

## **EU Illegitimately Utilizes UN as Proxy to Further its Global Ambitions**

The following article demonstrates the close linkage between the recent December 2004 report of the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change entitled, "A More Secure World - Our Shared Responsibility" and European Union regional policy. In other words, it confirms, once again, the EU's illegitimate use of the United Nations as a proxy to further its global ambitions.

*See:*

<http://72.14.207.104/search?q=cache:vlaMRhAMoOcJ:bobwhitson.typepad.com/howlings/science/+Whitman+%2B+Millennium+Challenge+Corporation+%2B+precautionary+principle&hl=en>

### **[Dispatches from the Hague Conference on Environment, Security, and Sustainable Development](#)**

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**Monday, 10 May 2004**

THE HAGUE, Netherlands Terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and perhaps failed states top today's security agenda. But what about the environment? Can environmental security help us make the world a safer place?

**The Hague Conference on Environment, Security, and Sustainable Development** comes at an ironic time for those of us working in the field of environmental security. Before Sept. 11, some observers, such as journalist Robert Kaplan, predicted that environmental change would be the security concern of the 21st century. Deforestation and soil erosion leading to widespread migration, climate change swamping low-lying islands and coastal communities, competition for scarce resources erupting into conflict -- these and collapses in Liberia, Somalia, and Haiti prompted a number of policy responses. In the U.S., then-Vice President Al Gore formed the U.S. State Failure Task Force to look into what factors caused states to fail in the post-Cold War era. **At the United Nations, creation of a "green helmets" force -- environmental shock troops that would respond to environmental crises -- was debated (and eventually rejected by developing countries based on sovereignty concerns).**

**However, despite official pronouncements suggesting that poverty and human security concerns are national security concerns, including President Bush's 2002 National Security Strategy, U.S. response in the "war on terrorism" has been essentially unidimensional: force. New U.S. initiatives around HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Challenge Corporation are potentially significant but arguably would do**

**little to address failed and failing states. *And the Bush administration certainly shows little if any interest in pursuing environmental security, a term closely identified with Bush's vanquished opponent Gore.***

**While U.S. policy makers may largely ignore environmental security, interest is rising in Europe. The Hague conference has attracted a diverse group of mostly European policy makers, scholars, and advocates seeking to promote more sustainable relationships between people, their environment, and the natural resources they depend on.**

"Whether we came from Mars or from Venus, we are all here now on spaceship earth," said Pieter van Geel, state secretary for housing, spatial planning, and the environment in the Netherlands. He was referring to Robert Kagan's characterization of Americans coming from Mars, for their realist faith in power, and Europeans from Venus, with their internationalist commitment to multilateralism.

**Yet Minister van Geel made clear as he opened the conference that the climate change issue will be pushed aggressively during the Dutch turn at the European Presidency starting in July 2004.** Holland is a country, after all, where you ride your bike uphill to get to the beach. He called for action on climate change and the sea-level rise that comes with it by saying he would rather avoid having the next meeting at The Hague in life jackets. It would indeed be a shame for Andrew Carnegie's lovely Peace Palace, the home of the International Court of Justice, where we are meeting for three days, to be submerged.

**Saying that sustainable development is a prerequisite for sustainable security summarizes the general European sentiment, expressed today by Frits Schlingemann, director of the Regional Office for Europe of the U.N. Environment Program.** Few disagreed at this broad-brush level.

But the consensus quickly breaks down when choosing which issues to focus on. **Climate change dominates this agenda from the European perspective, with calls for engagement and action from the disengaged United States.** Rajeb Boulharouf of the public affairs office of the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification made the case for focusing attention on the life and death struggles of people in the developing world. He accurately described the shortcoming of many environmental security conferences such as this one, saying we hear climate change mentioned 10 times a day, biodiversity five times, and desertification once if we are lucky. From the perspectives of many Southerners, climate and biodiversity issues are luxury items that gloss over key developing-country environment and security linkages: local struggles for controlling natural resources or Northern subsidies that undercut the development potential of trade.

Tomorrow -- thoughts on mending the transatlantic environmental divide.

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