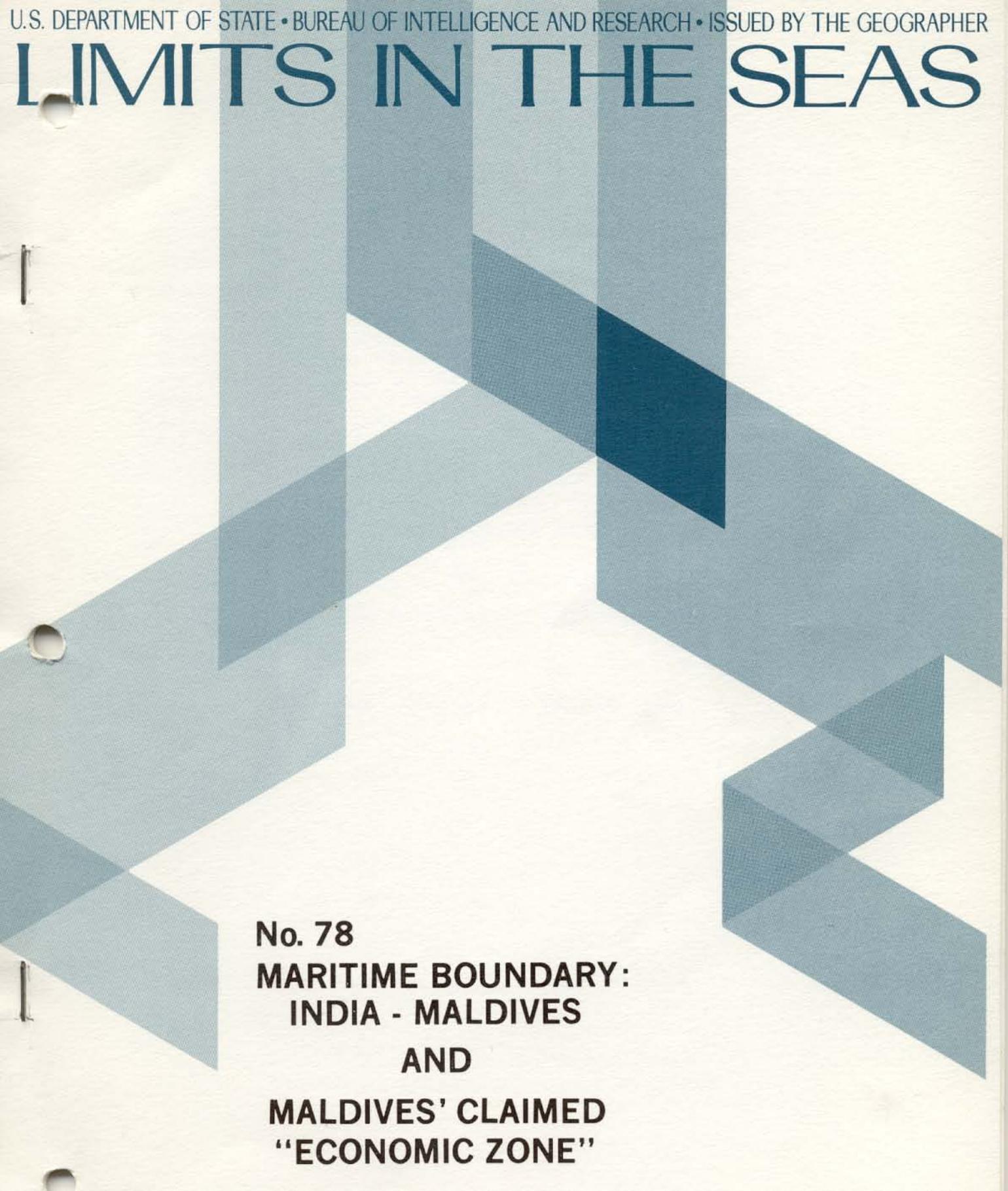


# LIMITS IN THE SEAS



**No. 78**

**MARITIME BOUNDARY:  
INDIA - MALDIVES**

**AND**

**MALDIVES' CLAIMED  
"ECONOMIC ZONE"**

*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 continental shelf of maritime nations.*

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## LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 78

Maritime Boundary: India-Maldives

and

Maldives' Claimed "Economic Zone"

July 24, 1978

Office of the Geographer  
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

**MARITIME BOUNDARY: INDIA-MALDIVES**

**AND**

**MALDIVES' CLAIMED "ECONOMIC ZONE"**

On December 28, 1976, the Governments of the Republic of India and the Republic of Maldives signed an agreement establishing a maritime boundary. To date, however, ratifications have not been exchanged.

