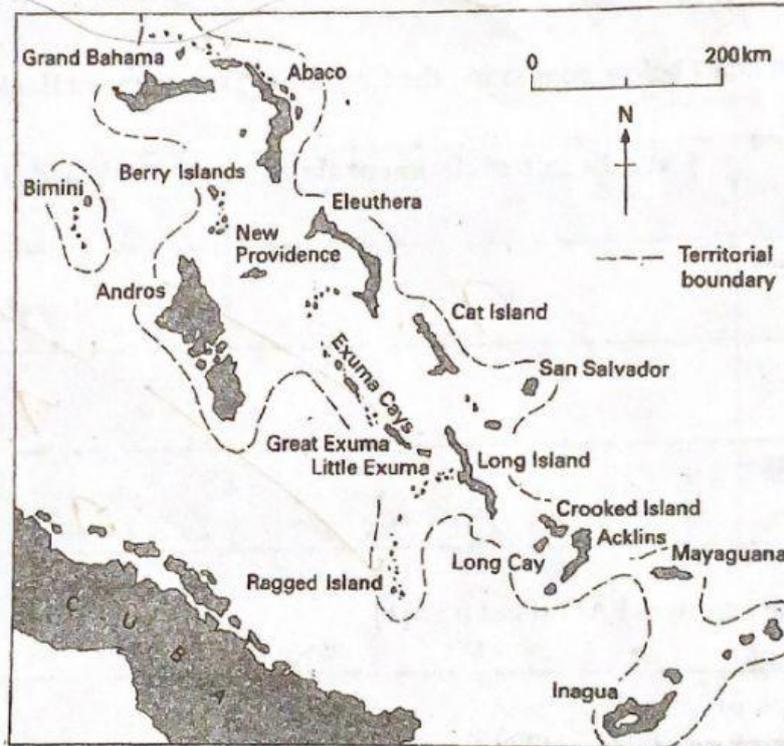


## Lesson 10

### Defending our Boundaries

The sea separates us from our neighbours, the United States of America (USA) and Cuba. The government of the Bahamas and these countries has each agreed that their **territorial boundaries** will extend to 19 kilometers from their coastlines. This means that The Bahamas has a right to protect all the waters with 19 km of these islands that lie furthest north, south, east, and west. These are our **territorial waters**.



*Primary Social Studies and Tourism Education for The Bahamas, Book 5.*

The Bahamas defends its boundaries for several reasons. These include:

- To prevent poaching
- To keep out drug smugglers
- To stop illegal immigrants
- To prevent the smuggling of weapons

The **Royal Bahamas Defence Force** was started in 1979 and is responsible for protecting our boundaries. Its main base is located at **Coral Harbour** on New Providence Island. The highest position in this organization is **Commodore**. The Royal Bahamian Defence Force officers patrol the waters within our territorial boundaries. It apprehends poachers of marine life, smugglers of drugs and illegal

aliens. They also intercept ships found **polluting** the waters. The Defence Force also assists in the enforcement of order along with relief in times of disaster.

### **Poaching**

Our waters are rich in fish and shellfish, which are important sources of food in The Bahamas. Fishermen from other countries often try to catch fish in Bahamian waters. They are poachers. Ships from the Defence Force patrol the waters around the **Great and Little Bahama Banks** to prevent from poaching.

If foreign fishermen are caught in our waters, they are arrested and taken to Nassau. Their catch is taken away from them or **confiscated**. They are put on trial and, if they are found guilty of poaching, they must pay a **fine** and may spend time in prison.

