
Introduction: A Natural Connection between Ecology and Peace?

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The announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2004 surprised many leaders around the world. Hawkish commentators were shocked that diplomatic peacemakers had been sidelined, and the Nobel committee had chosen Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmentalist, as the recipient. In a time when armed conflict is scourging so many parts of the world, the selection seemed to many “realists” an irritating distraction. Editorials the world over questioned the choice. *The Economist* emphatically asked the question “But what does planting trees have to do with peace?”¹ The Scandinavian press was even more critical with notable academic researchers including the Norwegian editor of the *Journal of Peace Research*, Nils Petter Gleditch, questioning the rationale for the prize.² This line of criticism had to do with the lack of empirical evidence linking environmental issues to conflict. These critics did not ask the more salient question of whether there are certain key attributes to environmental conservation that could independently contribute to peace-building in conflict zones.

This book explores the multiple ways in which environmental conservation zones can facilitate the resolution of territorial conflicts. Such zones are often places of ecological significance or natural beauty that usually have restrictions on development activities. While environmental regulations often spark development conflicts, there may be pathways by which ecological factors in such areas can be conducive to conflict resolution. The central question we address is how environmental concerns can be transformed into cooperation between various political jurisdictions.

Our focus is on the formation of conservation zones in which the sharing of physical space can build and sustain peace. Such zones that can play an instrumental role in peacemaking or sustaining amity between communities are termed “peace parks.” According to the Transboundary Protected Areas Network of the World Conservation Union there are 188 transboundary protected areas worldwide, and these are

such a growing phenomenon that a separate task force has been set up under the World Commission on Protected Areas to study them.³ We are also concerned with how such parks can be effective and how they might fail in their stated objectives. Thus the chapters in this book explore many factors such as the role of governments, the military, civil society, scientists, and conservation practitioners in negotiating effective arrangements that protect the environment, but more consequently that resolve existing conflicts which are external to the formation of a park itself. It is also important to note that while there are numerous transboundary conservation zones, many are not being effectively managed and numerous ecologically sensitive areas remain unprotected. For example, a recent geographic information systems (GIS) study conducted by Gomez et al. (2006), using a map of human influence, found 104 transboundary wild areas involving 61 countries that are not formally part of any conservation park.

The coinage of the term “peace park” can itself be traced back to the establishment of the Waterton Lakes Glacier International Peace Park between Canada and the United States in 1932. While at the time this gesture was largely meant to be symbolic, since both Canada and the United States had good relations and continue to be friendly neighbors, the term has naturally evolved to acquire many other connotations. For the purposes of this book we are concerned with any conservation zone that, by virtue of multiple jurisdictions, could either help resolve a conflict or maintain existing peace. The concept of peace parks challenges many deeply rooted historical assumptions about conservation zones, which have often been considered a source of conflict themselves due to the dispossession of land, differentiated values about conservation versus preservation,⁴ and consequently ecological primacy versus political expediency. The contributors to this book accept that the establishment of peace parks will undoubtedly require political attrition. However, the argument that we present is one of possibility for making environmental factors instrumental in peace-building. Although many existing structures would require reform to prevent the cooptation of peace parks by vested hegemonic interests, with effective strategies for community engagement we can implement this novel idea for conflict resolution at an international level.

Situating the Argument

Given the large volume of environmental security discourse over the past twenty years, it is important to first put the argument presented in this book in context.

Environmentalists have often sought to highlight the linkages between resource scarcity, ecological degradation, and conflict. In this regard they have been supported by some of the earlier literature on environmental security that gained prominence toward the end of the cold war.⁵ Any solutions presented in this vein tend to focus on how to improve environmental conditions as a means of addressing the conflict. While this is certainly a laudable goal where environmental factors are part of the conflict, the approach easily falls prey to critics who insist that environmental factors are a minor part of conflicts. In their view, larger ethnic, financial, or demographic factors lead to conflict and environmental issues play a subsidiary role, if any.⁶

Yet there is another way of invoking the environment in conflict resolution that would address the concerns of the skeptics. Instead of trying to tease out environmental causality in conflicts and thereby accentuate the importance of conservation, one can also try and see how environmental issues can play a role in cooperation—regardless of whether they are part of the original conflict. For example, *The Economist's* contention that the Darfur crisis is about ethnic and political factors could still be addressed by an approach stating that desertification is a common threat to both sides, and this could be a means of bringing parties together.

