

# Theory of International Relations

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## **Session 12**

# **Challenges to international order**

## **Part I**



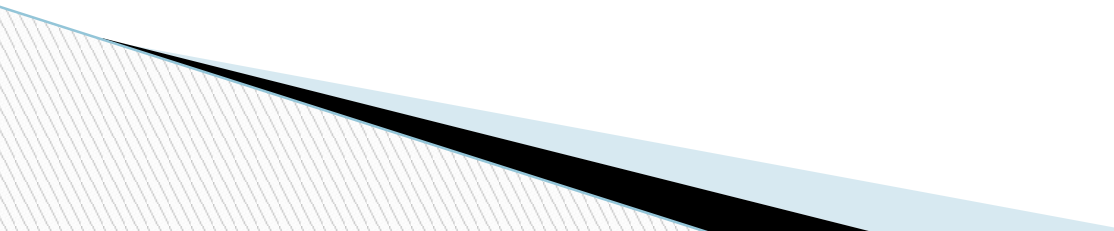
▣ **The threat to environmental security from global warming**

▣ **Nuclear weapons**



# The Environment—Protecting the Global Commons

## ▣ Conceptual Perspectives

- ▣ Two conceptual perspectives:
    1. First is the notion of collective goods
    2. The second conceptual perspective is sustainability, or sustainable development.
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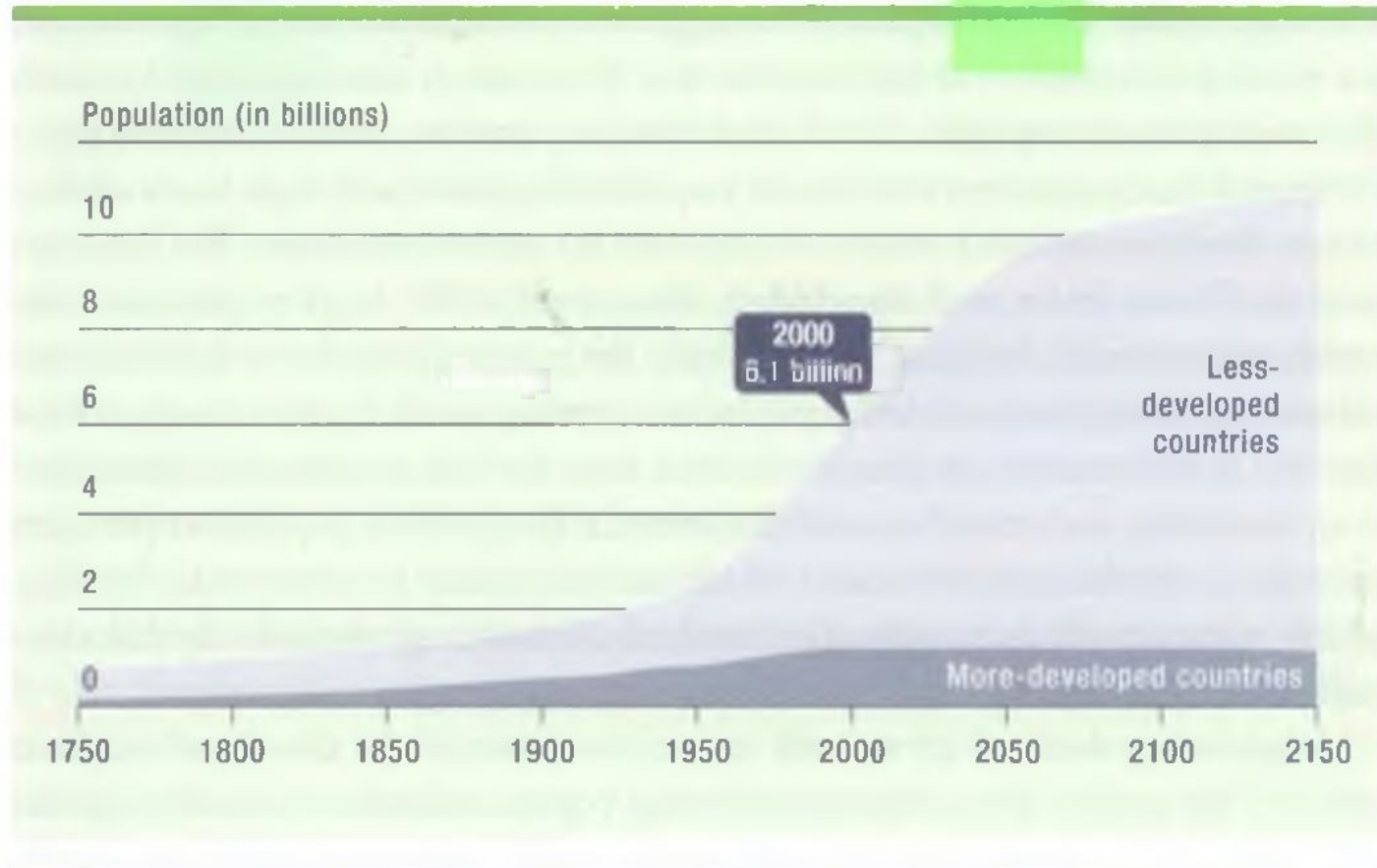
# Population Issues

Recognition of the potential population problem occurred centuries ago.

