

multiple factors that may contribute to violence, preclude strong conclusions. Press reports of coming doom and mass levels of environmental migrants in China are unsupported. It appears that the media has latched on to overly simplistic and sensationalizing scenarios. This is unfortunate, as the public and policy makers may jump to quick and incorrect policy conclusions. Environmental degradation in itself does not imply violent conflict. Yet for China two important points can be made. First, environmental stress and scarcity are likely to become increasingly significant for China, which is to say there will be a potential basis, perhaps a growing potential, for violent conflict. In China, it is widely expected that serious environmental challenges will occur over at least the next twenty years. Second, China's environmental problems are very much global problems that are of interest to Canada whether or not they result in a violent intrastate or interstate response.

This Paper attempts to cover a large intellectual territory in fairly short order. The first section sets out to clarify our understanding of the term national security and the context within which it is applied in the Paper. It then distinguishes between the concepts of environmental stress and environmental scarcity. The next section constructs an intellectual framework to help in understanding the linkages between environmental stress and violent conflict. This is followed by a section that applies the framework to China. This consists of identifying population pressures, the most serious environmental problems and Chinese policies to deal with them. Chinese economic growth strategies and the political setting are also brought into the analysis because of the interrelationship between environmental issues and economic development.⁵ Lastly, the Paper attempts to draw some conclusions on the environmental stress-violent conflict nexus in China.

2. The Concept of "National Security"

Views of what constitute "national security" are evolving. A number of people have proposed defining national security in a way that would take into account a wide range of social and environmental considerations.⁶ In so doing, the concept of

⁵For an insightful analysis of China's economic prospects, see Stephen Lavergne, "China 2000: The Nature of Growth and Canada's Economic Interests," Policy Staff Paper No. 94/10, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, May 1994.

⁶See Richard H. Ullman, "Redefining Security," International Security, Vol. 8, No.1, Summer 1983; Jessica Tuchman Mathews, "Redefining Security", Foreign Affairs, Vol. 68, No.2, 1989; and Ian Rowlands, "The Security Challenges of Global Environmental Change", The Washington Quarterly, Winter 1991.