

These conditions are not currently all met in China. Foremost, given the choices the Chinese public needs to make between environmental stress and economic growth, there is little to suggest that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the state of the environment. Certainly, the growing entrepreneurial class of *getihu* (privatized) business people are focused on making money, not broader social causes, such as income redistribution, equity and environmental protection. Many of the most dynamic members of society have focussed their considerable energy and talent where the Chinese system has encouraged greater independence - in growth and wealth creation. In short, there is little evidence that there exists a major government-public disconnect on environmental issues, at least for the time being.

The environmental stress-national security linkage may not immediately nor significantly alter Chinese decision-making priorities. Yet as the public's attitude evolves, raising the prospect of violent conflict and possible political instability, the ruling regime may see that its interest in maintaining a cleaner environment should have higher priority. Although it is not likely that large scale environment-induced violent conflicts will occur before the year 2000, the following fifteen to twenty years may be more challenging.

A serious dilemma is whether China might experience more domestic violence by foregoing or slowing economic growth. While environmental stress may contribute to violence, so may a lack of economic growth. A sharp reduction in economic growth in China could well threaten the legitimacy of the government and spark potentially violent political instability which could in turn have negative environmental impacts. This possibility sets the usual environmental stress-violent conflict paradigm on its head.

This review of the environmental stress-national security linkage suggests that there is no need to reassess fundamentally Canadian foreign policy on China. Political stability, economic reform and sustainable development in China remain major Canadian objectives. The linkage between environmental stress and violent conflict should reinforce Canada's interest in reducing environmental stress and channelling discontent with Chinese environmental conditions toward constructive resolution. In its decision-making, on both bilateral and multilateral initiatives, Canada will need to continue to take into account China's environmental problems and responses. This said, there should be no illusion about Canada's or even the West's capacity to influence the evolution of China. The process in China can be influenced by outsiders, but largely at the margins.