

Moreover, the Soviet delegate denied the right of the UN to interfere in matters solely concerning members of the socialist community.

**Refs:**

Robin Remington, *The Warsaw Pact: Case Studies in Communist Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971) 94-133

#276: **RIO DE LA PLATA DEMARCATION, 1969-73**

*Parties:* Argentina v. Uruguay

*Agents:* None

The Rio de la Plata is formed by the confluence of the Uruguay and Parana Rivers, at which point it is 25 miles wide; it flows 150 miles to debouch into the Atlantic, at which point it is 125 miles wide. The river is generally quite shallow and is subject to shifting obstructions formed by silt; its deepest channel runs quite close to Uruguay for almost its entire length. For economic and strategic reasons, the river is vital to Argentina and Uruguay, as well as to several other South American countries. Jurisdiction over the river was never precisely demarcated; before 1969 both Argentina and Uruguay shared its use freely under the terms of a 1910 protocol. Several decades before 1969 Argentina had occupied Martin Garcia Island and during the 1960s maintained a naval station on it; Uruguay had never acquiesced in this arrangement but it created no conflict.

During late 1968, however, Uruguay called for bids by international corporations to develop oil and natural gas fields on the continental shelf underlying the Plata estuary. Argentina protested strongly, laying claim to portions of the territory that Uruguay had planned to exploit. Jurisdictional disputes over various islands were revived. During mid-January Argentine forces occupied the islet of Punta Bauza (called Timoteo Dominguez by Uruguay), on the grounds that the islet had been created by silt deposits roughly four years previously and that it was a part of Martin Garcia and not a separate island. Uruguay protested, but it appeared that both parties were willing to negotiate a settlement. Meetings between them, however, revealed only basic differences in their views of what a proper settlement would entail. Uruguay insisted that the river should be demarcated at its geographic center; such a border would leave it controlling the major channel. Argentina insisted that the boundary should follow the deep channel, a division that would leave it controlling virtually all of the oil resources under the river. Preliminary talks were broken off in February, and although the parties joined in signing a treaty for

technical cooperation in economic development during the spring, both sides reserved their positions in the boundary dispute.

The dispute continued to simmer for three years, with occasional jurisdictional confrontations. The problem also became entangled with various domestic political conflicts in both countries, so that while the presidents of each state seemed eager to conclude a settlement as early as 1969, they could not achieve the freedom of action necessary to do so. Following Peron's election in Argentina, however, events moved smoothly toward a final agreement. On 19 November 1973 Peron flew to Uruguay for the signing of a final boundary accord dealing with the river. After suitable arrangements had been made for joint economic exploitation of the oil resources, the Uruguayan position had been adopted. The middle of the river was taken as the boundary, but the accord provided for international use of the various channels in the river. In addition, Argentina was awarded Martin Garcia and it agreed to convert the island from a navy station to a resort spot. Uruguay gained possession of the Timoteo Dominguez key.

Refs: *Latin America*, 1969; *Latin American Index*, 1969; *NY Times*, 1969

#277, 278:           **EQUATORIAL GUINEAN POST-INDEPENDENCE TENSIONS, 1969**

*Parties:*           Equatorial Guinea v. Spain

*Agents:*           OAU, UN

The agreement for Equatorial Guinea (EG) obtaining its independence from Spain came into effect on 12 October 1968 and provided for transitional arrangements whereby a Spanish Guardia Civil would remain in EG, pending a definitive military agreement. In February 1969 EG President Francisco Macias Nguema made a series of speeches calling for economic as well as political independence. He also demanded that the number of Spanish flags flown in EG be no greater than the number allowed for other foreign powers, a demand that was resisted by Spain; members of the EG National Guard thereupon forcibly removed some flags from the Spanish Consulate-General. Clashes followed in which at least one Spanish citizen was killed, and EG announced that it could not guarantee the safety of Spanish citizens.

President Macias then accused Spain of undertaking a number of hostile actions, including military occupation of key areas in EG and the arming of Spanish civilians; he appealed to UN Secretary-General U