Preface

This is the seventh book from the Project on Environmental Change and Foreign Policy, which I began while on the faculty of London Metropolitan University (formerly London Guildhall University) and which relocated to Hong Kong when I joined Lingnan University. Other books from the project, published between 2000 and 2005, were (in order of publication) Climate Change and American Foreign Policy (St Martin’s Press/Palgrave Macmillan), The Environment, International Relations and US Foreign Policy (Georgetown University Press), International Equity and Global Environmental Politics: Power and Principles in US Foreign Policy (Ashgate), International Environmental Cooperation: Politics and Diplomacy in Pacific Asia (University Press of Colorado), Global Warming and East Asia: The Domestic and International Politics of Climate Change (Routledge) and Confronting Environmental Change in East and Southeast Asia: Eco-Politics, Foreign Policy and Sustainable Development (United Nations University Press/Earthscan).

The core objective of the project is to better understand the role of foreign policy – the crossovers and interactions between domestic and international politics and policies – in efforts to preserve the environment and natural resources. Underlying this objective is the belief that it is not enough to analyze domestic or international political actors, institutions and processes by themselves. We need to understand the interactions among them, something that explicit thought about foreign policy can help us do.

More specifically, the project has sought to understand foreign policy processes in international efforts to address human-induced changes to the natural environment; to analyze the actors and institutions – domestic and international, governmental and nongovernmental – that constrain and shape actions on environmental issues; to show how environmental changes influence foreign policy processes; and to critically assess environmental foreign policies. Other objectives of the project are to test the waters of research in this field; to showcase research from established and new scholars of different backgrounds that has not been forced into traditional empirical, epistemological or ontological boxes; to give insight to governmental and nongovernmental practitioners and activists, which
might help improve their understanding of the politics and foreign policy of environmental issues; to disseminate these ideas to government officials and scholars so that they might have some positive effect on policy making and scholarship; and to enlighten students and laypersons interested in environmental protection, sustainable development, international affairs and foreign policy.

I wish to thank the contributors for answering my call to contribute to this project and for persevering through the very long process of research, writing, peer review and revision. Anonymous readers gave valuable comments that forced us to strengthen our thinking and writing. Lingnan University and its Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee provided important financial assistance. KK Chan has given me inspiration and support during this and many other projects, for which I am immensely grateful.

Paul G Harris
Hong Kong