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United States Department of State
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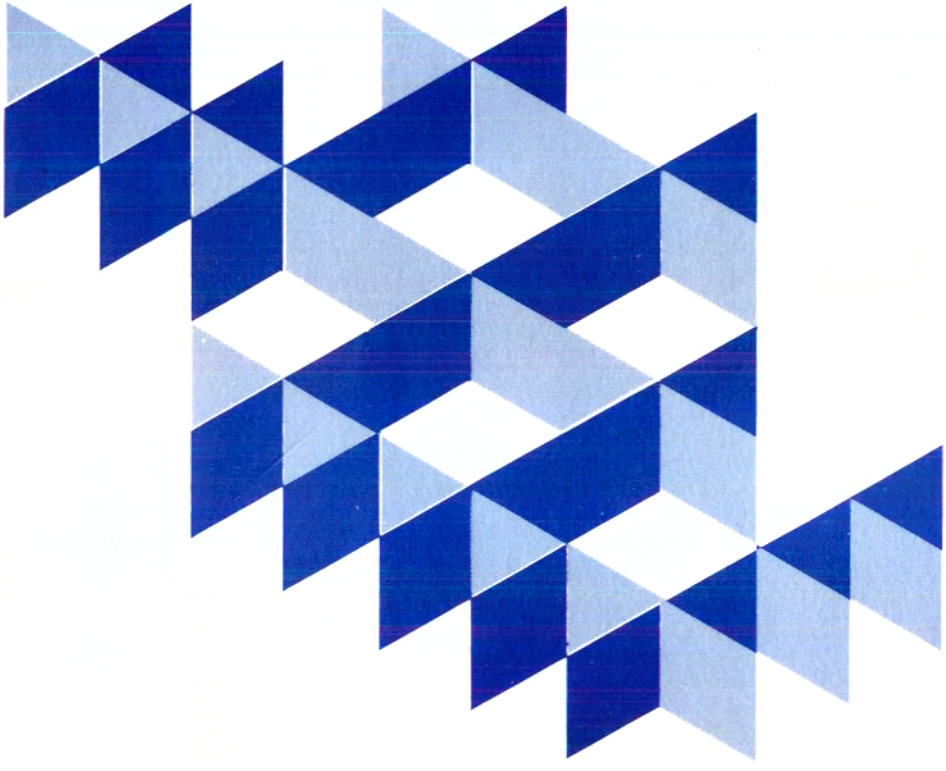
Limits in the Seas

No. 96

CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY:

GREECE - ITALY



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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: Daniel J. Dzurek. Additional copies may be requested by mail from The Geographer, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520.

LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 96

CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY:

GREECE - ITALY

June 6, 1982

Office of The Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY: GREECE-ITALY

On May 24, 1977, the Governments of the Hellenic Republic and the Italian Republic signed an agreement on the delimitation of their respective continental shelves in the Ionian Sea between the two states. Upon the exchange of instruments of ratification, the agreement entered into force on November 12, 1980. The full text of this accord is as follows:

AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC
AND THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC
ON THE DELIMITATION OF ZONES
OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF
BELONGING TO EACH OF THE TWO STATES

Having decided to establish the dividing line between the zones of the continental shelf belonging to each of the two States on the basis of the principle of the median line, the two Contracting Parties have agreed as follows:

Article I

1. In order to apply the principle of the median line mentioned in the preamble of this agreement, and taking into consideration any mutually approved minor adjustments, the dividing line between the zones of the continental shelf belonging to each of the two States shall be defined by the arcs of the great circle connecting the following points:

