

theory. It could find a wide audience with policy makers, environmental activists, academics and upper level students.

Conca, Ken, and Geoffrey D. Dabelko, eds. 2002. *Environmental Peacemaking*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

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### **Environmental Peacemaking's Catch-22**

Can regional environmental cooperation serve as a catalyst for regional peace and stability? Can it promote "post-Westphalian" forms of governance and identity that transcend the boundaries of the state? *Environmental Peacemaking* brings these questions to bear on six cases, ranging from the US-Mexican border to the Aral Sea basin.

The volume's findings contain news that is good, bad, and ironic. The good news is that a hostile or insecure political environment does not necessarily doom regional environmental cooperation. The bad news is that environmental cooperation appears to generate little "spillover" for the resolution of broader regional conflicts. The ironic news is that if regional environmental cooperation is to become effective enough to spill over into other issue-areas, we need more interstate trust, stronger regional identity, and more post-Westphalian governance. It's a Catch-22. Jean Monnet, meet Joseph Heller.

*Environmental Peacemaking* is a product of the authors' frustration with the current limitations of "environmental security." On the one hand, those who argue that environmental interdependence will force states to transcend traditional ways of thinking about "national security" have failed to demonstrate how environmental interdependence might lead to interstate peace. On the other hand, those who argue that environmental degradation and natural resource competition will generate violent conflict tend to overlook ways in which these conflicts can be cooperatively diffused.

In order to fill this gap, the authors identify two theoretically promising pathways leading from regional environmental cooperation to regional peace and stability. First, regional environmental cooperation might create a habit of cooperation and an atmosphere of trust among the states involved, thus lowering barriers to cooperation on other issues. Second, regional environmental cooperation might strengthen transnational linkages among nonstate actors, leading to the emergence of "post-Westphalian governance" and, ultimately, the creation of an "imagined security community" within which the use of force to resolve disputes becomes increasingly unthinkable.

These hypotheses are brought to bear on six regions in which environmental cooperation coexists with conflict and instability: the Baltic Sea basin, South Asia, the Aral Sea basin, Southern Africa, the Caspian Sea basin, and the

US-Mexico border region. The case studies are stunning in their sophistication and depth: each weaves a complex tapestry that illuminates the interrelationships among environmental degradation, natural resource use, economics, regional security, domestic politics, and interventions by extraregional actors. Even if the volume's theoretical goals were less ambitious, *Environmental Peacemaking* would still constitute an extraordinary contribution to the field.

What conclusions emerge? The good news is that regional conflict and instability do not foreclose the possibility of environmental cooperation. On the contrary, environmental cooperation may move forward in the face of enormous tensions, even outright warfare. For example, India and Pakistan have successfully cooperated in the management of the Indus basin since the early 1960s, despite the chronic violence that has plagued relations between the two countries. Nor is this an isolated incident: water-sharing and environmental protection regimes have emerged in such equally inhospitable regions as Southern Africa and the Aral and Caspian Sea basins. This cooperation remains modest, but nevertheless higher than a pessimist might predict on basis of regional political and economic instability.

The bad news is that these efforts have not yet "spilled over" in the form of broader interstate cooperation or modes of governance and identity that transcend the state. Cooperation over the Indus basin has brought India and Pakistan no closer to resolving their outstanding territorial disputes. The post-Soviet states ringing the Caspian Sea remain locked in confrontation over borders and other natural resources. Southern Africa remains a hotbed of internal and interstate violence, driven in part by natural resource competition. Mexico and the United States are still separated by one of the starkest borders in the contemporary world. The editors conclude, "We are left, therefore, to ask whether environmental peacemaking *could* be a reality in these or other regions, given the partial evidence provided by these incipient social processes" (p. 221).

The case studies do not inspire optimism. The authors' most consistent (and ironic) finding is that the hypothesized *effects* of environmental cooperation—enhanced interstate trust, more dense transnational ties among nonstate actors, and the emergence of a regional political community—are also *prerequisites* for more successful environmental cooperation. Stacy VanDeveer argues that the greatest barrier to post-Westphalian governance around the Baltic Sea is the deliberate exclusion of Russia from the "European" identity embraced by the other states in the region. Ashok Swain argues that environmental cooperation in South Asia is constrained by weak regional identity at both elite and popular levels. Douglas Blum concludes that effective environmental cooperation in the Caspian basin requires "fostering the political conditions within which the purposes of the regime can be realized" (p. 172). Erika Weinthal, Larry Swatuk, and Pamela Doughman—writing about the Aral basin, Southern Africa, and the US-Mexico border region, respectively—conclude that regional environmental conflicts cannot be resolved without greater transparency, transnational activism, and interstate trust.

Where does this leave us? On the one hand, we should not look to environmental cooperation for the promotion of interstate cooperation unrelated to natural resources use, or for the emergence of post-Westphalian modes of governance and political identity—particularly in regions where Westphalian states have yet to fully develop. On the other hand, several of the case studies indicate that *failure* to resolve highly salient natural resource conflicts may seriously obstruct efforts to resolve other issues. For the foreseeable future, then, the focus of “environmental peacemaking” should be making peace in environmental conflicts—a sufficiently ambitious goal in and of itself.

Kovel, Joel. 2002. *The Enemy of Nature: The End of Capitalism or the End of the World?* Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing Ltd; and New York: Zed Books.

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### Can The Leopard Change Its Spots?

In an era of media-spun promises of American-wrought liberty, economic growth and an “it-ain’t-so-bad-after-all” variety of anti-environmentalism, Joel Kovel’s *The Enemy of Nature* is a much needed counterpoint, an important attempt at truth-telling. His largely marginalized eco-political argument—that the ills of capitalisms and the ecological crisis are inextricably linked—is maybe not novel, but certainly worth repeating—and hearing.

The book’s fundamental argument is as follows: There is a growing amount of evidence for an accelerating deterioration of the Earth’s ecology. These deleterious changes are reaching global proportions and are likely to undermine the integrity of ecosystems and thus the very basis of life on Earth. The ultimate underlying cause for this ecodestruction is the now solely remaining economic system—capitalism—whose nature and goal is to grow and expand *ad infinitum*. Given this “cancerous” nature of the capitalist logic—carried out on the backs of workers turned into commodity—the system is fundamentally non-reformable and must be replaced if an ecologically viable foundation and human life with dignity is to be regained. The alternative is an essentially socialist society, whose members practice radical democracy, and value—above all—integrity of the ecological life world.

To make this argument, Kovel covers a lot of ground: instances of the environmental crisis, the prototypical industrial “accident” turned into ecological and human disaster, the false promises of capitalism, the nature of life and the question of human nature. He also reviews the fundamentals of Marxism, green and red philosophies, economies and reform movements less ambitious than his, the failures of “actually realized socialism,” and an odd garden variety of small enclaves of more or less successful evasions from the “capitalist force field.” That takes no small breath on behalf of the reader. Assuming good will—