



YTUMUN24

IMO

STUDY GUIDE

CHAIRBOARD MEMBER *Mehmet Polat*
CHAIRBOARD MEMBER *Eylül Su Karaman*
ACADEMIC ASSISTANT *Lara Kiran*

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1. Letter from the Secretary-General

Esteemed Participants of YTUMUN'24,

As the Secretary-General of Yildiz Technical University Model United Nations 2024, it is my utmost pleasure to express my warmest welcome to every one of you.

YTUMUN'24 aims to provide a platform for students to engage in diplomatic simulations and discuss pressing global issues. Delegates from all over the world will gather to represent different countries and work towards finding innovative solutions to complex problems. Through lively debates, negotiations, and resolutions, YTUMUN'24 fosters critical thinking, diplomacy, and teamwork among participants.

Our conference has been very well prepared with the contributions of our brilliant and hard working academic team. I am beyond pleased to have worked with every one of them and to have been given the opportunity of coordinating these excellent individuals.

As YTUMUN'24 Academic Team we cannot wait to have you all witness the outcome of our endless effort making the second annual edition of YTUMUN. I hope this conference makes a difference in every related way one can think of. Our goal is to make sure every single participant leaves with so much more than they had come with and widens their vision and perspective on these complex issues which they will be discussing in the committee sessions throughout these 3 days.

I am eagerly looking forward to meet each one of you and wish everyone fruitful debates and success in the upcoming conference. Together, let us be the difference we all are looking for in ourselves and our world. Let us aim high and work cooperatively in order to make this conference memorable. Together, let us reach for the stars.

Best Regards,

Dilay Örüng
Secretary-General of YTUMUN'24



2. Letter from the Chairs

Distinguished Participants,

With utmost enthusiasm, we extend our heartfelt greetings as we come together for the 2024 edition of Yıldız Technical University Model United Nations (YTUMUN). As your committee boards members we, Eylül Su Karaman and Mehmet Polat, are currently pursuing studies in Economics at Istanbul Technical University and Bahçeşehir University, respectively.

The prospect of engaging in four days of profound deliberation and enjoyable social gatherings with each of you fills us with immense joy. Throughout your tenure at YTU, our dedication remains steadfast in ensuring you encounter an exceptional experience.

The topics outlined on the IMO agenda bear significant local implications. We eagerly anticipate embracing a diverse range of perspectives on these pressing matters. We implore each of you to embody the collaborative and committed spirit of MUN, fostering collective efforts in formulating robust resolutions.

While this study guide aims to aid your research and conference preparation, we urge you to delve deeper into the subject matter—explore your country's stance and attain comprehensive knowledge. Your thorough preparation will undoubtedly enhance the richness of debates with fellow participants at YTUMUN.

Before concluding, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed Secretary General, Ms. Dilay Örüng, for granting us this opportunity. Additionally, we express our sincere appreciation to the diligent academic and organizing team of this esteemed conference. We are immensely grateful for the contributions of Lara Kıran, our academic assistant.

For any inquiries regarding the conference, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We wish you the very best in your preparations and eagerly anticipate your active participation in the conference!

Warm regards,

Eylül Su Karaman & Mehmet Polat
Chairboard of IMO

eylulssu@gmail.com

mehmetpolat0018@gmail.com



3. Introduction

3.1. Introduction to the Committee



Since its inception in 1948, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has served as a crucial pillar of stability, prosperity, and regulation on the world's seas. As a specialised agency of the United Nations (UN), the IMO is tasked with safeguarding the safety and security of maritime shipping and preventing pollution of the marine and atmospheric environments by ships. With 174 member countries and various governing bodies such as the Assembly, the Council, and numerous committees, the IMO holds exclusive authority to establish standards within the global shipping industry. It plays a pivotal role in shaping

regulations and fostering a safer and more sustainable maritime environment.

The maritime industry has flourished since ancient times, serving as a primary avenue for nations to enhance their trade, technology, knowledge, and cultural exchange. Throughout history, maritime engagement has correlated with rapid advancements in prosperity, military strength, culture, and trade, as evidenced by the great empires of antiquity such as the Romans, Carthaginians, Persians, Spanish, Portuguese, Ottomans, French, and British.

However, maritime activities have also been fraught with challenges, including chaos, conflict, and uncertainty. Recognizing the need for order, sea-faring nations have historically established laws to govern maritime practices. Examples include the Rhodian Maritime Law of 800 BCE, the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which delineated maritime boundaries in the "New World," and the Declaration of Paris in 1856, which set forth principles of maritime warfare during the Crimean War.

The 20th century witnessed a proliferation of treaties and agreements concerning maritime affairs, spurred by the upheaval of the Second World War and the subsequent reevaluation of global systems. In response to these shifts, nations convened in Geneva in 1948 to establish the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), later renamed the International Maritime Organization in 1982. This organisation continues to uphold the safety, fairness, security, and sustainability of shipping while protecting marine ecosystems from pollution caused by ships.



