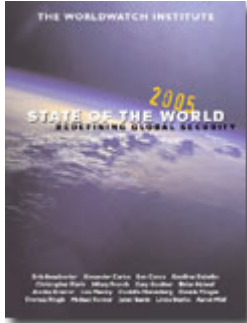# State of the World 2005: Redefining Global Security

Media Kit

Summary

Press Release: POVERTY, DISEASE, ENVIRONMENTAL DECLINE ARE TRUE 'AXIS OF EVIL'- *State of the World 2005* calls for new approach to global security

Foreword: Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Chairman, Green Cross International

Preface: Christopher Flavin, President, Worldwatch Institute

Table of Contents: with links to Chapter Summaries

Worldwatch Research Library: Security

More media materials on-line:

Worldwatch Global Security Brief No. 1:
Oil Price Surge Threatens Economic Stability and National Security

Experts Guide

Story Ideas

Notable Security Trends

Online Feature: Global Security

Request a Copy - for Media Only

Summary

Security concerns remain high on the world's agenda. In this year's annual report, Worldwatch researchers explore underlying sources of global insecurity including poverty, infectious disease, environmental degradation, and rising competition over oil and other resources.

Find out why terrorism is just symptomatic of a far broader set of complex problems that require more than a military response.

"We need a policy of 'preventative engagement': international and individual solidarity and action to meet the challenges of poverty, disease, environmental degradation and conflict in a sustainable and nonviolent way," writes Green Cross International Chairman and former Soviet president Mikhail S. Gorbachev in the Foreword to *State of the World 2005*.

POVERTY, DISEASE, ENVIRONMENTAL DECLINE ARE TRUE 'AXIS OF EVIL'

State of the World 2005 calls for new approach to global security

Washington, D.C.—The global war on terror is diverting the world's attention from the central causes of instability, reports the Worldwatch Institute in its annual *State of the World 2005*. Acts of terror and the dangerous reactions they provoke are symptomatic of underlying sources of global insecurity, including the perilous interplay among poverty, infectious disease, environmental degradation, and rising competition over oil and other resources.

Compounded by the spread of deadly armaments, these "problems without passports" create the conditions in which political instability, warfare, and extremism thrive. They could lead the world into a dangerous downward spiral in which the basic fabric of nations is called into question, political fault lines deepen, and radicalization grows. Tackling these challenges demands a strategy that emphasizes prevention-focused programs rather than military might, the report concludes.

"Poverty, disease, and environmental decline are the true axis of evil," says Worldwatch President Christopher Flavin. "Unless these threats are recognized and responded to, the world runs the risk of being blindsided by the new forces of instability, just as the United States was surprised by the terrorist attacks of September 11."

In the *State of the World 2005* foreword, former Soviet Union President and Green Cross International chairman Mikhail Gorbachev calls for a "Global Glasnost - openness, transparency, and public dialogue" and "a policy of 'preventive engagement' to meet the challenges of poverty, disease, environmental degradation, and conflict in a sustainable and nonviolent way."

Among the many destabilizing pressures examined, *State of the World 2005* highlights the following as particularly critical for efforts to build a more peaceful world:

OIL: Continued heavy dependence on oil carries with it enormous costs and risks. It fuels geopolitical rivalries, civil wars, and human rights violations. The economic security of supplier and buyer nations is compromised by severe swings in price and supply. And oil's role in undermining climatic stability poses grave threats to human safety.

WATER: Water agreements have made cooperation rather than conflict the norm among neighboring states. But within countries, water shortages are fueling violent conflict. Worldwide, 434 million people currently face water scarcity. Insufficient access to water is a major cause of lost rural livelihoods, compelling farmers to abandon their fields and fueling conflicts.

FOOD: Worldwide, nearly two billion people suffer from hunger and chronic nutrient deficiencies. Food security is often undermined by factors such as water availability, land distribution, poverty, and environmental degradation. Among the major food security threats on the horizon are climate change, the loss of diversity of plant and animal species, the rise of foodborne illnesses, and food bioterror.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE: Several known diseases have reemerged or spread geographically and many new ones have been identified over the last three decades. HIV/AIDS has become a major killer, and an estimated 34 to 46 million people are infected

with the virus. The world's economically least-developed countries are the most affected by the pandemic. In sub-Saharan Africa, the disease is devastating education, weakening militaries, and undermining political stability.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: More than 100 developing countries worldwide are currently experiencing a "youth bulge" (a situation where people aged 15 to 29 account for more than 40 percent of all adults). Economic opportunities are particularly scarce in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, where 21-26 percent of young people are unemployed. Worldwide, the more than 200 million young people worldwide who are either jobless or do not earn enough to support a family- especially young men - can be a destabilizing force if their discontent pushes them into crime or into joining insurgencies or extremist groups.

