

## Foreword

THE PRESENT STUDY, WRITTEN BY ONE OF THE FOREMOST CONTEMPORARY authorities on the law of the continental shelf, deals with one of the most important international problems of our time. The legal status of the ocean bed is a question of far more than legal interest. It will affect the economic balance of the world and the very structure of international relations. The basic issue is between the preservation of at least the most important aspects of freedom of the seas—the single most important achievement of the law of nations—and the progressive appropriation of the ocean bed by states, and its exploitation by competing economic interests. Inevitably, such a development will increasingly erode the freedom of navigation and fisheries, and immensely add to the dangers of the pollution of the oceans.

The present study is based on years of research and collaboration with scientists, geologists, and other experts. In short compass, Professor Andrassy's study not only gives a survey of the relevant facts and legal problems, but also outlines constructive alternatives to the present dangerous race for the nationalization of the oceans.

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