Figure I.1 synthesizes the disparate strands of environmental security discourse by highlighting two key assumptions or causal links that could lead from environmental scarcity and abundance to conflict and cooperation. It is important to note that environmental quality is often differentiated from environmental quantity in resource economics. However, for our purposes, impaired environmental quality translates into default environmental scarcity of usable resources.

The environmental peace-building narrative suggests that mutual knowledge of resource depletion and a positive aversion to such depletion leads to cooperation (pathway A).⁷ The Environmental Change and Security Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center has been among the few research institutions that has pursued this line of inquiry. Conca and Dabelko (2002) published the first anthology on environmental peace-making under the auspices of the Wilson Center and have also garnered interest from the World Conservation Union and the United Nations Environment Programme in this approach.⁸ The main premise of environmental peace-making is that there are certain key attributes of environmental concerns that would lead acrimonious parties to consider them as a means of cooperation. Thus environmental issues could play an instrumental role even in cases where the conflict does not involve environmental issues. As water resource theorists have frequently

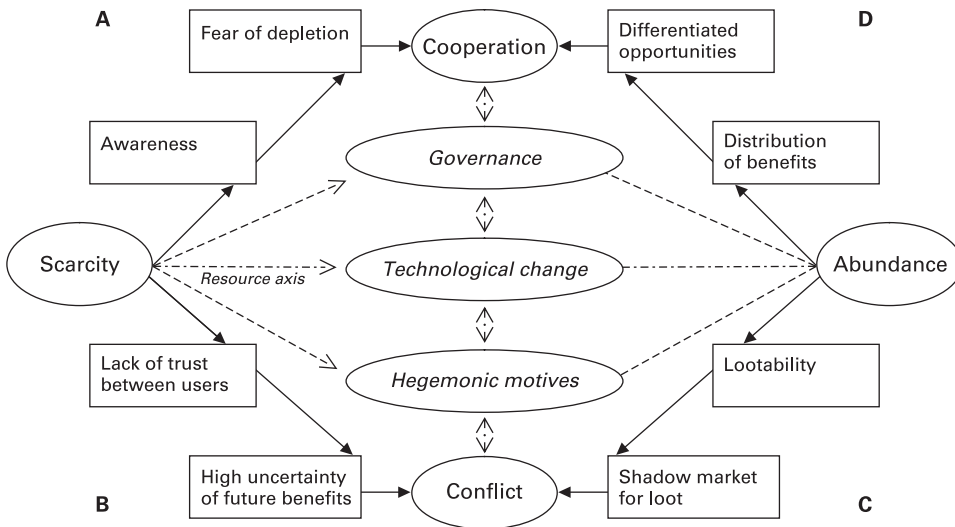


Figure I.1
Contending pathways of environmental security discourse

observed, this pathway often occurs despite perceived disputes of ownership or rights to water that may occur locally. Even adversaries who are aware of the dire impact of depletion are forced to be cooperative on water and avert any “water wars.”⁹

Within political science, environmental movements have rarely been considered a direct catalyst for cooperation. Scholars such as Litfin (1998) have focused instead on understanding shifting notions of sovereignty in environmental politics. There is also emerging literature on the growth of transnational networks of civil society in diluting state sovereignty for environmental ends.¹⁰ However, the power of such efforts in transforming the debate on environmental conservation to larger political reconciliation has eluded scholars. This may be partly because tangible institutional structures such as peace parks have so far not been empirically considered.

A reluctance to consider scholarly approaches to environmental peace-building may also be attributed to the dominance of resource scarcity and property rights discourse. By this account the classic tragedy of the commons scenario will occur when scarcity leads to conflict because of an absence of trust and relative uncertainty about accruing future benefits (pathway B). In economic terms this pathway implies a relatively high discounting rate for the future. Empirical work highlighted in a landmark volume on cooperative behavior by Oye (1984) and subsequent work by Axelrod (1985, 1997) shows that four factors are critically important in preventing

parties from moving along pathway B: long time horizons for agreements, regularity of stakes, reliability of information about other's actions, and quick feedback about changes in other's actions.

