THE SECOND CYCLE OF ECOLOGICAL URGENCY: AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE

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1-Ecological Urgency and Environmental Justice: Two Views

There has for several years existed a growing consensus among experts that a circumstance of ecological urgency on a global scale exists. What is new and potentially hopeful, is the rapidly increasing public acceptance of the reality of this urgency, at least with respect to climate change, and a sudden willingness of politicians across the political spectrum suddenly to put environmental protection high on their agenda. Encouraging as this is from the perspective of prospects for action, it could still produce a variety of regressive results if the impacts of policy adjustment fall heavily on the poor and vulnerable, and even more invisibly on future generations. It is crucial to bring environmental justice concerns in from the shadow lands of concern where they have long been consigned.

Without assessing the *substantive* character of ecological urgency on which there exists some divergence of opinion, Gus Speth and Peter Haas in their book *Global Environmental Governance* formulate a three-part conclusion that seems beyond controversy: (1) the conditions relating to the global environment are worsening; (2) current responses to address these conditions are grossly insufficient; and (3) major new initiatives are needed that address the root causes.

The identification of root causes remains, although to a
diminishing degree, somewhat contested, at least as far as selecting the primary explanation of this set of disturbing circumstances, and what to do about it. Among prominent participants in the recent phase of debate on environmental policy, Lester Brown continues to focus on anticipated population increases in the decades ahead putting an unacceptable strain on food supplies, although his latest prescriptions for policy are of a more comprehensive character; Gus Speth emphasizes the continuing reliance on destructive technologies, especially with respect to energy; and the Paul and Ann Ehrlich call attention to the wasteful burdens on the environment associated with consumerism (that is, consuming more than is related to a satisfying life defined in moderate terms). Overall, the greatest convergence of concern about environmental conditions involves the adverse effects of climate changing trends, and the growing pressure to establish stringent controls on greenhouse gas emissions, especially of carbon dioxide. Two highly respected reports based on scrutiny of the evidence by leading scientists have gone a long way to resolve any fundamental sense of uncertainty about the acute threats to planetary wellbeing posed by anticipated levels of global warming over the course of the next several decades.

Notable in all of these assessments is the scant attention given to the bearing of fairness or justice on either the diagnosis of the environmental challenge or its cure. The tendency of environmentalists is to focus on their sense of what is causing the problems, and offer prescriptions designed to mitigate or end the perceived threat. This inattention to the justice perspective tends to benefit the rich and powerful, as well as those currently alive, and to accentuate the burdens and grievances of the poor and marginal, and the unborn. To ignore the extent to which the inequalities of life circumstances in the world are associated with avoiding the externalities of modern industrial life and warfare is not only unfair, but tends to aggravate national and geopolitical tensions of a North/South character, as well as class and race/ethnic tensions
within particular states. The relevance of these geopolitical tensions is particularly neglected in environmental policymaking circles, but it is evident from patterns of contemporary warfare, which is seldom focused upon battlefield encounters of opposing armies. These tensions have their most pronounced effects on the vulnerable civilian members of a society, as well as perversely on some of the already most blighted and stressed regions in the world, especially sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, the destruction of the water purification system in Iraq during the first Gulf War or the destruction of an electric power plant in Gaza during an Israeli military offensive in the summer of 2006 resulted in environmental degradation that was especially harmful to the health and wellbeing of the already extremely poor and vulnerable Gazan population.

To be sure, rhetorical acknowledgements are frequently made that humane global governance is a precondition to gain the sort of international cooperation that is required if a sustainable environment is ever to be achieved. Speth and Haas, for instance, conclude their book by invoking the following sentiment expressed in the Earth Charter: “We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.” To similar effect is the assertion by Robert Nadeau in his important book *The Environmental Endgame*, that “..any realistic and pragmatic assessment of what will be required to resolve the crisis in the global environment clearly indicates that the gross inequalities between the lives of the haves and have-nots on this planet are not commensurate with the terms of human survival.”

