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DECREE ON BULGARIA TERRITORIAL AND COASTAL WATERS

The following is a decree on territorial and coastal waters, dated 10 October 1951, with amendments dated 31 October 1951:

1. The territorial waters of the People's Republic of Bulgaria extend 12 nautical miles to the open sea from the shore line, from islands, from the farthest harbor hydraulic structures, and from the line demarcating the end of coastal waters.

A nautical mile is 1,852 meters.

2. The waters enclosed between the coast and the straight line from Cape Constantine to Cape Ilandzhik, in the case of Stalin Bay, and from Cape Emine to Cape Mosleniya (Zekhtin Borun), in the case of Burgas Bay, are considered as coastal waters of Bulgaria.

3. In order to insure the security of the country, the Council of Ministers may decree that isolated sectors of the territorial waters of Bulgaria will be closed to all navigation. Prior to the amendment, Article 3 read as follows: That part of the territorial waters which extends 3 miles from the shore line of the territory of Bulgaria represents the sea-boundary strip of Bulgaria.

4. The territorial waters of Bulgaria are separated from the territorial waters of neighboring countries by the geographic parallel passing through the point at which the land border meets the sea.

5. The territorial and coastal waters of Bulgaria, the air space over them, and the soil and subsoil covered by them are part of the territory of Bulgaria and therefore subject to its laws.

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6. Bulgaria exercises its sovereignty over the territorial waters, in accordance with existing laws, the articles of international law, and treaties and agreements signed with other states.

7. The ports of Stalin (Varna) and Sozopol are closed to foreign vessels. Other ports of Bulgaria may be closed by a decree of the Council of Ministers.

8. Nonmilitary foreign vessels may pass through, stop, and anchor in territorial and coastal waters of Bulgaria (but not in sectors of the territorial waters mentioned in Article 3), as well as enter ports open to foreign vessels, if the vessel's course coincides with the prescribed course, if it has been damaged, or if it is seeking shelter from storm.

Passage of such vessels through the sectors of the territorial waters mentioned in Article 3 is granted only when vessels enter or leave ports, and then only along lanes designated by the port authorities.

If, during violent storms, a foreign nonmilitary vessel is in danger, it may request permission to enter one of the bays or harbors southwest of Cape Kaliakra or Cape Emine. It may remain there only until the storm is over.

9. Foreign warships may pass through, stop, or anchor in the territorial and coastal waters of Bulgaria or enter one of the ports open to foreign vessels, only with prior permission from the Bulgarian government or in case of damage or storm.

10. All foreign underwater craft are forbidden, while submerged, to travel, stop, lie on the bottom, or anchor in the territorial and coastal waters of Bulgaria.

Any underwater craft found submerged within the territorial and coastal waters of Bulgaria will be pursued and destroyed without warning, and no responsibility will be taken for the consequences of such action.

Article 9 applies to underwater craft navigating on the surface.

11. Foreign vessels, while within the territorial and coastal waters of Bulgaria, may not catch marine animals, acquire marine products, make measurements, investigations, studies, photographs, or conduct war exercises, target practice, etc., nor use radio-transmitting and radio-locating equipment or sound-emitting equipment other than that needed for strictly navigational purposes. They must strictly observe international regulations, the laws of Bulgaria, and the directives issued on the basis of these laws by the appropriate government organs on safeguarding public order, security, sanitary requirements, and the financial interests of Bulgaria.

Radio-transmitting equipment may be used only in case of damage to the ship or in rescuing shipwrecked people. Permission for depth sounding will be given only to vessels which have run aground, and then only if the sounding occurs in the immediate vicinity of the vessel.

12. A foreign vessel which violates the laws of Bulgaria, the established international regulations, or treaties concerning navigation while within the territorial or coastal waters of Bulgaria, will be asked, by means of established international signals or by means of a warning shot from the coast guard or port authorities, to leave the territorial waters of Bulgaria.

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13. A foreign warship which refuses to comply with the warning to leave the territorial waters of Bulgaria may be placed under fire, and no responsibility will be taken for the consequences of such action.

14. Foreign nonmilitary vessels which are guilty of major violations (contraband, harboring persons without documents or persons sought by the authorities, etc.) or which do not comply with warnings to leave the territorial waters of Bulgaria may be detained by the appropriate units of the coast guard, and the responsible persons may be brought to trial or the ship may be required to pay the fines and taxes set by law.

A vessel which refuses to be detained and attempts to flee to the open sea may be pursued continuously by coast guard units, which will attempt to capture it before it reaches the territorial waters of another state.

15. Foreign warships on authorized transit through the territorial waters of Bulgaria or entering into its ports do not pay any taxes, unless some special services are rendered to them.

16. The Council of Ministers will add regulations to this decree after the Minister of Interior has made his reports.

17. The present decree repeals the decree and law of 1935 on territorial waters, as well as all conflicting legislation.

The execution of the present decree is entrusted to the Minister of Interior.

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