The full text of the agreement is as follows:

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND MALDIVES ON  
MARITIME BOUNDARY IN THE ARABIAN SEA AND  
RELATED MATTERS**

The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Maldives,

DESIRING to strengthen the existing historical bonds of friendship between the two countries,

RECALLING the Agreement between India, Maldives and Sri Lanka concerning the determination of the trijunction point (Point T) between the three countries in the Gulf of Manaar, which came into force on July 31, 1976, and

DESIRING to establish the maritime boundary between the two countries in the Arabian Sea,

HAVE AGREED as follows:

**Article I**

The maritime boundary between India and Maldives in the Arabian Sea shall be arcs of the Great Circles between the following positions, in the sequence given below, defined by latitude and longitude:

Point No.	Latitude North	Longitude East
T	04°47'04"	77°01'40"
1	04°52'15"	76°56'48"
2	05°05'35"	76°43'15"
3	05°13'56"	76°36'48"
4	06°28'14"	75°41'34"
5	06°33'21"	75°38'31"

Point No.	Latitude North	Longitude East
6	06°51'06"	75°25'46"
7	07°15'27"	75°16'19"
8	07°24'00"	75°12'06"
9	07°25'19"	75°11'18"
10	07°51'30"	74°56'09"
11	07°48'30"	74°29'45"
12	07°41'50"	73°38'34"
13	07°39'02"	73°19'38"
14	07°40'52"	73°03'23"
15	07°42'19"	72°49'30"
16	07°42'54"	72°42'26"
17	07°49'05"	72°03'45"
18	08°05'38"	70°15'08"
19	07°57'27"	69°35'45"

## **ARTICLE II**

The coordinates of the positions specified in Article I are geographical coordinates and the straight lines connecting them are indicated in the chart annexed hereto, which has been signed by the officials duly authorised for the purpose by the two Governments respectively.

## **Article III**

The actual location at sea and on the seabed of the positions specified in Article I shall be determined by a method to be mutually agreed upon by the two Governments respectively.

## **Article IV**

(1) Each Party shall have sovereignty over all islands falling on its side of the aforesaid boundary, as well as over the territorial waters and the airspace above them.

(2) Each Party shall have sovereign rights and exclusive jurisdiction over the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone as well as over their resources, whether living or non-living, falling on its own side of the aforesaid boundary.

(3) Each Party shall respect rights of navigation through its territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone in accordance with its laws and regulations and the rules of international law.

## Article V

If any single geological petroleum or natural gas structure or field, or any single geological structure or field of any mineral deposit, including sand or gravel, extends across the boundary referred to in Article I and the part of such structure or field which is situated on one side of the boundary is exploited, in whole or in part, from the other side of the boundary, the two countries shall seek to reach agreement as to the manner in which the structure or field shall be most effectively exploited and the manner in which the proceeds deriving therefrom shall be apportioned.

## Article VI

The Agreement shall be subject to ratification. It shall enter into force on the date of exchange of instruments of ratification which shall take place as soon as possible.

Sd/-YB Chavan  
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

Sd/-AHilmy Didi  
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

New Delhi, 28th December, 1976

On December 5, 1976, the Republic of Maldives entered into law two bills related to the establishment and enforcement of an "exclusive economic zone." The text of the two laws are as follows:

### **LAW NO. 30/76 OF 27TH NOVEMBER 1976, RELATING TO THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES.**

No. 30/76  
5th December, 1976

1. The area, including the sea as well as the sea-bed and sub-soil thereof, situated within the line joining the points of which the co-ordinates are given below, shall constitute the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Maldives.

