

International Law Studies—Volume 51

Situation, Documents, and Commentary on Recent Developments in the International Law of the
Sea

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The thoughts and opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily of the U.S. Government,
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SECTION V

**TREATY ON CONTINENTAL SHELF
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TREATY ON CONTINENTAL SHELF AND SUPPLEMENTARY LEGISLATION

A. Note on United Kingdom-Venezuela Treaty (1942) with Summary and Excerpts

NOTE. The greatest part of the development of the doctrine of the Continental Shelf is traceable to national legislation. Claims since 1950 are collected, *infra*, Section VI. The early national claims to the Continental Shelf are reprinted in U. S. Naval War College, *International Law Documents, 1948-49* (1950) at pages 182-196. National claims through 1950 are also collected in *U.N. Leg. Series I*, (1951), pages 3-47. Included in this latter collection is the earliest important document on this subject, the Treaty, between the United Kingdom and Venezuela, relating to the Submarine Areas of the Gulf of Paria, 26 February 1942, *Ibid.*, page 44, taken from *British Command Paper* No. 6400. The United Kingdom national legislation carrying out this Treaty is printed in the same collection at page 46.

The 1942 Treaty, *supra*, contains a preamble and nine articles. Article 1 defines "submarine areas of the Gulf of Paria" as "the sea-bed and sub-soil outside of the territorial waters of the High Contracting Parties to one or the other side of the lines A-B, B-Y and Y-X". Article 3 defines the area within the lines mentioned. Article 2 divides the claims of the two governments in the defined area. Article 4 provides for a mixed Commission to mark the respective boundaries. Article 5 provides: "This Treaty refers solely to the submarine areas of the Gulf of Paria, and nothing herein shall be held to affect in any way the status of the islands, islets or rocks above the surface of the sea together with the territorial waters thereof". Article 6 provides in the first sentence: "Nothing in this Treaty shall be held to affect in any way the status of the waters of the Gulf of Paria or any rights of passage or navigation on the surface of the seas outside the territorial waters of the contracting parties". The second sentence of Article 6 provides that any installations shall not be a danger or obstruction to shipping. Article 7 provides for cooperation in practical measures to prevent pollution. Article 8 requires insertion in any concession of provisions to ensure compliance with Articles 6 and 7, and for supervision of operations to the same purpose. Article 9 provides for peaceful solution of disputes. The quotations above are taken from the text printed in *U. N. Leg. Series I*, (1951), pages 44-46.