
Gleanings From A Neighboring Journal...

Readers of *The Social Contract* may be interested in the matter of immigration related to environment as it is explored in the Spring 1991 issue of *Population and Environment*. Edited by Virginia D. Abernethy, Professor of Psychiatry (Anthropology) at Vanderbilt Medical School, the journal features analyses that relate to future US and global developments in the areas of food supply, energy and population. The current issue of *Population and Environment* includes an analysis of energy use by John P. Holdren, Acting Chair of the Energy and Resources Group, University of California (Berkeley).

Dr. Holdren finds that 93 percent of the increase in the United States' use of energy since 1970 can be attributed to our *population growth*. Energy use per person in the US grew very little between 1970 and 1990, partly because of the slow growth in GNP per capita during much of this period, and partly because of increases in energy efficiency (defined as the ratio of GNP to energy use). If the US population had been constant between 1970 and 1990, national energy use in this period would have grown only seven-tenths of a percent rather than the 24 percent energy growth actually experienced.

Dr. Holdren states, further that "...if the United States still had the population with which it fought World War II--135 million people--the 1990 level of per capita energy use for this country could be met from its 1990 array of energy sources *minus* all the imported oil and all the coal."

The geopolitical and environmental implications of Dr. Holdren's conclusion are staggering, according to Dr. Abernethy. For example, the potential Iraqi monopoly of Persian Gulf oil would have been far less threatening to our national interest if we were less dependent on imports. In addition, since imported oil accounts for 55 percent of our current trade deficit, this drain on the economy could be largely avoided. Moreover, lower use of fossil fuels could mean that the \$25 billion-a-year costs associated with the 1990 Clean Air Act would have been avoided entirely.

The Spring 1991 issue of *Population and Environment* also contains studies of US and world food prospects, physical limits on the economy, mechanisms that maximize environment-friendly decisions in the business sector, and other studies.

Population and Environment is published by Human Sciences/Plenum Press, 233 Spring St., New York NY 10013-1578. Each issue includes original analyses of carrying capacity limits in the US and other countries. Carrying capacity refers to the number of individuals who can be supported without degrading the physical, cultural and social environment, i.e. without reducing the ability of the environment to sustain the desired quality of life over the long term.