3.2. Introduction to the Agenda Item

Definition of Continental Shelf

Article 76 (1) of UNCLOS defines the continental shelf as follows:

“The continental shelf of a coastal State comprises the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance”¹

In history, like lands, states want to take control of the seas and oceans. With the development of ships that can handle the ocean tornados and over 20m waves, and with the lead of Spain and Portugal, western european states started to dominate seas and oceans. With colonialism and imperialism, the known world expanded, production increased, and pioneered the first industrial revolution. However, as known, colonialism and imperialism came with unforgettable tragedies.

Clashes in the mainland never stopped, even leading to clashes in seas and islands. Over the years, the world map has settled and human beings have entered in peace times. However, diplomacy became more important than red brass and bullets. In the modern world it is rare to see conventional war. Rather than conventional war, countries choose to clash financially and by diplomacy. Claims on the expansion of states' continental sea shelf is one of the ways to demonstrate dominance amongst the other countries.

Islands and islets are often traded between countries after wars as some kind of payment. Before settlement of EEZ and international continental shelf agreements, islands and islets were mostly used for bases of countries that followed aggressive expansionary policies. For example, we can discuss the Treaty of Lausanne which swapped 12 Aegean islands between the Kingdom of Italy and the Ottoman Empire. Hundred years ago, Aegean islands and countless islets were only used for controlling trade roads and providing both military and political bases for Italy. However, with the settlement of EEZs and continental shelf agreements, Aegean islands and islets played an important role in the current debates in the area.

¹ Art. 76 (1) unClos.



4. Key Vocabulary

1. Stakeholders: Individuals, organisations, or entities with an interest or involvement in the maritime sector, including governments, shipping companies, and non-governmental organisations.

2. Compliance: Adherence to established international maritime regulations through inspections, audits, and reporting mechanisms.

3. Conventions: International agreements or treaties established by the IMO to govern various aspects of maritime safety, security, and environmental protection.

4. UNCLOS: The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), also called **the Law of the Sea Convention or the Law of the Sea Treaty**, is an international agreement that establishes a legal framework for all marine and maritime activities.

5. Continental Shelf: The continental shelf is the submerged part of a continent that extends from the shoreline to the continental slope. A continental shelf usually stretches from the coastline to depths ranging from 100 to 200 metres. On average, continental shelves are approximately 65 kilometres (40 miles) wide. In most cases, these shelves merely continue the landmass of the continent beneath the ocean's edges (Rafferty, 2012).

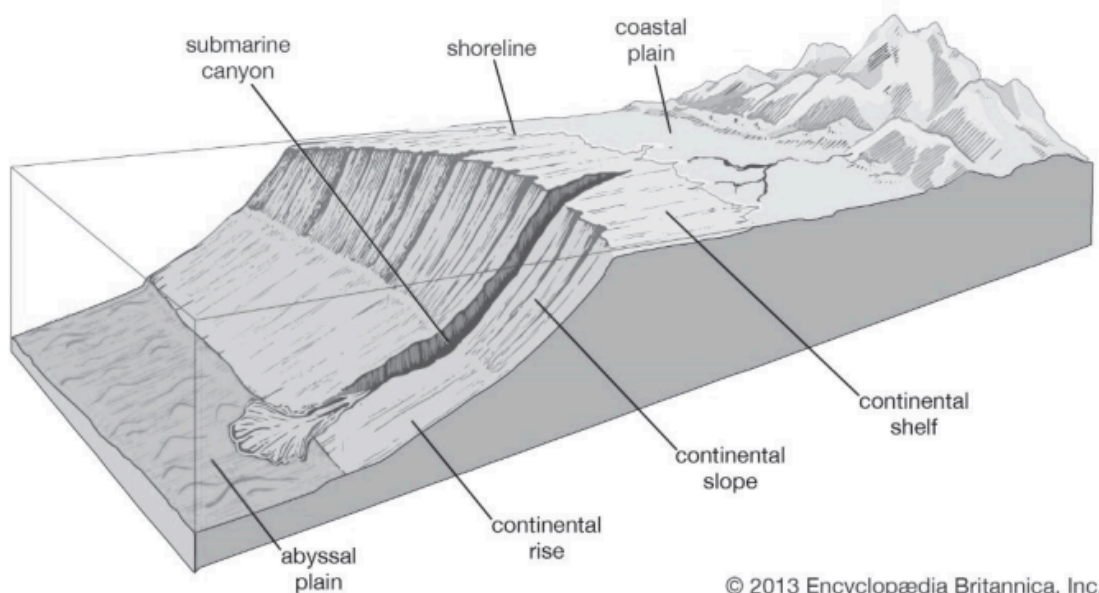


Figure 1: Continental Shelf Edge



Source: <http://cache.eb.com/eimageid=3173&rendTypeId=4.jpg>

6. Islet: An islet is a small island, often uninhabited or sparsely populated, that is typically smaller than a standard island.

7. Bilateral Agreements: Bilateral agreements are agreements or treaties made between two parties or nations to address specific issues or matters of mutual interest.

8. International Arbitration: International arbitration is a process where disputes between parties from different countries are resolved by an impartial third party outside of national courts.