Point	North Latitude	East Longitude
1	39°57'.7	18°57'.5
2	39°57'.4	18°56'.1
3	39°49'.0	18°54'.9
4	39°17'.3	18°55'.6
5	39°02'.0	18°54'.0
6	38°30'.0	18°43'.9
7	37°52'.0	18°28'.6
8	37°21'.3	18°17'.0
9	36°59'.5	18°19'.1
10	36°54'.4	18°19'.2
11	36°45'.0	18°18'.6
12	36°26'.5	18°18'.0
13	36°24'.1	18°17'.7
14	36°11'.0	18°15'.7
15	36°09'.0	18°15'.7
16	35°34'.2	18°20'.7

2. The aforementioned dividing line is drawn on the following charts annexed to this agreement:

(a) Hellenic nautical chart No. II, 1956 edition, on a scale of 1:1,000,000 at 38°;

(b) Italian nautical chart No. 436 L(C), 1975 edition, on a scale of 1:1,000,000 at 41°.

3. The Contracting Parties have agreed that for the moment such delimitation shall not extend northward beyond point 1 or southward beyond point 16.

This delimitation shall subsequently extend in both directions to the points of intersection with the zones of the continental shelf belonging to the respective neighboring countries.

Article II

If the dividing line runs through a deposit of some mineral substance, including sand and gravel, and if the part of the deposit which is located on one side of the dividing line is wholly or partially minable by equipment located on the other side, the two Governments, in liaison with any holders of mining rights, shall attempt to reach an agreement on the conditions for mining the deposit so that such mining may be as profitable as possible and each of the Parties may retain all its rights to the mineral resources of the soil and subsoil of its continental shelf.

In the event that the natural resources of a deposit located on both sides of the dividing line have been mined, the Contracting Parties, after consultation with any holders of mining rights, shall make every effort to reach an agreement on equitable compensation.

Article III

The Contracting Parties shall adopt all possible measures to ensure that the exploration of their respective zones of the continental shelf and the mining of its natural resources do not adversely affect the ecological balance or other legitimate uses of the sea.

Article IV

The Contracting Parties shall endeavor to resolve through diplomatic channels any dispute which may arise concerning the interpretation or application of this agreement.

If the dispute is not resolved within a period of four months after one of the Contracting Parties has made known its intention of undertaking the procedure set forth in the preceding paragraph, it shall be submitted to the International Court of Justice at the request of one of the Contracting Parties, or to any other international authority chosen by common agreement.

Article V

None of the provisions of this agreement shall affect the regime for the superjacent water and airspace.

Article VI

1. This agreement shall be subject to ratification.

The instruments of ratification shall be exchanged as soon as possible at Rome.

2. This agreement shall enter into force on the day that the instruments of ratification are exchanged.

Done at Athens on May 24, 1977, in two original copies in the French language, both texts being equally authentic.

For the Government of the Italian Republic

[s] Forlani

For the Government of the Hellenic Republic

[s] Bitsios

Analysis

The Greece - Italy continental shelf boundary is illustrated on the attached page-size map which is based on DMAHTC chart 310. Official maps depicting the dividing line were annexed to the original agreement. On the attached map the boundary line segments are rhumb lines, whereas the agreement states the use of segments of great circle arcs. Measurements used in this study are based on charts and geodetic parameters different from those used by the parties to the agreement. Slight discrepancies may, therefore, appear in any comparison.

The continental shelf boundary consists of fifteen segments, fourteen turning points, and two terminal points and runs in a general north-south direction for 268.0 nautical miles. The depth of water in the boundary region varies from less than 800 meters to nearly 4,000 meters. The northern terminus of the boundary is the point of closest approach to the coasts of Greece and Italy, situated 22.0 and 20.1 nautical miles from the respective coasts. The southern terminus lies 168.9 nautical miles from the coast of Sicily and 163.4 nautical miles from the Greek island of Stamfani.