At another level, resource abundance may arguably lead to conflict if there is a breakdown of governance and the resource is lootable (pathway C). This is the causality that is most often presented by environmentalists and antiglobalization activists when referring to the extractive industries. However, as the two causal links show, it is only likely to be followed if the resource in question is highly lootable and a market is allowed to exist in this lootable resource. Initiatives such as the Kimberley Process for regulating the flow of diamond revenues, linked to financing of conflicts, have attempted to circumvent such causality.¹¹ Additionally this is an interesting area where the “small is beautiful” approach to industrial activity that many environmentalists embrace might not be applicable either. Small-scale artisanal mining operations, for example, might be more anarchic and harder to govern than large-scale mining operations run by multinationals. Hence success stories of mining activities that have not led to conflict and helped with development and cooperation in countries such as Botswana and Chile often involve large-scale operations as opposed to the alluvial diamond mining or gold-panning in regions such as Sierra Leone or Congo.

There are of course win-win prospects of abundant resource usage leading to cooperative outcomes under ideal governance regimes (pathway D). Political ecology¹² and related literature in environmental justice movements¹³ suggest that this outcome is most sustainable if power relations among players are balanced and there are enough opportunities to allow for constructive competition (that which spurs creativity but deters conflict). Good governance systems can certainly allow for such mechanisms to emerge more effectively. Increasingly such governance structures are emerging beyond usual confines of nation states and through the proliferation of deliberative global policy networks. While some of these networks operate through contentious political movements,¹⁴ the tension they exert often cause positive transformation of inertial institutions and ultimately lead to cooperative outcomes.

Environmental Endogeneity

Social scientists trying to study causal relationships of any kind must contend with the problem of “endogeneity”—the direction of causality. Hence environmental cooperation and the resolution of larger conflicts must be considered in this light

as well. Is environmental cooperation a result of conflict mitigation or is it leading to conflict reduction itself? The temporal analysis can often be so closely intertwined that the causality confounds researchers. Most politicians are quick to state that a minimal level of conflict mitigation is essential for environmental cooperation to occur. However, I would argue that the process is much more dialectical in nature. Environmental issues can be an important entry point for conversation between adversaries and can also provide a valuable exit strategy from intractable deadlocks because of their global appeal. However, they cannot be taken in strategic isolation and are usually not a sufficient condition for conflict resolution.

The key to a constructive approach in environmental peace-building is to dispense with linear causality and instead consider the conflict de-escalation process as a non-linear and complex series of feedback loops. Positive exchanges and trust-building gestures are a consequence of realizing common environmental threats. Often a focus on common environmental harms (or aversions) is psychologically more successful in leading to cooperative outcomes than focusing on common interests (which may lead to competitive behavior).

Peace Parks as Exemplars?

Now that we have the broader vision of environmental peace-building in mind, let us consider the ways in which this vision could be implemented. Conservation of environmental resources at various levels often requires the establishment of protected areas of land. Land conservation can be a contentious matter on its own because of property rights concerns and the historical misuse of such measures to depopulate areas or cause demographic shifts. The establishment of some national parks in the United States has been directly linked by historians to adverse policies toward Native Americans.¹⁵ Similarly conservation zones for wildlife in South Africa were also linked to misappropriation of land from indigenous Africans.¹⁶ Most recently there has been growing tension between large environmental organizations such as Conservation International, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Nature Conservancy and indigenous rights groups (particularly in South America) with accusations of corporate cooptation in the name of conservation.¹⁷ However, all of these critiques pertain to the management and implementation of conservation plans rather than the concept of conservation itself.

There can, of course, be varying degrees of conservation and heightened local involvement in decisions between areas to address these concerns but the broader

vision of bio-regionally based environmental protection remains constructive all the same. The notion of transboundary protected areas (TBPA) or transfrontier conservation areas (TFCA) was developed independent of their potential instrumental use in conflict mitigation. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) played an important role in moving this concept forward and established a task force within the World Commission on Protected Areas for this purpose. In 2001 the task force prepared a monograph that moved the idea one step forward with the suggestion that such TBPA be used for peace and cooperation—giving a renewed connotation to the term “peace park.”¹⁸ According to this publication, there were 166 existing transboundary protected area complexes worldwide comprising 666 individual conservation zones.