To confront these challenges to global security, *State of the World 2005* calls for a strengthening of the civilian institutions and systems that are best equipped to address them. A range of strategic investments in sustainable energy, public health, protection of ecological systems, education, jobs, and poverty alleviation will assist in this transition, write the report's authors.

"The current fixation on fighting terrorism has overshadowed the graver threats that now loom over us, said *State of the World 2005* Project Directors Michael Renner and Hilary French. "A more sustainable and equitable world is a more secure world. Rather than continuing to build military muscle, governments need to redouble their efforts to safeguard human and environmental security, enhance disarmament and post-conflict reconstruction, and redesign the United Nations for the security challenges of today and tomorrow."

In particular, the report calls on governments and others to take the following actions:

- **STRENGTHEN AND BROADEN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION** The permanent membership of the U.N.'s Security Council must be expanded to make it more representative of today's world. The U.N.'s ability to respond effectively to underlying threats to international peace and security such as poverty, disease, and environmental decline also needs strengthening. U.N. institutions and other mechanisms of global governance must also be redesigned to better harness the energy and insights of civil society.
- **FULLY FUND AND SUPPORT THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs) AND THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WSSD) TARGETS** In 2000, the members of the United Nations agreed to reduce global poverty, disease, and societal inequities significantly by 2015. These goals were complemented two years later by a series of sustainable development targets adopted at the WSSD. Shifting just 7.4 percent of donor governments' military budgets into development assistance would provide the $50 billion a year in additional funds that analysts estimate are needed to achieve the MDGs.
- **BOLSTER ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEMAKING** Governments should build on the growing array of joint environmental initiatives, including peace parks, shared river basin management plans, regional seas agreements, and joint environmental monitoring programs that are helping to promote cooperation among traditional political adversaries. As such initiatives gain momentum, they will reduce international tensions while also protecting the environment.

—END—

Worldwatch Institute
1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-1904, USA
Tel: +1 202 452 1999
Fax: +1 202 296 7365

Media Inquiries:
Darcey Rakestraw
drakestraw@worldwatch.org

State of the World 2005
Foreword
Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Chairman, Green Cross International

Five years ago, all 191 United Nations member states pledged to meet eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015, including eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability. These critical challenges were reaffirmed by health officials from across the globe in October 2004 at the tenth anniversary of the landmark International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo.

The overarching conclusion from this 2004 meeting was that while considerable, albeit erratic, progress was indeed being made in many areas, any optimism must be tempered with the realization that gains in overall global socioeconomic development, security, and sustainability do not reflect the reality on the ground in many parts of the world. Poverty continues to undermine progress in many areas. Diseases such as HIV/AIDS are on the rise, creating public health time bombs in numerous countries. In the last five years, some 20 million children have died of preventable waterborne diseases, and hundreds of millions of people continue to live with the daily misery and squalor associated with the lack of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation.

We must recognize these shameful global disparities and begin to address them seriously. I am delighted that the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Wangari Maathai, a woman whose personal efforts, leadership, and practical community work in Kenya and Africa inspire us all by demonstrating the real progress that can be made in addressing environmental security and sustainable development challenges where people have the courage to make a difference.

Humankind has a unique opportunity to make the twenty-first century one of peace and security. Yet the many possibilities opened up to us by the end of the cold war appear to have been partially squandered already. Where has the "peace dividend" gone that we worked so hard for? Why have regional conflict and terrorism become so dominant in today's world? And why have we not made more progress on the Millennium Development Goals?

The terrible tragedies of September 11, 2001, the 2004 terrorist attacks in Beslan in Russia, and the many other terrorist incidents over the past decade in Japan, Indonesia, the Middle East, Europe, and elsewhere have all driven home the fact that we are not adequately prepared to deal with new threats. But better preparation means thinking more holistically, not just in traditional cold war terms.

I believe that today the world faces three interrelated challenges: the challenge of security, including the risks associated with weapons of mass destruction and terrorism; the challenge of poverty and underdevelopment; and the challenge of environmental sustainability.

The challenge of security must be addressed by first securing and destroying the world's arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. Both Russia and the United States have taken numerous positive steps in this direction. But we must accelerate these nonproliferation and demilitarization efforts and establish threat-reduction programs around the world if we are to be truly successful.

The world's industrial nations must also commit greater resources to the poorest countries and regions of the globe. Official development assistance from the top industrial countries still represents but a tiny percentage of their gross national products and does not come close to the pledges made over a decade ago at the Rio Earth Summit. The growing disparity between the rich and the poor on our planet and the gross misallocation of limited resources to consumerism and war cannot be allowed to continue. If they do, we can expect even greater challenges and threats ahead.