In this respect there are justice concerns expressed both expeditiously, that is, to provided a realistic and pragmatic foundation for problem-solving, and ethically, to validate a dynamic of drastic adjustment. For instance, Nadeau insists that “achieving the goal of a sustainable global environment will
require that material flows in industrialized economies be reduced by 90%, or by a factor of ten.” With adjustments of this magnitude it is difficult to envision how social and ethical considerations can be brought to bear, or indeed how democratic procedures can be maintained. If the circumstances really do require such drastic adjustments we may already be in the position anticipated decades ago by Garrett Hardin that only an austere authoritarian politics can manage the challenge of transition to a sustainable environment, with considerations of justice pushed far into the background. What is clear is that to the extent that adjustments can be fashioned in an atmosphere of choice rather than necessity the prospects for humane and democratic transition are improved. Of course, the boundaries between choice and necessity are blurred and contested, and even interrelated.

Whether we are already situated within the domain of necessity depends on how seriously the present situation is regarded from the perspective of environmental sustainability and the carrying capacity of the earth. The collective imagination of the peoples of the planet, and especially the governing elites, remains in a circumstance of deep denial with respect to the overall scale of the environmental challenge, although under growing pressure as the extent of threat is validated by evidence and a more attuned public opinion. Nevertheless, the predominant mood remains one of denial and contradiction, increasingly acknowledging the problems and yet still unwilling to demand major changes in the policies that are responsible for the growing menace. This dangerous, multi-faceted condition of denial is accentuated by special interests, especially associated with overseas corporate operations and governmental complicity, by the hostility of neoliberal ideology to regulation, and by the geopolitical preoccupations and distractions on comparatively minor issues of immediacy that remain the characteristic focus of major state actors. The regressive leadership role of the United States early in the 21st century is nowhere more detrimental to the global public good than with respect to
environmental policy. Without strong institutions of global governance, the quality of world order remains, for better or worse, dependent on the outlook and priorities of those shaping the policies of leading sovereign states. The role of the United States as global leader has become increasingly controversial since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, particularly during the Bush presidency that commenced in 2001.

It is important to couple the overall issue of denial with respect to the ecological condition of the planet with normative questions raised by the suffering specifically associated with environmental injustice. At present, in most of the environmental literature the two concerns (-protection and justice) are effectively decoupled. It is true that each orientation pays lip service to the other, but not in a policy relevant manner. That is, those alarmed principally about environmental unsustainability argue that to restore conditions of sustainability requires attention to poverty and a commitment to human rights for all persons, but the preoccupation is with `fixes' of various kinds, especially in pricing for the market to include environmental costs and technologies that operate more benignly with respect to pollution and toxic wastes. The challenges of distributive justice relating to the environmental agenda are essentially ignored.

Similarly, those who have tried to raise the environmental justice issue in the last decade or so have understandably focused on bringing their concerns about environmental injustice to the fore. This effort has necessarily been preoccupied with a variety of local sites of activist struggle where global and national capital has been deployed to build dams or nuclear power plants, or to dump toxic wastes, or to mine uranium, or to site polluting industries, or to neglect contaminated water and air. As a result the bigger, global picture of environmental degradation and the earth's carrying capacity are bracketed, and are not being given the attention they
What seems of great ethical and political importance at this time is to insist on the inclusion of environmental justice assessments and prescription in the wider dialogue on global environmental policy, and at the same time, to encourage environmental analysts to bring environmental justice priorities as well as fairness to unborn generations into their scenarios for a future condition of environmental sustainability. Planning for a sustainable future is what Lester Brown dubs `Plan B' to distinguish it from the prevailing `Plan A,' business as usual, but of course there are an almost unlimited of potential candidates for Plan B, and the ones that I am advocated treat environmental justice goals as inseparable from environmental sustainability goals.

