

Presentation of the State of the World 2005 Report

by

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Symposium on the Worldwatch Institute report

"State of the World 2005: Redefining Global Security"

Peace Palace, The Hague, 28 February 2005 and European Parliament, Brussels, 1 March 2005

The kinds of security challenges that Chris Flavin presented cannot be resolved by raising military expenditures, dispatching troops, sealing borders, or by maintaining the status quo in a highly unequal world.

There is growing recognition of this fundamental truth even among those charged with traditional security tasks. The Norwegian government recently decided to reinforce its military presence in Afghanistan. But the defense minister, Kristin Krohn Devold, in a recent meeting emphasized that the civilian departments need to do more to shore up social and environmental stability. She said that if more foresters were sent to Afghanistan, then Norway and others could start withdrawing soldiers.

The continued pursuit of traditional military priorities threatens to sideline the struggle against poverty, health epidemics, and environmental degradation, draining scarce resources away from the root causes of insecurity.

In 2000, UN members agreed on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—intended to alleviate many of these root causes. They were complemented in 2002 by the targets adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. But progress toward these goals has been excruciatingly slow and quite uneven across different regions. Gains with regard to improved sanitation and reduced child mortality, for instance, are lagging behind MDG targets in several regions. But Sub-Saharan Africa in particular is struggling across the board to stay on course.

Yet, relatively modest investments could help break the vicious circles that are destabilizing large parts of the planet. Rough estimates suggest that programs to provide clean water and sewage systems would cost roughly \$37 billion annually, for a number of years; cutting world hunger in half might require \$24 billion; preventing further soil erosion, another \$24 billion.

A rough, order-of-magnitude estimate suggests that these and other social and environmental programs together might cost slightly more than \$100 billion per year, over a number of years. That is undoubtedly a substantial sum of money, about twice as much as is made available in official development assistance annually. But compare this with the costs of the war and occupation in Iraq, which has already absorbed more than \$150 billion. The Bush administration recently requested another \$80 billion just for this calendar year.

The unavoidable conclusion is that the financial resources needed are available. What is missing is a change in priorities to channel resources into these urgent programs. Overcoming this investment deficit is a political challenge.

There is another investment deficit with regard to the legacies of past warmaking and traditional approaches to security. The international community's investments remain inadequate in

- promoting disarmament,
- controlling dangerous weapons and weapons materials,
- strengthening peacekeeping capabilities,
- and pursuing post-conflict reconstruction, incl. the environmental impacts of warfare.

Security spending is terribly misdirected today. World military expenditures are now close to \$1 trillion a year, and may soon surpass the peak amount spent during the Cold War. Shifting national and global budgetary priorities is part of the answer to the challenges before us. Redirecting even a relatively small share of military budgets would easily provide all the funds needed to pay for achieving the MDGs.

If we accept a broader definition of security, it follows that there is a broader range of policy opportunities to address the challenges before us, including:

- Promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency for climate stability
- Safeguarding critical ecosystems
- Reducing population growth, in part by encouraging girls' education and empowering women
- Making critical investments in education and job training
- Strengthening public health systems

But the critical issue is not drawing up a long list of priority actions. Rather, we need to ensure that our policies are more cross-cutting and better integrated. The absence of beneficial economic development breeds insecurity. For development to take place requires peace and political stability. And dev. needs to be sustainable and equitable to bring about stable outcomes.

Developing more effective responses to the challenges before us requires bringing together the strengths and insights of different disciplines, policy communities, and bureaucratic turfs — incl. the fields of security, development, environment, public health, and others.

This is a matter not only of promoting interdisciplinary thinking, but also encouraging the development of a "shared language" and trying to surmount competing cultures, agendas, and time horizons of different actors involved. It is encouraging that the Swedish government decided in 2003 to align its trade, agriculture, environment, and defense policies around the guiding principle of equitable and sustainable global development.

We also need greater international cooperation and better-coordinated interactions along the global—national—local spectrum.

In part, this requires redesigning the UN for the security challenges of today and tomorrow.

- a. This concerns particularly the composition and powers of the Security Council, and the question whether it should be involved in non-traditional security issues or whether new entities are needed for effective international environmental governance.
- b. It will be equally important to reform the World Bank, IMF, and WTO so they promote policies that are pro-poor and pro-environment.

A broad range of actors from civil society have emerged as skilled players in global politics and even as leaders on the broad range of issues relevant to global security—in concert with like-minded governments. Civil society has been dubbed a "second superpower" by some. Although it wields growing influence, there is also reason for caution:

- the staying power of a broadly mobilized citizenry have yet to be put to the test;
- large-scale mobilizations may be difficult to organize with great frequency;
- and success creates its own challenges (straining the capacity for effective participation).

One of the most exciting new concepts concerns environmental peacemaking—building peace through environmental cooperation. The basic idea is that cooperative efforts to manage cross-boundary environmental resources can help to create more peaceful relations between parties in dispute.

As a peacemaking tool, the environment offers some useful—perhaps even unique—qualities that lend themselves to building peace and transforming conflict:

- environmental challenges ignore political boundaries,
- require a long-term perspective,
- encourage and necessitate local and NGO participation.

There is a growing array of initiatives that seek to promote environmental peacemaking. They include: peace parks (such as along the border between Peru and Ecuador); shared river basin management plans (such as for the Nile and the Mekong); regional seas agreements (Baltic and Mediterranean); and joint environmental monitoring programs.

Environmental peacemaking efforts may help to enhance mutual trust by establishing pragmatic, working-level contacts across political divides; establish cooperative habits—among governments as well as at the society-to-society level; create common regional identities around shared resources; and establish mutually recognized rights and expectations. Over time, a new dynamic might then arise that sustains broader peacemaking efforts.

Experience shows that in many instances, governments locked into relationships marked by suspicion and hostility—if not outright violence—have found environmental issues to be one of the few topics around which ongoing dialogue can be maintained. Caucasus, Kashmir, Israel-Palest.

Surprisingly, however, relatively little is known about the best design for environmental peacemaking initiatives or the conditions (i.e., the institutions and mechanisms) under which they are most likely to succeed. Also, most of the attention to date has gone to inter-state cases. But similar efforts are also needed within countries, where different communities and regions may be at odds with one another. This will provide the international community with some powerful peacemaking opportunities.

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