

Comments on the State of the World 2005: Redefining Global Security

by

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Congratulations to the Worldwatch Institute for a most stimulating report. Each year we count on the State of the World Report to deepen our understanding and hopefully bring our political masters to their senses.

I'm delighted that Worldwatch is launching a broader Global Security Project (just as IES set up in 2004) and I'm glad that they and the Woodrow Wilson Institute keep the flag flying in the USA for sustainable development, environment and security.

The foreword by Mr. Gorbachev and preface by Chris Flavin are very useful, underlining that global security is NOT military; it can only be achieved by sustainable development policies and following all the RIO Agenda (which seems to have been forgotten).

A few brief comments on the substance of the Report:

Michael Renner, who has done so much to redefine security for us all, has written two excellent chapters on definitions and disarmament.

The chapter on infectious diseases makes a novel and essential connection, especially in relation to AIDS and its devastating effects on the economies and environments of Southern Africa.

The chapter by Alexander Carius and Geoff Dabelko on water is encouraging, showing how water can be a cornerstone to head off conflict. We also see here how the involvement of the private sector can be very positive.

The chapter by Chris Flavin offers valuable new pointers for new solutions in the essential task of changing the oil economy.

In relation to the EU strategy for security - and here I can also refer to the excellent chapter written by Anja Koehne for the German version of the report - it would be good to know what follow-up is being made with regard to the EU strategy, and how it links both to the Lisbon Process and to the revision of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (and indeed how the Lisbon Process intends to take sustainable development fully into account).

Hopefully we can look to the future UK Presidency to reinforce the role both of sustainable development and the implementation of the Security Strategy, including environment and security.

Further on the UK, its current Presidency of G8 gives it an opportunity to get sustainable development and security back into the texts for the approval of the Heads of State in Gleneagles in July. Again it is hoped that all three prongs of Gordon Brown's African Strategy, so essential for the environmental and developmental security of that continent will be adopted by ALL the G8, including the US and Japan.

Those of us who are concerned - as all of us are at this conference - must keep up the pressure on our governments on these issues. Since 9/11 environmental security has really dropped off the radar screen of our governments, and we have to get it back. Many of those attending here from the European Commission, the European Parliament, from governments

and NGOs can certainly help to move this process forward and we should use the opportunity offered us by the timely publication of the report to do so.

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