There is a second disconnect that also is not accorded the attention it deserves by either of these two perspectives: that is, the growing energy squeeze, relating to petroleum supplies and prices, as a world order dimension of the present setting. James Howard Kunstler's challenging book is essentially about the deep dislocations likely to afflict America, but his assessments have global implications, as well as help explain the geopolitical struggles for the control of oil reserves in the Middle East. It is amusing to notice that the big oil companies are trying to get on this ecological bandwagon; BP proclaims in recent TV ads that its vaunted initials now stand for `Beyond Petroleum!!' At this point the immediate environmental justice effects are pronounced: higher energy costs impact most heavily on the poor, especially those living near subsistence levels, although in some instances the very poor cannot afford energy at any price, and are not therefore adversely affected by the recent rapid rise of fuel costs. From a strictly environmental perspective, the rising price of oil greatly encourages investment in alternative energy technologies, but it also diverts agricultural land into more profitable bioenergetic
uses, foreshadowing food shortages, rising food prices, and famines that would again most certainly disproportionately harm the poor. So far, although I suspect not for long, neither of these two types of environmentalists has given sufficient attention to the emergent challenge of planning a transition to a post petroleum world, and even Kunstler does not worry enough about the global side of this profound challenge to the affluent modern world associated with a seemingly fixed supply of oil in the face of dramatic expansions in demand from such fast growing giants as China and India.

The third disconnect involves war and militarism in the early part of this new century. What has been called `asymmetric warfare' now dominates the global stage, and is currently exemplified by the long war in Iraq and the thirty-four day Lebanon War initiated by Israel during the summer of 2006. The high tech side in 21st century wars relies on its formidable capabilities to destroy the infrastructure of the `enemy' that is dispersed throughout the society. This form of warfare is directed primarily at the civilian population, especially in countries of the South, producing great suffering among the poorest sectors of such a society, largely as a result of environmental damage to water and food supplies, producing massive outbreaks of disease, shortages, and in the end heavy civilian casualties, especially among the young and infirm. Also the targeted areas are environmentally deteriorated by attacks in a number of ways that have not yet been reliably established, but include widespread use of depleted uranium armor and warheads that appears to induce radioactive illness, and have long-lasting health effects.

From these preliminary remarks, then, several conclusions emerge:

--The character of environmental justice should be understood in relation to distributive inequities associated with race and class, as
well as with respect to the injustices visited on non-Western societies as a result of colonial and post-colonial practices, and in relation to the persisting failure of present political actors to take responsibility for the life circumstances of future generations;

--To promote environmental justice it is necessary to take specific account of current and anticipated inequities in framing recommendations for environmental reform on all levels of social order, as well as in relation to the future;

--To ground the environmental justice dialogue about policy options, it is necessary to give attention to the energy squeeze as it affects the poor, the non-Western world, and future generations;

--Geopolitical circumstances need to be taken into account in assessing environmental injustice, including the grossly disproportionate current investment in extremely wasteful and dysfunctional military forms of security, especially by the United States. It is also necessary to take account of the civilian and environmental impacts of the most prominent modes of contemporary warfare: that is, asymmetric warfare in which high tech air, land, and sea power, along with missiles and artillery, are characteristically used against non-state adversaries armed with light weaponry, but relying on well-conceived tactics to inflict major physical and symbolic harm on powerful state actors or to mount resistance to a belligerent occupation that has been based on the military superiority.

