International Boundary Study

SERIES A

LIMITS IN THE SEAS

Straight Baselines

FINLAND

BUREAU OF
INTELLIGENCE
AND RESEARCH

NO. 48

SEPTEMBER 15, 1972

ISSUED BY
THE GEOGRAPHER

This paper is one of a series issued by The Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State. The aim 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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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

Series A

LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 48

STRAIGHT BASELINES: FINLAND

The Geographer
Office of the Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

STRAIGHT BASELINES: FINLAND

The Government of Finland decreed on August 18, 1956, a new law on the territorial sea for the state. The law-decree, No. 463, permitted the drawing of straight baselines about the coast of Finland:

Article 1.

The Finnish territorial waters comprise the part of the sea directly connected with the country's land area which in the East, adjacent to the Soviet Union, is bounded by the country's maritime frontier in the Gulf of Finland through the Virolahti archipelago, defined in the Paris Peace Treaty (690-691/47) signed on February 10, 1947; and in the West, adjacent to Sweden, [is bounded] by the country's maritime frontier and the extension of the end thereof into the Perameri Sea in the Tornio archipelago, defined when the boundaries were fixed in 1926 - 1927 according to the topographic boundary declaration signed in Tornio on January 19, 1811, after the Hamina Peace Treaty. The outer limit of the territorial waters toward the open sea is the boundary of international waters, except in the Ahvena [Aaland] Sea, to the South and North of the rocky isle of Market. There the limit is the country's maritime frontier as defined in the above-mentioned boundary declaration of 1811, as it was included in the agreement signed on October 20, 1921 (64/22), regarding the neutralization of Aaland Islands.

A solitary island, rocky isle, skerry, or a group formed by these, situated far out in the sea, may have separate territorial waters of its own.

Article 2.

The territorial waters are divided into inner territorial waters and outer territorial waters, or the marginal sea.

Article 3.

By inner territorial waters are meant that part of the territorial waters which is bounded on the shore side by the mainland and the estuaries of rivers, and on the seaward side by a line and the angles or base points of which are located at the farther points of land, either on the mainland, on islands, rocky isles or skerries.

Article 4.

The base points intended in Article 3 above are so chosen.

(1) that they are above sea-level more than one half day per year, on the average, at low-water levels during the ten-year period preceding the year when this law takes effect;

(2) that their distance from one another is at most twice the width of the marginal sea; and

(3) that the inner territorial waters will be as extensive as possible. The base points will be corrected at intervals of thirty years.

Article 5.

The marginal sea is a zone directly adjacent to the inner territorial waters. Its outer limit, the limit of international waters, is four nautical miles, or 7,408 meters, distant from the outer limit of the inner territorial waters, unless otherwise specified in this law.

Article 6.

If an island, rocky isle, a skerry, or a group formed by these is situated so far out in the sea that it remains beyond the outer limit of the inner territorial waters defined in Article 3 and 4, such an island, rocky isle, skerry or group shall have separate territorial waters of its own, but the width of such waters shall be three nautical miles, or 5,556 meters.

Article 7.

From the Southern terminus of the country's Eastern maritime frontier the outer limit of territorial waters runs at a distance of four nautical miles from the farthest points of land to the Eastern terminus of the [Southern] limit of the Finnish maritime frontier as defined in the Paris Peace Treaty signed on February 10, 1947, which is a parallel of latitude South of the Haapasaari archipelago, where it joins the said frontier.

From the Western terminus of the [Southern] frontier mentioned in paragraph 1 above, by which the Finnish territorial waters are bounded, the outer limit of the marginal sea runs to the west along the extension of the said border, until it joints the outer limit defined in Article 5.

In the Tornio archipelago, of the Gulf of Finland, the base point which follows the last base point on the Finnish side is on the Swedish side.

Article 8.

The base points of the outer limit of the inner territorial waters and their exact locations will be listed in a decree, which will also give a more detailed explanation of the water-level intended in Article 4, as well as other stipulations which may be necessary for the enforcement and the application of this law.

Helsinki,

President of the Republic
URHO KEKKONEN

Foreign Minister Ralf Törngren

Approved Finnish Diet: May 23, 1956.