(1)	7°57'27"N	69°35'45"E
(2)	7°57'27"N	69°11'48"E
(3)	4°02'20"S	69°11'48"E
(4)	4°02'20"S	77°05'42"E
(5)	3°27'15"N	77°05'42"E
(6)	4°47'04"N	77°01'40"E
(7)	4°52'15"N	76°56'48"E
(8)	5°05'35"N	76°43'15"E
(9)	5°13'56"N	76°36'48"E
(10)	6°28'14"N	75°41'34"E

(11)	6°33'21"N	75°38'31"E
(12)	6°51'06"N	75°25'46"E
(13)	7°15'27"N	75°16'19"E
(14)	7°24'00"N	75°12'06"E
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(16)	7°51'30"N	74°56'09"E
(17)	7°48'30"N	74°29'45"E
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(19)	7°39'02"N	73°19'38"E
(20)	7°40'52"N	73°03'23"E
(21)	7°42'19"N	72°49'30"E
(22)	7°42'54"N	72°42'26"E
(23)	7°49'05"N	72°03'45"E
(24)	8°05'38"N	70°15'08"E
(25)	7°57'27"N	69°35'45"E

2. The Republic of Maldives shall have the sovereign rights and exclusive jurisdiction over its Economic Zone for the purpose of exploitation, conservation and management of the natural resources therein, both living and non-living, or for any other economic purpose. Thus the use and exploitation of the products or natural resources found in the said Zone for any economic purpose, or the conduct of scientific researches, or the construction, maintenance or operation of artificial structures and devices for any purpose within the said Zone shall not be executed by non-Maldivians without assent of the Government of the Republic of Maldives.

3. Any person or persons contravening the sovereign rights of the Republic of Maldives over its Economic Zone shall be liable to prosecution and conviction in accordance with Laws and Regulations of the Republic of Maldives.

**LAW NO. 32/76 OF 5TH DECEMBER, 1976 RELATING TO THE NAVIGATION AND  
PASSAGE BY FOREIGN SHIPS AND AIRCRAFTS THROUGH THE AIRSPACE,  
TERRITORIAL WATERS AND THE ECONOMIC ZONE OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
MALDIVES**

No. 32/76  
5th December, 1976

1. Ships of All States shall enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial waters and other Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Maldives. Passage shall be considered innocent only if such passage is not prejudicial to the peace, good order and security of the Republic of Maldives.

However, no foreign warship shall enter the Territorial Sea of the Republic of Maldives, nor

a foreign fishing vessel shall enter its Economic Zone without prior consent of the Government of the Republic of Maldives. While navigating in the Territorial Waters of Maldives foreign warships shall fly their national flag. Submarines shall navigate on the surface and show their flag.

2. No foreign Aircraft shall enter or pass through the Air space of the Territory of the Republic of Maldives except in conformity with the international norms and in accordance with the Laws and Regulations in force in the Republic of Maldives. Foreign military aircraft shall not enter or pass through the air space of the territory of the Republic of Maldives without prior consent of the Government of the Republic of Maldives.

Salvage and rescue operations of foreign ships within the Territorial Waters of the Republic of Maldives shall be carried out in accordance with the regulations and practices in effect in the Republic of Maldives.

3. Any foreign ship which runs aground on an island, a reef or a sandbank within the Territory of the Republic of Maldives, if abandoned, without notifying the incident to the Government of the Republic of Maldives, shall be property of the Government.

4. All ships shall bear responsibility for any damage caused within the Territory or Economic Zone to any other party by the negligence or deliberate action of those ships.

5. Any person or persons who act in contravention of the provisions of this Law shall be guilty of an offence and shall upon conviction be penalised in accordance with the Laws and regulations of the Republic of Maldives.

6. In this Law unless the context otherwise requires-  
'Ship' means any description of ship or vessel or boat or craft or any other description of vessel used in Navigation on or below the waters.

'Warship' means a ship belonging to the armed forces of a state, or a ship which by reason of the equipment contained therein could be used for any warlike purpose.

