

Qatar-United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi)

Report Number 7-9

Agreement on Settlement of Maritime Boundary Lines and Sovereign Rights over Islands between Qatar and Abu Dhabi

Signed: 20 March 1969

Entered into force: 20 March 1969

Published at: Limits in the Seas No. 18 (1970)
I Canadian Annex 175 (1983)
II Libyan Annex No. 19 (1983)
I Conforti & Francalanci 115 (1979)
National Legislative Series, UN Doc. No. ST/LEG/SER.B/16, p. 403 (1974)
28 Basic Oil Laws and Concession Contracts (Middle East) A-O (1970)
1 The International Law of Ocean Development: Basic Documents 419 (1976)

I SUMMARY

The agreement between Abu Dhabi and Qatar resolved a longstanding dispute over several islands and delimited the boundary between the parties' continental shelves. The agreement also provides for 'equal rights of ownership' and revenue-sharing with respect to the Al-Bunduq oil field. Abu Dhabi (now a member of the United Arab Emirates) and Qatar are adjacent states that share a concave coastline on the Arabian side of the Gulf. Their continental shelf boundary is approximately 115 nautical miles (n.m.) in length and connects four points. The landward and seaward termini are equidistant points. One of the turning points coincides with the location of an oil well and the other is a negotiated point with no apparent basis. It is assumed that the boundary also involves a 3-mile arc around the island of Dayyinah, although this is nowhere mentioned in the agreement.

The agreement entered into force upon signature.

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while not constructed as an equidistant line, nevertheless approximates such a line. Point A, the seaward terminus, is approximately equidistant from the Abu Dhabi, Qatar, and Iran mainlands. Point D, the landward terminus, is situated at the intersection of the parties' 3-mile territorial sea limits, and is therefore also an equidistant point.

5 Islands, Rocks, Reefs, and Low-Tide Elevations Considerations

Shoals close to the Abu Dhabi mainland were used in establishing the seaward terminus of the boundary, which is equidistant from Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Iran.

6 Baseline Considerations

Neither state has declared a system of baselines and baseline considerations were not a factor in the delimitation of the Abu Dhabi-Qatar boundary.

7 Geological and Geomorphological Considerations

Geology and geomorphology did not affect the location of the boundary. The seabed in the vicinity of the boundary is very shallow (10 meters to 40 meters) and devoid of any distinguishing geomorphological features.

8 Method of Delimitation Considerations

The delimitation involved a selective use of equidistance modified to take account of special circumstances (specifically, the location of an existing oil well and an island located approximately midway between the parties' coasts). The seaward terminus of the boundary is equidistant from Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Iran. From there, the boundary proceeds to the Al-Bunduq No. 1 well, which was drilled by ADMA prior to the delimitation. From this point, the boundary proceeds on a line that is at certain points equidistant from the islands of Arzanah (Abu Dhabi) and Shara'iwah (Qatar) to a negotiated point with no apparent basis. The previously disputed island of Dayyinah, which is allocated to Abu Dhabi by the agreement, lies on Qatar's side of the boundary but within 3 miles of it. It is assumed that the parties intended the continental shelf boundary to follow the 3-mile limit around Dayyinah. The boundary then continues to the landward terminus, which is defined as the point where the territorial seas of the two states intersect at the mouth of the Khaur Al'Adid and is, therefore, an equidistant point.

9 Technical Considerations

The State Department Geographer has noted that the coordinates specified in the agreement for the turning point that coincides with the Al-Bunduq No. 1

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V REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL READINGS

The boundary is discussed in the following sources:

- A.A. AL-HAKIM, *THE MIDDLE EASTERN STATES AND THE LAW OF THE SEA* (1979)
 Amin, *Customary Rules of Delimitation of the Continental Shelf: The Gulf States Practice*, 11
JOURNAL OF MARITIME LAW AND COMMERCE 509 (1980)
 Gault, *Offshore Boundary Delimitation in the Arabian/Persian Gulf*, in *OCEAN BOUNDARY
 MAKING: REGIONAL ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS* (D. M. Johnston and P. M. Saunders, eds.
 1988)
 Lagoni, *Oil and Gas Deposits across National Frontiers*, 73 *AJ.I.L.* 215 (1979)
 Historical aspects of the parties' dispute over islands are discussed in the following works:
 H.N. AL-BAHARNA, *THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE ARABIAN GULF STATES* (1968)
 D.W. BOWETT, *THE LEGAL REGIME OF ISLANDS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW* (1978)
 Hay, *The Persian Gulf States and their Boundary Problems*, 120 *Geographical Journal*, 431
 (1954)

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