By supplemental decree, No. 464, 180 points along the coast were selected for the straight baseline system. The points are:

No.	North			East		
	°	'	"	°	'	"
1	60	19	27	27	37	16
2	60	18	36	27	34	44
3	60	16	31	27	20	20
4	60	15	54	27	16	26
5	60	14	15	27	1	44
6	60	12	42	26	55	55
7	60	13	52	26	53	2
8	60	16	29	26	41	41
9	60	15	0	26	35	31
10	60	14	30	26	29	45
11	60	13	1	26	19	58
12	60	9	44	26	15	51
13	60	9	40	26	15	44
14	60	9	2	26	5	12
15	60	6	18	26	51	30
16	60	2	23	26	46	41
17	60	4	32	26	38	27
18	60	6	17	26	25	40
19	60	6	12	25	22	9
20	60	5	27	25	8	12
21	60	2	9	24	53	40
22	60	1	54	24	52	21
23	59	59	4	24	37	37
24	59	54	40	24	26	55
25	59	52	10	24	18	40
26	59	52	6	24	18	22
27	59	53	50	24	4	7
28	59	51	41	23	55	1
29	59	49	10	23	40	51
30	59	47	13	23	35	29
31	59	44	56	23	23	51
35	59	45	28	23	13	19
33	59	44	57	22	58	27
34	59	44	37	22	45	54
35	59	44	16	22	30	50
36	59	43	22	22	30	15
37	59	43	17	22	30	0
38	59	42	50	22	25	7
39	59	44	59	22	13	5
40	59	43	4	22	4	54
41	59	43	14	21	57	37

No.	North			East		
	°	'	"	°	'	"
42	59	44	0	21	44	39
43	59	40	33	21	30	24
44	59	40	29	21	30	13
45	59	40	30	21	29	45
46	59	44	47	21	19	36
47	59	45	22	21	9	10
48	59	44	2	21	2	55
49	59	45	54	20	58	43
50	59	44	10	20	44	22
51	59	46	30	20	31	53
52	59	49	26	20	24	15
53	59	49	36	20	15	7
54	59	50	49	20	1	18
55	59	50	3	19	56	50
56	59	48	33	19	47	10
57	59	50	9	19	52	18
58	59	57	31	19	57	23
59	60	3	10	19	49	34
60	60	4	58	19	42	35
61	60	7	22	19	36	31
62	60	8	47	19	33	4
63	60	9	25	19	18	13
64	60	14	48	19	11	15
65	60	18	3	19	8	7
66	59	30	10	20	24	57
67	59	31	5	20	25	40
68	59	30	13	20	21	6
69	59	30	16	20	21	0
70	60	18	6	19	8	7
71	60	20	0	19	22	36
72	60	25	43	19	23	40
73	60	25	53	19	23	53
74	60	25	40	19	34	6
75	60	29	13	19	44	57
76	60	28	19	19	56	59
77	60	28	14	20	8	42
78	60	32	21	20	12	25
79	60	32	25	20	12	33
80	60	32	24	20	12	45
81	60	31	35	20	28	3
82	60	34	33	20	31	33
83	60	35	47	20	40	54
84	60	37	56	20	47	36
85	60	44	28	20	44	50

No.	North			East		
	°	'	"	°	'	"
86	60	45	58	20	44	39
87	60	45	8	21	0	2
88	60	50	46	21	0	16
89	60	51	0	21	0	20
90	60	52	3	21	0	45
91	60	54	43	21	2	20
92	60	55	28	21	3	3
93	60	58	57	21	7	42
94	61	3	2	21	10	14
95	61	9	18	21	18	22
96	61	15	28	21	20	23
97	61	25	37	21	22	55
98	61	25	14	21	16	23
99	61	25	20	21	16	16
100	61	28	47	21	19	23
101	61	36	37	21	22	10
102	61	38	46	21	19	54
103	61	38	52	21	19	54
104	61	43	21	21	21	38
105	61	49	53	21	19	32
106	61	52	58	21	14	35
107	61	56	3	21	16	27
108	62	1	7	21	14	5
109	62	7	42	21	17	0
110	62	10	22	21	17	3
111	62	16	44	21	14	44
112	62	18	54	21	9	40
113	62	22	33	21	6	57
114	62	25	8	21	5	21
115	62	28	41	21	4	16
116	62	34	34	21	2	39
117	62	38	32	21	1	23
118	62	45	15	20	53	8
119	62	48	2	20	48	25
120	62	55	27	20	53	25
121	62	57	32	20	44	22
122	63	5	4	20	43	2
123	63	7	53	20	41	42
124	63	14	12	20	35	2
125	63	15	18	20	38	2
126	63	21	17	20	45	52
127	63	25	28	20	47	20
128	63	26	38	21	4	37
129	63	27	12	21	8	25