9. Diplomatic Negotiations: Diplomatic negotiations are discussions and exchanges between representatives of different countries aimed at resolving conflicts, reaching agreements, or addressing mutual interests through peaceful means.

10. Sovereignty: Sovereignty refers to the supreme authority or power of a state to govern itself and its territory without interference from external sources. It encompasses the state's ability to make and enforce laws, manage its internal affairs, and interact with other states on the international stage as an independent entity.

11. Territorial Waters: refer to the area of the ocean adjacent to a coastal state's land territory, extending up to 12 nautical miles from its baseline. Within these waters, the coastal state exercises sovereignty, including exclusive rights over the airspace above, the seabed and subsoil below, and the water column.

12. Maritime Boundary Delimitation: Maritime boundary delimitation is the process of establishing boundaries between coastal states' maritime zones to define their jurisdiction over marine resources.

13. Imia/Kardak: Refers to a group of small, barren islets. The conflicting maps of the area led to a significant conflict between Greece and Turkey in 1996. This conflict was notable as it involved disputed sovereign lands rather than just nautical territories, marking a significant escalation in Aegean tensions.

14. Grey Zones: The concept pertains to territories in the Aegean whose Greek sovereignty has been challenged by Turkish politicians and academics in recent years. While the exact islands classified as "grey zones" remain unclear, they are generally considered areas of Turkish military and economic interest. Notably, Imia/Kardak is regarded as the most prominent example of a "grey zone."



5. Focused Overview

Description and Features: The continental shelf can be described as a shallow continental shelf in comparison to that of deep basin. In general, it extends to a depth of about 200 metres, though this can vary depending on activity and changes in tectonics and sea level.

Legal Basis: The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea defines the rights and responsibilities of the states regarding the continental shelf. UNCLOS defines the continental shelf as the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas extending beyond the territorial sea of a state up to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baseline where the continental margin does not extend to that distance.

Dispute Resolution: Commonly, there arise quarrels between neighbouring states over issues of the extent of the continental shelf and the rights to exploit its resources. They are usually quite intricate, taking into account geo-logical, legal, and political factors. UNCLOS has provided for dispute resolutions, which consist of negotiation, mediation, and arbitration procedures.

Resource Exploration and Exploitation: The continental shelf abounds in natural resources like oil, gas, and minerals. Therefore, states explore and exploit these resources to fill their energy and economic needs. However, exploration and exploitation of continental shelf resources should be done in the mode of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and environmental rules. Continental shelves are very critical marine ecosystems with diverse varieties of marine species. Because these are fragile ecosystems, there will be a need for protection measures concerning the continental shelf against the impacts of human activities, such as resource extraction, shipping, and pollution.

Geopolitical Implications: Control of the continental shelf has substantial geopolitical implications. Control could help secure and enhance a country's economic and strategic positions. States may assert sovereignty over contested continental shelf areas to secure access to precious resources and strategic maritime routes.

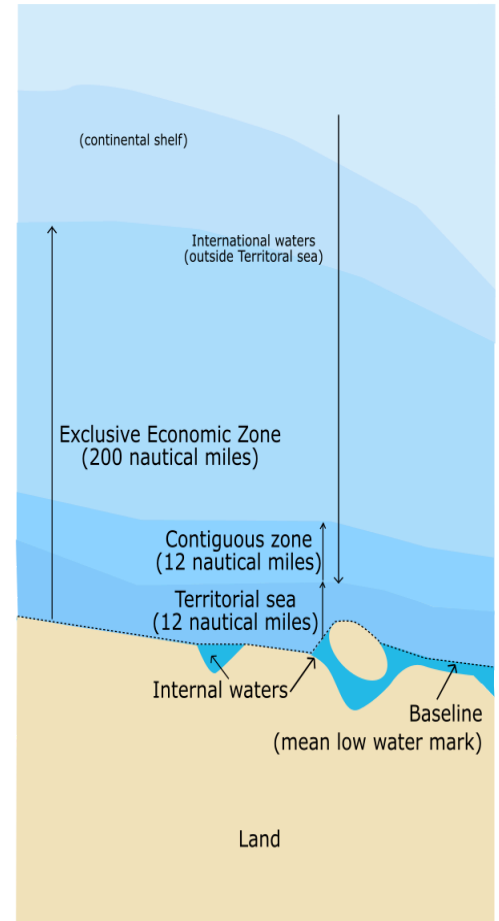
As observed, countries are allowed to use EEZs as their territory with some limitations. However, there are some disputes between countries on the topic of exclusive economic zones. For example, Greece and Türkiye agreed upon 6 nautical miles in Aegean



sea. However, the Greek government wants to increase their Exclusive Economic Zone to 12 nautical miles. With this act, both Turkish and Greek EEZ increases but Turkish authorities strongly disagrees with this action due to the fact that it lowers the local power of Türkiye on the topic.

In order to have a better scope on the topic, we have to differ three terminological ideas between themselves.

