**Tropical Chic**
Swire, Peter S
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pg. 18

And of course, we must deepen our contact with those dissidents or independent groups that are pressing for human rights and democratization at great personal peril and sacrifice. We must lend them whatever support and encouragement and protection we can.

It would be naive to embrace these challenges without remembering that totalitarianism still has some life left in it. In China, in the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe, liberalization could well be reversed. This bloody century should have taught us not to underestimate the efficacy of raw, pitiless force. But militating against such force is pressure from below, because the totalitarian project has failed, and pressure from above, because the socialist project has failed.

The connection between the two is something that most Communist rulers would rather ignore. They would love to introduce capitalism, or a measure of it, without introducing freedom. But the ideological obstacles to doing so are profound. For 70-odd years all the methods of unfreedom—democratic centralism, the party dictatorship, the secret police, the purges, to name a few—have been justified in the name of socialism. That is, the political system was defended not for its intrinsic justice (who could make such a case?) but for its ability to preserve this most beneficent of economic systems. Now this economic system is being at least partially abandoned. So what justification remains for maintaining the political system? Our goal in the coming years should be to keep this question on Communist minds and to nudge them toward the right answer.

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

Joshua Muravchik is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Saving the rain forests from their saviors.

# TROPICAL CHIC

## BY PETER P. SWIRE

IN CASE anyone is wondering where Peter Max has been since the early 1970s, the answer is "in creative retreat," according to a spokesman. But now Max is back, and he's determined to use his art "to show his concern for planetary issues," especially the preservation of tropical forests. For instance, Max has produced a "quality line of sportswear" that features shirts saying "Save the Rainforest" and "Hug a Tree." The proceeds will be donated to Peter Max's bank account. But don't get the wrong idea; Max says he plans to hold a $1 million auction of his work, and *that* money will go to the Rainforest Action Network, a San Francisco-based organization devoted to linking rain forest activists.

That's a lot of linking. Max is but one of many cultural heroes who have lined up for the hottest political cause since world hunger. The British rock star Sting has done a rain forest benefit concert at the Kennedy Center. And the Grateful Dead, though long known for consciousness raising, had never raised it for any specific political cause until last September's benefit concert for tropical forests at Madison Square Garden. The audience received an extensive information kit, including ready-to-send postcards to officials at the World Bank, at the United Nations Environment Program, in Congress, and in Brazil. Also: quotes from band members, including drummer Mickey Hart's meditation on "a profound understanding of man's biochemical relationship with nature." Suzanne Vega and Roger Hornsby sang at the concert, and Kermit the Frog was featured in a "Save the Rainforests" film.

Tropical chic is particularly evident in Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian is featuring a major exhibition on rain forests, the National Zoo is raising money to start its own tropical forest, and environmental groups are staffing up on lobbyists and grass-roots activists in the area. Among politicians, tropical forest preservation has moved up the charts to rate mention not only by members of Congress, but by former presidents Ford and Carter and President-elect Bush.

There is one problem with all of this. Backers of the rain forest movement are mostly in the United States or other modern industrialized countries. The rain forests are not. They're mostly in developing countries, which face other, more pressing issues, such as feeding their growing populations. So two questions must be answered. First, why is it our business to tell Brazil, Indonesia, and other forested countries what to do with their forests? And, assuming there's an answer to that question, how can we in developed countries convince the forested countries they should listen to us?

The standard answer to the first question is that the

Peter P. Swire is an attorney at Powell, Goldstein, Frazer & Murphy in Washington, D.C.



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whole world is affected by tropical deforestation, so everyone should have a say in what happens to the forests. The best-known spillover effect is global warming, caused by emission of carbon dioxide and other gases. Deforestation (often to create farmland or ranch land, or just for the lumber) contributes to the greenhouse effect in two ways: burning the trees releases carbon dioxide into the environment, and cutting them reduces the number of trees on hand to convert carbon dioxide back into oxygen. The effect of deforestation on warming is substantial, perhaps one-third of the effect of all burning of fossil fuels. Estimates of the rate of tropical deforestation vary from 27,000 square miles per year (a bit larger than West Virginia) to 77,000 square miles (Nebraska). At the latter rate, the tropical forests, now covering about seven percent of the world's land surface, will disappear by 2050. Recent satellite photos that show thousands of fires in Brazil, ruining 31,000 square miles of virgin forest per year, suggest the higher number may be more accurate.

UNFORTUNATELY, the problem of global warming can seem abstract and distant to political leaders struggling with crises of debt, hunger, population growth, and urbanization. More to the point, even if, say, Brazil does recognize the gravity of the greenhouse effect, why should it sacrifice for the entire world? After all, northern countries don't have a long history of such sacrifice. They got rich by cutting their forests and exploiting their minerals. In fact, even since the environmental toll of economic development became evident, northern nations haven't posted a strong record. The United States, for example, has been blocked by political bickering from taking strong action on acid rain. So Third World leaders can justifiably tell us to clean up our own back yard before telling them to clean up theirs. In particular, they can demand that we cut our own, sky-high consumption of fossil fuels, which contributes substantially to global warming.