No.	North			East		
	°	'	"	°	'	"
130	63	27	12	21	10	22
131	63	24	19	21	21	30
132	63	25	56	21	30	50
133	63	29	13	21	44	20
134	63	28	24	21	58	15
135	63	31	44	22	9	25
136	63	37	29	22	21	52
137	63	37	37	22	21	59
138	63	37	59	22	22	28
139	63	38	16	22	23	11
140	63	45	6	22	31	20
141	63	51	52	22	37	18
142	63	53	55	22	39	54
143	63	55	41	22	43	3
144	63	56	11	22	44	24
145	63	57	37	22	48	44
146	63	57	50	22	53	57
147	63	59	28	22	9	43
148	64	4	56	23	22	42
149	64	5	34	23	24	0
150	64	11	55	23	33	14
151	64	18	54	23	30	23
152	64	19	44	23	27	0
153	64	20	4	23	26	33
154	64	18	58	23	31	7
155	64	18	32	23	49	24
156	64	21	17	23	54	18
157	64	25	2	23	1	19
158	64	26	56	23	5	30
159	64	32	16	24	15	10
160	64	39	31	24	19	25
161	64	40	30	24	19	14
162	64	40	55	24	19	26
163	64	42	8	24	21	18
164	64	42	44	24	23	27
165	64	49	12	24	31	42
166	64	55	28	24	37	30
167	65	0	15	24	34	28
168	65	2	22	24	33	22
169	65	5	10	24	37	50
170	65	5	10	24	47	34
171	65	12	38	24	54	8
172	65	14	20	24	46	0
173	65	14	46	24	44	18

No.	North			East		
	°	'	"	°	'	"
174	65	20	8	24	39	22
175	65	24	52	24	49	7
176	65	32	47	24	47	42
177	65	36	17	24	36	53
178	65	33	51	24	18	49
179	65	36	11	24	12	10
(180)	(65	35	9)	(23	57	8)

SUMMARY

The Finnish straight baseline system has been printed on large-scale charts published by the Finnish Hydrographic Office. The most recent editions, which have been examined by this office, were printed in 1965.

The law contains three interesting concepts. First, the system is subject to a periodic review. According to Article 4(3), the points must be corrected at intervals of 30 years. Second, the Government of Finland has commenced its straight baseline system by connecting Swedish and Finnish islets; the intersection of this line with the Finnish-Swedish maritime frontier marks the beginning of the Finnish system. This unusual technique has been employed by several North European states.

The third, and most important, concept is stated in Article 4(2) which provides that the basepoints will be chosen so that their [basepoint] distance from one another is at most twice the width of the marginal sea…." As a consequence, the longest Finnish straight baseline segment measures 8 nautical miles or less in length, a restriction which contrasts sharply with the practices of many states. The limitation of the length of baseline segment means that the Finnish system nearly duplicates the configuration of the fringing islands. The Finnish system is the least expansive straight baselines yet analyzed by this office.

The total length of the Finnish system measures approximately 793.2 nautical miles between the Swedish and Soviet maritime frontiers. The average length of a segment is approximately 4.4 nautical miles.

The Finland-USSR territorial sea boundary is discussed in International Boundary Study No. 74 - February 1, 1964, Finland-USSR Boundary. The continental shelf boundary is analyzed in International Boundary Study, Series A, No. 16 - May 25, 1970, Limits in the Seas, Continental Shelf Boundary: Finland - Soviet Union.

Finland is a party of the Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous zone.

NOTE: Not all points are shown on the attached map. Certain basepoints were too close to identify on the mapped scale.

EUROPE

BALTIC SEA

From the latest information to 1940

SOUNDINGS IN FATHOMS

For Symbols and Abbreviations, see Chart No. 1

NOTE

The boundaries indicated upon this chart have no official significance. They are approximate only, and are shown thus: — — — — —

Magnetic variation curves are for 1965

Figures in parentheses indicate annual change

CAUTIONS

1. Only the principal outside lights are shown on this chart. The following are also omitted: lightships, buoys, beacons, radiobeacons, direction finding stations, wrecks, and the characteristics of the lights.
2. Abnormal magnetic conditions exist in the area covered by this chart. Great caution should be exercised when near land or in comparatively shallow water.

Sweden and Finland Straight Baselines

CONVERSION TABLE
FATHOMS TO METERS

Fathoms	Meters	Fathoms	Meters
¼	0.5	8	14.6
½	0.9	8½	15.5
¾	1.4	9½	15.5
1	1.8	9½	16.0
1½	2.3	9	16.5
1½	2.7	9½	16.9
1¾	3.2	9¾	17.3
2	3.7	9¾	17.8
2¼	4.1	10	18.3
2½	4.6	10½	18.7
2¾	5.0	10¾	19.2
3	5.5	10¾	19.6
3¼	5.9	11	20.1
3½	6.4	12	21.9
3¾	6.9	13	23.8
4	7.3	14	25.6
4¼	7.8	15	27.4
4½	8.2	16	29.3
4¾	8.7	17	31.1
5	9.1	18	32.9
5½	9.6	19	34.7
5½	10.1	20	36.6
5¾	10.5	30	54.9
6	11.0	40	73.2
6¼	11.4	50	91.4
6½	11.9	60	109.7
6¾	12.3	70	128.0
7	12.8	80	146.3
7¼	13.2	90	164.6
7½	13.7	100	182.9
7¾	14.1		

CONTINUED ON CHART 5005

Source of Data: Office of the Geographer, Department of State

From H.O. 4845, 14th Edition, May 1940; Revised 7/1/68

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