Regarding the environment, we need to recognize that Earth's resources are finite. To waste our limited resources is to lose them in the foreseeable future, with potentially dire consequences for all regions and the world. Forests, for example, are increasingly being destroyed in the poorest countries. Even in Kenya, where Wangari Maathai has helped plant over 30 million trees, forested acreage has decreased. The global water crisis is also one of the single biggest threats facing humankind. Four out of 10 people in the world live in river basins shared by two or more countries, and the lack of cooperation between those sharing these precious water resources is reducing living standards, causing devastating environmental problems, and even contributing to violent conflict. Most important of all, we must wake up to the dangers of climate change and devote more resources to the crucial search for energy alternatives.

It is for reasons such as these that I founded Green Cross International 12 years ago and continue to advocate for a global value shift on how we handle Earth, a new sense of global interdependence, and a shared responsibility in humanity's relationship with nature. It is also for these reasons that I helped draft the Earth Charter, a code of ethical principles now endorsed by over 8,000 organizations representing more than 100 million people around the world. And it is for these reasons that Maurice Strong, Chair of the Earth Council, and I have initiated the Earth Dialogues, a series of public forums on ethics and sustainable development.

We need a Global Glasnost—openness, transparency, and public dialogue—on the part of nations, governments, and citizens today to build consensus around these challenges. And we need a policy of "preventive engagement": international and individual solidarity and action to meet the challenges of poverty, disease, environmental degradation, and conflict in a sustainable and nonviolent way.

We are the guests, not the masters, of nature and must develop a new paradigm for development and conflict resolution, based on the costs and benefits to all peoples and bound by the limits of nature herself rather than by the limits of technology and consumerism. I am delighted that the Worldwatch Institute continues to address these important challenges and goals in its annual *State of the World* report. I urge all readers to seriously consider their personal commitments to action after finishing this volume. Only with the active and dedicated participation of civil society will we be successful in building a sustainable, just, and peaceful world for the twenty-first century and beyond.

State of the World 2005
Preface
Christopher Flavin, President, Worldwatch Institute

When the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Kenyan environmental activist Wangari Maathai in October 2004, the Nobel Committee's decision was met with dismay in some circles. To many traditional security specialists, it seemed frivolous at a time of military conflict, civil wars, terrorism, and proliferating nuclear materials to give this most prestigious of international awards to a person known for planting trees rather than signing treaties. Indeed, a leading politician in Norway, which sponsors the prize, commented, "It is odd that the committee has completely overlooked the unrest that the world is living with daily, and given the prize to an environmental activist."

In our view, the award could not have been more fitting. The life history of Wangari Maathai is testimony to the fact that the insecurity the world struggles with today is inextricably linked to the ecological and social problems she has devoted her life to addressing. In 1977, she founded the Green Belt Movement to organize poor women to plant millions of trees—the group's goals included replenishing Kenya's dwindling forests, providing desperately needed cooking fuel, and making women active participants in improving their lives and those of their families.

Maathai's success and her subsequent challenge to government conservation policies put her in direct conflict with the country's autocratic president. She and her followers were beaten and jailed—but in the process they spurred thousands of followers to action in Kenya and around the globe. The civil society movement that Wangari Maathai leads helped pave the way for Kenya's peaceful transition from virtual dictatorship to elected government in 2003. Capping the historic transition, she is now a member of the Kenyan parliament and assistant environment minister in the current government.

By coincidence, the Nobel Peace Price was announced just as we were putting the finishing touches on *State of the World 2005*—the twenty-second edition of our annual book and the first to focus on global security, the topic that has so dominated private and political discourse over the past few years. As longtime admirers of the Green Belt Movement, my colleagues and I were heartened by the news of Wangari Maathai's award, and inspired by the hope that this latest Nobel Prize will help convince millions of people around the world to stop viewing global security as something that can be safeguarded solely through diplomatic skills or military power.

Our focus in the pages that follow is on the deeper roots of insecurity—many of them found in the destabilization of human societies and the natural world that has accompanied the explosive growth in human numbers and resource demands over the past several decades. Drawing on the varied expertise and insights of our own staff, as well as on a record number of collaborators from around the world, we have sought to unravel the often hidden links between such disparate phenomena as falling water tables, the spread of AIDS, transnational crime, environmental refugees, terrorism, and climate change. In doing so, we have found ample reason to fear that the profound insecurity that has gripped the world for the past three years may grow even deeper in the years ahead.

