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David Smith is the closest friend, the closest colleague, that I have working in the international environment. I grew up in Australia and he is from New Zealand, so we honestly ought to hate each other. The truth is he is the finest public servant that I have ever known. We met seven years ago in Siberia. (Yes, that makes perfect sense, I realize). A little over three years ago we were back in Siberia in an even more remote location in the Altai Republic nestled in the triangular border intersections of Kazakhstan and Mongolia and China I want to tell you what it was like. It was pretty rough. We were working on environmental issues in the highest mountain range in all Siberia. We had generators that worked on and off again; we had no running water. Every morning at 7 AM, we would meet collectively for breakfast. If you didn't have five (or seven) vodka toasts, combined with cold fishhead soup—and what I most remember is that one dead fish eye staring up at me from my bowl and it was everything I could do from upchucking—and we had to smile and say, “This is wonderful.” That's life in Siberia.

We have learned a lot and worked on many projects together. David was here last summer for our NATO-United Nations conference on the environment. We have worked collaboratively not only in Siberia, but in Kenya, Rwanda, and Washington, D.C. as well.

We have just returned from a wonderful session “on the road”—where The Pell Center hosted a symposium on *Future Shock: Environmental Change and Human Impact* at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars this week. Out of that, I gave a thirty-minute interview to *Newsweek*

magazine and tomorrow David and I have a one hour conference call with producers at ABC News who are working on a documentary tentatively titled *Earth 2100*. This is great for the University and for The Pell Center.

Before we begin, I would like to show you what I call the human map of the world. It is not just about Africa; it is about human challenges.

A Human Map of the World

Just imagine if you were to breakdown the planet earth to 100 people. What would that planet look like?

- 61 Asians, 12 Europeans, 8 North Americans, 5 South Americans and the Caribbean, 13 Africans, 1 from Oceania.
- 53 Women, 47 Men.
- 53 live in a city.
- 9 are disabled.
- 33 are Christians (Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Anglican, and other Christians), 18 are Muslims, 14 are Hindus, 16 are non-religious, 6 are Buddhists, 13 practice other religions.
- 43 live without basic sanitation, 18 live without an improved water source.
- 6 people own 59 percent of the entire wealth of the community.
- 13 are hungry or malnourished.
- 14 can't read, 7 are educated at a secondary level.
- 12 have a computer.
- 3 have an internet connection.
- 1 adult aged 15-59 has HIV/AIDS.

- The village spends more than USD \$1.2 trillion on military expenditures and USD \$100 billion on development aid.
- If you keep your food in your refrigerator and your clothes in a closet, if you have a bed to sleep in and a roof over your head, you are richer than 75 percent of the entire world population.
- If you have a bank account, you're one of the 30 wealthiest people in the world.
- 18 struggle to live on USD \$1.00 per day or less.
- 53 struggle to live on USD \$2.00 per day or less.
- Appreciate what you have and do your best for a better world.

It is my honor to introduce David Smith. Please welcome him.

David Smith

Thank you Peter and to The Pell Center for inviting me. What I would like to talk about this evening is why the environment is important for making a better world for people.

The Poverty and Environment Link



This is a canal in Bamako, the capitol of Mali—it is grossly polluted. It smells. There are clouds of mosquitoes so thick, you can catch them in your hand. This disgusting water is what these people live on. They live in villages next to this canal, which is their only source of water. They use it for cleaning, cooking—everything. As a result of having to rely on this disgusting water, their children get sick and die. They get malaria. They cannot afford to

pay for medicines. They cannot afford even to buy fuel to sterilize their water. This scene is only a twenty minute bike ride from the center of Bamako.



This is a hillside in Rwanda. It is incredibly steep. Much of Rwanda is incredibly steep. Ninety percent of the population relies on farming for livelihood. Yet even with these sharply rising hills, people farm like this with no sustainable terracing. They chopped down all the trees. Every time it rains, the soil slides down massive rivulets and washes away. Year after year, the soil is less and less productive. So they grow less and earn less income, they have less food for their children, and families—all because of environmental damage.



Look at this man's face. It is so full of hate and while the hate is being triggered by [presidential] election rigging [between Luo candidate Raila Odinga and Kikuyu Mwai Kibaki] in Kenya, the underlying problem in Kenya fueled violence even before the election ignited it. The root cause for violence is really competition

over land. There are too many people for the land available land and every year, land decreases its productive capacity. In effect, every year there is less land per person and this competition set

against the ever growing population causes immense social stress in Kenya. Trigger points such as election rigging release the hate and frustration—and the violence.

Unsustainable use of environmental resources is an economic issue. It costs in terms of health: it makes people sick; polluted water makes people sick. Sick people die from waterborne diseases.

Unsustainable land use reduces agriculture productivity, reduces incomes and causes instability and insecurity. In Rwanda—the most densely populated region in all Africa—there are so many people that the competition over land is fiercely intense. In many countries in Africa, including several stable states—and some that used to be stable states such as Kenya—there is intense competition over land. Localized factions appear frequently.

