

Arbeitspapier zur Tagung:

Globalisierung als Aufgabe

Handlungsmöglichkeiten und Gestaltungsoptionen der Politik

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Globalization vis-à-vis Environmental Security*

Examined here are current developments in globalization as these might influence developments in environmental security. I need not dwell at any length upon the dynamics of globalization itself since this has been well summarized by James Rosenau (1996); a useful brief historical perspective on the subject has recently been presented by Emma Rothschild (1999); and Paul Kennedy (1993) has explained at length how we should be preparing for a globalized twenty-first century. Neither is there a need for me to dwell at any length upon the concept of environmental security since I have done this a number of times elsewhere (Westing, 1986; 1989b; 1991; 1999a).

Nonetheless, it will be valuable for me to begin by offering very brief synopses of the current dynamics of **globalization** on the one hand and the current dynamics of **environmental security** on the other. These two summaries readily lead us to five further issues: (1) whether the increasing tempo of globalization influences the increasing tempo in the deterioration of environmental security; (2) whether the positive aspects of globalization outweigh the negative ones; (3) whether the reversal of globalization would have a significant impact on environmental security; (4) whether globalization might be regulated so as to improve environmental security; and, finally (5) a suggested response to globalization.

The dynamics of globalization and of environmental security

Globalization: The ever quickening pace and growing diversity of globalization over the past several decades can be demonstrated by a number of objective (though certainly not thoroughly independent) measures. In the realm of **economics**, we are witnessing remarkable expansions in world trade, in interstate monetary transfers, in interstate capital investments, in multinational (transnational) corporations, and in organized transnational (metanational) crime. In the realm of **communication**, we are witnessing remarkable expansions both in one-way interstate contacts (via radio, television, and printed materials) and in two-way interstate contacts (via telephone, telefax, e-mail, and touristic or other person-to-person liaisons). In the realm of **knowledge and information**, we are witnessing remarkable expansions in the interstate exchange of scholars and experts, in the worldwide availability of scholarly and technical journals and reports, and in the global spread of culinary, musical, clothing, and other local customs. And in the realm of **cooperation**, we are witnessing remarkable expansions in interstate governance (via multilateral humanitarian, arms control, human rights, and environmental treaties) and in

transnational collaboration (via environmental, human rights, and other nongovernmental organizations [NGOs]).

Environmental security: The ever quickening pace and growing diversity of deterioration in environmental security over the past several decades can also be demonstrated by a number of objective (though again not thoroughly independent) measures. In the realm of **natural-resource utilization**, we are witnessing remarkable worldwide expansions in the unsustainable exploitation of agricultural soils, tropical timber trees, rangeland grasses, ocean fisheries (both the higher and lower trophic levels), and freshwater supplies. In the realm of **waste-sink utilization**, we are witnessing remarkable worldwide expansions in the unsustainable disposal of gaseous, liquid, and solid wastes, prominent among them the unsustainable discharge into the atmosphere of carbon dioxide and other so-called greenhouse gases. In the realm of **biodiversity and related habitat protection**, we are witnessing remarkable worldwide losses in plant and animal species. And in the realm of **social security** — which is inextricably linked in both directions with environmental security — we are witnessing remarkable increases: (1) in human numbers; (2) in livestock numbers (such gains strongly linked with wildlife losses); (3) in intrastate (internal, non-international) armed conflicts (wars); (4) in refugee flows (both political and environmental, both intrastate and interstate); (5) in deadly communicable disease frequencies (e.g., in malaria, tuberculosis, yellow fever, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome [AIDS]); (6) in illiteracy; (7) in economically failing states (e.g., those 100 or more in which both GNP/*caput* and income/*caput* have been consistently declining for the past decade or more); (8) in the spread or intensification of unemployment, chronic hunger, and abject poverty; (9) in the ever widening gaps between the rich and the poor, both as between and within states; and (10) in a declining United Nations Development Programme (UNDP; New York) 'Human Development Index' for more than 30 states. Finally, scant comfort can be gained from the essentially unchanging prevalences in the truly widely entrenched governmental autocracy and corruption.

The influence of globalization on environmental security

Several recent analyses shed some important light on the adverse impacts of globalization on environmental security, especially in relation to public health on the one hand, and to the global economic system on the other.