2-The First Cycle of Ecological Urgency

The first cycle of ecological urgency can be located for convenience in the period between 1972, the date of the UN Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and the publication of *The Limits to Growth* study of the Club of Rome and the Earth Summit of 1992. In this period environmentalism took
off as a grassroots movement, as a subject for serious academic study and controversy, and as a stimulus for transnational grassroots activism. It was an exciting period of rising public consciousness and mobilization, perhaps epitomized by the prominence of Greenpeace as an organizational presence and the founding of green political parties, especially in Europe. But it was also a time for retrenchment of powerful vested corporate and governmental interests, for Promethean reaffirmations of the capacity of technological innovations to overcome whatever harm could be attributed to the role of technology as the engine of human progress. The environmental movement was effectively accused of `crying wolf,' using `scare tactics', and advocating policies of environmental protection that were insensitive to the developmental aspirations of the poor nationally and globally. Environmentalism was initially derided as a superfluous, hysterical movement of elitists in the affluent North who cared only about preserving their vacation wilderness haunts and their affection for exotic animals, and were oblivious to the dependence of the poorest of the poor on robust economic growth.

There were important elements of truth in this critique, mixed with a dogmatic and cynical neoliberal optimism that refused to be shaken by the facts. There is no doubt that this first cycle of awareness was initially insensitive to the three broad concerns of environmental justice depicted above. At the same time, as the Stockholm Conference illustrated, it was overly sensitive to geopolitical concerns, keeping the impact of war on the environment off its agenda because the United States did not want to deal with accusations that its modes of warfare in Vietnam were environmentally destructive, and additional influential states did not want to deal with environmental objections to the continuing testing of nuclear weapons. The official name of the 1972 Stockholm Conference was the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. It was a huge success in at least two respects: providing an arena for NGO activism as a counter to the
immobility, formalism, and geopolitics of the UN inter-governmental approach dominated by Westphalian canons of protocol; and as a learning experience for governments around the world about the dependence of their future prospects for sustainable development and eventual prosperity upon a more attentive and knowledgeable approach to environmental issues.

Stockholm was also a rude awakening to an impending North/South clash on global environmental policy. This encounter was more bitter than necessary due to the failure of the conference organizers to anticipate the objections of non-Western countries to several environmental challenges, which if directly addressed, would appear to imperil the highest priority of the countries of the South: namely, rapid economic growth achieved in the face of existing circumstances that highlighted uneven development, accompanied by dramatic disparities in standards of living. For developing countries, recently freed from the shackles of colonialism, it seemed dangerously threatening to discuss, much less to constrain, future development by an expensive regime of regulation focused on polluting technologies. From the perspectives of the South it seemed that the industrialized countries of the North had already reaped the economic benefits of these polluting technologies, making the curtailment of their availability at this point shut the gate on the South in relation to their delayed pursuit of developmental goals. As representatives from the South expressed their anger and anxiety in the form of a non-negotiable claim: that the countries of the South were entitled, without interference, to cause whatever pollution was necessary to go forward with programs of rapid development. Part of the distress arose from the perception that environmentalism was emerging as a way to shackle the formerly colonized world in conditions of permanent backwardness and mass poverty while the colonial powers went about stabilizing their circumstances of affluence.

In the years following the conference, both sides of this
Stockholm debate moderated their positions somewhat to enable a measure of forward progress. No major international initiative addressing environmental concerns was held after Stockholm that did not include the word `development' in its title, amounting to a conceptual recognition that environmental protection needed at every step to be fully reconciled with developmental goals. In the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, for instance, the title of the meeting was `The UN Summit on Environment and Development.' This was a way of signaling the Third World that their objections to Stockholm had been registered. The Rio approach was prefigured by the influential Brundtland Commission report that also recognized the importance of bringing concerns about environmental justice into the policy mix, offering the memorable emotional observation that poverty was the worst form of pollution. The report proposed doing this in two major ways: by ensuring that development concerns were taken into full account when assessing environmental challenges and recommending policy responses. Rio adhered to these rhetorical guidelines but it was notable through its reformulation of the essence of the environmental threat as no longer being one of pollution. It was at Rio that global attention was for first time seriously focused on the emergent dangers of climate change due to global warming, as well as the importance for the sake of development and future generations to take urgent steps to protect biodiversity. The Rio conference also exhibited three other crucial trends: first, the increasing influence of global civil society as evidenced by the participation of thousands of NGO representatives and delegations, as well as their greater impact on media; and secondly, through the visible participation of world business in the work and funding of the conference, seeking to convey the impression that a convergence of interests between market forces and environmental protection; and thirdly, the stridently regressive leadership of the United States, as expressed by the notorious pre-conference assertion by then President George H. W. Bush who failed to attend but sent a disheartening message that “the American way of
life is not negotiable” that continues to resonate among critics of the United States approach to global environmental concerns. American anti-environmentalism was carried to brash new heights by the second president Bush, including a very public and denunciatory rejection of the Kyoto Protocol. This is not a politically partisan point as neither political party has distinguished itself with respect to the environment, although overt hostility to the environmental agenda is more clearly associated with the Republican affinity with business interests and their ideological championship of autonomous markets minimally regulated. Given the general atmosphere in the United States ever since the end of the Cold War supportive of neoliberal capitalism, a Democratic president would not have been able to gain the level of support in the US Senate that would be needed to ratify even the minimalist treaty negotiated at Kyoto to restrict the emission of greenhouse gasses, and until very recently, even an attempt would seem futile.

