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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

Series A

LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 11

CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO-VENEZUELA

**The Geographer
Office of the Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research**

CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO-VENEZUELA

CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO-VENEZUELA

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of Venezuela signed an Agreement on February 26, 1942, relating to the division of the submarine areas of the Gulf of Paria. Ratifications were exchanged and the Agreement came into force on September 22, 1942.

The Gulf of Paria is a shallow inlet of the Atlantic Ocean between Venezuela and the island of Trinidad. The maximum depth is 150 fathoms in the Boca Grande, which is the northern entrance into the Gulf of Paria. This depth is outside the area delimited by the Agreement dividing the Gulf of Paria. In the middle of the Gulf the depths average from 10 to 20 fathoms.

This Agreement relating to the Gulf of Paria was the first international accord reached concerning the division of the continental shelf. Since the establishment of the Agreement, the then British colony of Trinidad and Tobago has become the independent country of Trinidad and Tobago. The new country acceded to the provisions of the Agreement. Both Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela are parties to the Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf.

The Agreement set forth the following principles:

Article 1

In this Treaty the term "submarine areas of the Gulf of Paria" denotes the sea-bed and sub-soil outside of the territorial waters of the High Contracting Parties to one or the other side of the lines A-B, B-Y and Y-X.

Article 2

(1) His Majesty the King declares that he for his part will not assert any claim to sovereignty or control over those parts of the submarine areas of the Gulf of Paria which lie westerly of the line A-B or southerly of the lines B-Y and Y-X respectively described in Article 3 of the present Treaty and that he will recognize any rights of sovereignty or control which have been or may hereafter be lawfully acquired by the United States of Venezuela over the said parts of the submarine areas of the Gulf of Paria.

(2) The President of the United States of Venezuela declares that he for his part will not assert any claim to sovereignty or control over those parts of the submarine areas of the Gulf of Paria which lie easterly of the line A-B or northerly of the lines B-Y and Y-X respectively, described in Article 3 of the present Treaty and that he will recognize any rights of sovereignty or control which have been or may hereafter be lawfully acquired by His Majesty the King over the said parts of the submarine areas of the Gulf of Paria.

Article 3

The lines A-B, B-Y and Y-X mentioned in the preceding Article are drawn on the annexed map and are defined as follows:

Line A-B runs from Point A, which is the intersection of the central meridian of the Island of Patos with the Southern limit of the territorial waters of the said Island, the approximate coordinates of which are: Latitude 10° 35' 04" N, Longitude 61° 51' 53" W. From there the line runs straight to Point B which is situated at the limit of the territorial waters of Venezuela at the point of their intersection with the meridian 62° 05' 08" W, the approximate latitude of which is 10° 02' 24" N.

Line B-Y runs from Point B, already established, and follows the limits of the territorial waters of Venezuela to Point Y, where the said limits intersect the parallel of 9° 57' 30" N, the approximate longitude of which is 61° 56' 40" W.

Line Y-X runs from Point Y, already established, and follows the said parallel of 9° 57' 30" N. to Point X, situated on the meridian of 61° 30' 00" W.

The Longitude of the central meridian of the Island of Patos to which this Article refers shall be determined by taking the mathematical half of the most eastern and the most western longitudes of the said Island.

Should the straight lines A-B or Y-X described in this Article intersect in their course the outside limit of the territorial waters of either of the two High Contracting Parties, the dividing line shall follow along the said limit until it reaches again the intersecting straight line in conformity with the stipulations in Article 1 and 5 of this Treaty, which exclude the bed of the sea and the subsoil of territorial waters.

The coordinates of points A, B and Y which are here given approximately shall be determined with exactness by the Commission provided for in Article 4 of this Treaty.

Article 4

(1) The High Contracting Parties shall, as soon as practicable after the coming into force of this Treaty, appoint a mixed Commission to take all necessary steps to demarcate the lines A-B, B-Y and Y-X by means of buoys or other visible methods on the surface of the sea or on the land as the case may be. Any buoys or other means employed shall, however, conform in all respects to the provisions of Article 6 of this Treaty.

(2) The manner in which this mixed Commission shall be constituted and the instructions to which it shall be subject for the fulfilment of its duties shall be laid down in a special protocol or by an exchange of notes.

Article 5

This Treaty refers solely to the submarine areas of the Gulf of Paria, and nothing herein shall be held to affect in any way the status of the islands, islets or rocks above the surface of the sea together with the territorial waters thereof.

Article 6

Nothing in this Treaty shall be held to affect in any way the status of the waters of the Gulf of Paria or any rights of passage or navigation on the surface of the seas outside the territorial waters of the Contracting Parties. In particular passage or navigation shall not be closed or be impeded by any works or installations which may be erected, which shall be of such a nature and shall be so constructed, placed, marked, buoyed and lighted, as not to constitute a danger or obstruction to shipping.

Article 7

Each of the High Contracting Parties shall take all practical measures to prevent the exploitation of any submarine areas claimed or occupied by him in the Gulf from causing the pollution of the territorial waters of the other by oil, mud or any other fluid or substance liable to contaminate the navigable waters or the foreshore and shall concert with the other to make the said measures as effective as possible.

Article 8

Each of the High Contracting Parties shall cause to be inserted in any concession which may be granted for the exploitation of submarine areas in the Gulf of Paria stipulations for securing the effective observance of the two preceding Articles, including a requirement for the use by the concessionaire of modern equipment, and shall cause the operation of any such concession to be supervised in order to ensure that the provisions of the present Treaty are complied with.

Article 9

All differences between the High Contracting Parties relating to the interpretation or execution of this Treaty shall be settled by such peaceful means as are recognized in International Law.

