This 3-volume work on *Sea-Bed Energy and Minerals: The International Legal Regime* is concerned with the law governing the exploitation of energy and mineral resources in two quite different submarine areas. Volume I deals with the areas within the limits of national jurisdiction, that is, all of the submarine areas extending from the coast to the seaward limit of the continental shelf. As its subtitle indicates, this volume is predominantly concerned with *The Continental Shelf*. Although the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has still not entered into force and, indeed, may not do so for many years for some of the major maritime powers, its adoption in 1982 did, nonetheless, usher in a period of relative stability in the rules governing the areas within national jurisdiction, including, in particular, the continental shelf. However, being the creatures of compromise, some of its rules are undeniably vague and it has been left to State practice and international courts and tribunals to develop these rules further, especially those relating to the delimitation of the continental shelf between neighbouring States. The purpose of Volume I is to provide an analysis of the rules of conventional and customary law in the light of this practice.

Volume 2, on *Sea-Bed Mining*, deals with the area beyond the limits of national jurisdiction ("the Area"), that is, the submarine area lying seaward of the outer limit of the continental shelf. It is in this much deeper area beyond the continental margin that the deep-sea mining of polymetallic nodules is likely to take place in the early years of the next century. It is fortunate in one sense that the economics of the minerals market have pushed back by many years the expected commencement of the commercial exploitation of these resources. The delay may give the international community the much-needed time to reach agreement on the highly complex legal regime needed to govern it. Unfortunately, it follows that the task of providing an exposition of the current law is both difficult and hazardous; difficult because of the enormous complexity of the rules so far drafted, and hazardous because the law is still in a state of considerable flux and the outcome of the legislative process is hard to predict. Nevertheless, it is the purpose of Volume 2 to provide such an exposition.
Volume 3, which will be published at the same time as Volume 2, will provide *Documents, Tables and Bibliography* relating to the subject matter of the first two volumes.

In considering problems of continental shelf delimitation, one map is worth many pages of text and my task has therefore been greatly eased by being able to rely upon the expert cartographic services of Mr. Huw Dobson of the Department of Maritime Studies and International Transport at the University of Wales College of Cardiff. I am also most grateful to my secretary, Mrs. Valerie Simpson, BA, for coping cheerfully and skilfully with a sometimes difficult manuscript.

For their courteous co-operation and invaluable advice, it is a great pleasure to record my indebtedness to Ms. Annebeth Rosenboom and the production team at Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

December 1991  
E.D.B.