Environmental justice concerns surfaced by stages during this first cycle, and became more or less influential in a variety of international policy arenas, including the World Bank and IMF. There is no doubt that the Third World encounter with environmentalism had a dual character during this period. At first, as indicated, the main response was an undifferentiated opposition to any kind of environmental checks on developmental priorities. But later on, especially at local levels where large development projects were being situated, successive waves of environmental activism swept through the Third World, and was often mixed with the protection of poor peoples' traditional habitats from environmental destruction. Environmentalists in the South also struggled against corporate practices in their countries and opposed government arrangements that called for the dumping of toxic wastes from developed countries.

At the same time, there was beginning to be attention given in the North to environmental justice issues, especially a growing
realization that the heaviest immediate burdens of environmental abuse were being experienced by the most vulnerable members of society and that the life prospects of future generations were being irresponsibly jeopardized and burdened for the sake of maximizing present prospects for economic growth.

The first cycle of awareness did raise consciousness, and build some political momentum for making certain inter-governmental policy adjustments that were protective of the global environment (e.g. ozone layer) without imposing very heavy costs on market forces. Most governments in the South, as well as the North, came to appreciate the relevance of environmental concerns to their public policy goals, and created a new bureaucratic niche for environmental advisors. And social activists built on their effectiveness in raising environmental consciousness on a number of fronts. These civil society actors understood the necessity of maintaining as much public awareness as possible to offset environmentally detrimental activism associated particularly with amply funded and well-situated corporate and military pressure groups. Perhaps, the most ambitious civil society undertaking, and its most notable success, was to mount a worldwide campaign in opposition to the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, especially in the oceans. Greenpeace played a leading role, especially its imaginative symbolic resistance to French nuclear tests in the Pacific. The French government was so distressed by this campaign that it actually engaged in lethal sabotage against the Greenpeace vessel The Rainbow Warrior in 1985 while the ship was docked in the harbor at Auckland, New Zealand. This unfortunate incident was by no means the last deaths associated with the struggle by citizens and civil society organizations to protect the people of the planet from environmental health hazards. The justice dimension of these encounters is obscure and contested with respect to global impact; there is no doubt that those living near nuclear test sites are exposed to radiation hazards, but whether low-level radiation inflicts worldwide health hazards remains
The first cycle wound down for a series of reasons: a well-orchestrated backlash organized by business was promoted by mainstream media and very influential with the public; some environmentally responsible policies were implemented creating the misleading impression that governments were now sufficiently alert to environmental dangers to restore confidence in further industrial development; the doomsday predictions made by first cycle activists did not materialize in the form of worldwide famine, increasing urban pollution, resource shortages. The supposed ‘population bomb' failed to explode. The carrying capacity of the earth seemed up to the challenge, and environmental optimists mounted a counter-attack. Green political parties lost ground by not being able to address the spectrum of societal concerns in a credible manner, and by having their rhetoric and some of their proposal adopted by the mainstream. Other issues seemed more urgent to ethically sensitive civil society actors. There was growing concern about and opposition to the exploitative impacts of economic globalization, which were definitely widening the gaps between rich and poor within and among countries. There were also worries associated with American primacy in world politics after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the end, it is possible to conclude that during this first cycle of ecological urgency, a robust environmental movement was generated, but that it lacked sufficient depth and perseverance to counter continuing and shifting patterns of environmental deterioration. Thus this first cycle came to a grinding halt without countering the most severe threats posed by the impact of human activities on the environment.