Demographic imbalances are one destabilizing force. As Lisa Mastny and Richard Cincotta describe in the second chapter, in roughly one third of the world's countries—most of them in Africa, the Middle East, and South and Central Asia—a large generation of teenagers is faced with limited economic prospects and often little in the way of education. Most of the world's civil wars, emigration, and terrorism emerge from those countries—exacerbated in many cases by ethnic and religious differences and by the breakdown of the social and ecological systems people depend on.

In many of these same countries, the spread of infectious diseases, particularly AIDS, is also tearing societies apart, killing many of the young people who are best equipped to lead their nations forward economically and politically. Growing human pressures on natural resources—triggering the collapse of fisheries and the drying up of rivers, for

example—are further undermining some societies. The latest humanitarian crisis to hit the world's headlines in 2004 was in Darfur in Sudan, where the immediate clashes between Arab nomads and African villagers was preceded by years of desertification that led herders to encroach on farmland to their south, heightening tensions and eventually leading to open conflict, forced eviction of villagers, and genocide.

Access to oil is another cause of instability that has commanded recent attention. The dramatic run-up in prices to over $50 per barrel in the fall of 2004 coincided with growing instability in the Persian Gulf, where the world's richest oil resources are located. The dominance of the oil industry in the Middle East has undermined the economic and political development of the region while flooding it with petrodollars that have increased economic disparities and financed the rise of terrorism. The dependence of the United States and Europe on Middle Eastern oil has led to highly skewed economic flows and heavy military investments that have created deep resentments on both sides. The prospect of world oil production beginning a long decline within the next decade, just when large countries like China and India stake their claims to remaining reserves, would be reason enough for concern even without the crisis caused by the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Together, they have created a global powder keg.

The possibility of disruptive climate change may be an even greater threat to the security of societies. Amid new signs of accelerated global warming—from the rapid melting of Arctic ice to the spread of diseases and pests into new territories—scientists are focusing on the potential for the sudden collapse of economically essential ecosystems such as forests, underground water resources, and coastal wetlands. The unprecedented four hurricanes that devastated Florida in 2004, combined with the record number of typhoons that hit Japan, left weather forecasters studying the possibility that catastrophic weather events could soon become the norm—with immense human consequences, particularly in the world's poorest countries. An October 2004 report by a coalition of aid and environmental agencies warned that climate change is likely to worsen poverty. By flooding valuable coastal areas and undermining forests and watersheds, a changing climate will exacerbate competition for resources.

One tragic consequence of the September 11th terrorist attacks is that they substantially reduced world attention to many of the underlying causes of insecurity. Aid to the world's poorest countries has barely risen, and international commitments to combat problems such as AIDS and global warming are seriously underfunded. Moreover, with even traditional allies such as the United States and several European nations at loggerheads on many issues, we may be not only losing the struggle against terrorism in a narrow sense but setting in motion a range of additional instabilities that could lead the world into a dangerous downward spiral.

We devote this book to reversing that spiral and to building the international cooperation that is essential for achieving a secure world. Just as Wangari Maathai planted trees to improve the economic security of her people, it is time now to plant hope by working together to reach essential goals: a less oil-dependent energy system, a more equal society in which women's roles are strengthened, and a natural world that is stable and productive. Our authors demonstrate the need for a robust security policy—one that links traditional strategies such as disarmament, peacekeeping, and conflict prevention with underlying efforts to meet health and education needs and to restore ecosystems.

It is fitting that the Foreword of *State of the World 2005* is by another Nobel Peace Prize winner: former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, who is now Chairman of Green Cross International. Gorbachev, who played a starring role in the conclusion of the late twentieth century's biggest security challenge, the cold war, has devoted much of his energy over the last decade to one of the great challenges of the twenty-first century—creating an environmentally sustainable world.

Wangari Maathai and Mikhail Gorbachev represent living bridges between the environment and security. Our futures will be shaped in large measure by how quickly the world follows their lead.

State of the World 2005: Table of Contents

For summaries of each of the chapters click on the headings below or go to:
http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/sow/2005/toc

Worldwatch Research Library: Security

Analysts increasingly recognize that a multitude of social, economic, and environmental pressures underlie many of the world's armed conflicts. Struggles over resources like oil, water, timber, and minerals are often the result of depletion and degradation, or of an unsustainable increase in consumption. Degraded areas may be rendered uninhabitable, creating waves of environmental refugees. And the impacts of resource scarcity often reinforce existing social divisions. While the potential for conflict is particularly pronounced where poverty and inequality are extensive, resource wealth can also trigger conflict: the pillaging of diamonds, minerals, timber, and other resources has financed wars in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Worldwatch research on security helps to connect the dots between environmental degradation, inequitable resource distribution, consumer demand, and armed conflict.

For a complete list of related publications go to:
http://www.worldwatch.org/topics/economy/security/