

# World's woes mean focus may shift, group says

By DAVID BRISCOE  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After decades of running arms races and plotting star wars, world leaders soon will be forced back to the basics of feeding their people, an environmental group says.

"Food security may well replace military security as the major preoccupation of governments in the years ahead," says researcher Lester Brown, one author of the 1995 "State of the World," published by the Worldwatch Institute.

Overharvested fisheries, overcut forests, overpumped water reserves and overpopulated cities make it a woeful world, according to Worldwatch's annual assessment of the planet.

The report cites a 99 percent reduction of the oyster harvest in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, similar reductions in the Caspian Sea sturgeon harvest and depletion of fish species in the Black Sea.

"Nature's limits are beginning to impose themselves on the human agenda," Brown said in the report.

At a press conference introducing it, Brown said he remains optimistic, despite the consistently gloomy conclusions he has reached through 12 years of tracking the world envi-

ronment. "We just have to hope that things will change."

The report backs the idea of a worldwide tax on currency exchanges to fund global environmental protection and insists on a greater U.N. effort.

Hilary French, a Worldwatch researcher, said a tax of only 0.003 percent on world currency exchanges could raise \$8.4 billion for programs to reverse what she called a trend of "environmental degrada-

tion, economic decline and social disintegration."

Industries that depend on threatened resources have a different view.

Lee Weddig, spokesman for the National Fisheries Institute, said Worldwatch's conclusion that the

oceans are now yielding their limit of fish is "fairly accurate." But that may not be all bad, Weddig said.

"We've hopefully achieved an equilibrium," he said, adding that fish stocks shift.

Luke Popovich of the American Forest and Paper Association said worldwide forestry depletion is a problem but may be exaggerated. It is not a problem in North America, he said. "We cut down trees in order to protect forestry. They cut down trees in order to clear the land for other uses," he said, referring to practices elsewhere.

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1995 "State of the World"

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