1. Introduction

The linkages between environmental and national security concerns are of increasing interest to decision-makers and members of the public.[1] Earlier work explored a methodological framework for attempting to understand environmental stress-violent conflict linkages.[2] Understanding the link between the environment and national security requires that a distinction be made between environmental stress, i.e., negative environmental effects, and the more general, but intricately linked, case of scarcity of renewable resources. This distinction is seldom explicitly recognized in the literature. This Paper attempts to apply the environmental stress-violent conflict framework to China, while also taking into account how the scarcity of renewable resources may contribute to violence.

Environmental degradation of China is emerging as an important source of disputes, including <u>potentially</u> violent conflict.[3] Contributing factors to environmental deterioration in China, which extends over the full gamut of environmental problems such as deforestation and soil erosion, have been large absolute increases in population and, during the Mao Zedong years, a Stalinist type, heavy industry development strategy that took little account of environmental concerns. Moreover, the post-1978 reform period has seen economic growth outpace implementation of effective environmental policies. However, while cases of noise and air pollution have been noted as the cause of urban violence, the number and intensity of such conflicts are not known.[4]

Lack of data on key analytical aspects, such as Chinese peasants' motivation for moving from interior rural regions to coastal urban areas, and the complexity of

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[1] Linkages between the physical environment and national security issues are not entirely "new." Humans have often resorted to violence to gain or maintain control of resources and, during the Cold War period, so-called "strategic studies" were concerned with the ecological implications of nuclear war. The issue, however, is evolving as environmental stress or the scarcity of renewable resources are viewed as contributing to violent conflict or threatening national security.

[2] Robert T. Stranks, "A View of the Forest: Environmental Stress, Violent Conflict and National Security", Policy Staff Paper No. 95/05, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, April 1995.

[3] Vaclav Smil, "Environmental Change as a Source of Conflict and Economic Losses in China," Occasional Paper No. 2, Project on Environmental Change and Acute Conflict, A Joint Project of the University of Toronto and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, December 1992.

[4] Ibid. p. 11.