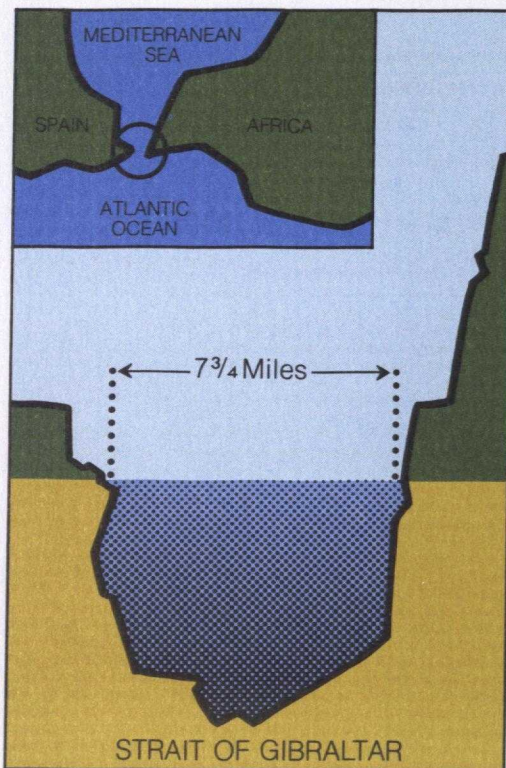
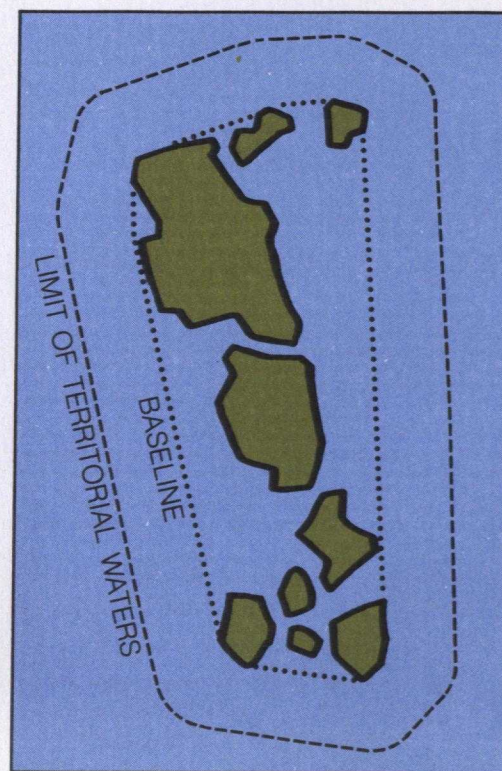




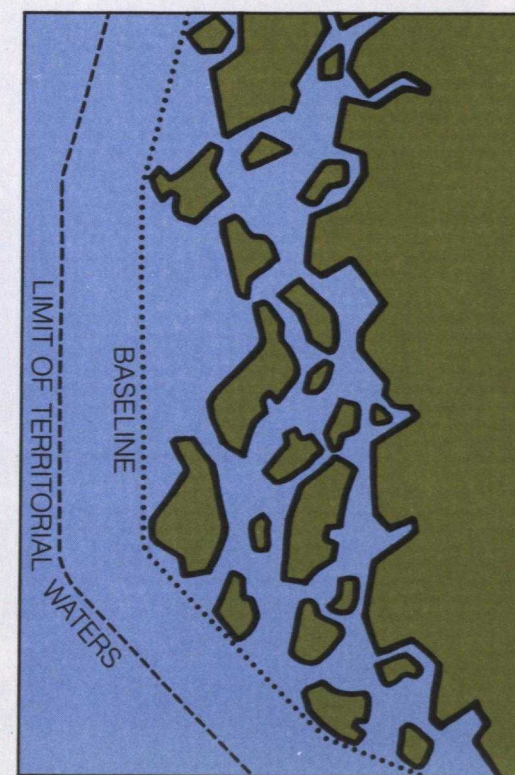
international straits

These are straits which have traditionally been used as means of communication between one part of the high seas and another part or the territorial sea of another state, and which have a width of 24 miles or less. A prime example is the Strait of Gibraltar. Since the waters of such straits are territorial, the rights of the coastal states bordering them must be respected but at the same time international navigation must not be unduly impeded. Physical conditions vary from strait to strait, and what constitutes innocent passage in one strait may not be acceptable in another owing to special circumstances which seriously increase the risk of pollution, collision or other disaster. Thus, there is a need for a better definition of the respective rights and duties of both strait states and user states.



archipelagoes: oceanic

Oceanic archipelagoes are groups of islands which form a geographic entity or unit unrelated to any "mainland". Indonesia and the Philippines are the best examples. These states claim the right to join the outermost points of the outermost islands with straight baselines, thus enclosing the waters of the archipelago. Others have proposed that a limit be imposed on the length of baselines and on the land-water ratio, so as to avoid widely scattered groups of islands claiming vast expanses of the ocean. As many such archipelagoes lie across important shipping lanes, these concepts may affect the transit of ships.



coastal

Coastal archipelagoes are those which lie in close proximity to the mainland. In most cases, such groups of islands belong to the state to which they are adjacent. The classic example is that of the fringe of islands off the coast of Norway. In 1951, the International Court of Justice ruled that these islands could be joined by straight baselines from which the territorial sea of Norway would be measured, since the waters between these islands and the mainland were so closely linked to the land mass that they could readily be subjected to the same legal regime. The straight baseline system has since been widely applied throughout the world by states with similar geographic configuration.