- In **1798**, Thomas Malthus posited a key relationship - ***Malthusian dilemma***
- The Limits to Growth, an independent report issued by ***the Club of Rome*** in **1972**, systematically investigated trends in population, agricultural production, natural resource utilization, and industrial production and pollution and the intricate feedback loops that link these trends

# Population Issues

FIGURE 10.1 | World Population Growth, 1750–2150 (projected)




SOURCE: United Nations, World Population Prospects. The 2008 Revision, medium variant (2009).

# Natural Resource Issues

## Fresh water

Only 3 percent of the earth's water is fresh (one-third lower than in 1970), at the same time that demand is increasing. Agriculture accounts for about two-thirds of the use of water, industry about one-quarter, and human consumption slightly less than one-tenth.

**2025** - two-thirds of the world's people will live in countries facing moderate or severe water-shortage problems.



# Natural Resource Issues

## ▣ **Pollution**

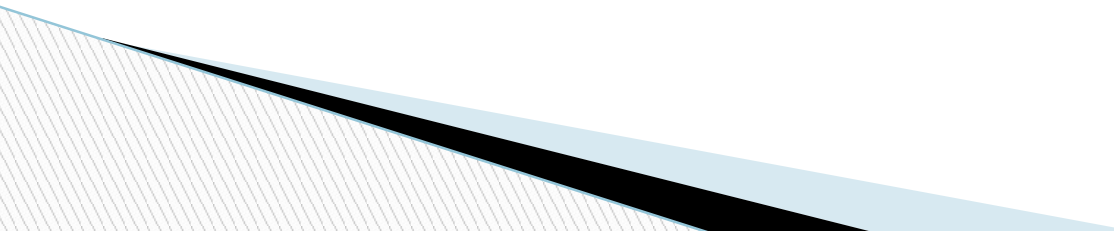
- ▣ In the 1950s and 1960s, several events dramatically publicized the deteriorating quality of the commons.
- ▣ The oceanographer ***Jacques Cousteau*** warned of the degradation of the ocean, a warning confirmed by the 1967 *Torrey Canyon oil spill* off the coast of England. ***Rachel Carson's*** 1962 book **Silent Spring** warned of the impact of chemicals on the environment.



# Environmental NGOs in Action

- NGOs perform a number of key functions in environmental affairs:
  1. First, they are generalized international critics, often using the media to publicize their dissatisfaction and to get environmental issues onto international and state agendas - Greenpeace's indictment of Brazil's unsustainable cutting of mahogany trees

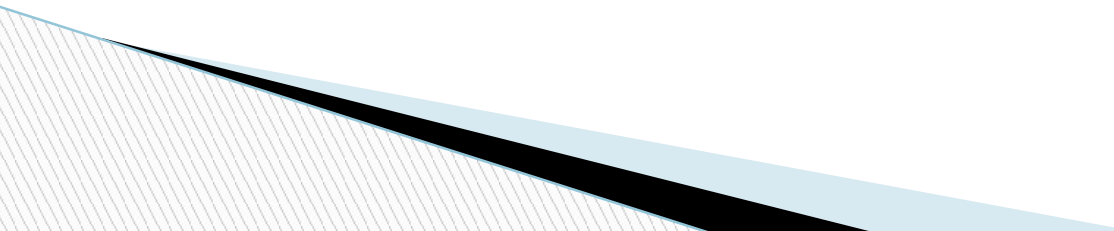
# Environmental NGOs in Action

2. Second, NGOs may function through intergovernmental organizations, working to change the organization from within - NGOs transformed the International Whaling Commission from a body that limited whaling through quotas into one that banned whale hunting altogether
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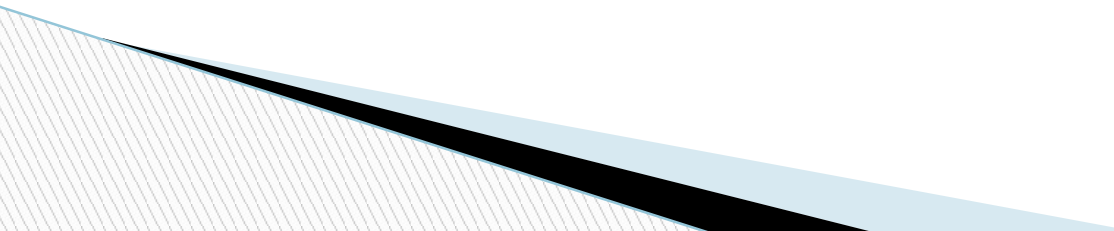
# Environmental NGOs in Action

