundation**. And **the guys at CATO since at least 2004**. Along with a host of other prominent and firmly established Conservative individuals and organizations.

Which makes it disappointing that neither of Tennessee's Senators, not Corker or Alexander, were among the original 34. It is true that they can still sign on to the letter and may yet do so. Neither has indicated that they are willing to support LOST. They haven't made a statement either way.

Senator Corker is said to be reading the treaty so he has a personal grasp of the details and consequences, an admirable approach when it comes to such an important decision. However, even this valid delay in announcing his decision, even if his ultimate decision is to oppose ratification, carries a cost.

Now that the magic number of 34 opposing votes has been reached, the interest and furor over the issue will subside. Rather than be seen as a leader in supporting US sovereignty, it will be easy for detractors to portray him as a follower who played it safe. The truth of the matter will be irrelevant in the midst of perception being spun as reality in the minds of far too many people.

I hope that Senators Corker and Alexander will still decide to sign on to the letter opposing LOST. They would be representing me if they do so. Yet I would have preferred if Corker and Alexander had given more serious consideration to the research and informed positions of folks like Meese, Rumsfeld, DeMint, Inhofe and others – had been influenced by them along with their own research and investigation – and been one of the early adopters of that position as opposed to someone who came along after.

Perception is not reality. It must never be confused with it. But perceptions, once formed and held, can be difficult to overcome. While not reality, they are a reality that must be dealt with. I'd rather they be dealt with on offense as opposed to defense.

I'm disappointed that our Senators were unable to find a way to be perceived as national leaders on this hugely important issue. Time will tell what that will mean for them. But it's an opportunity lost ... lost at sea. Being lost at sea and then found later is always a good thing. Better by far, however, never to have gone over the side in the first place ...