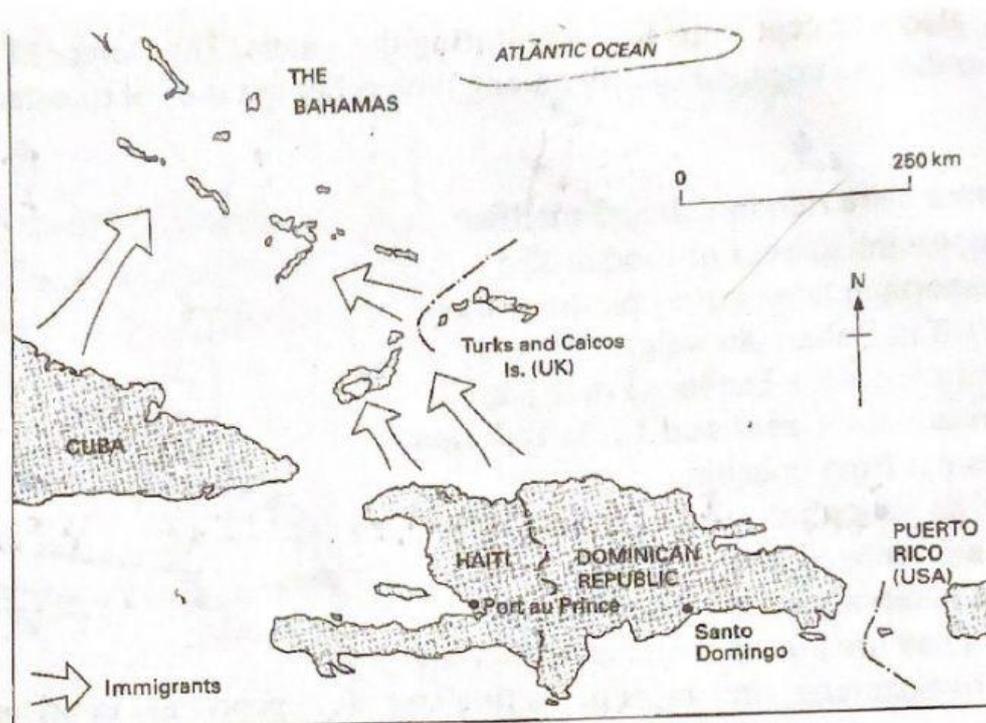


### **Drug smuggling**

Only about 100 kilometers of water separates the northern Bahamas from the USA, and many drug smugglers try to send drugs from South America through The Bahamas to Florida. On the Family Islands, there are many small airports which can be used by small planes to land drugs. It is difficult for the police and other law enforcement officers in The Bahamas to protect all our boundaries.

The USA helps The Bahamas by providing helicopters, fast boats, and people from the **US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)**, who works with The Bahamian police and Defence Force. Together they try to stop the drug smugglers.

A new system has been developed to stop the smugglers. Two special balloons, called **radar balloons** have been floated 450 meters in the air at **High Rock on Grand Bahama** and **George Town Exuma**. These balloons carry special instruments which enable people on the ground to detect boats and planes up to 300 kilometers away. If any boat is suspected of drug smuggling, it can be tracked, chased, and caught. Anyone who is found guilty of drug smuggling faces a heavy fine and is usually, imprisoned.



### Illegal immigrants

Sometimes people from other countries try to enter The Bahamas without official permission. Some are trying to reach the USA; others are looking for work in The Bahamas. Most of these illegal immigrants come to our islands by boat. If any such boats are found in our waters, they are stopped, and the passengers are sent back to sea, beyond our boundaries.

If the boats are in too poor a condition to put back to sea, they are brought into Nassau. The people on board are **deported** to their country as soon as possible. Many illegal immigrants in The Bahamas come from nearby **Haiti**. It is important that all Bahamians help to defend our boundaries. We want our country to be a safe place and one that tourists will enjoy visiting.

Answer all questions in COMPLETE SENTENCES. Marks will be deducted for incomplete sentences.

1. What is a territorial boundary?
2. What is the name of the law enforcement agency that patrols The Bahamas' territorial boundary?
3. Give THREE reasons why The Bahamas defends its territorial boundaries.
4. Apart from protecting our territorial boundaries, what are TWO other duties of the Royal Bahamas Defense Force?
5. Explain why it is difficult for the Royal Bahamas Defence Force to protect all of The Bahamas.
6. How does the USA help our law enforcers? State THREE ways.
7. Which country has the largest amount of illegal immigrants coming to The Bahamas?
8. What does the word "deported" mean?