'Military Aircraft' means an aircraft belonging to the armed forces of a state, or an aircraft which by reason of the equipment contained therein could be used for any warlike purpose.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **India-Maldives Maritime Boundary**

The India-Maldives maritime boundary is depicted on the attached map between turning points 6 and 24 and then to point 1.<sup>1</sup> Analysis for the map was based on

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<sup>1</sup> The numbering sequence on the map is based on the Maldives' "exclusive economic zone" law. These turning-point numbers are used in the present analysis.

the largest scale charts available, and geodesic distances were calculated by computer.<sup>2</sup>

The boundary consists of 20 terminal or turning points connecting arcs of Great Circles, which are depicted on the attached map as rhumb lines. The total length of the boundary is 496.25 nautical miles. Point T (point 6 on the attached map) was established by agreement among India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka on July 31, 1976. This point is situated approximately 200 nautical miles from each coast.

The boundary closely approximates an equidistant line. The attached table lists the salient basepoints for each country and their respective distances from the boundary turning points. From the India-Maldives-Sri Lanka trijunction point, the boundary runs in a northwesterly direction for approximately 223 nautical miles. This segment of the boundary generally is equidistant from the southwest coast of India (Cape Comorin to Quilon) and from the northeast Maldives atolls (Male Atoll to Tiladummati Atoll).

At point 16 the boundary turns westward and continues in this direction for the final 272.76 nautical miles. Minicoy Island is the closest Indian territory to this segment of the boundary, with the exception that the Laccadive Island of Suheli Par is the closest Indian territory to the boundary terminus. Tiladummati and Ihavandiffulu are the closest Maldives' territories. India and the Maldives probably intended to terminate the boundary 200 nautical miles from their coasts, but point 1 is calculated to be 197 and 203 nautical miles from the Maldives and India, respectively.

With the possible exception of that part of the boundary situated in the Eight Degree Channel area, the entire length of the India-Maldives boundary traverses a marine region where the water depths exceed 1,000 fathoms (6,000 feet).

### **Maldives' Claimed "Exclusive Economic Zone"**

The India-Maldives maritime boundary provides the outer limit of the "economic zone" claimed by the Maldives to its northeast and north.

Points 1-6 on the attached map, representing the remainder of the Maldives' claimed zone, in essence form three sides of a rectangle. The perimeter of the zone totals 2,236.71 nautical miles and encompasses a water area of approximately 326,000 square nautical miles.<sup>3</sup>

The rectangular shape of this "economic zone" is similar to previously claimed maritime zones. It is not at all clear, however, on what bases these other zones have been developed. There appears to be neither historical nor legal precedence for the Maldivian maritime limits.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that distances in this study are calculated using a different spheroid than the one used by the two countries. Slight discrepancies may, therefore, appear in any comparison.

<sup>3</sup> The total land area of the Maldives is approximately 115 square miles.

The Maldives' 1964 Constitution defines the Republic as "the Islands and the sea and air surrounding and in between Latitudes 7°10-1/4' (North) and 0°45-1/2' (South) and longitudes (East) 72°29-1/4' and 73°49'."

On February 24, 1969, the Maldives created an exclusive fishing zone that paralleled the above rectangle at a distance of approximately 100 miles.<sup>4</sup>

On December 30, 1970, the Maldives passed Bill No. 52/70, "The Territorial Water Limits and Fishing Territory."<sup>5</sup> The effect of this law was to revise slightly the outer limits of the fishing zone but to confuse the issue by joining the territorial sea and fishing zone into one defined area.

On May 29, 1972, the Maldives Government transmitted to the United Nations Secretariat a note that, quoting from the apparently revised Constitution, defined the maritime limits of the Republic. The fishing zone remained identical to the 1970 law, but the Constitution now defined the Republic as follows:

"The Territory of the Republic of Maldives is the islands situated between latitudes 07.09 1/2 degrees North, and 0.45 1/4 degrees South, and longitudes 72.30 1/2 degrees East, and 73.48 degrees East, and the sea and air surrounding and in between the islands."

The legal status of the rectangle formed by the straight lines along the above parallels and meridians is not specified in the Constitution. If these coordinates are meant to delimit the outer limits of the Maldivian territorial sea, the validity of the lines is questionable because they do not relate directly to the atolls of the state.

