



GA3: Special, Political and Decolonization

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Issue: Addressing conflicts arising from ownership of natural resources in overlapping Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)

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Committee:	Special, Political and Decolonization Committee (GA3)
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I. Introduction

Every country has their own so-called land and they all have borders with their neighbors, but how do countries settle on sea borders? The sea provides the country with livestock, luxuries, and most importantly natural resources. Countries would fight to find easy ways of reaching oil, gas, or anything that has an energy output. With countries out to look for these resources, conflicts are bound to occur. To solve this, in December 1982, the United Nations drafted the Law of the Sea which has many clauses. The reasons that most conflicts occur isn't because of who has more territory. It is mostly about the natural resources that countries can obtain in their Exclusive Economic Zone. Since the Law of the Sea has been drafted, there have been many conflicts occurring. This report will mostly focus on the European and Eurasian side of conflicts. With democratic and diplomatic consultations, bearing in mind that there are ongoing problems, many conflicts have been dealt with.

The major disputes in Eurasia and Europe are as following: the Turkish illegal oil drilling in EEZ of Cyprus, Caspian sea separation, Bahrain-Qatar island dispute, The Croatian EEZ dispute between Italy, Slovenia and Croatia, and the claims of China in the Spratly Islands located in the South China sea. Most of these disputes have caused major tensions in the international community.

II. Involved Countries and Organizations

Turkey

Turkey has been accused of illegally drilling gas and oil in the EEZ of Cyprus and has been told by the EU that if Turkey's actions do not stop immediately, the European Union will take measures such as possible sanctions. Turkey has defended it's right to drill due to the fact that Turkey does not recognize Cyprus as a state. Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, has spoken on the situation by saying "To us, these kinds of threats from the Greek Cypriot administration are meaningless. They know they cannot take a step against us, and if they dare to do so they will get their response like in the past". This statement refers to the Turkish invasion in 1974 where the Turkish troops have tried to seize control over the island. This conflict



resulted in the separation of the island into two new governments. Since then Turkey is the only government that recognizes the Northern government while the rest of the international community does not recognize them as a state. This causes many problems with the EEZ that Northern Cyprus is entitled for which is why there are conflicts arising in the area.

Cyprus

Cyprus is currently dealing with Turkish companies drilling in its EEZ and is trying to sue these companies with the support of the EU. The Greek Cypriot government has invited Turkish officials to negotiate in an agreement; however, there has been no news about any treaties or decisions from either side.

China

Before the Law of The Sea was passed, China had claims to a special region named the South China Sea surrounded by many countries. However, China states that it has rights on the region due to its history and presence. Used initially by the Republic of China, this region is called the “nine dash line”, a border that covers nearly all of the region. However, the Law of the Sea doesn’t allow China to have claim due to the distance between its main land and the region. The main reason that China wants to claim this sea is to obtain exclusive rights to one of the most important body of sea which is filled with billions of barrels of natural gas and Crude oil. Thus, China has been building man-made islands to claim their legal rights, but this is not how the international community is looking at it.

Russia

After the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), countries split off, and a problem occurred on the Caspian Sea. The Sea is now surrounded by 5 countries: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Iran, Turkmenistan, and Russia itself. All but Iran was part of the USSR.

Qatar

Qatar and Bahrain have had many disputes over the years 1930-2010. They have been fighting for more territory, not as much as oceanic disputes but land disputes, such as the Zubarah and Fasht Dibal. In both cases, Qatar has won the court cases at the International Court of Justice, but the tension between the two countries are still very tense.



Bahrain

Bahrain has been claiming many of Qatar's islands and territories. Most of the time they have been found guilty by the ICJ.

Iran

Iran has been the longest standing country near the Caspian Sea. The rest of the countries are very new as they were formed when the Soviet Union collapsed. Iran questioned whether the Caspian Sea was a sea or a lake. Iran claimed that it was a lake, but the other four countries disagreed.

European Union

The EU has already warned Turkey about the possible consequences that it might face, but the Turkish government defends its claim that it does not recognize Cyprus as a nation. The EU Foreign Minister has said that Turkey's "continued and illegal drilling activities" will cause the revision on an air transport agreement that the Turkish government had with the EU. On further notice, if the actions of the Turkish government continues, financial aid that the EU is currently providing Turkey will be cut back.