1. **Exclusive Economic Zone:** An “exclusive economic zone,” or “EEZ” is an area of the ocean, generally extending 200 nautical miles (230 miles) beyond a nation's territorial sea, within which a coastal nation has jurisdiction over both living and nonliving resources.²
2. **Contiguous Zone:** The contiguous zone is an area of sea contiguous to and extending seaward of the territorial sea, in which the coastal State may exercise the control necessary to prevent and punish infringements of its customs, fiscal, immigration, and sanitary laws within its territory or territorial sea.³
3. **Territorial Sea:** Territorial waters, in international law, that area of the sea immediately adjacent to the shores of a state and subject to the territorial jurisdiction of that state. Territorial waters are thus to be distinguished on the one hand from the high seas, which are common to all countries, and on the other from internal or inland waters, such as lakes wholly surrounded by the national territory or certain bays or estuaries.⁴



With that being said, discussing 200 nautical miles on the Aegean Sea is impossible due to the fact that between Samos Island and Karaburun peninsula is only 1.6 kilometres (approx. 1.2 nautical miles). So within that topic, countries may go into more complex procedures. International law, geopolitical, historical factors will be the main components of the new agreement. Mostly, agreements are approved by international courts to ensure the agreements are backed by international maritime law.

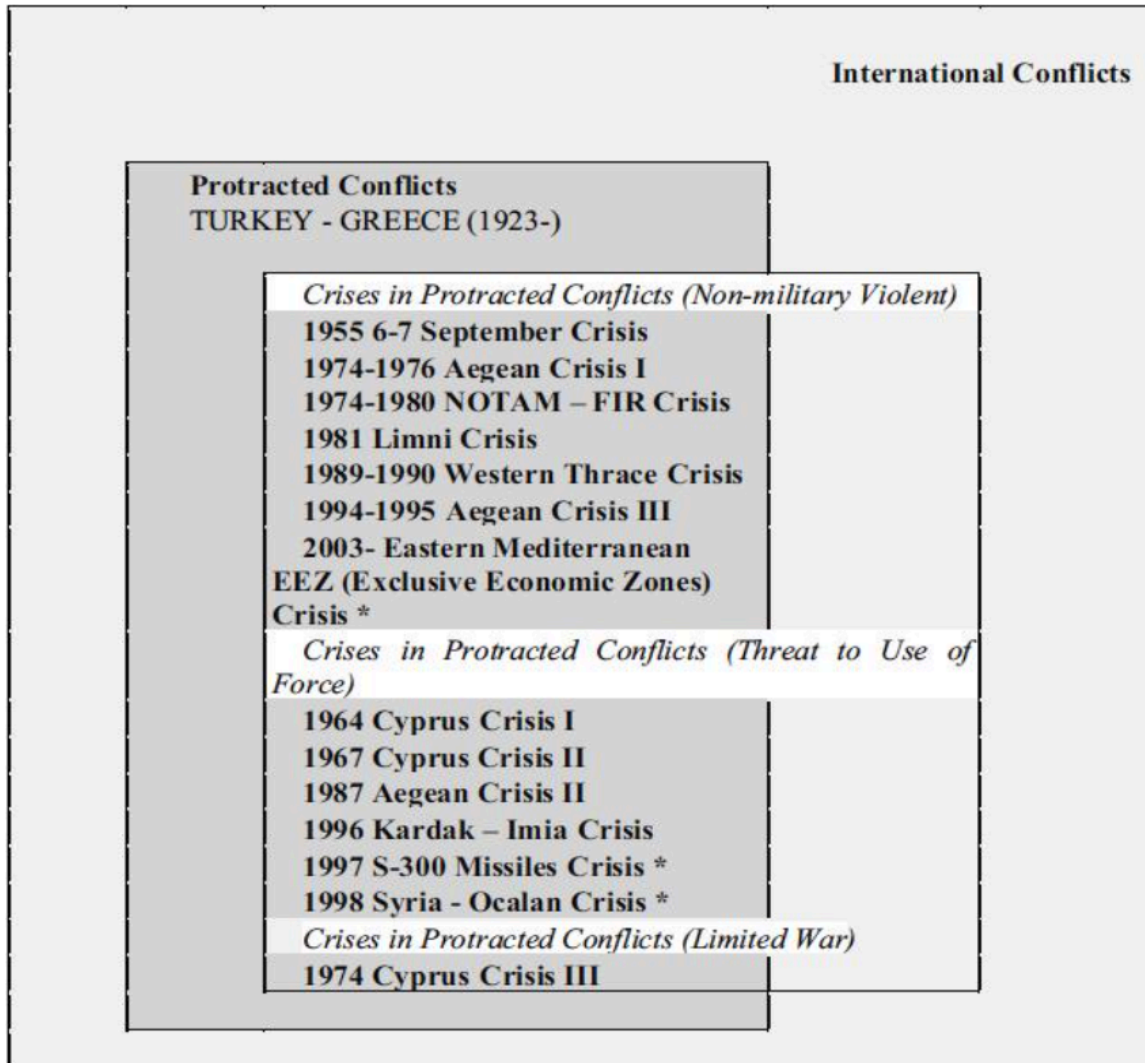
² What Is the “EEZ”? : Exploration Facts: NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research. oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/facts/useez.html.

