

Volume 5 | Issue 2

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1973

## Book Noted

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### Recommended Citation

Books Noted, *Book Noted*, 5 Case W. Res. J. Int'l L. 210 (1973)

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## BOOK NOTED

*The Politics of the Ocean.* By Edward J. Wenk, Jr. Seattle: University of Washington Press (1972). Pp. 590. \$14.95.

The ocean can serve mankind in many ways. For example, the sea is an important source of food, particularly of animal proteins and fats. Further, the ocean is an important source of nonliving resources — gas, petroleum, and such nonfuel minerals as copper and zinc.

Prior to the early 1960's, there was little concern on a national political level with the haphazard exploration and indiscriminate exploitation of marine resources that had previously characterized the federal government's attitude toward the seas. This lack of concern was reflected by the fact that before the 1960's, jurisdiction over coastal activities was fragmented among twenty federal agencies. However, with the creation in 1966 of the Marine Sciences Council which was the first federal agency to be granted enough authority to deal with the entire problem of marine affairs, national policies and strategies were developed to allocate marine resources in order to meet wide-ranging social goals and aspirations.

The author, who was Executive Secretary of the Council, divides the development of the federal government's attempt to manage marine affairs into three distinct stages: (1) intensified preparation by building research tools, (2) policy formulation to turn the seas toward practical benefit, and (3) the creation of new marine-related institutions. Drawing upon his personal experiences over ten years as a science policy adviser for the federal government, Mr. Wenk details the problems he and others encountered in trying to formulate and achieve public policy goals in a pluralistic society.

Based on his experience, the author makes several recommendations to improve the decision-making process with regard to marine affairs. Mr. Wenk advises the appointment of a technological ombudsman to provide the President with authoritative, speedy, non-political, objective analysis of important technological questions. Moreover, the author favors greater Vice-Presidential involvement in marine affairs, thus providing the President with more powerful assistance in dealing with marine matters.

In conclusion, *The Politics of the Ocean* is concerned primarily with national management of the oceans; the book deals only briefly with international issues. Further, although each issue in the book is thoroughly presented, a general reader would undoubtedly tend to get lost in the maze of agency abbreviations and details which the author includes. (MJH)