In the extreme north, the limit (probably meant to be 7°9.5'N.) passes within 2.75 nautical miles of Ihavaniffulu Atoll. The western and eastern limits, in contract, are 16.75 nautical miles and 34.25 nautical miles from the nearest points on the atoll. Addu Atoll, in the extreme south, is 3.25 nautical miles from the southern limit at its closest point but approximately 34 nautical miles from both the eastern and western limits. Most of the atolls are situated between 10 and 20 nautical miles from the nearest limit. One point on the

<sup>4</sup> On February 24, 1969, the Republic of Maldives enacted Law No. 5/69 Javiyani of 1969, which, in part, created an exclusive fishing zone within the area of the following coordinates:

"the intersection of latitude 7°42-1/2'N. and longitude 70°53-1/2'E.  
 the intersection of latitude 2°22-1/4'S. and longitude 70°53-1/2'E.  
 the intersection of latitude 2°22-1/4'S. and longitude 75°23'E.  
 the intersection of latitude 7°28'N. and longitude 75°23'E.  
 the intersection of latitude 7°42-1/2'N. and longitude 75°10-1/6'E..."

<sup>5</sup> On December 30, 1970, the Republic of Maldives enacted Bill No. 52/70, an amendment to Bill No. 5/69 Javiyani, which stated, in part, that,

"The Territorial Waters Limits and Fishing Territory of the Republic of Maldives lie between Latitudes 7°42' North and Latitudes 2°22-1/4' South and Longitudes 70°53-1/2' East and Longitudes 75°25' East, leaving the North-East corner formed by a diagonal line intersecting at Latitudes 7°42' North and Longitudes 75°01' East and Longitudes 75°25' East and Latitudes 7°12' North."

western edge of the "rectangle," however, is more than 55 nautical miles from the nearest land on Haddummati and Suvadiva atolls.

It is possible that the Maldivian Government considers this rectangle to be a national baseline. But to consider lines situated from 2.75 to more than 55 nautical miles from the coastline as national baselines would be contrary to any state practice and to international legal norms.

This "Constitutional rectangle" apparently was used to develop the 1970 fisheries zone and 1976 "economic zone." Point 2 of the "economic zone," the northwest corner of the rectangle, is situated 201.64 nautical miles from the "Constitutional rectangle." From point 2 to approximately 1° South latitude, the outer limit of the "economic zone" parallels the "Constitutional rectangle" at a distance of approximately 200 nautical miles. Small segments of the lines connecting points 3 and 4 and points 4 and 5 of the "economic zone" also parallel this line at a distance of 200 nautical miles.

Instead of creating a 200-nautical-mile zone by measuring from the southern corners of the "Constitutional rectangle," the Maldives Government has continued the parallel lines to the point where the southern parallel intersects the eastern and western parallel, respectively. Points 3 and 4, as a result, are situated at a distance much greater than 200 nautical miles from the nearest Maldives "territory" (310 and 308 nautical miles, respectively). It is interesting to note that the entire southern "economic zone" limit is geographically closer to the British Indian Ocean Territory (Chagos Archipelago), with points 3 and 4 being situated at a distance of 170 and 199 nautical miles, respectively.

In the northeast, the outer limit of the Maldives' zone coincides with the Maldives' boundary with India. The distance figures shown in the attached Table 6 indicate that the Maldives "Constitutional rectangle" apparently was not considered as the baseline.

### **Conclusion**

The "economic zone" is a developing concept under negotiation in the Third United Nations Law of the Sea Conference. Current international consensus, however, supports the establishment of living-resource jurisdiction over a zone 200 nautical miles in breadth, measured from the baseline from which the territorial sea limit is developed.

There are a number of fundamental elements in the Maldives maritime claims that warrant clarification. If the coordinates established in the Constitution as defining the "Territory of Republic of Maldives" are interpreted as the territorial sea limits, then it appears that the Maldives has improperly used these limits as baselines from which to develop its resource zones. If, however, the Maldives intended this "Constitutional rectangle" as the Maldives' national baseline, then its validity, from both a legal and historical basis, must be questioned.

