

might. Environmental stress is only one element among many political, economic and social factors that contribute to conflict and social instability. Linking a specific cause with a specific outcome is problematic.

- Nonetheless, environmental stress (such as water and food shortages arising from environmental degradation) may in some cases contribute to violence. Such violence may be international or intrastate in nature. Evidence to date suggests that intrastate violence is more likely.
- A key variable is the rate of technological progress and the dissemination of innovation. While over-simplified, the implication of a high level of technological advancement is less environmental stress, and correspondingly less pressure for environmentally motivated conflict. The capacity of social institutions to evolve is also an important factor.
- There are many historical examples of the scarcity of non-renewable resources contributing to interstate conflict. Environmental stress, such as degradation of the global commons, poses new challenges.
- The type of environmental stress, local or global, is likely to influence the nature of potential conflict. National and multilateral mechanisms are needed to identify abusers, to measure abuse and to develop nonviolent mechanisms to address the abuse. Multilateral approaches are likely to be the most lasting, but also the most difficult to achieve.
- Fears of environmental degradation leading to large numbers of emigrants from the developing countries need to be realistically assessed. While large numbers of people from developing countries may seek to enter developed countries, these people are more likely to be economic migrants or refugees rather than environmentally generated migrants.

These points reflect the immense scope of the environmental stress-national security interface, and highlight areas and issues where more analytical work and critical thinking is needed. A practical approach to increasing our understanding of environmental stress-national security linkages, might be through country-specific case studies. Such an approach would essentially attempt to take a country through the conceptual framework presented in the Paper.