

Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

1973-1982

Concluded at Montego Bay, Jamaica on 10 December 1982

Document:-
A/CONF.62/39

Letter dated 12 February 1975 from the representative of France to the Secretary-General

Extract from the Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, Volume IV (Summary Records, Plenary, General Committee, First, Second and Third Committees, as well as Documents of the Conference, Third Session)

constitutes an example in support of the above-mentioned principle that Turkey has responded to the proposal by Greece. Turkey furthermore hopes that the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea will take due note of this development when considering the norms to be applied in areas with special characteristics.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

(Signed) Osman OLCAY
Permanent Representative of Turkey
to the United Nations

Note dated 6 February 1975 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey addressed to the Embassy of the Republic of Greece in Ankara

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to the Embassy of Greece and, with reference to its note No. 6242.4/53/AS.293, of 27 January 1975 regarding the delimitation of the continental shelf in the Aegean Sea, has the honour to set forth the view of the Turkish Government for transmission to the Greek Government as follows.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomes the spirit of conciliation of Greece regarding its proposal to settle the dispute on the delimitation of the Aegean continental shelf through peaceful means.

It is the considered view of the Turkish Government that various vital questions concerning the Aegean Sea are still outstanding between Greece and Turkey and should be resolved through peaceful means. As Turkey and Greece are

compelled to be friendly and co-operative by virtue of geography and mutual interests, there seems to be no other alternative but to settle their disputes through negotiation.

Animated with this spirit, and in view of the special geographic structure of the Aegean Sea, wherein both countries are confronted with the issues yet to be settled, *inter alia* the breadth of the territorial seas in the Aegean and the use of its space, the Turkish Government hopes that the Government of Greece will agree as a matter of priority to enter into negotiations with the Government of the Republic of Turkey on the question of the Aegean continental shelf with a view to arriving at a mutually acceptable and satisfactory solution.

Indeed, Turkey had proposed on various occasions the initiation of negotiations between the two countries with the aim of solving the differences concerning the Aegean continental shelf peacefully, in a just and equitable manner. It should be noted regretfully that these Turkish proposals were not met by Greece and negotiations were thus prevented. There is no doubt that meaningful negotiations constitute a basic method for the settlement of international disputes. In view of the fact that such negotiations have not yet taken place, the issues relating to the disputes have neither been fully identified nor elucidated.

However, in principle the Turkish Government favourably considers the Greek Government's proposal to refer the dispute over the delimitation of the Aegean continental shelf jointly to the International Court of Justice. To this effect and to elaborate the terms under which the matter shall be referred to the Court, Turkey proposes high-level talks to be initiated between the two Governments. The Turkish Government is of the opinion that these talks should be held at the ministerial level.

DOCUMENT A/CONF. 62/39

Letter dated 12 February 1975 from the representative of France to the Secretary-General

[Original: French]
[18 February 1975]

I have the honour to refer to the notes by which the Secretariat periodically advises Member States of the decisions taken by certain States extending the breadth of their territorial waters beyond 12 nautical miles.

The French Government believes that it is most regrettable that such measures should be taken at a time when the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea is seeking to propose to States the adoption of rules which take into account the interests of all States.

Furthermore, both at the bilateral level and in connexion with the work undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations to reform the law of the sea, the French Government has had occasion to indicate that in its opinion the maximum limit of 12 miles marking the breadth of territorial waters represented the best possible compromise between the interests of the international community and those of the coastal State, it being understood that the latter could exercise, beyond that limit, specific and wide-ranging economic prerogatives.

Under these circumstances, while it feels duty-bound to recall that it fully reserves its rights and those of its nationals with respect to vessels flying its flag and to aircraft registered in its territory, in connexion with the above-mentioned unilateral decisions, the French Government hopes that the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, which is to continue its work at Geneva from 17 March to 10 May 1975, will make it possible to find a universally acceptable solution to the problem of the breadth of territorial waters.

I should be grateful if you would have this note circulated to the permanent missions of States Members of the United Nations.

(Signed) Jacques LECOMPT
Deputy Permanent Representative of France
to the United Nations