³ Hugo, Caminos. “Contiguous Zone.” *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, 1 Mar. 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/e1151>.

⁴ “Territorial Waters | International Law and Maritime Boundaries.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15 Mar. 2024, www.britannica.com/topic/territorial-waters.



6. History of Events



Source: Prepared by the authors based on Brecher, *International Political Earthquakes...*, p. 38.

* The cases with * denote those crises in which Greece was indirectly involved.

6.1. Imia/Kardak Crisis (December 1995)

Imia/Kardak islets are located 7 kilometres off from Muğla. Before this crisis, Kardak was not on the agenda of both the Türkiye and Greece governments. On 25 December 1995, Turkish cargo ship Figen Akat crashed on Kardak and Greece authorities contacted Figen Akats' captain announcing that they are ready to help. However, Figen Akat stated that they are on the Turkish continental shelf and they will accept help from only Turkish authorities. Figen Akat managed to escape from islets with their own engine power. However, this dispute will evolve into a crisis between Türkiye and Greece.



One Greek priest and one local Greek mayor went to Kardak with the Greek flag and declared it as their islet. Later, Turkish journalists went to Kardak and replaced the Greek flag with the Turkish flag. The Greek army responded to this action by blockading the Kardak and arm the islets. After that action, the Turkish Prime minister responded to the Greek authorities by stating that the Turkish army is ready for a Greek-Turkish war. But it was quite dangerous for the Turkish side because in the mentioned years, the Turkish army has been dealing with the terror organisation PKK in the east side of Türkiye. Also, Tansu Çillers' coalition government has lost the trust within their citizens and Erbakan was rising as it shows in the polls. So Tansu Çiller may use this opportunity to regain the trust of their voters. In this sense, Greek authorities do not want to strengthen the reigning power in Türkiye. So, Greek military and politicians want to avoid Tansu Çiller creating a common enemy amongst their citizens and avoid her to regain the votes she already lost.

Kardak contains two islets in its complex. Figen Akat crashed on east Kardak, but the Greek blockade was blocking both east and west Kardak. Tansu Çiller ordered their army to get on the islets and put up the Turkish flag. Turkish SaS and SaT commandos bypassed the Greek blockade and managed to raise the Turkish flag in the west Kardak. With this, the Turkish government managed to establish the status quo ante bellum.

The Kardak crisis was one of the many crises between Türkiye and Greece. Both being members of NATO does not stop them from continuing their claims on Aegean Sea and its islands.

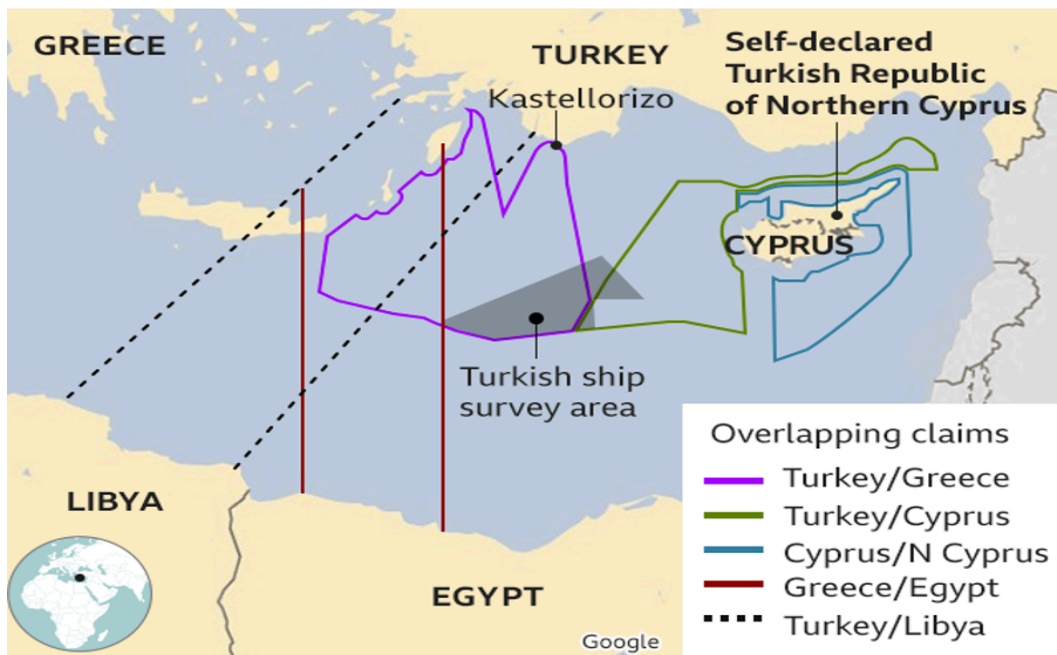
6.2. UNCLOS on Topic

An important step in establishing the legal framework for regulating marine operations in the Aegean Sea and beyond has been done with the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea by Greece and Türkiye. UNCLOS contains clear provisions for determining maritime borders, establishing the exclusive economic zone , and protecting the environment and marine resources .