Previously the term “peace park” had been used to describe memorials such as the one in Nagasaki, Japan, as well as the establishment of such conservation zones for ecotourism and sustainable livelihoods. The establishment of the Peace Parks Foundation in South Africa by Dr. Anton Rupert in 1997 as a means of promoting regional cooperation (primarily in ecological-based tourism) gave greater impetus to the peace parks movement. Following the World Parks Congress in 2003, a Global Transboundary Protected Area Network was established by IUCN and based in South Africa, and a formal typology was also developed to define five different kinds of TBPA as follows:¹⁹

- *Two or more contiguous protected areas across a national boundary* This is what most people visualize when they hear about a transboundary protected area, but this is only one model. An example is Park “W,” which is shared by Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger and is being managed cooperatively for common conservation aims.
- *A cluster of protected areas and the intervening land* This is a more ambitious approach in that it attempts to balance strict protection with sustainable management in buffer zones and other parts of the landscape. The World Bank is currently developing such a project in the West Tien Shan Mountains of Central Asia; the project will focus first on four protected areas and later extend over parts of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and the Kyrgyz Republic.
- *A cluster of separated protected areas without intervening land* In practice, it is not always politically or practically possible to include intervening land, and some successful transboundary initiatives have involved protected areas that are geographically separated but share common ecology or problems, and usually have

some interchange between species. An example currently under development with support from IUCN is a transboundary initiative in the Great Lakes region of Africa involving Kibira National Park in Burundi, Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda, which all have common management aims but no control over intervening farmland.

- *A transborder area including proposed protected areas* Some transboundary initiatives have started with protected areas in one country or region, with the hope of extending protection across the border, but without any formal agreement. This might be a transitional stage, with the area later becoming, for example, two or more contiguous areas across a national boundary. The Pha Taem Transborder Initiative between Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, is developing a complex including four existing and one proposed protected areas in Thailand as well as proposed protected areas in Laos and Cambodia.

- *A protected area in one country aided by sympathetic land use over the border* Sometimes there will be no realistic expectation (or perhaps no need) for protected areas on both sides of a border, but a need for sympathetic management in one country to safeguard a protected area in its neighbor's country. An example is in the island of Borneo, where improved forest management on the Malaysian side of the border is helping to preserve populations of large animals in the adjoining Kayan Mentarang National Park in Indonesia.

Furthermore the Transboundary Protected Areas Network formally defined the term "peace park" as follows: "transboundary protected areas that are formally dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources, and to the promotion of peace and cooperation." It is important to note, however, that some scholars prefer a definition of peace parks that does not limit them to being in adjoining border zones but rather in any zone that has endured conflict. As Gerardo Budowski of the University of Peace has argued, the border definition might exclude island states and other remote areas where conflicts might still be fought.²⁰

Conservation and Conflict Resolution in the Condor Corridor

Using conservation measures as a direct means of resolving an armed conflict is the most consequential use of environmental peace-building; yet this approach is still in early stages of global acceptance. The first international peace park idea involv-

ing an armed conflict between neighboring countries was in the Cordillera del Condor region between Ecuador and Peru. This case deserves special recognition as it was the first formal effort in which conservation groups were actively involved in international conflict resolution, and the resultant peace treaty included explicit mention of conservation measures as part of the overall resolution of the conflict.

The territorial conflict between Ecuador and Peru goes back several decades. In 1995, following several failed attempts at conflict resolution, an armed conflict broke out that lasted for about three weeks. A peace agreement signed in February of 1995 committed both countries to the withdrawal of forces “far” from the disputed zone. This plan was overseen by four guarantor countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States. In compliance with the plan, both nations organized the withdrawal of 5,000 troops from the Cenepa Valley and supervised the demobilization of 140,000 troops on both sides.