To highlight how environmental unsustainability kills millions and costs billions, every year about 2.2 million people in developing countries, mainly children, die from waterborne diseases. At any one time, it is estimated that half of the total number of hospital beds in developing countries are occupied by people suffering from waterborne diseases. Respiratory diseases caused by indoor smoke from solid fuels kills an estimated 1.6 million people annually. This is because most people do not have electricity to cook food indoors and using charcoal as an alternative. As a result, water and smoke are trapped inside their and damages breathing. Children become sick and die.

Urban air pollution alone kills about 800,000 people annually. The cost of all this in terms of human misery is unquantifiable but in economic terms it costs billions of dollars a year.

To give some concrete examples of the links between environmentally unsustainable land and water use and poverty: Overgrazing equals reduced grass growth, more soil degradation and erosion, which in turn equals decreased livestock numbers and decreased production, which equals decreased incomes. In many countries, including the United States, the depletion of ground water is a major problem. I have been reading recently what's been happening around Nevada and with the depletion

of the Ogallala Aquifer further east. An incredible underground flow has been depleted and it is quite possible that in a decade or two no one will truly know where the water sources will be coming from.

Deforestation causes erosion as well, with valuable soils washing out into streams. In Rwanda, there is so much deforestation and inappropriate land use that the silt runs down into the streams and into hydroelectric reservoirs. As one result, less hydroelectricity is generated because the lakes are filling up with silt. Rwanda spends about \$65,000 U.S. dollars *a day* importing petrol and diesel to make up for the hydroelectricity that could run off generators because of inappropriate land use.

Fisheries are another good example of the links between environment and development. If you deplete fisheries and you catch less fish and you lose incomes. An example, not so far from here—with which you are all familiar—is the once legendary Outer Banks off the coast of New England.

In summary, unsustainable use of the environment reduces the social and economic benefits that environmental resources produce. People get sick and die from water pollution. Farmers grow less and earn less. Environment damage severely weakens real or sustainable development. Yet the contribution of environment to social and economic development is often poorly understood. Many developing countries have what they call “poverty reduction strategies” [commonly referred to as PRS], where governments plan for the next five years what the priorities are and how to address problems in their countries. Often environment does not feature in these programs, so it does not get budgeted and no resources are effectively allocated to offset further environmental impact and resulting human deprivation. Thus, unsustained land use continues and people grow poorer and poorer because of environmental damage.

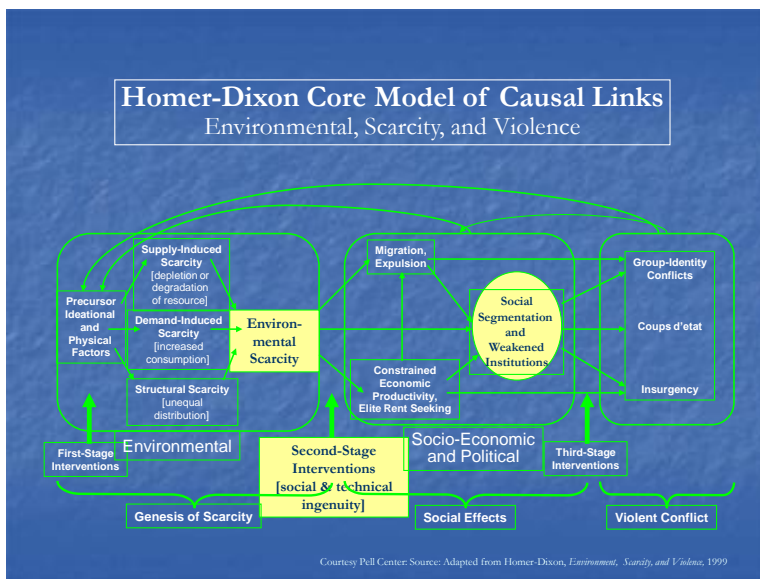
What are we in the U.N. trying to do about that? We work with governments to use economic analyses to show how the environment is important to economic development and then we work

with them to integrate detailed policies to include sustainable land use, action to combat water pollution, and how to effectively allocate funds to reduce poverty and lessen environmental impact.

This diagram shows how environmental problems contribute to violent conflict. Environmental scarcity creates tensions and a potential for violence. In using Kenya as an example, you have social segmentation and weakened institutions. You have huge and very dangerous ethnic rivalries. People don't think of themselves as being Kenyan first, they think of themselves as being a Luo or a Kikuyu or a Kalenjin. These are some of the different tribes. So they met to protect the interest of their particular tribes and the governments don't focus on getting people to think as being Kenyan. The government manipulates tribal rivalries for political gain and that leads to the potential of extreme violence when something triggers it off like election or land conflict.

How the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Works with The Pell Center

This leads me to my collaboration with The Pell Center. This diagram sums up for me what The Pell Center works on. The Pell Center makes linkages between issues and tries to help with multilateral solutions to solve them, which is policy that sustains Senator Pell's legacy.