United Nations

While no situation has ever escalated to that level however, China was a country that received a hearing notice from the International Court of Justice for attacking Philippine ships. The UN is against actions against the set boundaries of The Law of the Sea.

United States of America

The US is very dominant in controlling countries and their political decisions. They have intervened many times in China's progress in the Spratly Islands by sending drones, ships and airplanes. The US has also not been on good terms with Turkey these past few weeks as the purchase of the Russia Missile System is a possible threat they have incentive to place sanctions on Turkey and send more ships to the EEZ.

Philippines

The Philippines and other countries like Vietnam and Malaysia have been under attack by the Chinese government; not through violence but with blockades around the bases that they have at the Spratly Islands. They have accused China of trespassing in their waters to the International Court of Justice which



resulted in The Republic of China being found guilty. They also seem to have intentions to claim oceanic territory but have not done anything illegal outside of their EEZ.

III. Focused Overview of the Issue

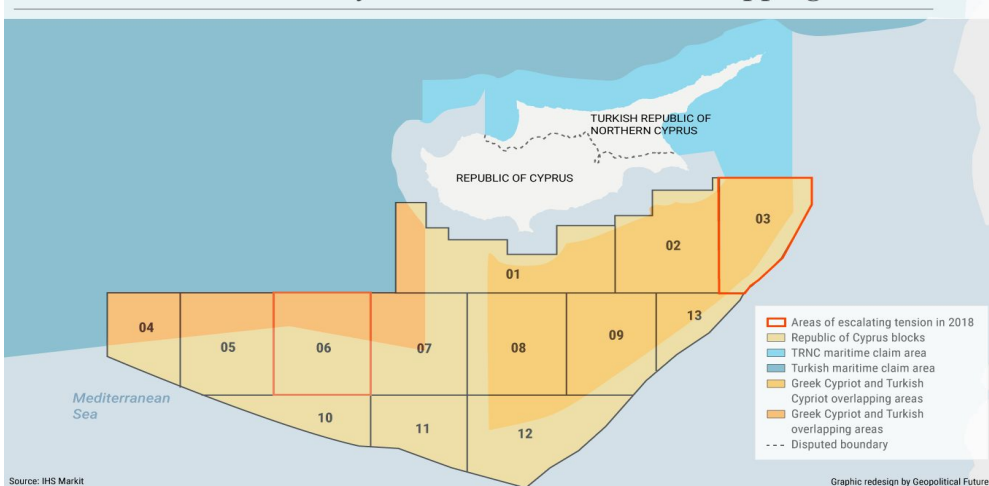
In 1973 the delegate of Malta, Arvid Pardo, proposed an idea that shook the international community. Pardo has contributed to the creation of the modern laws of the sea. Arvid's idea was to propose that the seabed and the ocean floor be declared as "underlying the seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction"¹ to be "the common heritage of mankind". This proposition made a point to help undeveloped countries safely keep their borders in tact with them. The UN recognizing the importance of this issue would create a national agency that has control over the resources among the given borders. Pardo's aim was to give poor countries their right to have access to natural resources in their vicinity.

Until the discovery of offshore oil drilling, the seabeds were used mostly for navigation and fishing. However, now with the more valuable natural resources deep in the seabed, countries like the US, UK or France had to seize control of international waters to pump out these sources. However, after Pardo's proposition passed, the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea was in session to create a resolution for this issue.

Turkey-Cyprus Dispute

The major dispute that is currently going on in the Eurasia province is the Turkish-Cypriot illegal drilling operations. Turkey has just begun it's drilling operations in the EEZ of Cyprus. However, Turkey has been warned both by the Cypriot government and the EU. Since the attempted coup against Cyprus and it's separation to south and north republics, Turkey has not recognized Cyprus as a state.

Eastern Mediterranean Hydrocarbon Reserves: Overlapping Claims



Both the Turkish and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus do not recognize Cyprus as a state and claim parts of sections from 1-9 and 12-13. These claims allow the Turkish oil company, TPAO, a Turkish petroleum corporation, to continue with drilling



operations. The Turkish government has also sent two Barbados class frigates to protect the massive drilling ships. Turkish companies aren't the only ones drilling in the area. Companies from the US like Exxon or companies from Europe including Total from France, Eni from Italy and Royal Dutch Shell from the Netherlands are all in the area collecting resources Turkey claims is theirs.