With this much accomplished, conservation groups became very active in trying to lobby for a peace park. It should be noted that Conservation International was actively involved in biodiversity fieldwork even before the resolution of the conflict; it had worked closely with the military when fieldwork on documenting the biodiversity of the region was conducted in 1993. Therefore they were gradually able to influence more “hawkish” army officers about the collective importance of conservation and its instrumental use for conflict resolution.²¹

In November 1997, the two nations agreed in the Declaration of Brasilia to address four areas: (1) a commerce and navigation treaty, (2) a border integration agreement that would stimulate much needed development in both countries, (3) a mutual security agreement designed to prevent future conflicts, and (4) a completion of demarcation of land borders. By February 1998, they were able to agree on the first three, but that left the most important one, the demarcation of land borders. Tensions arose again in August 1998 as 300 Ecuadorian soldiers spread out along an 11 kilometer line, 3 kilometers inside Peru and 20 kilometers from the demilitarized zone. To prevent further escalation, and with pressure from conservation groups, the presidents of Ecuador and Peru both met with President Clinton on October 9, 1998, and asked that the guarantor nations make a proposal to mark the border for them. With US satellite mapping they were able to arrive at an agreeable border demarcation. As part of the peace treaty that was subsequently signed, both countries agreed that the area should be designated for conservation purposes while recognizing international borders.

Initially both countries declared national parks on their respective sides of the border. However, in 2000, Conservation International and the International Tropical Timbers Organization partnered with local conservation groups in Ecuador and Peru and with the Chimú indigenous communities (particularly the *Schuar* of Ecuador) to establish a bioregional management regime.²² This has resulted in the creation of the Condor–Kutuku conservation corridor in 2004, from which many other peace park proponents can draw some instructive insights. This first test case of comprehensive conflict resolution through conservation, involving a host of organizations, has greatly helped to move the peace park agenda forward in other cases.

Book Structure and Argument Development

The chapters in this book were selected to cover a broad range of issues, while also providing in-depth case analysis. This is among the first books to integratively examine the issue of peace parks and thus must cover a great deal of territory to provide an authoritative voice. The structure reflects the multiple audiences and diverse backgrounds of the contributors. Part I presents a historical overview as well as some methodological and theoretical perspectives on the study of peace parks. Our aim here is to look at economic, political, and social theories on which the concept of peace parks may be predicated and the potential pitfalls that might arise with application of these theories. While most of the chapters in this segment are not case-specific, three cases are presented to illustrate how various theories and tools of peace-building can be applied. Game theory has been used as a tool by economists and political scientists to explore ways in which behavioral responses to uncertainty can cause or limit conflict. Chapter 2 attempts to provide analytical rigor to understanding various scenarios under which peace parks may be established with reference to case examples discussed in the volume.

The Southern African case (chapters 4 and 5) is presented via the discussion of ecological resilience theory, as a landmark effort in postconflict reconstruction and development. This case is especially instructive in developing a broader theory of peace parks because of the simultaneous attention to conservation, economic development, and conflict resolution that the Southern African experience had to contend with. Furthermore these two chapters reveal that varying perceptions of geographic and demographic scale underlie the politics of peace park formation, and may also transcend borders *per se*. Hence the process of peace park establishment in this con-

text must be concurrent with broader efforts at bridging cognitive and ideological divides.

The Central American case presents an exemplification of how conservation efforts have complemented economic integration in a postconflict environment. This is often believed to be the most fertile ground for peace park formation. The emerging role of global governance structures such as international trade agreements is also placed in context by the discussion of this case. However, the challenges that peace park formation may encounter and the risk of cooptation are candidly discussed. Furthermore the formation of any conservation zone may be beset by micro-conflicts over process and resource distribution. This chapter also provides a revealing problematique that such efforts might present. Thus an effort at environmental peace-making (pathway A in figure I.1) must also contend with forces that might push the dynamics of interactions between players in the direction of pathway B, leading to conflict.

Part II presents a series of case studies of existing peace parks from around the world with two focal areas for analysis: bioregional management and economic development. Often both factors are important policy drivers for conservation efforts and hence deserve detailed case analysis. We start off with a more detailed analysis of the African experience to transition smoothly from part I to part II. An effort was made to select authors that have firsthand field experience of working in conservation zones. It is important to note here that we are largely presenting peace parks between states that have existing positive relations with each other as well as those that are in conflict with each other. While the latter category is of greater interest in terms of conflict resolution analysis, the former category can also provide some insights in terms of how cooperation can be sustained between amicable neighbors through environmental conservation.

The Selous–Niassa Wildlife Corridor exemplifies the role of foreign donors by providing mediation through conservation programs that develop better ties among African countries. This case also reveals the complex negotiating process between scientists and communities in establishing joint conservation zones from bottom-up through donor facilitation (GTZ in this case). The case also shows how such initiatives do not necessarily need formal treaties and protocols among nations to move forward. Indeed the initiatives can be formulated at grassroots and then get government acquiescence, as was the case between Tanzania and Mozambique.

