

an equitable basis for developing deep-ocean resources, it will obviously be necessary to develop principles for delimiting the area over which such a system will apply. What are the present limits of national jurisdiction into the abyssal depths under existing law? Will these limits continue to be regarded as capable of being extended beyond the geophysical continental shelves of coastal states? Beyond the shelf proper, the continental slope, the rise? What of those coastal states that are not favoured with an extensive geographical continental shelf?

The present legal position regarding sovereign rights of the coastal state to the resources of submarine areas extending at least to the abyssal depths is not in dispute. The proposed study should, therefore, be confined to the problems of exploration of the resources of the deep ocean floor. In the absence of generally recognized principles of international law, such a study should, presumably, take into account and indeed begin with existing state practice. Exploration permits have already been issued over areas of the ocean floor in widely different geophysical circumstances. It is already a fact that exploitation is taking place at considerable distances from the coasts and that exploration is being carried out in areas where the water depth far exceeds 200 meters. There have, moreover, been a number of international agreements whereby states with opposite coasts have divided between themselves