

ANTARCTICA

IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Edited by B. A. Hamzah



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PUSTAKA PERDANA



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FOREWORD

MANY international issues have an uncanny way of staying hidden, smouldering behind a facade of unexpectant calm, before bursting out into the open to drag all and sundry into the fray. The Antarctica problem has the potential to become such an issue. Although it is still quite a distance from ignition point, it poses a perennial issue for the international community through its irresolution. The Antarctica Treaty of 1959 is fast outliving its usefulness and is flawed and outdated as it lacks the appropriate legal structure to support the proclaimed universal objectives.

Although recent attention focussed on the Antarctica issue was catalysed only through the combined efforts of Malaysia, Antigua, Barbuda and other like-minded countries at the 38th United Nations General Assembly of 1983, the majority of the members of the world community have not failed to recognise, and to be concerned over, the conflict-prone situation. In fact, they have been encouraged by the current efforts of Malaysia and those of other countries in the past to internationalise the Question of Antarctica. Recognition that something should be done to defuse the issue – one that has been put aside for almost three decades but is now showing the effects of stress and strain – is openly acknowledged. And so is recognition of the fact that a review of the 1959 treaty by the United Nations is overdue.

Even as debate over the simmering issue heats up, it is essential that objectivity prevails. Reason must reign in order that the way might be paved for a better order to ensure that Antarctica and its resources are maintained as a common heritage for mankind. Since it is only through proper understanding that viable solutions can be sought, it is hoped this volume will in a small way serve to shed some light on the issues concerned.

In compiling this volume, I have received unfailing encouragement from Dr Noordin Sopiee. The editorial support of ISIS's Khalid Abdullah is greatly appreciated. I would also like to record my appreciation to the late Cecilia Lim for reading the original manuscript. The editor, however, is solely responsible for the selection of materials incorporated in this volume.

B A Hamzah
Editor