The West African case of the “W” International Peace Park shows how colonial interest in conservation ironically led to a bioregional zone of interest, yet

the delineation of boundaries for nation-states at the time of independence did not follow this approach. Nevertheless, the vestiges of bioregionalism from the days of French control have trumped nationalism to allow for the establishment and formalization of the park. This case also shows how asymmetric geographic territory and control between countries such as Benin, Niger, and Burkina Faso does not necessarily have to hinder the establishment of a park. Mutual gains through collaboration to form such a park can be derived even from such asymmetric players.

Nevertheless, we do not neglect the central role of a dominant power in peace park formation as exemplified by the case of the Emerald Triangle conservation zone. Here Thailand is by far the economic and demographic power in the region and has been a key force in galvanizing change with the help of international organizations such as the International Tropical Timber Organization. This chapter also shows us the mechanics of forming contemporary conservation zones and how they can play a positive role in improving relations at a regional level, particularly where riparian corridors are involved (the Mekong in this case).

The Antarctic case (chapter 9) is discussed in this segment as a historical exemplar of cooperation on science. The lessons gleaned in this case are specially revealing of the legal and logistical challenges of cooperation in harsh environments. The Antarctic case also reveals the different kinds of collaboration between both friendly and hostile partners. The role of science as a means of peace-building is also addressed using the Antarctic treaty as an important milestone in global environmental governance.

Most peace parks, so far, have been only between countries that do not have any active conflicts. This could be used as evidence to support the argument that environmental issues are low politics as compared to the high politics of war and peace, or it could be a sign of the lack of strategic vision on the part of politicians and the disconnect between ecology and politics. This volume builds on the latter argument and provides guidance on how we may move from visions of “soft peace” (between friends) to “hard peace” (between enemies). However, all the cases presented illustrate the micro-conflicts of managing a transboundary zone that can arise in various contexts.

Apart from Africa, we also cover peace parks in Southeast Asia and the last chapter of part II provides an example of ongoing bioregional management in North America—one that is often presented as an exemplary standard to many other

nations. However, as the chapter shows, conservation measures and even economic development are now being trumped by yet another national imperative—border security and the “war on terror.”

Part III continues with the theme of regional security and discusses some cases of peace park proposals that have not been realized on this account. This is the more “visionary” segment of the volume, laying out specific proposals for future peace parks in detail. The cases discussed here are all proposals rather than actual parks, revealing the inchoate nature of this study area and the importance of prospective work in this regard.

We transition from the US–Canadian case from part II to the US–Mexican case in part III in which regional security issues are far more crucial. The chapter provides an interesting comparison between economic cooperation versus environmental cooperation. While Mexico and the United States have managed to agree on agreements such as NAFTA and encourage industrial corridors such as the Maquiladoras,²³ despite concomitant security concerns, proposals for a peace park have come under far greater scrutiny and resistance. This case appears ripe for a public–private partnership approach to peace park formation as exemplified by initiatives such as the NAFTA Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

Postconflict reconstruction can also provide an important opportunity for peace park formation as exemplified by the chapter on Liberia. Managing the chaotic times of such transitions can be daunting such as the “invasion” of 4,000 miners into Sapo National Park, many of whom were ex-combatants. However, bringing many of these factions within the conservation community while also providing livelihoods to them is indeed possible. Instead of fueling conflict, appropriate management of the situation by the park staff mitigated potential civil strife. The formation of a Civilian Conservation Corps in this context is particularly instructive and could be emulated by other peace park aspirants.

The case of the Kuril Islands shows us how the potential resolution of a territorial dispute independent of a peace park arrangement can be environmentally deleterious. The author argues that regardless of whether the islands fall under Russian or Japanese control, the environmental management regime that best manages the ecosystem efficiently would need an arrangement similar to a peace park. Furthermore the case shows how conventional notions of rational behavior on the part of states that have much to gain from bargaining (resource-rich and cash-poor Russia versus resource-poor and cash-rich Japan) might not always materialize. Hence the

proposal that Japan buy the islands from Russia (similar to Alaska) has been rejected. In such cases with irrational and intangible notions such as national pride and prestige are at work, peace parks might also provide a respectable exit strategy.

