

PREFACE

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which adopted in 1982 and amended in 1994, created a comprehensive framework for the regulation of activities on, under, and over the oceans. The Convention entered into force in November 1994, a year after having been ratified by the required 60 countries.

The Convention on the Law of the Sea was a package deal among states with substantially different interests not only on maritime issues, but also on matters such as the common heritage of mankind, how the global economic relations should be organized in the future, and to the extent to which international relations should be governed by international law.

The Convention was signed by 119 delegations (Greece being one of them) at the final meeting of the UN Law of the Sea Conference on December 10, 1982, in Montego Bay, Jamaica. As of June 1996, 100 states have become parties to the treaty.

When the Convention was signed, only four countries opposed it because they objected to specific provisions that appeared to damage their national interests. The countries were the United States, Israel, Venezuela, and Turkey.

The United States had opposed the Convention because of some seabed mining provisions, but in July 1994, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a new Agreement which had, basically, amended the seabed mining provisions. After this development, the United States government has requested the U.S. Senate to ratify the Convention.

Israel had opposed the Convention because it had conveyed some benefits to the Palestine Liberation Organization. The latest progress in the Middle East peace process has reduced this opposition, and the Israeli government is now giving serious consideration to acceding to the Convention.

Venezuela and Turkey were the only two countries that opposed the Convention because of the existence of islands close to their coasts which did not belong to them. These islands were given the same rights as mainlands, namely, the rights of having their own territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, and continental shelf.

Turkey did not sign the Convention of 1982, the Agreement of 1994, and does not plan, in the near future, to ratify the Convention. On the other

hand, Greece did sign the Convention, the Agreement of 1994, and indeed ratified the Convention on June 1, 1995. This simple fact speaks volumes about the position of both states as related to the new international law of the sea.

In this book, we will not only attempt to review the main developments in the Greek -Turkish dispute relating to the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea, but also all other aspects of the Greek maritime interests. The new constitution of the oceans can affect a great maritime nation, such as Greece, in variety of ways.

This work represents the collective effort of all the contributors who have followed closely – and many of them participated and contributed to – the creation of the new international law of the sea. Furthermore, we decided to write this book in English because we believe that there are not too many books that cover Greek affairs in this language. Thus, this effort will broaden the horizons of non-Greek speaking scholars, who are interested in following and studying Greek affairs.

Since this book is the product of a collective effort, I would like, first of all, to express my profound gratitude to all the contributors who so generously responded to my request. I would also like to thank my friends Professors Theodore A. Couloumbis, John O. Iatrides, and Nikolaos Stavrou, who gave me their support and encouragement from the first day that I decided to undertake this project.

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