

change. The potential environmental impact of a future population becomes more uncertain as more assumptions on possible new technologies are made. It also becomes increasingly difficult to generalize on how Chinese population growth will contribute to specific domestic or international national security concerns.

In addition to total population, the distribution of population will influence the environment, as well as generating other potentially serious results. Growth rates, and the rise in relative percentages of urban dwellers in the developed countries and even more so in developing countries, will place increasing pressure on the economic infrastructure.<sup>28</sup> This is particularly true for China, which already has an overtaxed socioeconomic infrastructure. China is expected to become substantially more urbanized, increasing from a current 30 percent to nearly 55 percent by 2025.<sup>29</sup> A prominent feature of future population growth will be the continued expansion of "megacities." Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin each currently have in excess of ten million inhabitants and by the year 2010 each city is expected to have an additional five million.<sup>30</sup> In the early part of the next century, 2015, these three cities could easily have over sixty million inhabitants, or more than twice the total population of Canada. China, then, not only faces a significant increase in absolute population, but also stress related to the rural-urban mix. The combination of population growth, rapid urbanization and local and possibly global environmental decay could prove to be a volatile mix.

## 5.2 Environmental Stress and Population Migration

Arguably the mass movement of population, both domestically and internationally, may create a national security concern. Immigration, by increasing the number of people, whatever race or ethnicity, may be seen as contributing to environmental problems in the receiving country. As described in the analytical framework, environmental stress has the potential to generate violence. But there is

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<sup>28</sup>The developed countries' populations are currently about 75 per cent urban, and are projected to be near 85 per cent by 2025. The developing countries' populations are about 38 per cent urban and are projected to be near 57 per cent by 2025. See United Nations Population Division, World Urbanization Prospects: The 1994 Revision, New York: United Nations, 1995, ST/ESA/SER.A/150, pp. 78-9.

<sup>29</sup>ibid., pp. 80-1.

<sup>30</sup>ibid. , pp.4-5