

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE • BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH • ISSUED BY THE GEOGRAPHER

LIMITS IN THE SEAS



NO. 91
MARITIME BOUNDARY:
UNITED STATES-VENEZUELA

This paper is one of a series issued by The Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State. The aim of the series is to set forth the basis for national arrangements for the measurement of the territorial sea or the division of the maritime areas of coastal nations.

Intended for background use only, this research document does not represent an official acceptance of the United States Government of the line or lines represented on the charts or, necessarily, of the specific principles involved, if any, in the original drafting of the lines. Principal analyst for this study: Robert W. Smith. Additional copies may be requested by mail from the Office of The Geographer, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520.

LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 91

MARITIME BOUNDARY:

United States - Venezuela

December 16, 1980

Office of The Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

MARITIME BOUNDARY: UNITED STATES-VENEZUELA

On March 28, 1978, the Governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Venezuela signed an agreement delimiting a maritime boundary in the east-central Caribbean Sea. Instruments of ratification were exchanged and the treaty entered into force on November 24, 1980. The full text of the agreement is as follows:

MARITIME BOUNDARY TREATY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

The Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Venezuela,

Reaffirming the cordial relations between the two countries,

Conscious of the need to establish a precise and equitable maritime boundary,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE 1

The sole purpose of this Treaty is to establish, in accordance with international law, the maritime boundary between the United States of America and the Republic of Venezuela.

ARTICLE 2

The maritime boundary between the United States of America and Venezuela is determined by the geodetic lines connecting points 1-22, having the following coordinates:

Latitude (north)	Longitude (west)
1. 16°44'49"	64°01'08"
2. 16°43'22"	64°06'31"
3. 16°43'10"	64°06'59"
4. 16°42'40"	64°08'06"
5. 16°41'43"	64°10'07"
6. 16°35'19"	64°23'39"
7. 16°23'30"	64°45'54"

8.	15°39'31"	65°58'41"
9.	15°30'10"	66°07'09"
10.	15°14'06"	66°19'57"
11.	14°55'48"	66°34'30"
12.	14°56'06"	66°51'40"
13.	14°58'27"	67°04'19"
14.	14°58'45"	67°05'17"
15.	14°58'58"	67°06'11"
16.	14°59'10"	67°07'00"
17.	15°02'32"	67°23'40"
18.	15°05'07"	67°36'23"
19.	15°10'38"	68°03'46"
20.	15°11'06"	68°09'21"
21.	15°12'33"	68°27'32"
22.	15°12'51"	68°28'56"

and along an azimuth of 274.23 degrees true from point 22, in the event that the maritime boundary of the United States of America extends westward, until the trijunction with a third State is reached. In no case shall this trijunction point be further westward than latitude 15°14'28" N longitude 68°51'44" W.

ARTICLE 3

The latitude and longitude of the points described in Article 2 have been determined on the 1927 North American Datum, Clarke 1866 ellipsoid.

The maritime boundary has, for illustrative purposes only, been depicted on nautical chart No. 25000, published by the Hydrographic Center, Defense Mapping Agency, Washington, D.C., Sixth Edition, February 12, 1977, which is annexed to and forms an integral part of this Treaty.

ARTICLE 4

It is understood by the two Governments that south of the maritime boundary the United States of America shall not, and north of the maritime boundary the Republic of Venezuela shall not, for any purpose, claim or exercise sovereign rights or jurisdiction over the waters or seabed and subsoil. The establishment of this maritime boundary does not affect or prejudice in any manner the positions of either Government with respect to the sovereign rights or jurisdiction of either State, the rules of international law concerning the exercise of jurisdiction over the waters or seabed and subsoil, or any other matter relating to the law of the sea.

ARTICLE 5

Any dispute concerning the interpretation or application of the provisions of this Treaty shall be resolved by direct negotiations between the two Governments.

ARTICLE 6

This Treaty is subject to ratification in accordance with the constitutional procedures of the two States, and will enter into force on the date of exchange of instruments of ratification.

Done at Caracas, March 28, 1978, in two copies, each in English and Spanish, both texts being equally authentic.

Analysis

The US-Venezuela maritime boundary is depicted on the attached illustrative map. The boundary, 298.7 nautical miles in length, comprises 22 segments with one established terminal point. The western terminal point currently is undetermined pending negotiations with a third party. As noted in Article 2 of the agreement, however, a trijunction will occur no farther westward than 15°14'28"N, 68°51'44"W., the northeast terminal point in the maritime boundary between the Netherlands Antilles (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao) and Venezuela.

The US-Venezuela maritime boundary begins in the east (point 1 on the attached map) as a trijunction point among the Netherlands Antilles, the United States, and Venezuela; point 1 is approximately 67 nautical miles from the respective territories. From point 1 to point 8 (130.72 nautical miles in length) the boundary extends in a southwesterly direction between St. Croix to the north and Aves Island to the south. From point 8 to point 11 (55.64 nautical miles in length) the course of the line bends in a south-southwesterly direction. At point 11 the boundary turns in a west-northwest direction and continues for 112.34 nautical miles to point 22. At point 12 the boundary reaches its maximum distance from the respective territories, measuring approximately 177.2 nautical miles from Puerto Rico and Islas Los Roques.

The maritime boundary has been determined on the 1927 North American Datum and the Clarke 1866 ellipsoid. The lines connecting the turning points are geodesics.

This treaty is the first United States maritime boundary that has entered into force since implementation of the 200-nautical-mile US fishery conservation zone on March 1, 1977. Venezuela implemented maritime boundary agreements on September 22, 1942 with Trinidad and Tobago in the Gulf of Paria (see Limits in the Seas No. 11), and on December 15, 1978 with the Netherlands Antilles.