Courtesy Pell Center. Source: Adapted from Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*, 1999

Some of these poverty-environment-security linkages include competition for land in Kenya, armed clashes over scarce water and pasture in Darfur, potential conflict over transboundary waters in Central Asia and Africa. Climate change is frightening, of course. Perhaps worst of all we have competition over increasing scarce natural resources—land and water. People use land, and they stop other people from using it, so there is conflict. If land is not available and people are displaced, out of jobs, the lack of alternatives creates conflict. If you go out and cannot buy a water filter, if you're poor and cannot afford an alternative means of support, you are more likely to turn violent.

This is one of the key reasons why we work with The Pell Center. The more I think of The Pell Center and Senator Pell's legacy—and his extremely valuable legacy for the U.S. government to deal with these problems—the more I realize how important our collaboration is I think we need to highlight the links between poverty-environment and security. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are not expert in these areas. For us to be able to work with The Pell Center on highlighting links between environment, security and development is a very valuable thing. To tackle some of these problems, be it environmental or development problems, or security problems, in developing countries we really do need more support, more constructively critical involvement from the United States. You are the only “superpower” left in the world. You have a legacy of deep engagement and multilateral systems. The United States was a key force in establishing the U.N. Senator Pell was there at the founding of the United Nations, at the San Francisco Conference in 1945. He was there for the key events in the U.N. including the establishment of the U.N. Environmental Programme at the Stockholm Conference in 1972. To help address these terribly important complex, poverty-environment-security-development issues, we need to work more and more with institutes such as

The Pell Center, which has the ability to step back, to think carefully, to come up with sophisticated practical solutions. Often in the U.N. we're deeply engaged countries and regions and do not have the funding or the staff to be able to step back a bit, think with academics and other people, and come up with solutions because we are often ground-level day to day.

I would like to conclude that the contacts with make with Peter and others through The Pell Center are crucial. We would like to also work with The Pell Center and other institutions such as the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, in Washington D.C., to try and encourage the U.S. government to be more constructively engaged in seeking solutions to problems in the rest of the world. If we take Senator Pell, who was a firm believer in the U.N., but who was not an un-critical one as well. That is the best approach because we know that the U.N. is not nearly as effective or efficient as it should be. For the U.N. to change and become more effective, we need more constructive engagement and influence from the U.S.. I believe the model of Senator Pell and his commitment to multilateralism is a really good model for the U.S. to adopt to try and improve the U.N. system—to make us more effective in tackling problems on poverty and violence and security. What we have to do in the U.N. is not only become more effective and proficient, we really have to incorporate the linkages between issues more successfully and think tanks such as Woodrow Wilson and The Pell Center are very useful to us in trying to develop solutions.

Allow me to give you an example of how it would be good for both the U.S. and the U.N. if there were more involvement. At the moment, we work quite closely with the governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and they are both very strong supporters of the U.N. Ireland is now a major donor. But, they are not uncritical. What they say to us is, "We believe in the U.N. and we like some of the things that you are doing, some of the things you are doing we don't like at all, and we really think you need to improve." Ireland is a country of 4.5 million people and it has a lot of influence in

the U.N. Because it remains committed to multilateralism, it donates money but also remains critical and involved. Ireland is the biggest single donor of the program I manage. They interrogate me—I often spend an hour-two hours in session meetings—answering their questions on “Why are you doing this? Are you spending our money wisely? Have you achieved your results on the ground? If you are achieving results on the ground, we’ll give you more money. If you’re not, we will cancel your funding until you reform.”

Whereas, if I meet with people from the U.S. State Department you just get a constant string of criticism. None of it is constructive. It is “Why are you doing that? You should have been doing this.” We say we’re trying to become more effective, and here’s an example of what we’re doing. And the response is often, “No, no we don’t like that.” It is depressing. It is not a good model for the U.S. to influence the U.N. so we can work together to make the world a better place. Yet it is in your interest as the biggest country in the world as much as it is in the interest of the most desperately poor.



Look at these boys. This is Rwanda. In 1994 boys like this we’re taken out and told to kill other young boys. We stood back. It happened because the “superpowers” weren’t interested.

Contrast this with the latest trouble in Kenya, which had the potential to completely spiral out of control and get as bad as Rwanda. When the violence started, the first thing we had to do was locate our staff where they were. We could not locate some of our staff. I found one of the people that works for me by mobile phone. I heard angry voices and shouting in the background. She ended up abandoning her home. Stopping at a road block—I could hear the shouting and screaming—I myself turned the car around to get away from what these folks were doing . . .

In truth, the United States deserves credit for not allowing the recent violence in Kenya to get as bad as it was during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. The U.S., United Kingdom and the European Union, as soon as all this trouble started in Kenya, became deeply involved—putting pressure on both sides in Kenya. It did not cost much money—USD \$200,000 dollars, and flying Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Nairobi. That pressure, that commitment, that will to stop the violence, stopped it. If it had been left up to the Kenyans, they would have kept on and would still be clubbing each other to death today. The international pressure, the U.S. playing a pivotal role—it made the difference. I think that is a model and a model fully consistent with Senator Pell and what he supported for how the U.S. can become better engaged for making the world a better place. Speaking as a U.N. bureaucrat, it would be really wonderful if the U.S. were more constructively involved in the U.N. system. We would welcome that.