**MALDIVES' CLAIMED "EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE"  
AND  
INDIA-MALDIVES MARITIME BOUNDARY<sup>1</sup>**

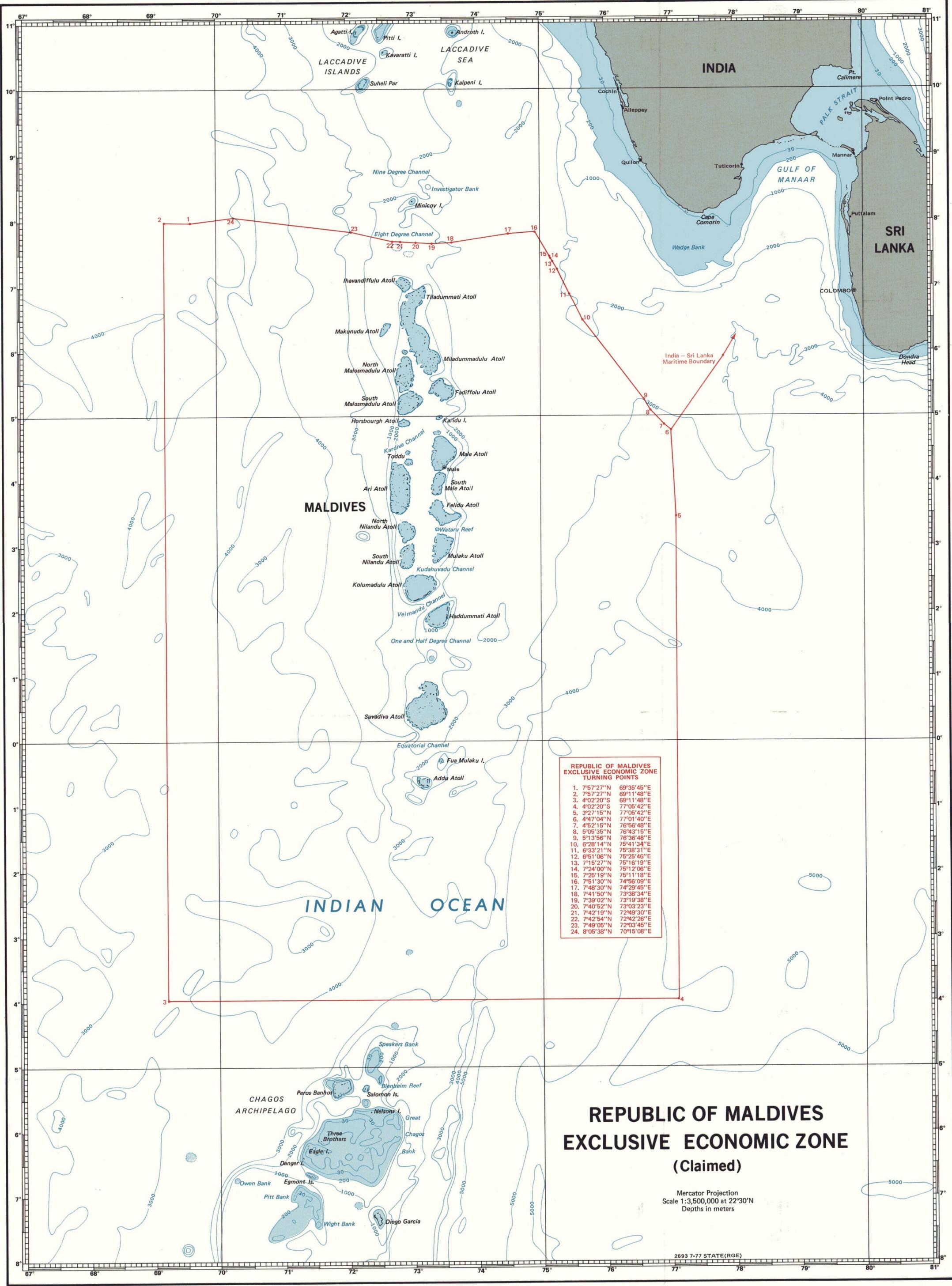
TURNING POINT	NEAREST MALDIVES TERRITORY	DISTANCE TO TURNING POINT (NAUTICAL MILES)		NEAREST INDIAN TERRITORY <sup>2</sup>	DISTANCE BETWEEN TURNING POINTS (NAUTICAL MILES)
1.	Ihavandiffulu Atoll (Kandufuri Island)	197	203	Laccadive Islands	
					23.76
2.	Ihavandiffulu Atoll (Kandufuri Island)	220	-	-	
3.	Addu Atoll(Gan island)	310	170	British Indian Ocean Territory (Chagos Archipelago)	716.23
4.	Addu Atoll(Gan island)	308	299	British Indian Ocean Territory (Chagos Archipelago)	473.58
5.	Felidu Atoll	200	-	-	447.35 79.53
6.	Male Atoll	200	199	Cape Comorin	
Trijunction Point: India-Maldives- Sri Lanka			199	Point Southwest of Ambalangoda (Sri Lanka)	7.09
7.	Male Atoll	195	195	Cape Comorin Adunda Island	
8.	Male Atoll	184	184	Adunda Island	18.94

