

ince 1994, the Environmental Change and Security Program (ECSP) has promoted dialogue on the connections among environmental, health, and population dynamics and their links to conflict, human insecurity, and foreign policy. ECSP brings international policymakers, practitioners, and scholars to Washington, D.C., to address the public and fellow experts.

The program distributes two annual journals, the *Environmental Change and Security Program Report* and the *China Environment Series*, to more than 7,000 people around the world. *ECSP News*, a monthly e-mail newsletter, links 3,000 subscribers to news, meeting summaries, and event announcements on the program's comprehensive website, [www.wilsoncenter.org/ecsp](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/ecsp). ECSP also publishes *Focus*, a series of papers on population, environment, and security (previously named *PECS News*), as well as original research and occasional reports.

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The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars is the living, national memorial to President Wilson established by Congress in 1968 and headquartered in Washington, D.C. It is a nonpar

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**E**nvironmental pathways to peace can emerge at the unlikeliest of times—even during conflict, when managing shared environmental resources can be an important lifeline connecting combatants cut off from other avenues for dialogue. In May, I attended a conference in Tehran designed to connect Iran to the world's environmental community. "Environment, Peace, and the Dialogue Among Civilizations and Cultures," sponsored by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Iran's Department of Environment, built on then-President Mohammed Khatami's initiative to engage in dialogue across borders and civilizations.

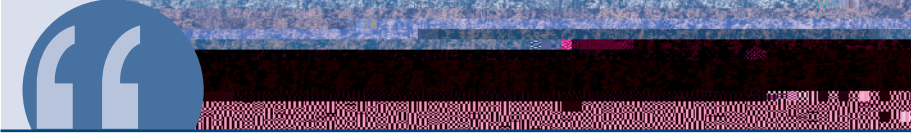
Seven hundred guests from around the world listened to President Khatami's energetic opening speech, which called for new dialogues that would help build international trust and understanding. He tied environmental decline to growing poverty and injustice, while stressing that environmental cooperation can increase peace and stability.

Approximately 70 politicians and experts from more than 30 countries, joined by at least as many Iranian attendees, debated topics such as environmental damage in wartime, scarcity's contributions to conflict, and cooperation as a peacebuilding tool. Using the environment as a pathway to peace was dissected in panel discussions—and practiced in the hallways among the international crowd of scholars and policymakers.

At its most fundamental level, environmental peacemaking uses cooperative efforts to manage environmental resources as a way to transform insecurities and create more peaceful relationships between parties in dispute. Environmental management may help overcome political ten-

sions by promoting interaction, confidence building, and technical cooperation.

Even as we seek to turn the environment and



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demographic transition, and environmental sustainability"—if donors step up to support it.

Environmental peacemaking can take myriad forms, two of which we present in this issue of *ECSP Report*. A preview of a forthcoming ECSP publication, "Parks for Peace or Peace for Parks," offers five perspectives on these intriguing transboundary programs that seek to build peace and meet conservation goals—at the same time. Using examples from South Asia, southern Africa, and South America, the excerpts are drawn from papers that delve deep into the debate and offer recommendations for those considering these appealing yet complex mechanisms.

The military may seem an unlikely venue for environmental peacemaking, but as Rear Admiral John Sigler USN (Ret.) explains, environmental security engagement—particularly disaster response—is a part of U.S. Central Command's efforts to promote regional stability and contribute to the ongoing process of conflict resolution. While the goals may swing from conservation to security, looking at these efforts side-by-side helps develop our understanding of environmental peacemaking—which we are continuing to do, as Ken Conca and I (with others) follow up on our 2002 book on the topic.

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meetings and a topical navigation tool, which sorts news, research, videos, and links according to your interests. Our redesigned monthly e-newsletter, *ECSP News*, delivers meeting summaries, program news, and event announcements straight to your inbox, as we continue to use new media to streamline our publications and improve our dissemination.

While environmental peacemaking efforts like the Iranian conference or the U.S. military's programs will never single-handedly resolve conflicts in the Middle East, they may be, according to Iran's former vice president for the environment, Massoumeh Ebtekar, "the end of the beginning." In many places, the environment and natural resources are contributing to conflict and insecurity, whether from scarcity or abundance. But practitioners and policymakers should try to utilize environmental pathways to peace rather than ignore this tool. For example, the recently signed Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act recommends expanding U.S. programs that support and encourage cooperative water management mechanisms around the world, as they are "critical components of long-term United States national security." Without such systematic efforts to capitalize on these peacemaking opportunities (and better analysis of existing programs), states and societies may deny themselves a valuable tactic—and a lasting peace.

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