3. Third, NGOs can aid in monitoring and enforcing environmental regulations, either by pointing out problems or by actually carrying out on-site inspections - TRAFFIC, the wildlife-trade-monitoring program of the World Wildlife Fund and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is authorized to conduct inspections under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

# Environmental NGOs in Action

4. Fourth, NGOs may function as part of transnational communities of experts, serving with counterparts in intergovernmental organizations and state agencies to try to change practices and procedures on an issue - the Mediterranean Action Plan of the UN Environmental Program.
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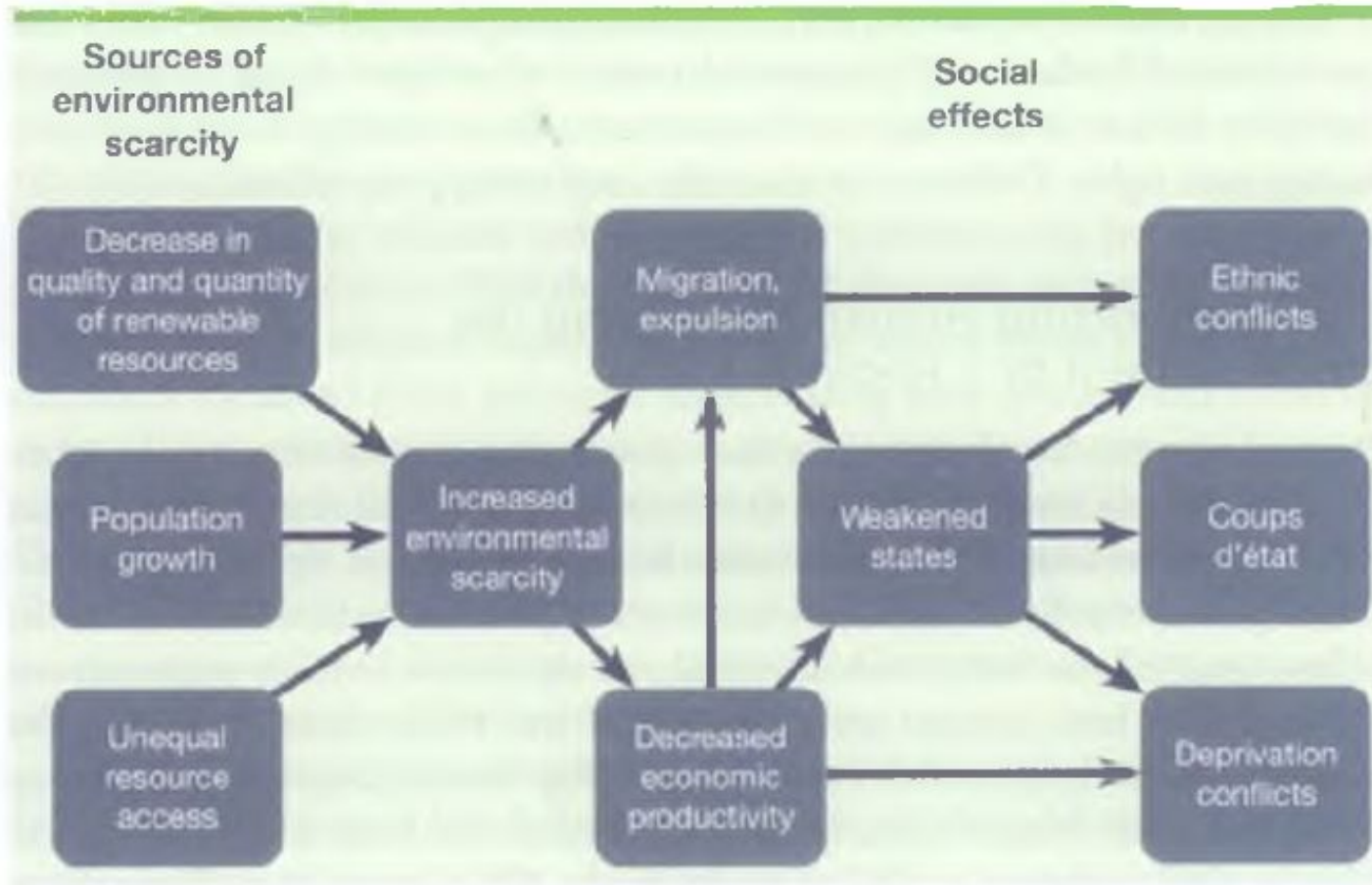
# Environmental NGOs in Action