The cases of active conflict that are discussed in this section, such as between India and Pakistan, the Koreas, and Central Asia and the Middle-East, are all conducive to using peace parks as an exit strategy from conflict entrapment. Three acute international military conflicts that are now being considered as possible peace park contenders are discussed in the last chapters of the volume. While this vision may seem Utopian to some, the ongoing efforts to move these conservation zones forward from multiple channels is refreshing and reassuring to even the most pessimistic observers. For example, the formation of a peace park in the Mesopotamian marshlands between Iraq and Iran has been welcomed by all sides as a means of bringing Shi'as and Sunnis together and healing the wounds of the three wars fought in this area within the last two decades.

The chapters pertaining to these conflicts have been authored by conservation practitioners, military personnel, and strategic analysts, who are intimately familiar with the regional geographies as well as the political climate of each case. The aim here is to go beyond theory and seek means of implementation. What is striking about these conflicts is that the rationale for their perpetuation is termed more broadly as security. However, a redefinition of security to include environmental integrity may be in order. These chapters do not suggest that environmental harm will necessarily lead to conflict but rather that ecological deterioration and an inability to study it, such as the loss of water from Karakoram glacial meltwater, can reduce human development and hence make countries more vulnerable to civil strife. These cases also show the various ways by which peace park movements have arisen at an international level.

In the Korean case the demilitarized zone (DMZ) has ironically become a default sanctuary for wildlife, since there is no development activity occurring in the area. Several conservation biologists were thus attracted to using this high biodiversity characteristic of the region to develop a conflict resolution strategy between the two countries. An organization called the DMZ Forum, established in the United States in 1998, has been lobbying for this proposal to be included as part of the six-party talks. Media magnate Ted Turner has been instrumental in popularizing this effort, most recently in his visit to both North and South Korea in August 2005. In his conversations with leaders in the North, he told the media that the North Koreans were

receptive to the idea but felt “preoccupied with the six-party talks”—an indication that the initiative is still perceived external to the core negotiations within the talks.²⁴ While this may give credence to realist assertions that environmental issues will likely be a consequence rather than a constituent of peace agreements, they certainly provide a means of trust-building and help to transform the collective psyche of conflicting parties.²⁵

Conservation and Conflict Resolution: How the Twain Shall Meet?

As we endeavor to use collective environmental protection as a means of conflict resolution, let us not forget that conservation efforts are often causes of tremendous conflict. Environmental organizations and their relationship to communities have recently come under attack from both sides of the political spectrum. Since many peace park projects are often being promoted by such organizations,²⁶ the legitimacy of these groups is essential for meeting the goals of conflict resolution. Such conservation groups are thus often faced with the dilemma of whether or not to give primacy to their ecologically determined conservation objectives.

On the one hand, pragmatic eco-revisionists have “attributed so many of environmentalists’ failures to the incuriosity about the human (read: social) sciences, like social psychology and their scientific fetishization of the ‘natural’ sciences.”²⁷ At the same time some anthropologists have taken this criticism a step further by challenging conservationists about their detachment from indigenous people in their pursuit of conservation. In a much publicized article for *Worldwatch* magazine, anthropologist Mac Chapin recently critiqued the work of the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, and Conservation International by asserting that “as corporate and government money flow into the three big international organizations that dominate the world’s conservation agenda, their programs have been marked by growing conflict of interest—and by a disturbing neglect of the indigenous people whose land they are in business to protect.”²⁸

Anthropologists and conservation scientists have encountered this debate before in various guises. An article in *Conservation Biology* by Schwartzman et al. (2000) that gave primacy to indigenous conservation practices had sparked a similar heated debate with responses from conservationists such as Redford and Sanderson (2000). Interestingly enough the disagreement here was between staff scientists at major environmental groups—some of whom were more unequivocally sympathetic to

indigenous concerns over conservation priorities. Such a divergence highlights the “varieties of environmentalism” that Guha and Martinez Allier (1997) have alluded to in their work on social movements.

