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Trends. Environment and Security in an Era of Globalization: Why Kyoto Matters

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With an international meeting on global warming set for Kyoto, Japan in December 1997, the United States government (USG) still has not provided significant input as to direction, agenda, criteria, and the like. This nonoccurrence has occurred even though many other governments are waiting for the USG to make its mark. Recognizing the very close linkages between environment and security should facilitate the USG making its move.

Throughout history environmental and security Issues have interacted. Geographical, climatic, and biomedical phenomena have at least partially induced security consequences. Military conquest, political and economic decisionmaking, and cultural praxis have at least partially induced environmental consequences.

In an era of globalization, not only are environmental Issues becoming of larger security significance and more significantly influencing the very conceptions of security, but the same is the case for the converse. A very incomplete list of current environmental Issues exemplifying this increasing reciprocal interactionism includes (1) global warming, (2) the migration and mobility of species, (3) disease, epidemics, and pandemics, and (4) pollution from industry and military industrial complexes. All of these in their own ways are affecting the number and health of peoples, how and where they are able to live, what options they have to effect preferred life styles, and the threats they face. These aspects are the basis of security conception. Thus the above environmental Issues also are influencing the values and meanings of current security Issues--e.g., nuclear weapons proliferation through relativisms of free trade to information technology cultures. As well, the handling of these and other current security Issues and changing conceptions of the basis of security conception is, in turn, affecting the handling of current environmental Issues and conceptions of the environment.

While security seems to be at the deepest source of social theory from most psychological theories of motivation to historical theories of action, reciprocal interactionism with the environment--Issues and conceptions--precludes understanding one without the other. (See Boehnke, K., & Schwartz, S.H. (1997). Fear of war: Relations to values, gender, and mental health in Germany and Israel. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 3, 149-166; Man and beast in Botswana. (September 30, 1997.) *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Smith, E. (1997). Private selves and shared meanings: Or forgive us our projections as we forgive those who project into us. *Psychodynamic Counseling*, 3, 117-131.