

TITLE 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

PART I - CRIMES

CHAPTER 1 - GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 7. Special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States defined

The term “special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States”, as used in this title, includes:

- (1) The high seas, any other waters within the admiralty and maritime jurisdiction of the United States and out of the jurisdiction of any particular State, and any vessel belonging in whole or in part to the United States or any citizen thereof, or to any corporation created by or under the laws of the United States, or of any State, Territory, District, or possession thereof, when such vessel is within the admiralty and maritime jurisdiction of the United States and out of the jurisdiction of any particular State.
- (2) Any vessel registered, licensed, or enrolled under the laws of the United States, and being on a voyage upon the waters of any of the Great Lakes, or any of the waters connecting them, or upon the Saint Lawrence River where the same constitutes the International Boundary Line.
- (3) Any lands reserved or acquired for the use of the United States, and under the exclusive or concurrent jurisdiction thereof, or any place purchased or otherwise acquired by the United States by consent of the legislature of the State in which the same shall be, for the erection of a fort, magazine, arsenal, dockyard, or other needful building.
- (4) Any island, rock, or key containing deposits of guano, which may, at the discretion of the President, be considered as appertaining to the United States.
- (5) Any aircraft belonging in whole or in part to the United States, or any citizen thereof, or to any corporation created by or under the laws of the United States, or any State, Territory, district, or possession thereof, while such aircraft is in flight over the high seas, or over any other waters within the admiralty and maritime jurisdiction of the United States and out of the jurisdiction of any particular State.
- (6) Any vehicle used or designed for flight or navigation in space and on the registry of the United States pursuant to the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies and the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, while that vehicle is in flight, which is from the moment when all external doors are closed on Earth following embarkation until the moment when one such door is opened on Earth for disembarkation or in the case of a forced landing, until the competent authorities take over the responsibility for the vehicle and for persons and property aboard.
- (7) Any place outside the jurisdiction of any nation with respect to an offense by or against a national of the United States.
- (8) To the extent permitted by international law, any foreign vessel during a voyage having a scheduled departure from or arrival in the United States with respect to an offense committed by or against a national of the United States.
- (9) With respect to offenses committed by or against a national of the United States as that term is used in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act—
 - (A) the premises of United States diplomatic, consular, military or other United States Government missions or entities in foreign States, including the buildings, parts of buildings, and land appurtenant or ancillary thereto or used for purposes of those missions or entities, irrespective of ownership; and
 - (B) residences in foreign States and the land appurtenant or ancillary thereto, irrespective of ownership, used for purposes of those missions or entities or used by United States personnel assigned to those missions or entities.

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 5, 2009 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscprint.html>).

Nothing in this paragraph shall be deemed to supersede any treaty or international agreement with which this paragraph conflicts. This paragraph does not apply with respect to an offense committed by a person described in section 3261 (a) of this title.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 685; July 12, 1952, ch. 695, 66 Stat. 589; Pub. L. 97–96, § 6, Dec. 21, 1981, 95 Stat. 1210; Pub. L. 98–473, title II, § 1210, Oct. 12, 1984, 98 Stat. 2164; Pub. L. 103–322, title XII, § 120002, Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2021; Pub. L. 107–56, title VIII, § 804, Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 377.)

Historical and Revision Notes

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 451 (Mar. 4, 1909, ch. 321, § 272, 35 Stat. 1142; June 11, 1940, ch. 323, 54 Stat. 304).

The words “The term ‘special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States’ as used in this title includes:” were substituted for the words “The crimes and offenses defined in sections 451–468 of this title shall be punished as herein prescribed.”

This section first appeared in the 1909 Criminal Code. It made it possible to combine in one chapter all the penal provisions covering acts within the admiralty and maritime jurisdiction without the necessity of repeating in each section the places covered.

The present section has made possible the allocation of the diverse provisions of chapter 11 of Title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., to particular chapters restricted to particular offenses, as contemplated by the alphabetical chapter arrangement.

In several revised sections of said chapter 11 the words “within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States” have been added. Thus the jurisdictional limitation will be preserved in all sections of said chapter 11 describing an offense.

Enumeration of names of Great Lakes was omitted as unnecessary.

Other minor changes were necessary now that the section defines a term rather than the place of commission of crime or offense; however, the extent of the special jurisdiction as originally enacted has been carefully followed.

References in Text

Section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, referred to in par. (9), is classified to section 1101 of Title 8, Aliens and Nationality.

Amendments

2001—Par. (9). Pub. L. 107–56 added par. (9).

1994—Par. (8). Pub. L. 103–322 added par. (8).

1984—Par. (7). Pub. L. 98–473 added par. (7).

1981—Par. (6). Pub. L. 97–96 added par. (6).

1952—Par. (5). Act July 12, 1952, added par. (5).

Territorial Sea Extending to Twelve Miles Included in Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction

Pub. L. 104–132, title IX, § 901(a), Apr. 24, 1996, 110 Stat. 1317, provided that: “The Congress declares that all the territorial sea of the United States, as defined by Presidential Proclamation 5928 of December 27, 1988 [set out as a note under section 1331 of Title 43, Public Lands], for purposes of Federal criminal jurisdiction is part of the United States, subject to its sovereignty, and is within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States for the purposes of title 18, United States Code.”