Enrolling in the organisation meant Greece and Türkiye's commitment to follow international legal norms and principles to regulate claims for maritime operations. At the same time, Greece and Türkiye have not ceased to dispute maritime boundaries and EEZs. This remains true in the Aegean Sea where intricate territorial claims, geopolitical dynamics, and historical complaints have undermined efforts to fairly apply UNCLOS measures to establish mutually acceptable solutions accepted by all. The failure to solve long standing issues, regardless of sporadic diplomatic manoeuvres and mediation attempts, has only served to exacerbate perpetual tensions between the two nations.



While UNCLOS provides an international framework for peacefully settling maritime conflicts through adjudication, arbitration, or negotiation, generating political will for compromise and maintaining open communication on thorny topics demands Herculean effort from all sides. Sustainable progress necessitates appreciation for differing perspectives, creative thinking beyond entrenched positions, and confidence that cooperation can curb conflict. Maintaining security, collaboration, and the peaceful settlement of problems in the region will depend on Greece and Türkiye adhering to UNCLOS principles and having constructive conversation as they negotiate their maritime disputes in the Aegean Sea and beyond.



5.

7. Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue and International Cooperation

For ages, Türkiye and Greece have pursued security-focused foreign policies regarding the Aegean issue. The disputes over maritime and airspace jurisdiction in the Aegean Sea, along with perceived threats to the safety of Türkiye's western coast (and Greece's islands in the Aegean Sea), have been the primary drivers of strained relations between the two countries. This has led to a security-oriented approach in their foreign policies toward each other. The securitization of the Aegean issue has led to political crises, hindering the development of political, economic relations, and diplomatic negotiations between the two nations.

During the early 2000s, Türkiye's traditional security-focused foreign policy toward the Aegean issue gradually shifted towards a more dialogue-oriented approach in response to



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calls from the European Union (EU). This led to the resolution of political crises stemming from the Aegean issue. However, with deteriorating EU-Türkiye relations after 2010, both sides have reverted to security-focused foreign policies regarding the Aegean issue. This shift indicates a broader change in Turkish foreign policy toward Greece and the Aegean issue, moving away from dialogue, diplomacy, and cooperation toward security-oriented approaches seen in the 1990s. The ongoing struggle between Türkiye and Greece to assert control over their respective zones in the Aegean Sea is a key factor driving this return to security-focused policies and discourse.

Furthermore, the decline in the quality and stability of EU-Türkiye relations in recent years has hindered the EU's ability to influence Türkiye's policy toward the Aegean issue in line with EU norms and calls for dialogue and diplomacy. As a result, the resolution of the Aegean issue through peaceful means has become increasingly challenging.

Greece and Türkiye grapple with a multitude of intertwined contentious issues. These include the delineation of territorial waters and national airspace, demarcation of exclusive economic zones, allocation of flight information regions (FIR), and demilitarisation of Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. Among these, resolving the Aegean territorial water delineation stands out as a crucial matter. According to various international agreements, such as the 1923 Lausanne Convention on the Straits, the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty, and the 1947 Paris Treaty, these disputes are mandated to be resolved through bilateral negotiations.

Nevertheless, Greece contends that the sole dispute in the Aegean Sea pertains to the delineation of the continental shelf, advocating for resolution through the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Türkiye, on the contrary, rejects ICJ involvement and advocates for direct negotiations to settle the issue, citing its rights enshrined in the aforementioned treaties. Türkiye asserts that direct talks would better safeguard its rights and foster confidence and amity between the two nations, potentially leading to mutual concessions. Türkiye initially proposed talks on Confidence Building Measures in 2000 to foster better relations between the two nations. This process, still underway, aims to decrease the potential for conflict in the Aegean region and enhance mutual trust. To date, 29 Confidence Building Measures have been agreed upon. Additionally, discussions between the Turkish and Greek Foreign Ministers in New York on February 1, 2002, and in Istanbul on February 12, 2002, resulted in plans for "exploratory contacts" concerning the Aegean matter. The inaugural meeting under this framework took place on March 1, 2016, in Athens, followed by the 12th exploratory contacts session in Ankara on March 12, 2002. Turkey hopes that both sides will recognize these efforts as just and enduring, fostering the groundwork for a comprehensive solution to the Aegean issue. However, periodic tensions persist, notably highlighted by the agreement signed between Turkey and the Libyan national government in late 2019, which addressed the delineation of maritime jurisdiction areas. This development reignited discussions on the Aegean Sea continental shelf matter between Turkey and Greece, sparking a renewed period of high tensions between the two nations.



