

FOREWORD

As it relates to legal issues on the use of the sea and its resources in Northeast Asia, Western-language literature has not been prolific to date. In this sense, the present volume, written by an incumbent multilingual foreign service officer who took part in negotiations for regional maritime dispute settlement, will prove helpful to scholars and practitioners interested in Northeast Asian law of the sea.

The geographical, geopolitical and geological circumstances of Northeast Asia are so complicated that some law-of-the-sea issues of great importance to the coastal States have yet to be negotiated for settlement. For instance, the coastal States enacted their exclusive economic zone laws barely in the late 1990s – some 20 years after those in most other regions of the world had done so in the latter part of the 1970s. Moreover, the few fisheries agreements in force are mostly bilateral and provisional despite the pressing need for multilateral arrangements. In fact, the entire region, which would ultimately require over a dozen bilateral and multilateral agreements for the delimitation of its territorial seas, exclusive economic zones and continental shelves, has only three such agreements in force to date, namely the Korea-Japan Northern Continental-Shelf Boundary Agreement of 1974, the USSR-North Korea Territorial-Sea Boundary Agreement of 1985 and the USSR-North Korea Economic-Zone/Continental-Shelf Boundary Agreement of 1986.

At a time when the coastal States of Northeast Asia are belatedly hard at work to settle their maritime issues with one another, this book, with cartographic illustrations, will be useful not only as a source of up-to-date information, but also as a source of wisdom applicable for the settlement of the particular maritime disputes in Northeast Asia.

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