Yet environmentalists are collectively also accused all too often by those on the Right of the political spectrum for being too positional and uncompromising in their approach to problem-solving and not interacting adequately with free-market interests. Even Conservation International, which is often accused by more traditional environmentalists of accepting large contracts and grants from oil companies and development donors,²⁹ is just as much criticized by industrialists for not willing to compromise enough on extractive projects in ecologically sensitive places such as Madagascar.³⁰

Environmental and human rights groups are thus often lumped together by critics of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as Sebastian Mallaby (2004) or Clifford Bob (2005) who decry their unwillingness to compromise on urgent development projects. While this “damned if you do and damned if you don’t” situation may lead many groups to remain sanguine, the conflicts that may be generated by conservation efforts clearly need to be addressed. The formation of peace parks must be considered part of this process of internal reconciliation as well as the extant motive of instrumental conflict resolution if it is to be sustainable.

As an environmental planner who must constantly contend with prospective and prescriptive matters, it was especially rewarding to bring together chapters that provide strategic guidance for conflict areas and show how such layers of conflict are reconciled. The proposed peace parks are presented with a measure of modest realism, while challenging realist notions of environmental issues are being relegated to “low politics.” The chapters provide enough detail and instructive insights to make them plausible and appropriate for a policy audience.

When dealing with matters as emotive as environmental protection and conflict mitigation, one can’t help but feel a sense of urgency and advocacy for a phenomenon that holds promise in harmonizing these two worthy goals. This book has been written at a time of transition when peace parks are being recognized as a phenomenon by some while being dismissed as a side story by others. However, there is little disagreement that if managed and implemented effectively, conservation with community consent and conflict resolution are goals worth pursuing. My aim in this volume is not to be a green or blue activist but rather to present a story of measured hope with analytical persuasion.

Notes

1. "The woman who planted trees." *The Economist*, October 14, 2004.
2. Gleditch and Urdal (2004).
3. Global Transboundary Protected Areas network Web site <<http://www.tbpa.net>>.
4. Spence (2000).
5. The conventional environmental security argument presented by Homer-Dixon (1999). Instead we are positing a more nuanced human security argument offered by scholars such as Najam (2003).
6. Deudney and Matthew (1999).
7. Ali (2003) and Conca and Dabelko (2003).
9. Wolf (2002).
10. Keck and Sikkink (1998).
11. The Kimberley process was initiated by Global Witness (based in London) and Partnership Africa Canada as a means of certifying diamonds from nonconflict zones. The process has been successful in convincing governments to sign on to a stringent system of certification and compliance assurance for raw stones along the supply chain to the point at which they are polished for jewelry. For more information refer to <www.globalwitness.org>.
12. Peluso and Watts (2003).
13. Suliman (1997).
14. Tarrow (2005).
15. Spence (2000).
16. Beinart and Coates (1995).
17. Chapin (2004). See also the response by various environmental groups and readers to this article in the February 2005 issue of *Worldwatch*.
18. Sandwith et al. (2001).
19. Typology from the Global Transboundary Protected Areas network <<http://www.tbpa.net>>.
20. Budowsky (2003).
21. Conservation International published a detailed biological assessment as part of its Rapid Assessment program in 1997, and acknowledged the help of the Ecuadorian army for logistical support.
22. These indigenous communities have erroneously been called "Jivaros" by early European settlers. The process of engagement with the Schuar was managed by the Natura Foundation of Ecuador. See Ponce (2004).
23. Kamel and Hoffman (2002).
24. Ted Turner's interview with *Korea Times*, August 17, 2005.
25. Van Vugt (2000).

26. For example, the most vocal support of transboundary conservation has come from groups such as the World Wildlife Fund and Conservation International, which recently published a pictorial volume on transboundary conservation; see Mittermeier et al. (2005).

27. Schellenberger and Nordhaus (2005).

28. Chapin (2004). Sociologist Steven Brechin seconded Chapin's criticism in a subsequent comment to *Worldwatch* by stating "close relationships with wealth extractive industries like oil and gas may prevent conservation organizations from critiquing or challenging their corporate donors" (Brechin 2005). The magazine gave an opportunity for the leaders of these organizations, as well as the Ford Foundation, to respond and they collectively showed a measured exasperation with this criticism.

29. Conservation International has also established a Center for Environmental Leadership in Business, which is funded by numerous corporations.

30. Personal communication with Conservation International staff, Antananarivo, Madagascar, November 2005.