Public health: Julio Frenk *et al.* (1997) and Anthony McMichael *et al.* (1999), among others, argue persuasively that, despite some important advances (e.g., in the spread of vaccinations, oral rehydration therapy, antibiotics, and medical information), globalization has in fact undermined the public health status of many states throughout the world. To provide some examples, infectious diseases are circulating more widely, and, as already noted, the worldwide incidences of such major killers as malaria, tuberculosis, yellow fever, and AIDS are rising substantially. The international trade in tobacco, as in illegal drugs, is expanding remarkably, leading to the spread of ever more serious associated public health problems. Multinational corporations are moving their polluting and otherwise dangerous production facilities to states with lax public health and environmental protection standards. Disease microorganisms throughout the world are developing resistances to antibiotics. Chronic malnutrition is on the increase in many Third-world states. The fast-growing Third-world urban populations are increasingly exposed to unsanitary (polluted) conditions. And, finally, the spread of westernized diets is beginning to prove detrimental (as evidenced, e.g., by increases in cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and breast cancers).

Economics: Richard Falk (1995) and Clem Tisdell (1999), among others, make it amply clear that economic globalization in its various ramifications is largely detrimental to environmental security. To begin with, the accepted wisdom that continued economic growth is needed for the creation of employment opportunities and other benefits to society undermines the very necessary efforts to achieve an environmentally sustainable steady-state economy. Indeed, the global natural-resource base — both its renewable resources and its renewable sink capacities — simply does not suffice to accommodate any widespread improvements in living standards even approaching those now enjoyed in the 27 or so highly industrialized states.

Especially antithetical to the requirements of environmental security is the spread of freer markets, which makes it difficult, if not virtually impossible, for member states to restrict environmentally deleterious interstate trade — as has been so forcefully encouraged by the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT; Geneva), its successor, the 1995 World Trade Organization (WTO; Geneva), and the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA; Washington). The widespread acceptance by Third-world states of the so-called structural adjustment conditions imposed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank; Washington) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF; Washington) further undermines environmental security, not only by their emphasis on freer trade, but also often by encouraging conversions from small-scale subsistence farming to large-scale commercial agriculture for the production of exportable commodities. Similarly, it has been recognized that environmental security suffers in states being newly brought into the international economic system, in large part owing to the continuously strong emphasis on economic growth. This was seen to be the case especially in the early stages of such integration, but may well carry on into the medium-term and even long-term futures, particularly as the natural-resource-based carrying capacity of a state is in the process likely to be exceeded.

Positive versus negative aspects of globalization

It seems clear that environmental security in the aggregate is undermined by economic and other aspects of globalization. But all is not bleak on the globalization front. Thus, we certainly must not overlook the spread of knowledge and information among the states and the peoples of the world. Such spread permits — and should presumably thus be conducive to — more environmentally enlightened practices at local, national, regional, and worldwide levels. Then there is the proliferation of both national and international NGOs, especially in the fields of environment and of human rights. The voice that such issue-oriented NGOs now give to people provides an increasingly important influence on (counterbalance to) national governments and their intergovernmental agencies. And the formation of a 'Global Peoples' Assembly' has recently been proposed for the special purpose of democratizing the international order, that is, the political dimensions of globalization (Falk & Strauss, 1999).

A world without globalization

Is globalization at the root of all the world's current ills, as seems to be suggested by such advocacy groups as the International Forum on Globalization (IFG; San Francisco; 1994—) or the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Benefit of Citizens (ATTAC; Paris; 1998—)? At least with respect to environmental security, it is abundantly clear that certain aspects of globalization are detrimental to environmental security whereas other aspects of it are supportive of environmental security. But I would venture to suggest that even if the process of globalization could be reversed — indeed, even if it could

be largely eliminated — that would not address the fundamental challenges to the achievement of environmental security.

At the very heart of the growing deterioration in our environmental security are the seemingly ever expanding human and associated livestock numbers. Inexorable concomitants of these linked expansions are the expanding arrogations of what remains of the natural world, of the unsustainable exploitation of the world's major renewable natural resources, and of the unsustainable exploitation of the world's major waste depositories (sinks).

At another level, groundbreaking analyses by Jared Diamond (1997) and David Landes (1998) make it agonizingly clear that some combination of biogeographical (environmental), cultural, and historical differences between the rich states and the poor ones have been largely responsible for their starkly contrasting levels of development. These structurally unavoidable and deeply imbedded differences between the present haves and have-nots will make it extraordinarily difficult, if not virtually impossible, to equalize them.

