

Harris, G. Paul (editor). 2001. The Environment, International Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy. Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C. Paperback. Price: Unknown. IX + 267 pp + index

The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 highlighted many areas where international collaboration is needed in order to protect and conserve global environmental resources. The concern over the threat posed by the exponential increase in world population, unprecedented increase in the use of natural resources by the industrialized countries, the increase in the amount of pollution, the decline in bio-diversity and problems posed by HIV/AIDS around the world made it vividly understandable why concerted efforts is needed at the global level and why dedicated leadership by the world's greatest economies such as the United States, Canada, Japan, Great Britain, Germany, France, Russia and Australia is of paramount importance.

The book: The Environment, International Relations and the U.S. Foreign Policy is the product of "the project on Environmental Change & Foreign Policy which began at London Guildhall University in early 1998" (p.ix). The primary objectives of the first phase of the project was to highlight how U.S. foreign policy reacts to and is shaped by the fluctuations in the environmental movements domestically and internationally. This book is an attempt to articulate current issues in the environmental arena which preoccupies the U.S. Foreign Policy.

The environmental agenda of the U.S. Foreign Policy needs to be understood. There are areas of environmental debate/change that the United States has been most interested and involve. This volume explains why the United States takes the position it does on matters of its interest. There is no question that the United States is one of the biggest users of the world's natural resources and also the world's most capable polluter of the environment. The editor, Paul Harris makes this point when he cited the works of J.T. Houghton, Meiro Filho, B.A. Callander, N. Harris, A. Kattenberg and K. Maskell, eds:

...its emissions of pollutants that scientists believe contribute to global warming and to the climatic changes that result from global warming surpass those of any other country. Indeed, on a per capita basis, U.S. emissions of these "greenhouse gases" are among the highest in the world. With less than one-twentieth of the world's population, the United States produces nearly one-fourth of the world's greenhouse gases (p.4).

The book provides it readers with the history of some of the most prominent issues which concern U.S. foreign policy. Of particular interest in this book is the domestic political conception of environmentalism and how some American Presidents have behaved during certain environmental

movements. The book is divided into four parts: (I) Introduction (II) National Security and Geopolitics (III) Domestic and International Politics and (IV) National Interests and International Obligations. There are eleven chapters covered by ten contributors which include the editor. Their focus has been on how the United States deals with the new challenges in the era of environmental decline and international diplomacy. The United States international environmental policy is dictated by a number of self interest which include; national security, economy, politics and the American public opinion and interest. The authors have done a very good job of writing excellent papers to inform the readers. However, it must be pointed out that the book has not done well on stressing the significance of informing American public about the significance of including environmental matters in foreign policy although it did say in the Preface(p.ix) that it is hoped that the discussion in the book would get “onto the street” where they might have some positive effect on policy making and scholarship. “Overall, this is a very worthwhile book for scholars and students of international relations and environmental policy.

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