

outlined in these statements one and two years ago, remain unchanged and untreated, and it is only a matter of time until the wrong kind of wind whips more of them into flames.

If people in the West are tempted to complacency and/or to distraction about the continuing and deepening potential for ugly North-South conflict, it is likely that the global conference on the environment and development in Brazil in June 1992 — the “Earth Summit” — will shake their lethargy somewhat. This conference, many years in the preparation and chaired by an eminent Canadian, Maurice Strong, is intended to rally all nations to confront the growing security threat posed to the entire planet by environmental degradation. These preoccupations, among the most deeply-felt concerns of publics in the industrialized world, now seem certain to run headlong into the anger of Third World governments and peoples at their deprivation from the benefits of global development, and their inability, and refusal, to undertake further disproportionate sacrifices for the benefit of the world’s privileged minority. Will this confrontation, unlike the energy crisis of the 1970s, stir the leaders of the industrialized world to give real attention to Third World problems, and support peaceable and sustainable measures for improvement? Or will inertia once again prevail, and the “rich” wait for the alienation of the Third World to reach inescapable crisis proportions? The swelling tides of desperate migrants are only the first signs of how Third World suffering can now reach First World shores, and in an interdependent world no-one will be safe from critical environmental damage, from economic stagnation, or from hostile ideological tides that could well generate pervasive new threats of mass and selective violence.