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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

Series A

LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 49

TERRITORIAL SEA BOUNDARY:

CYPRUS--SOVEREIGN BASE AREA (U.K.)

The Geographer
Office of the Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

TERRITORIAL SEA BOUNDARY:
CYPRUS--SOVEREIGN BASE AREA (U.K.)

Introduction

When Cyprus became independent in 1960, the United Kingdom retained, as sovereign British territory, certain base areas on the island. These non-ceded lands did not pass to the new state. The limits between the base areas and Cyprus were precisely delimited as international boundaries, and provisions were made for the demarcation on the lines.

In addition, Section 3 of the Treaty Concerning the Establishment of the Republic of Cyprus provided for territorial sea boundaries between the Republic and the U.K. Sovereign Base Area (SBA). These limits also may have a potential influence on continental shelf boundaries although the possibility is not dealt with specifically in the treaty.

Section 3 states:

1. The Republic of Cyprus shall not claim, as part of its territorial sea, waters lying between Line I and Line II as described in paragraph 2 of this Section, or between Line III and Line IV as described therein.

2. The lines for the purposes of paragraph 1 of this Section shall be as follows:-

Line I: From the position of the low-water line lying in a 163° direction from Point No. 57 D/1, as defined in Schedule A to this Annex, in a 163° direction for 6.85 miles; then in a 207° direction for 3 miles; and then in a 204° direction.

Line II: From the position on the low-water line lying in a 108-1/2° direction from Point 59 A/5, as defined in Schedule A to this Annex, in a 108-1/2° direction for 7.8 miles; and then in a 136° direction.

Line III: From the position on the low-water line lying in a 170° direction from Point No. 41 B/10, as defined in Schedule B to this Annex, in a 170° direction for 3.8 miles; then in a 136° direction for 3.1 miles; and then in a 156° direction.

Line IV: From the position on the low-water line lying in a 103° direction from Point No. 42 B/3, as defined in Schedule B to this Annex; in a 103° direction for 0.9 miles; then in a 150° direction for 6.3 miles; and then in a 176°.

3. In paragraph 2 of this Section, the distances quoted are in sea miles reckoned at 1,582 international metres to one sea mile, and the bearings are referred to the True North and are given in degrees reckoned clockwise from 000° (North) to 359°.

The Schedules A and B cited in the Section list the various United Kingdom base sites mentioned in the agreement. The specified points were plotted on large-scale maps which were deposited with the treaty but never publicly printed. The U.K. Government, however, has informed us that the values of the four points are as follows:

57 D/1	48401098	Cyprus Metric Grid
59 A/5	71971008	Cyprus Metric Grid
41 B/10	564009.7 E 3871228.2	UTM Grid Coordinates
42 B/3	582264.6 3869698.3	UTM Grid Coordinates

The four specific lines have been printed on the attached charts and represent the limits between the territorial waters of the U.K. SBA and the Republic. The former would follow the United Kingdom claim for territorial waters of 3 nautical miles while Cyprus claims 12. The distances as measured from the normal baseline have been noted on the map.

Directional alignments of the boundaries change at distances greater than 3 nautical miles from the baseline. Azimuths do not, however, change beyond 12 nautical miles. In each instance, the terminal limits in the sea boundaries have not been designated; presumably they may be continued indefinitely or until the adjacent lines connect. Since the 12-mile limit from the baseline could have been determined precisely, the non-termination must have been deliberate. Logically, the decision could be based on: a) the concern that one party might extend its territorial sea to a distance which would envelop or enclose the sea of the other; or 2) the anticipated need for the limits to serve as a continental shelf or seabed boundary beyond the territorial sea.

The 100-fathom line on the chart, which is situated within the 3-mile limit (along the boundaries), approximates the 200-meter depth limit cited in the Convention on the Continental Shelf.

ANALYSIS

A precise determination of the principles used by the negotiators is impossible. The limits, however, are not based on the equidistance principle. Rather they appear to have been drawn as simplified normals to generalized coastal baselines. As the limit extends seaward, the coastal area involved in the normalization increases and the line vector must change. The result is a simplified but effective method of maritime boundary determination. The principal difficulty, if indeed normalization was the basis, would involve the determination of the "general direction" and sector of the coastline to be used for the particular perpendicularity.

The eastern sector's limits appear to converge at a distance of approximately 32 nautical miles from the shore. The eastern boundary of the western U.K. SBA will not connect, if prolonged, with the limits of the eastern SBA zone.

The United Kingdom is party to both the Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone and to the Convention on the Continental Shelf. Cyprus has adhered to neither.