

PROTECTING THE ANTARCTIC ENVIRONMENT: AUSTRALIA AND THE MINERALS CONVENTION. Lorraine M. Elliott. 1993. Canberra: Australian Foreign Policy Publications Programme. vii + 92 p, soft cover. ISBN 0-7315-1537-4. £23.25; \$Aus15.00.

At the heart of the Antarctic Treaty System is consensus. The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCPs) have always recognised that their interests in Antarctica have been served by seeking a consensus, and presenting a united front in dealing with all questions concerning the continent. Such an attitude is embodied in Article IV of the Antarctic Treaty, which neutralises differences over territorial claims, and has seen the ATCPs through the Cold War, the Falklands conflict, and the protests of developing states within the United Nations.

Yet this consensus was seriously threatened in the late 1980s by the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities (CRAMRA). For the first time, Antarctic Treaty states were openly opposed to each other over a major international convention, which had previously been negotiated under the same consensus and cooperation that had existed since the International Geophysical Year in 1957–1958. The background to this crucial episode is the subject of *Protecting the Antarctic environment*.

The author, Lorraine Elliott, seeks to examine, from the perspective of Australia, the rupture between the ATCPs over CRAMRA. In the context of the CRAMRA dispute, such a limitation is both acceptable and advisable, given that the Australian policy shift to reject CRAMRA was central to the breakdown of the agreed position of the ATCPs on the Convention. Although Elliott's work concentrates on Australia, it does discuss the roles of the other protagonists in the dispute, so an effective and succinct discussion of the CRAMRA crisis is provided.

The book is divided into three parts. The first considers the policy objectives that underscore Australian participation in the Antarctic Treaty System. In doing so, there is the mandatory discussion of the formation of the Antarctic Treaty, viewed from an Australian perspective. More interestingly, there is an attempt to focus on the policy-making structure for Antarctic issues within the Australian government. Publicists often neglect the importance of national policy-making processes in considering the interactions of states in the ATS, and Elliott's examination of it is only disappointing in that it is brief, in keeping with the rest of the work. The core of the first section is an exposition on Australian Antarctic policy, noting the development of a stronger focus on environmental protection through the 1980s, while maintaining a commitment to participate in the CRAMRA negotiations. Elliott concludes with the view that Australia had failed to achieve most of the target objectives it had set for inclusion in CRAMRA, and while this may profit from the benefit of hindsight, it certainly is consistent with the events that were to unfold.

The second part charts the revision of Australian attitudes towards CRAMRA in 1989. There is an appraisal of

potential motivating factors for the decision to abandon CRAMRA. Good use is made of Hansard, leaked ministerial correspondence and cabinet submissions, and contemporary newspaper articles. The material is a neatly synthesised chronological discussion of the reversal of Australian policy on CRAMRA. Given that it will be well into the twenty-first century before cabinet documents concerning CRAMRA will be released, Elliott has put together a very cogent summation of events with the material available to her. Elliott's conclusion about the change in policy is that the communities of interest that have previously dominated Antarctic policy-making in Australia were supplanted as the sole stakeholders as advisers on Antarctic issues. The rise of efficient NGOs with significant political clout was able to bring into question long-standing assumptions about Australia's Antarctic policy and was able to influence the cabinet sufficiently to bring about a change in those policies. Such a conclusion is eminently reasonable, and finds much support in the material Elliott has presented.

The third section of the book goes on to consider the international ramifications of the Australian about-face on CRAMRA. It charts the gradual erosion of support for the Convention through 1989–1990 and the drift of support from CRAMRA towards the solution that was to become the Madrid Protocol. This is still undertaken from an essentially Australian perspective, although Elliott is compelled to examine the motivations of the other protagonists in the dispute. Surprisingly little discussion of the contents of the Madrid Protocol is made, which is disappointing, but reflects the author's specific focus on CRAMRA, rather than a more generalist examination of Antarctic environmental regimes and policy.

Elliott is able to draw a number of conclusions from her analysis. These include the impact of NGOs on the decision-making process, and contemplating the roles such groups may have on wider environmental policy. Elliott also queries the influence that a committed middle power can have on multilateral negotiations. Australia was (with the assistance of France) able to bring about a dramatic change in the views of the ATCPs in a relatively short space of time. This is a conclusion worthy of further discussion, and no doubt Elliott's analysis would provide a useful case study for a political scientist seeking to examine the influence of middle powers in the world.

On the whole, this slim volume provides a thought-provoking and useful summary of the reasons why CRAMRA failed. The greatest difficulty with the book is its length, as it covers quite complex policy interactions in a relatively short amount of space, and it would be preferable if some more of the background and detail of the CRAMRA saga were discussed. In fairness, though, such a detailed exposition is not Elliott's intention, but rather a succinct and readable analysis of a landmark dispute in the history of the ATS. In this objective, it would seem that she has certainly succeeded. (Stuart Kaye, Faculty of Law, University of Tasmania, GPO Box 252C, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia.)