3-The Second Cycle of Ecological Urgency

In the first years of the twenty-first century there were crucial shifts in the perception of ecological urgency as compared to the
first cycle. Furthermore, public attention had diminished considerably, certainly at governmental levels, but also among the general public. There were some voices in the wilderness repeating environmental warnings, especially with respect to climate change causing global warming, polar melting, extreme weather, droughts, and coastal flooding. And there were a variety of high-profile local issues (particular dams, power plants, nuclear facilities, toxic dumps) and specific events (tsunamis, extreme storms) that encouraged activism and media interest, but there were no high-profile comprehensive critiques of the sort that aroused widespread public interest of the sort that existed at the start of the first cycle.

But this mood of complacency began to change in about 2003. There were renewals of an apocalyptic concern in popular culture such as the film “The Day After Tomorrow” depicting the onset of a new ice age. At first, these ecological alarms were shrugged off as `science fiction' or assimilated as entertainment. Rising energy prices and authoritative warnings about the human basis of climate change started to create a new political receptivity to the imposition of governmental restrictions on private sector behavior. This mood has seemed to be most attuned to the need for urgent action within the framework of the European Union, which has only recently tendered a commitment to go beyond the Kyoto constraints on carbon emissions, and go even further if the other principal industrial powers will join with them.

Overall, attitudes of complacency have been difficult to displace, and have remain prevalent in the United States. In a sophisticated series of comprehensive reports prepared by the National Intelligence Council in Washington, DC, and closely related to CIA and other influential sectors of American society, environmental concerns were at the margins, while issues of environmental justice were either missing altogether, or touched upon indirectly. For example, in the report “Global Trends 2010” it was acknowledged, with elaboration, that more than 3 billion
people will be living in what was described as `water-stressed regions' in the South. In the 2004 “Mapping the Global Future: Report of the NIC `s 2020 Project” environmental issues were modestly flagged as more likely to demand attention from policymakers and pose what were called `ethical dilemmas,' but there was no consideration of whether or not environmental justice should be a policy goal. The report prepared by a large group of social scientists and policy analysts called attention to four world futures that they believed represented the most likely outcomes of present global trends. They were named Davos World, Pax Americana, A New Caliphate, and Cycle of Fear to call to the mind of readers their principal characteristic. It seems remarkable that such an exercise failed to put forward a plausible fifth scenario (“Ecological Chaos”) stressing issues of ecological urgency that are quite capable of fundamentally altering the political landscape in the next decade or so. It seems quite likely that rising anxiety about climate change has already had a sufficient impact on public consciousness so that think tanks contemplating the future now could not overlook the potential central relevance of the environmental policy agenda, especially in the aftermath of highly respected and authoritative reports of a rather strong consensus within the scientific community.