At yet another level, the growing deterioration in our environmental security is so difficult to address owing to certain enduring human traits, especially: (1) our widespread inability to submit to nonviolent systems of law and justice, either at the national or interstate levels; (2) our widespread submission to totalitarian and corrupt governments, both local and national; and (3) our continuing recourse to armed conflict with deadly and destructive intent for the ultimate settlement of our many disputes, both sub-national and national.

The various factors antithetical to environmental security just outlined — factors that are at the very core of the poor state and continued deterioration in our environmental security — all predate the great expansion in globalization of recent years, and would presumably all remain functional even if the various processes of globalization could by some legerdemain be made to vanish.

The regulation of globalization

Globalization is, of course, not occurring in a vacuum. Processes that might be termed nationalization, localization, internationalization, and regionalization are also in progress with respect to the state system. Thus, **nationalization** has been occurring with enormous vigor in recent decades and with zealous attachment to national sovereignty. In fact, the number of sovereign states merely since 1950 has progressed from about 88 to the present 192 or so. **Localization**, often a prelude to the formation of new states, but to some extent a process of its own, has also been flourishing in recent decades. One poignant example of the burgeoning of localization is the growing numbers of intrastate armed conflicts. **Internationalization**, the collaborating by states via universal multilateral treaties, and often the concomitant formation of intergovernmental agencies, has also been flourishing in recent decades (examples already noted earlier being WTO and NAFTA). But it must be pointed out that such internationalization has not been accompanied by any substantial relinquishment of national sovereignty — witness, for example, the continuing great paucity of states (a mere two dozen or so) that have submitted to the International Court of Justice [World Court; the Hague] on a compulsory and unconditional basis; or the reluctance of the necessary 60 states to permit the 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court to become a reality, only 4 as of September 1999, And **regionalization**, a geographically limited subcategory of internationalization, has also been occurring to a more or less modest extent, especially in the field of environment (more on this below).

There is considerable room for the enactment and/or enforcement of regulations and associated actions and programs at the state level that would be directly supportive of environmental security. Despite the unlikelihood of such corrective actions by states — according to Falk (1995), owing to some combination of lack of will and lack of capacity for the public sector to become more intrusive — it is nonetheless important to enumerate at least some of the most urgent needs. Thus, all states must develop or expand programs which are supportive of family planning and population stabilization (or even of reduction, as necessary), both domestically and beyond, the latter via appropriate intergovernmental agencies (e.g., the United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA; New York]). Important for all states, but especially so for the advanced industrial ones, environmental protection legislation enacted by them must cover not only domestic actions by individuals and corporations, but also all those carried out by its nationals and corporations in other states or in the extra-territorial portions of the global biosphere. Any national environmental protection constraints should be applicable not only to exports, but also to imports. And it would be a most instructive and useful exercise for all states to annually publish a national environmental ('green') accounting, with emphasis on indicators of progress (if any) toward sustainability, as was pioneered by the Netherlands in 1985.

It is crucial that the member states of intergovernmental agencies such as the World Bank, IMF, and WTO act collectively to 'green' them up more rigorously, so that environmental considerations will no longer be — as they are now — subservient to free-trade considerations. Comparable 'bottom-line' environmental considerations should also be fundamental to the actions of such restricted multilateral groupings as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA; Geneva; 1960—), the European Union (EU; Brussels; as established by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD; Paris; 1961—).

Multinational corporations are not so readily amenable to regulation throughout their often far-flung spheres of operation as one might wish, but NGOs can apply at least some pressure on them by publicizing their environmental actions or human rights records, both good and bad. Greenpeace (Amsterdam; 1970—) has become well known for vigorously publicizing what it considers to be grievous corporate environmental transgressions. Other less flamboyant NGOs have also begun to interest themselves in various segments of industry. For example, Eco-tex (Köln; 1992—) monitors the textile industry (production, manufacture, and trade) from an environmental standpoint and offers 'green' certification; the Rainforest Alliance (New York; 1987—) provides 'green' certification for sustainably harvested tropical timbers; and the Fair Labor Association (Washington; 1999—) is in the process of publicizing the human rights records of the major multinational clothing and footwear manufacturers. Apropos such labeling, the Canadian government has since 1988 been issuing an 'EcoLogo' to products that pass muster. Finally it must be added here that industry itself has also begun to become more environmentally responsible (Nash & Ehrenfeld, 1996; Spencer-Cooke, 1999; White, 1999). Manifestations of this include greater corporate environmental transparency and the adoption of environmental codes of conduct via such corporate coalitions as the International Chamber of Commerce (Paris; 1972—) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (Geneva; 1990—).