There are two documents published by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs which states the issue about the dispute between Greece and Türkiye:

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

EK-II

The two parties have agreed on the following confidence building measures:

1. Both parties recognize the obligation to respect the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of each other and their rights to use the high seas and international airspace of the Aegean.
2. In conducting national military activities in the high seas and the international airspace, the two parties shall endeavour to avoid interfering with smooth shipping and air-traffic as ensured in accordance with international instruments, rules and regulations. This would contribute to the elimination of unwarranted sources of tension and reducing the risks of collision.
3. The two parties have agreed that, the planning and the conduct of national military exercises in the high seas and the international airspaces which require the promulgation of a NOTAM or any other notification or warning should be carried out in such a way as to avoid also to the maximum extent possible the following :
 - a) The isolation of certain areas.
 - b) The blocking of exercise areas for long periods of time.
 - c) Their conduct during the tourist peak period (1 July-1 September)* and main national and religious holidays.

It is understood that the planning and execution of all national military activities will be carried out in accordance with the existing international rules, regulations and procedures.

4. With a view to achieving the above, and without prejudice to the existing international regulations and procedures, the two sides will proceed, when required, to due communication through diplomatic channels.
5. The provisions of this memorandum of understanding shall have effect and be implemented in full conformity with the provisions of the Davos joint Press Communiqué.

Athens, 27 May 1988

The Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Hellenic Republic

Karolos Papoulias

The Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Turkey

Mesut Yılmaz

* For 1988, 7 July - 1 September



GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS
ON THE HIGH SEAS AND INTERNATIONAL AIRSPACE

1. The military and other activities carried out by the ships and aircraft of both countries on the high seas and international airspace will be conducted in accordance with international law and international custom, instruments, rules, regulations and procedures.
2. In accordance with the above;
 - A. The naval units of the parties will abide by the following guidelines:
 - a) They will refrain from acts of harassment of each other while operating in the high seas in accordance with international law and custom.
 - b) They will act in full conformity with international law, rules, regulations and procedures as well as military custom and courtesy.
 - c) Naval units engaged in the surveillance of ships of the other party during firing operations and other military activities in accordance with international law, instruments, rules, regulations and procedures, shall maintain a position which would not hamper their smooth conduct.
 - B. The air force units in conducting military activities in the international airspace will abide by the following guidelines:
 - a) They will act in full conformity with international law and in particular international custom, instruments, rules, regulations and procedures.
 - b) Pilots of the aircraft of the parties shall display utmost caution when in proximity of aircraft of the other party and shall not manoeuvre or react in a manner that would be hazardous to the safety of the flight and/or affect the conduct of the mission of the aircraft.
3. To promote the climate of confidence, whenever there are claims of acts contrary to the above, the sides will in the first place inform each other through diplomatic channels prior to releasing official statements.

Istanbul, September 8, 1988

A. Mesut YILMAZ
Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Turkey

Karolos PAPOULIAS
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Hellenic Republic



8. Major Parties and Organizations Involved

European Union (EU): According to EU regulations, Turkey's disputes over borders with its neighbouring countries pose a challenge to its EU membership aspirations. Greece has leveraged this aspect to bring its disagreements with Turkey into the EU realm, as seen in the 1999 Helsinki Declaration, which marked the beginning of Turkey's EU accession negotiations. The EU tends to support Greece, safeguarding the interests of its member states against external challenges. Prior to 1999, the European Parliament voiced concerns over Turkey's actions, notably during the 1996 Imia crisis, condemning Turkey's actions as provocative and emphasising Greece's sovereignty, which is viewed as part of the EU's external borders. The EU consistently urges Turkey to address its disputes with Greece and maintain amicable relations, a stance reiterated in various EU documents and progress reports. These reports call on Turkey to renounce its "casus belli" declaration and adhere to international law principles. The European Parliament consistently expresses apprehension over escalating military tensions in the Aegean and perceives Greece's borders as integral to the EU's external boundaries, aligning with Greece's standpoint on the Aegean dispute.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO): In 1957, NATO's Military Committee approved a document granting Greece control over the Aegean Sea up to its territorial waters, while giving Turkey control over the Black Sea up to its territorial waters. However, uncertainties about the future led to a gradual shift in NATO's Air Defense Area of Responsibility towards Turkey's territorial border. These arrangements persisted until Greece left NATO's military wing following the 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation. Greece later sought to rejoin, but initial resistance was met. Efforts to reintegrate Greece into NATO intensified under Alexander Haig's leadership. General Bernard Rogers, appointed NATO Commander-in-Chief in 1979, initiated the Rogers Plan aimed at reconciling Greece and Turkey within NATO. Signed in 1980, the plan's vague language allowed both parties to interpret it to their advantage. However, Greece, under the Papandreou government, reneged on its commitments outlined in the agreement, leading to tensions between the two countries. Greece's reluctance to join NATO's military wing, particularly under Papandreou's government, complicated efforts to resolve disputes with Turkey. While Greece viewed Turkey as a threat to national security, Turkey sought reassurances against potential Soviet threats within the NATO framework. This dynamic contradicted the alliance's objectives and hindered efforts to improve Turkish-Greek relations.