There is a rapidly emerging consciousness that the unresolved issues of environmental sustainability will produce severe adverse consequences if further ignored. The worst of the ecological problems, even at this point, may not be any longer remedied at acceptable costs. The widespread positive reaction to the grim message of the film “An Inconvenient Truth,” starring Al Gore and winning an Academy Award, is one expression of this rising curve of revived environmental concern within the popular culture. There are two clusters of environmental issues that are in the process of overcoming the period of ecological complacency that followed the first cycle of ecological urgency: climate change, including its
multiple serious secondary effects on ocean levels, polar ice caps, extreme weather, desertification; petroleum supply squeeze and the desperate search for a viable post-petroleum energy policy. Both challenges are daunting in their complexity, and require massive adjustments in a relative short period of time. It is difficult to suppose that such a process of adjustment will take place except in a top-down manner, and then only in an atmosphere of planetary emergency. If this were to happen it would almost certainly be accompanied by a variety of stringent restrictions on general consumption, life style, and free choice that burdened ordinary people, especially the poor, far more than elites. Unless the call for environmental justice becomes part of the ethos of democratic societies, and is treated as an essential and inalienable human right of every person, patterns of unfairness will almost certainly be reproduced, and undoubtedly accentuated, as conditions of scarcity becomes so acute that harsh forms of rationing will need to be introduced.

Comparing the second cycle to the first is instructive. In the first cycle the stress was on the interaction between population, resources, and pollution, making the collapse of modern industrial civilization appear as an almost inevitable outcome of a failure to make radical adjustments in modes of industrial production and in projected demographic trends. There were concerns about resource depletion, including hydro-carbons, but more so in the vein of anticipated shifts to coal with its greater polluting impact. In the second cycle the emphasis is more on restricting carbon emissions without further delays and hastening a transition to a post-petroleum economy, especially with respect to transport and living arrangements. So far, the environmental warnings issued by scientists and through the impact of extreme weather events, as well as by the dramatic rise in the price of oil, have certainly registered rhetorically with the public or political leaders, but as yet without any serious tangible moves designed to minimize the environmental and human damage. And to the extent that attentive
citizens are growing increasingly concerned about these threats, they are not paying much discernible attention to the justice dimensions except possibly to take note of North/South implications. Of course, past international environmental negotiations have taken some account of the dynamics of uneven development, or else a consensus on policy and behavior cannot be achieved. At Kyoto this acknowledgement produced a graduated scale of differentiated obligations that recognized the developmental claims of the South. This approach was also critically invoked by the United States and some other rich countries to bolster their insistence that the negotiated arrangements decided upon at Kyoto were unfair and unrealistic and did not deserve their respect. No attention was given to the three other justice dimensions: diminishing disproportionate burdens on the poor and marginal; protection of future generations; diminishing the costs militarism and war.

4- Conclusions

Addressing the second cycle of ecological urgency at this stage calls for careful thought and societal action, including a consciousness-raising public discourse that incorporates an integral concern with rendering environmental justice. This discourse needs to delve deeply into structural constraints on policy that arise from special interests entrenched in government and the private sector, as well as explore the whole spectrum of policy proposals that call for fundamental shifts in life style, budgetary priorities, and market regulation. The following recommended steps intend to contribute to the formation of such a discourse:

--Massive public education, including via the mechanisms of popular culture such as film, music, comic books, that conveys an understanding of both the dangers arising from global trends relating to the environment, and the importance of addressing these dangers in a manner sensitive to the claims of environmental
John Lanchester writes provocatively that “[t]he remarkable thing is that most of the things we need to do to prevent climate change are clear in their outline. We need to insulate our houses, on a massive scale; find an effective form of taxing the output of carbon; spend a fortune on both building and researching renewable energy and DC power [high voltage energy transmission cables]; spend another fortune on nuclear power; double or treble our spending on public transportation; do everything to curb the growth of air travel; and investigate what we need to do to defend ourselves if the sea rises, or if food imports collapse.”

Governmental pressure to induce a more responsible treatment of the global environmental agenda by the mainstream media throughout the world. The emergence of so-called `green hawks,' retired military commanders, linking future national security concerns with environmental failure is beginning to mainstream the importance of response in line with geopolitical priorities. The recognition that the countries with least capacity to cope with environmental harm are likely to be hardest hit, and susceptible to extremist politics is both leading to a rethinking of the cosmopolitan nature of nature security, but also insinuates environmental justice concerns, even if only with pragmatic motivations.