According to the agreement, a median line was used "taking into consideration any mutually approved minor adjustments." Significant adjustments appear to have been negotiated at turning points 1, 2, and 3, where the boundary line is 1.9 to 3.3 nautical miles closer to the Greek island of Othoni than to the coast of Italy; at point 8, where the boundary point is 6.1 nautical miles closer to the Italian coast than the Greek island of Kefallinia; and at points 15 and 16, where the boundary lies 1.8 to 5.5 nautical miles nearer to the Greek island of Stamfani[1] than to the coast of Sicily (see table). The rest of the turning points are calculated to be within 1.5 nautical miles of the apparent median line. The agreement makes provision for the eventual extension of the boundry line northward from point 1 and southward from point 16. Point 1 is situated 28.0 nautical miles from the coast of Albania. Point 16 lies 185.0 nautical miles from Malta and 212.6 nautical miles from Libya.

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1. One of the Nisoi Strofadhes (incorrectly labeled Nisoi Stofadhes on the attached map).

As in earlier agreements between Italy and its neighbors,[2] the problem of the exploitation of shared resources extending on both sides of the boundary is addressed (Article II). Dispute settlement by the International Court of Justice at the request of one of the parties, "or to any other international authority chosen by common agreement," is provided under Article IV.

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2. Limits in the Seas No. 9 "Continental Shelf Boundary: Italy - Yugoslavia," February 20, 1970; Limits in the Seas No. 89, "Continental Shelf Boundary: Italy - Tunisia," January 7, 1980; Limits in the Seas No. 90, "Continental Shelf Boundary: Italy - Spain," May 14, 1980.

Greece - Italy
Continental Shelf Boundary

Turning/Terminal Point	Distance Between Boundary Pts. (n.m.)	Nearest Italian Territory	Distance Land to Boundary Pt. (n.m.)*		Nearest Greek Territory**
1		Capo d'Otranto	22.0	20.1	Northwest Coast of Nisos Othoni
	5.4				
2		West coast near Torre Saracena	23.5	20.2	West coast of Nisos Othoni
	3.5				
3		West coast near Torre di Specchia Grande	24.1	21.2	West coast of Nisos Othoni
	31.7				
4		Capo Santa Maria di Leuca	39.8	38.7	Nisis Platia
	15.3				
5		Capo Santa Maria di Leuca	51.8	51.9	Akra Gardhiki on Nisos Kerkira (Corfu)
	32.9				
6		Capo Colonne	78.0	78.0	Akra Ortholithia on Nisos Kefallinia
	39.8				
7		Capo Rizzuto	89.4	90.3	South of Akra Yerogombos on Nisos Kefallinia
	32.0				
8		Coast south of Punta Stilo	103.5	109.6	South of Akra Yerogombos on Nisos Kefallinia
	21.8				

Greece - Italy
Continental Shelf Boundary - Continued

Turning/Terminal Point	Distance Between Boundary Pts. (n.m.)	Nearest Italian Territory	Distance Land to Boundary Pt. (n.m.)*		Nearest Greek Territory**
9		Coast south of Punta Stilo	119.2	119.8	South of Akra Yerogombos on Nisos Kefallinia
	5.1				
10		Coast south of Punta Stilo	122.9	122.9	South of Akra Yerogombos on Nisos Kefallinia
	9.4				
11		Scoglio Monistili	128.1	128.0	Nisis Ayios Ioannis near Nisos Zakinthos
	18.5				
12		Capo Spartivento	139.1	138.7	Nisis Ayios Ioannis
	2.4				
13		Capo Spartivento	140.5	140.1	Nisi Stamfani
	13.2				
14		Capo Spartivento	148.3	147.0	Nisi Stamfani
	2.0				
15		Capo Spartivento	149.7	147.9	Nisi Stamfani
	35.0				
16		Capo Passero on Sicily	168.9	163.4	Nisi Stamfani
Total	268.0				

* Measurements used in this study are based on charts and geodetic parameters different from those used by the parties to the agreement. Slight discrepancies may, therefore, appear in any comparison.

** akra = cape, point; nisi = islet, island; nisos = island, islet; nisis = islet.

Continental Shelf Boundary: GREECE-ITALY

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