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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

Series A

LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 38

STRAIGHT BASELINES: GERMANY

The Geographer
Office of the Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

STRAIGHT BASELINES: GERMANY

The Federal Republic of Germany has created a system of straight baselines for the island-fringed North Sea coast of the state. The system also includes straight baselines about the offshore island of Helgoland. The straight baselines, their coordinate values for turning points, and the seaward limit of the territorial sea are plotted on the following charts of the official German Hydrographic Institute (DHI):

INNERE UND SEEWÄRTIGE BEGRENZUNG DES KÜSTENMEERES AN DER NORDSEEKÜSTE
DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND (Internal and territorial waters
boundaries for the North Sea coast of the Federal Republic of Germany)

Chart No. 2, Mündung der Jade und Weser, 1:50,000, III 1970.
Contains points Nos. 8 and 9.

Chart No. 3, Ansteuerung von Helgoland, 1:50,000, III 1970.
Contains points Nos. 10 and 18 - 23.

Chart No. 44, Elbmündung, 1:50,000, III 1970.
Contains point No. 10.

Chart No. 50, Deutsche Bucht, 1:300,000, III 1970.
Overview chart of the entire system containing points
Nos. 1 - 23.

Chart No. 89, Juist bis Wangerooge, 1:50,000, III 1970.
Contains points Nos. 1 - 9.

Chart No. 90, Emsmündung, 1:50, III 1970.
No points.

Chart No. 105, Die Eider, Norder- und Süderpiep, 1:50,000, III 1970.
Contains point No. 11.

Chart No. 106, Hever und Schmalteuf, 1:50,000, III 1970.
Contains points Nos. 11 and 12.

Chart No. 107, Vortrapptief, Norder- und Süderau, 1:50,000, III 1970.
Contains points Nos. 13 - 15.

Chart No. 108, Lister Tief, 1:50,000, III 1970.
Contains points Nos. 16 and 17.

The values and positions of the turning points for the straight baselines, with the exception of those for Helgoland, are given on the attached chart. The values for the Helgoland points are as follows:

19.	54° 11' 33" North	7° 55' 12" East
20.	54° 11' 28" North	7° 55' 18" East
21.	54° 10' 50" North	7° 55' 33" East
22.	54° 10' 12" North	7° 53' 48" East
23.	54° 10' 09" North	7° 53' 32" East

The values are quoted on the cited chart No. 3.

These straight baseline and territorial waters charts note that mean low-water shorelines in these parts of the North Sea are subject to considerable fluctuations and that the most recent charts of the DHI should be consulted for the proper limits of the German territorial sea and internal waters.

ANALYSIS

The German North Sea coast is fringed with the low and sandy Frisian Islands which parallel and nearly mask the entire coast of the state. While the islands are normally depicted on geographical maps as lying from two to five miles offshore, they actually are connected to the mainland at low water by extensive mud flats. The straight baselines, as a consequence, may be considered to be a series of "river" closing lines in a sense. The straight baselines exert little effect on the outer limit of the German territorial sea.

The lengths of the individual lines and segments are as follows:

<u>line</u>	<u>line length</u>	<u>segment total</u>
1 - 2	3.28 n.m.	3.28 n.m.
3 - 4	0.60	
4 - 5	3.91	4.51
6 - 7	3.66	3.66
8 - 9	3.38	
9 - 10	21.50	
10 - 11	20.25	
11 - 12	9.50	
12 - 13	14.50	
13 - 14	0.77	
14 - 15	4.74	74.60
16 - 17	1.69	1.69
18 - 19	2.03	
19 - 20	0.10	
20 - 21	0.64	
21 - 22	1.20	
22 - 23	0.18	
23 - 18	1.82	6.97 (Helgoland total)
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18 lines 6 segments	total	94.71 nautical miles

The longest lines (9-10-11) measure approximately 21.5 and 20.25 nautical miles, respectively. The double segment serves to "close" the Jade, Weser, Elbe, and Eider rivers. (Note that on the attached chart the low-water coastline in this region has not been represented. While the lines appear to be "distant" from the shore, they are, in fact, close to the low-water line.)

The Federal Republic of Germany is not a party to the Geneva Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone, but it has drawn conservative straight baselines in conformity with the Convention language. It should be noted that the terminal point, No. 17, marks the limit of the international boundary between Denmark and Germany, and it is not a standard insular or low-tide base point in the terms of the Convention.¹

1. See International Boundary Study No. 81 - June 14, 1968, "Denmark - Germany Boundary", and Series A, No. 19 - June 3, 1970, "Straight Baselines: Denmark". Germany's point No. 17 and Denmark's No. 1 are identical.