A UN world conference devoted to the second cycle of environmental urgency, with attention to environmental justice as an imperative for transition to environmental sustainability. One dimension of this attention is the degree to which the adverse impacts of climate change has had on low carbon-emitting regions, including upsetting delicate ethnic balances in poor and traditional African countries. There is a new appreciation in this regard that
the terrible ordeal of Darfur in the last several years may be mostly attributable to droughts in the mid-1980s that disrupted relations between nomadic herders and crop-raising farmers. As Stephan Faris writes in an important article, “[t]o truly understand the crisis in Darfur—and it has been profoundly misunderstood” you need to take account of this pattern of causation, which also raises the equity question as to whether the West should be deemed responsible for tragedies of the Darfur variety rather than to ponder its degree of philanthropic good will.

--Demilitarization, especially by the United States, with goal of 1% of GNP as the ceiling for expenditures, adopting the Japanese approach that is written into their constitution. At this stage, the massive American over-investment in a military machine that is most unusable constitutes the worst misappropriation of resources in human history, and effectively precludes serious attention to the ecological agenda. At present, within the United States, and to a lesser extent within most states, the embeddedness of the military budget is not subject to political debate.

--Long-term mapping of environmental options and alternative futures by governments, international institutions, civil society actors, and private sector actors;

--Appropriate emphasis by civil society actors, including religious institutions, on environmental justice alongside environmental sustainability;

--Inter-civilizational and intra-civilizational dialogues on environmental justice and the future.

This enumeration of steps to be taken is a mixture of feasible educative and consciousness-raising initiatives and rather utopian behavioral adjustments that currently seem both politically unattainable yet essential if serious responses are to be fashioned in
the coming decade or so. It is this intermixing of perspectives that is the originality of the opening phase of the second cycle of ecological urgency. It is both an awakening to the urgency and a deflection of its radical implications. Such a phase is likely to give way in the years ahead to a more dedicated political program of response. Mixing optimism and pessimism, the reality of ecological urgency is likely to be felt too directly in the near future to allow for the resurfacing of an ethos of complacency. Yet whether the deepening of concern will also exhibit sensitivity to considerations of environmental justice will depend on the dedicated and activist efforts of persons throughout the planet who regard the challenge as ethical as well as ecological.

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There is an alternative conception of *inhumane* global governance resting on coercive control of behavior, and often associated with the establishment of a global empire under the control of the United States. In contrast, *humane* forms of global governance assume voluntary patterns of adjustment made explicit and formal by lawmaking treaties and given operational relevance by the development of institutional arrangements of various sorts. For elaboration see Richard Falk, *On Humane Governance: Toward a New Global Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1995).

Quoted, 150.


Nadeau, 177.

For classic argument along these lines see Garrett Hardin, `The Tragedy of the Commons,' *Science* 162:1243-1248 (1968).


See Robert B. Bullard, ed., *Environmental Justice: Human Rights*
and the Politics of Pollution (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 2005) 281-282 summarize the harmful impact on the poor and ethnically marginalized.

See Nadeau on need to connect justice and ecological policy, note 7; a good example of the more typical tendency to approach the ecological challenge without regard to social issues is Brown, note 2.

For overview see Bullard, note 10; also, see Robin Broad with John Cavanagh, Plundering Paradise: The Struggle for the Environment in the Philippines (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

See note 2, ix-xii.


See especially, Donella Meadows and others, *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (New York, NY: Universe, 1972), which gave the world a mere decade to reverse course or experience the collapse of industrial civilization, and misleadingly claimed the
authority of a large data set analyzed by a powerful computer program.


See reports cited Note 3.


For first cycle arguments see books cited in Notes 14 and 19.

See Kunstler, Note 13, for detailed presentation, although mainly preoccupied with the challenge as experienced in the United States