Picture of drilling ship "Yavuz" being escorted by the heavy armored Barbados class Frigate

The EU has warned Turkey about the possible sanction that would follow if the massive ship didn't leave. On July 20th, the EU's decision to financially support Turkey and the new air transportation agreement had been delayed. Turkey has not come to any agreements with the Cypriot government and has even threatened them by saying "They know they cannot take a step against us, and if they dare to do so they will get their response like in the past". Both countries are armed to

the teeth with warships guarding their assets over the zones.

South China Sea

The South China Sea is one of the most important bodies of water. It is full with natural resources and is the gateway for many cargo ships. The Chinese government does not recognize the United Nations Law of the Sea, which is why they are completely disregarding the law and have been for the past two years transforming reefs into islands. This is, in fact, to obey the UN Law of the Sea by creating islands in the international water zone and claiming the surrounding area around it. This area holds an estimated "11 billion barrels of oil, 109 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 10 percent of the world's fisheries". But more importantly, 30% of the world's trade flows through this specific area which makes it a very strategic area.



Fiery Cross reef 2014-2015 comparison



The construction of these islands has started in 2014. Prior to the construction, these islands were only reefs with a tiny post for a few people. After a year, however, the islands transformed into military bases with airstrips, missile systems and hangers. The media outlets show all their actions as militaristic with the aim of gaining more land. Additionally, China has been acting inside many EEZ's. China has been accused by the Filipino government on charges for violating the UN maritime law; EEZ violation. The Chinese government has been summoned by the ICJ but has disregarded their accusations which brought in more attention. The Chinese government has taken an extra step to stop any news from spreading by declaring an air identification zone over the area.

Bahrain-Qatar

Bahrain and Qatar have had many disputes about each other's territories; one claiming they have higher more historic or ethnic right to the islands. In 1985 when the Bahraini government started fortifications on their lands, the Qatari military responded by seizing workers including Bahraini officials. In 2001, their dispute had reached the attention of the ICJ resulting with a solution in which Bahrain wasn't happy with. Since then, the two countries have taken a more offensive approach on the subject with mini-attacks by both sides. The Bahraini news agency announced that Bahrain has "every right to claim what was cut off forcibly from its land and to dispute the legitimacy of the Qatari rule". This would ultimately incite more conflict and is a viable threat to the people of Bahrain and Qatar.

Caspian Sea Distribution

The Caspian Sea is the body of water that has no connection to any oceans and is surrounded by five countries. Four of the countries; Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Russia are members of the USSR, and Iran isn't. There is an ongoing conflict in deciding whether this massive body of water is a lake or a sea. Most countries agree with the idea that it should be considered a sea, but Iran strongly disagrees that it should be a lake. The entire reason there is an argument is because of the division of the oil and gas fields which entirely depends on what it will be considered. If it is considered to be a sea, then the body falls under the United Nations Law of the Sea which means the region would have to be split up. However, if it is considered to be a lake, then the lake would have to be equally split into five sections. Since Iran is the one country with the smallest coastline, it would not have access to much profit in the situation. The Caspian Sea is a very important body of water. It is very rich in caviar production, producing approximately 80-90% of the world's caviar. With the potential that these resources offer, countries that gain the most area will be in economic advantage as the next main caviar and oil exporter. Disputes over who owns what part has stopped the installment of a pipeline that would allow oil to be sent from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan.



Croatia - Slovenia dispute

The Croatian government has been violating international laws by claiming a portion of Slovenia's sea by placing guards next to fishermen blocking from Slovenian government from checking their boats. They have violated the fishery laws set by the EU. The Slovenian government has accused them of their violations and has placed a lawsuit against the country which will take place in the European Court of Justice (ECJ). However, due to the fact that oceanic borders are not the EU jurisdiction the hearing will only give an opinion on the matter at hand.

IV. Key Vocabulary

Exclusive Economic Zone: The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is an area of the sea that stretches from the rearmost coastline of a country's borders, the area that the EEZ covers has a maximum distance of 200 Nautical miles away from any piece of land that is owned by the country.

The Law of the Sea: The Law of the Sea is an international agreement defines the responsibilities of nations with respect to their use of the world's oceans, establishing guidelines for businesses, the environment, and the management of marine natural resources.¹

The International Court of Justice: The ICJ is judicial organ of the UN and the soul court that handles international disputes between countries or disputes between the UN and set country.