As to foreign aid, it would certainly be gracious for all states (although forgiving the several dozen thoroughly bankrupt ones) to annually donate some modest fraction of their GNP (0.7% is often suggested) for foreign development assistance. None (or very little) of such aid should be of a bilateral nature, but should rather be channeled through such intergovernmental agencies as UNDP, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD; Geneva), or the Global Environment Facility (GEF; Washington). All such development assistance should without fail have the attached conditionality

of a workable system of strict fiscal responsibility and environmental accountability. And finally, states could usefully join with their neighbors to form regional compacts, as dwelt upon below.

Regionalization as an approach to environmental security

To me the most productive approach to strengthening environmental security in the face of globalization is via widespread regionalization, based on regions (often sub-regions in diplomatic parlance) that have some logical coherence both geographically and environmentally — what I have termed 'ecogeographical' regions (Westing, 1989a). More specifically, environmental security should for each state begin at home (Westing, 1996; 1999b), although by necessity almost always together with the ecogeographical region of which it is an integral and unavoidable part (Byers, 1991; VanDeveer & Dabelko, 1999; Westing, 1989a; 1994). Such an ecogeographical security regime will encompass a domain which the included governments and people can readily grasp, with which the regional inhabitants can presumably identify, and which has a logical watershed (catchment basin) or other environmental, and often also social or cultural coherence. Thus, social security built upon environmental security — that is to say, sustainable development within a framework of social justice — not only must, but can most readily, be achieved within the national context of each state in concert with its immediate ecogeographical partners. National security in the traditional sense — protection from any external enemies — has to be retained of course, but only within the broader framework of sustained protection from hunger, maltreatment, internal strife, and despair. And such aims have the greatest opportunity for realization at the national and ecogeographical levels. The Baltic Sea region (VanDeveer & Dabelko, 1999; Westing, 1989a; 1989b), the Horn of Africa (Westing 1999b), the Red Sea region (Westing, 1999b), the Aral Sea region (Westing, 1994), the Tigris-Euphrates region (Westing, 1994), and the Korean peninsula (Westing, 1998-1999) provide a few specific examples.

That is not to suggest that there are no environmental security issues of global scope. Thus by way of example, to achieve sustainable and equitable exploitation of such common-domain natural resources as the atmosphere or the high seas and its seabed, or to rid the world of nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons or of land mines and other explosive remnants of war, will require broad multilateral action. Past experience suggests that to attain globally sustainable solutions will not be easy, and to make them equitable on top of that virtually impossible. But as more ecogeographical regions achieve their own environmental security, the involved states will be able to enter multilateral negotiations on global issues from positions of greater strength and confidence.

Many of the awesome challenges to environmental security — over-population (i.e., human numbers in excess of available natural resources and sink capacities as well as of available employment opportunities), the many intrastate armed conflicts with their huge numbers of casualties and associated social and environmental disruptions, and ever-growing numbers of internal and cross-border refugees, whether political or environmental, to name but a few of the more obvious ones — are most efficiently addressed at national and ecogeographical levels.

Conclusion

Globalization — especially in its multifarious economic and communication dimensions — has been accelerating with a vengeance. Nonetheless **nationalization** — as evidenced by the increasing numbers of states and their tenacious grips on national sovereignty — seems as entrenched as ever. For its part, **environmental security** is seriously deteriorating on a worldwide basis. Such deterioration ultimately derives from human numbers having by now far outstripped the carrying capacity of the global biosphere, this in concert with a high proportion of inept, indifferent, autocratic, and corrupt national regimes. Those deleterious factors are largely independent of globalization, but are, as we have seen, reinforced by it. And as I try to make a case for above — in addition to the 'greening' of world trade through environmentally sensitive governmental and intergovernmental regulations — the fundamental approach to ameliorating this dire state of affairs is not so much, in my view, to 'think globally, act locally', but rather to **'think locally, act regionally'**.

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[Footnote to the title]

* Invited working paper, for the international colloquium on 'Coming to terms with globalization: possible actions and options for the body politic' of the, Evangelische Akademie Loccum, Rehburg-Loccum, Germany, 10-12 December 1999. The author (M.F., 1954, Ph.D., 1959, Yale University) is a forest ecologist with a special interest in issues of international environmental security. He is pleased to acknowledge suggestions from Carol E. Westing. Address: Westing Associates in Environment, Security, & Education, 134 Fred Houghton Rd, Putney, VT 05346, USA; e-mail: westing@together.net.

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