5. Finally, and perhaps most important, NGOs can attempt to influence state environmental policy directly, providing information about policy options, sometimes initiating legal proceedings, and lobbying directly through a state's legislature or bureaucracy.
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# Environmental NGOs in

## Action

FIGURE 10.3 | Some Sources and Consequences of Environmental Scarcity

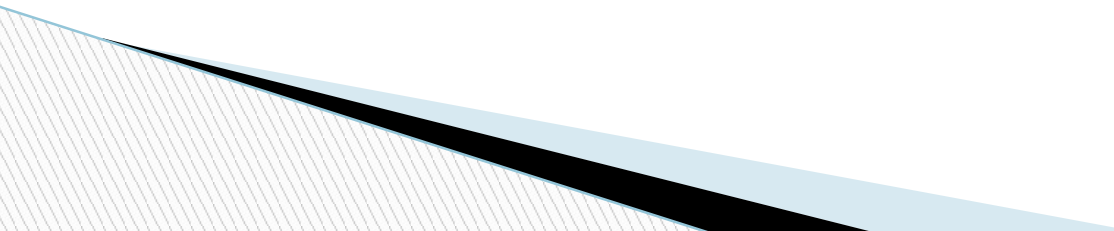


Source: Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence and Cases," *International Security* 19:1 (Summer 1994): 31. Reprinted with permission.

# Going Nuclear: A View from Iran

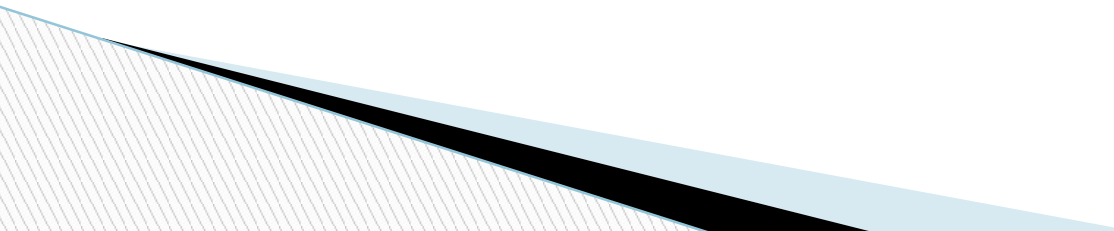
- The debates over nuclear programs in India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran have centred on what this decision means, the reasons for this decision, and how it relates to international law. Iran, whose foreign policy aims at reestablishing the nation as a major regional power, defends its decision to go nuclear on several grounds.
- Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) - Iran is a party, states have the “inalienable right to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.”

# Going Nuclear: A View from Iran

- This position is not unique to Ahmadinejad, who in 2009 won a controversial election to a second term as Iran's president after a campaign in which all the candidates endorsed that same position.
  - That view did not change in 2009, when Mohamed ElBaradei, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), urged Iran to “substantively re-engage” with the agency over the issue of Iran's nuclear development.
  - Iran is located near its traditional enemies Israel, with a nuclear arsenal estimated to contain over two hundred weapons; and Iraq, which fought a decade-long war against Iran in the 1980s.
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# Going Nuclear: A View from Iran

- Shiite Iran also has unstable relations with many of the Persian Gulf states, which have large, sometimes unhappy Shiite minorities. On the country's western border is Turkey, a NATO member and close American ally with economic and political ties with Israel. On Iran's eastern border is Sunni Pakistan, another nuclear power and ally of the United States.
  - Most Iranians believe the United States has been the country's enemy since the 1950s, when the CIA engineered the overthrow of Iran's reforming nationalist Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953.
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# Going Nuclear: A View from Iran

- The preemptive U.S. attack against Iraq in 2003 - reflected the American position that Iraq was part of an “axis of evil,” a group in which the George W. Bush administration also included Iran and North Korea.
- The fact that Iran has long been considered a potential target by American war planners causes further anxiety. Iran’s move to develop a nuclear weapons program could be a major deterrent to the United States, decreasing the likelihood that the United States will forcibly promote regime change in Iran, as it did in the cases of Serbia in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001, and Iraq in 2003.

# Recommended Literature

- [Karen A. Mingst](#), [Ivan M. Arreguin-Toft](#). *Essentials of International Relations*. 5th Ed. 2010: New York: W.W. Norton & Co. ISBN 978-0393935295
- [Robert Jackson](#), [Georg Sorensen](#). *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. 4th edition, 2010: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0199548842
- [Paul Wilkinson](#). *International Relations: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)*. 1st edition. 2007: Oxford Paperbacks. ISBN 978-0192801579

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