Natural Resources: Natural are any type of resources that exist without the action of mankind. These resources include fossil fuels; petroleum, natural gas and coal, solar and so on. Most of these resources can be found in the ocean but needs advancement in technology to drill it out.

Maritime: Maritime means a connection with the sea, more for naval and trade use.

Sea: The salt waters that cover the greater part of the of the earth's surface. A sea will be under the binding document of the UN Law of the Sea.

Lake: A body of fresh or salt water of considerable size, surrounded by land. A lake will not be under the binding Law of the Sea.



Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
9 th September 1947	First offshore, out of site of land, oil rig built in the Gulf of Mexico
15 th of July 1974	Turkish Invasion of Cyprus; separation into northern and southern Cyprus.
1973-1982	Creation of the Law of the Sea
10 th of December 1982	The signing of the Law of the Sea; 168 parties 157 signatories
26 th of December 1991	Collapse of the Soviet Union (USSR)
16 th of November 1994	The implementation of the Law of the Sea
2014-2016	China dumps sand and rocks on reefs
15 th July 2019	Drilling by the Turkish government begins in EEZ of Cyprus

To solve conflicts like that involve bodies of water, in December 1982, the United Nations drafted the Law of the Sea which has many clauses. Afterwards there hasn't been any major resolutions that have been passed, but there are treaties and agreements with other countries. Some countries have more than one treaty because of the amount of neighboring countries around them.

<http://www.wikizero.biz/index.php?q=aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi53aWtpcGVkaWEub3JnL3dpa2kvVW5pdGVkX05hdGlvbnNfQ29udmVudGlvbi9vbl90aGVfTGFG3X29mX3RoZV9TZWE>

<https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/GBR-CYP1960A.PDF>

<https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/cyp-gbr1960adm.tif>

<https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/cyp-gbr1960future.tif>



Cyprus:

[Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea](#)

[International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue](#)

These treaties, legislations and agreements are more focused on the current disputes in Europe. The link below contains research focused on maritime and oceans of the involved countries. This will help to see if your country has any kind of dispute about their maritime borders.

ICJ:

The ICJ has many cases that deal with border disputes, but the most recent one is the Philippines v. China, where the Philippines have accused China of trespassing and illegal activity inside their own EEZ. The Chinese government has disregarded their decision about the case and has been continuing to act on their islands.

[PCA Case N° 2013-19 IN THE MATTER OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA
...https://www.pcacases.com/pcadocs/PH-CN%20-%2020160712%20-%20Award.pdf](#)

All of the resolutions, agreements and treaties can be found in the useful links section.

VII. Failed Solution Attempts

Most countries face sanctions and embargoes but the current situation in Cyprus has only caused small sanctions to be placed on them but can further intensify. While The situation has been handled the tension between Qatar and Bahrain is still pretty tense with possibility of more conflicts can rise. China has disagreed with the International Court of Justice on their ruling about the South China accusations.

VIII. Possible Solutions

It is possible for countries to work together, meaning countries could help gain the resources and split the outcome evenly among themselves. Countries could furthermore rent out the zone depending on the countries allowance and respect to its own EEZ. Other options include compensation money for a country that has been subject to the dispute. Agreements between countries can be reached through diplomacy with compromises from both sides as their interests can be divided, however these agreements should be monitored by other countries with no interest in the area to help control the conflict to a minimum.



IX. Useful Links

Most useful links are newspapers, not only one but more than two just to clarify the dispute, the United Nations's International Maritime Organization is a very helpful website for research and for treaties the wikipedia page is full with treaties and at the bottom of the page there are the websites that wikipedia took the treaties from.

United Nations:

<http://www.wikizero.biz/index.php?q=aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi53aWtpcGVkaWEub3JnL3dpa2kvVW5pdGVkX05hdGlvbNfQ29udmVudGlvbI9vbl90aGVfTGf3X29mX3RoZV9TZWE>

Turkey:

<https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/GBR-CYP1960A.PDF>

<https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/cyp-gbr1960adm.tif>

<https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/cyp-gbr1960future.tif>

All of these sites include treaties and laws that include the body of seas that countries own among their territories either if it is legal or illegal, all information is given



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