

of foreign currency in order to purchase food on the international market may play an increasingly important role in the context of global security.

### **Environmental Refugees**

Because some regions may become agriculturally less productive, Dr. Gleick suggested that there may be an increase in migrations away from stricken areas. In the past two decades alone, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of environmental refugees, particularly in Africa, which has experienced terrible droughts and failures in agricultural production. The problem of environmental refugees was expected to get worse, not better, partly because of changing environmental conditions and partly because of growing populations.

Sea-level rise was expected to contribute to the problem of environmental refugees. The heavily inhabited flood plains of the world are very vulnerable, especially those of the Ganges-Brahmaputra in Bangladesh, and the Nile in Egypt. Dr. Gleick argued that while large migrations may lead to border problems and further international frictions, specific circumstances will determine whether or not this leads to actual conflict. Such mass movements of people would heavily strain the already underfunded and understaffed efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

### **Mineral Resources**

The potential for conflict over mineral resources (whose development is already constrained by climate) seems to lie in the shifting strategic importance of new or existing reserves. The question of the growing importance of Arctic oil and gas resources is a function of total oil and gas resources. The United States, in order to reduce dependence on Middle Eastern oil, already claims national security as the imperative for developing northern oil and gas resources.