<sup>1</sup> The India-Maldives maritime boundary consists of turning points 1 and 6-24.

<sup>2</sup> All territories listed in this column are Indian, except for the British Indian Ocean territory basepoints (turning points 3 and 4) and the Sri Lankan basepoint (turning point 6).

TURNING POINT	NEAREST MALDIVES TERRITORY	DISTANCE TO TURNING POINT (NAUTICAL MILES)		NEAREST INDIAN TERRITORY <sup>2</sup>	DISTANCE BETWEEN TURNING POINTS (NAUTICAL MILES)
	Fadiffolu Atoll	185			
9.	Fadiffolu Atoll	178	177 177	Adunda Island Kota Island	10.51
10.	Fadiffolu Atoll Miladummodulu Atoll	138 138	137 137	Kota Island Enciam Rock	92.18
11.	Miladummodulu Atoll	137	135 135	Enciam Rock Vilinjum	5.93
12.	Miladummodulu Atoll Tiladummati Atoll (Filadu Island)	132 131	130	Vilinjum	21.75
13.	Tiladummati Atoll (Filadu Island)	123	122 122	Vilinjum Vailey	25.99
14.	Tiladummati Atoll (Filadu Island) Tiladummati Atoll (Kelai Island)	121 121	120 120	Vailey Warkalli	9.48
15.	Tiladummati Atoll (Filadu Island) Tiladummati Atoll (Kelai Island)	120 120	120 120	Warkalli Quilon	1.53
16.	Tiladummati Atoll (Kelai Island)	115	114 114	Quilon Minicoy Island	30.09
17.	Tiladummati Atoll (Kelai Island)	91	90	Minicoy Island	26.37
18.	Tiladummati Atoll (Kelai Island)	50	49	Minicoy Island	51.24
19.	Tiladummati Atoll (Kelai Island)	40	40	Minicoy Island	19.00

TURNING POINT	NEAREST MALDIVES TERRITORY	DISTANCE TO TURNING POINT (NAUTICAL MILES)		NEAREST INDIAN TERRITORY <sup>2</sup>	DISTANCE BETWEEN TURNING POINTS (NAUTICAL MILES)
20.	Ihavandiffulu Atoll (Turakuna Island)	36	35	Minicoy Island	16.24
21.	Ihavandiffulu Atoll (Turakuna Island)	36	36	Minicoy Island	13.86
22.	Ihavandiffulu Atoll (Wagari Island)	37	38	Minicoy Island	7.04
23.	Ihavandiffulu Atoll (Wagari Island)	65	64	Minicoy Island	38.89
24.	Ihavandiffulu Atoll (Wagari Island)	163	166	Minicoy Island	60.21
					39.91



**REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES  
EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE  
TURNING POINTS**

1.	7°57'27"N	69°35'45"E
2.	7°57'27"N	69°11'48"E
3.	4°02'20"S	69°11'48"E
4.	4°02'20"S	77°05'42"E
5.	3°27'15"N	77°05'42"E
6.	4°47'04"N	77°01'40"E
7.	4°52'15"N	76°56'48"E
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19.	7°39'02"N	73°19'38"E
20.	7°40'52"N	73°03'23"E
21.	7°42'19"N	72°49'30"E
22.	7°42'54"N	72°42'26"E
23.	7°49'05"N	72°03'45"E
24.	8°05'38"N	70°15'08"E

**REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES  
EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE  
(Claimed)**

Mercator Projection  
Scale 1:3,500,000 at 22°30'N  
Depths in meters