Cyprus:

The agreements of 1960 established a state of affairs in Cyprus that prevented its annexation by either Greece or Turkey. Instead, a new state emerged with an emphasis on political equality between its two communities, backed by Britain, Greece, and Turkey. Initially lauded by Turkish leaders as a potential bolster to Turkish-Greek relations, tensions reemerged in 1963 when Makarios pursued constitutional amendments, sparking inter-communal violence.

Turkey, acting as a guarantor state, initially sought resolution through dialogue before considering military intervention due to escalating attacks on Turkish Cypriots, despite lacking military infrastructure. Turkey's deployment of deterrent measures helped quell violence and end the crisis, supported by US mediation.

Subsequent crises, notably in 1967 and beyond, prompted Turkey to focus on military readiness, leading to a successful intervention in 1974. Though different governments handled each crisis, Turkey maintained a consistent national stance on Cyprus. Employing various strategies from coercive diplomacy to limited escalation, Turkey aimed to restore order while avoiding wider conflict. Despite clashes, Turkey refrained from expanding the conflict, demonstrating a commitment to peace and cooperation, including diplomatic outreach to Greece.

9. Current Situation



⁵ Doğan, M. (2019, March 20). *AEGEAN SEA CONTINENTAL SHELF (GREECE v. TURKEY).pdf*. Uni-corvinus. https://www.academia.edu/38590976/AEGEAN_SEA_CONTINENTAL_SHELF_GREECE_v_TURKEY_pdf



After the Imia/Kardak crisis, the Turkish government launched a comprehensive initiative on March 24, 1996, aimed at addressing Turkish-Greek relations. This initiative encompassed four main dimensions: advocating for peaceful solutions to Aegean issues through various mechanisms, proposing a political framework for comprehensive and peaceful resolution, suggesting a security framework through Confidence Building Measures, and promoting a code of conduct to prevent unilateral actions and maintain stability. Under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan since 2014, Turkish foreign policy has placed an emphasis on nationalism and expanding Turkish influence in the region, particularly in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. This approach has been characterised by appeals to Turkish pride and nationalistic sentiments.

A significant moment occurred on September 2, 2019, when Erdoğan appeared in a photograph with a map during an official ceremony at the National Defense University of Türkiye in Istanbul. The map depicted a large portion of the Aegean Sea as "Türkiye's Blue Homeland," extending to the eastern coast of Crete and encompassing Greek islands without indicating Greek territorial waters. This concept, known as "Türkiye's Blue Homeland," reflects an irredentist and expansionist doctrine developed by elements within the Turkish Chief of Staff in 2006.

Adding to the tensions, on November 13, 2019, Türkiye submitted claims for Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) in the Eastern Mediterranean to the United Nations. These claims directly conflicted with Greek assertions in the same areas, including regions near the Aegean island of Rhodes and south of Crete. Greece condemned Türkiye's claims as legally unfounded, arbitrary, and violative of its sovereignty.

Furthermore, on November 27, 2019, Türkiye and the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Libya signed a contentious maritime boundary treaty, re-establishing EEZs for both states in the Mediterranean. This agreement faced international criticism, particularly from Greece, which viewed it as a violation of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In response to these developments, Greece, along with Egypt, signed its own maritime delimitation treaty in the summer of 2020. However, Türkiye rejected this agreement, asserting that a maritime boundary between Greece and Egypt does not exist and declaring the treaty "null and void."

These ongoing disputes, fueled by Türkiye's maritime claims and agreements, have significantly heightened tensions in the region. They have also expanded the scope of the Aegean Dispute beyond its traditional boundaries, potentially involving neighbouring states such as Egypt, Libya, Cyprus, and Israel.

⁶ *Türk Dış Politikası Kriz İncelemeleri | Turkey's Protracted Foreign Policy Conflicts: Cyprus and Aegean Crises.* (2019, March 28).

<https://www.tdpkrizleri.org/2019/03/28/turkey-s-protracted-foreign-policy-conflicts-cyprus-and-aegean-crises/>



10. Questions to be Answered

- Are the existing measures adequate and capable of ending the dispute in the Aegean Sea? If not, how can states and their local governments manage and combat the issue?
- How can the past implementations related to continental shelf and the dispute be linked to the situation in Aegean Sea?
- What is the current situation in the Aegean Sea and what problems need to be prioritised when it comes to solutions?
- What are the responsibilities of the IMO towards the Aegean Sea dispute and how can we fulfil them?
- How can the fairness of the Aegean Sea's continental shelf be ensured?
- Should the disputing nations negotiate their issues bilaterally or through mediation?
- Should the delimitation of airspace and maritime boundaries be made through mediation or through a judicial process in international law?
- What are each side's "red lines," and where would they be willing to compromise?
- How can the economic, logistical, and military needs of both sides be mediated?
- Is the status of the Aegean necessarily a zero-sum matter, or is cooperation possible?

11. Further Readings

[The Outstanding Aegean Issues / Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

[Türkiye's Views Regarding The Settlement Of The Aegean Issues](#)

[Issues of Greek - Turkish Relations - Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

[Greece's Bilateral Relations: Türkiye](#)

[THE AEGEAN SEA - REFERENCE DOCUMENTS / Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