In short, demanding unilateral action from the Southern Hemisphere in the name of the greenhouse effect is unlikely to do any good. And it may backfire, since U.S. pressure is easily seen as Yankee imperialism.

To be sure, in trying to drive home the urgency of saving the rain forests, we can always note, correctly, that the greenhouse effect is not the only problem. Consider the loss of "biodiversity." Tropical forests hold over half of all terrestrial species, and perhaps over 90 percent. Deforestation, at current rates, will lead to a greater extinction of species than accompanied the demise of the dinosaurs. It is hard to reduce this issue to costs and benefits. Ecologists warn about the large and unpredictable effects that would follow such a mass extinction. Scientists worry about losing the world's most complex ecosystems before most species there are even catalogued, much less studied. Genetic engineers will feel cheated by the loss of their chief feedstock, new genes, just when biotechnology is opening the tropics' genetic diversity to myriad new uses. And many people find human-caused extinctions wrong for moral and aesthetic reasons (which, of all the concerns about biodiversity, turn out to carry the greatest political clout).

Still, with biodiversity as with the greenhouse effect, the question arises: Why should southern nations especially care? Clearing the forests brings them short-term economic gains—at least to their cattle ranchers and governing elites—even if it impedes sustainable economic development. But the long-term, more abstract benefits of saving the forests accrue mostly to the north. That's where the bioengineering and pharmaceutical companies are, and that's where most of the biologists and taxonomists and National Geographic photographers are.

Given that moral suasion is largely unconvincing and ineffective, how are we to get tropical nations to do what we want? Some have proposed boycotting imports of beef raised on burned-out forest plantations, or wood logged in non-sustainable ways. This approach may sometimes work, but it also risks trade retaliation, and it suggests a moral high ground that we may not, in fact, have. Suppose the tropical countries, or other countries, started boycotting U.S. products whose manufacture entailed the burning of fossil fuels (i.e., most U.S. products). How would we feel about that?

THE FACT IS that if the world wants southern nations to stop burning their tropical forests, the world is going to have to pay them to do it. It can either pay them in the same currency, by forging some international environmental agreement under which all nations cut their various contributions to the greenhouse effect, or it can pay them with money. For now, the latter is simpler. And the mechanism for it already exists. The World Bank and the other multilateral development banks (MDBs), such as the Inter-American Development Bank, make more than $24 billion in loans and credits available each year to developing countries. These agencies have been criticized for funding projects that cause great environmental harm. Because the United States and other developed nations provide the funding, they can require the MDBs to pick projects that preserve the forests. There are signs that this is starting already.

The idea of subsidizing the preservation of rain forests has been picked up by some environmental groups in the form of "debt-for-nature swaps" that have offered an attractive deal to debtor nations including Costa Rica, Bolivia, and Ecuador. In these swaps, environmental groups buy up debt in hard-to-get dollars. In return, the debtor government agrees to make conservation investments in the local currency. The symbolism is apt: rather than "borrowing" short-term from their natural resources, the nations reduce debt by preserving those resources. The swaps expand parklands, sponsor environmental education and research, and provide funding for maintaining parklands that otherwise often exist only in theory.

But debt-for-nature swaps remain tiny compared with the economics of the overall debt problem. A far greater help to the rain forests would be an aggressive debt reduction plan that would directly ease the pressure on developing countries to exploit their resources so rapidly. Tropical



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forest preservation can become a major issue in LDC debt negotiations, joining traditional concerns about promoting democracy and maintaining economic stability. Environmental groups are pushing for such a solution, and Latin American governments are starting to see how effective the greenhouse effect could be in getting them more debt relief than they receive under the Baker Plan's renewed loans.

As the debt-for-nature swaps illustrate, environmental groups have done a fair amount of hard-nosed thinking about saving the rain forests. And the statements attributed to their celebrity patrons, for the most part, have been strikingly well informed. But it's important to remember that conscience alone won't save a single tree, and the forested countries are unlikely to respond favorably to stirring moral pleas or self-righteous demands.

Resisting faddish rain forest proposals is a particular challenge for Congress. A bill introduced by Representative Claudine Schneider of Rhode Island would require a forest conservation plan from every tropical country (a significant bureaucratic burden for some countries), and *all* activities supported by direct U.S. foreign assistance would then have to be consistent with the plan. Saving the rain forests is important, but not important enough to trump all other goals of foreign aid.

Among the better congressional proposals: part of the Agency for International Development (AID) appropriation has been earmarked for rain forest projects, with good results. The next step is to increase the overall level of aid and use it as leverage in the rain forest issues.

And what will professed environmentalist George Bush do? He has promised to convene a global conference on the environment in 1989, and to place tropical forest preservation high on the agenda. Sounds fine. But remember: presidents go to Moscow to duck tough domestic issues. Similarly, perhaps Bush will want to go to the international conference rather than tackling the tough, expensive, and controversial environmental issues that await him at home.

Be that as it may, the Bush administration can help save tropical forests through AID and the MDBs, by its support on debt-for-nature issues, and by starting to see forest preservation as integrally tied to the debt crisis. Bush can also use his bully pulpit to educate Americans about environmental issues. Perhaps a joint appearance with the Grateful Dead at the Kennedy Center?

The air war on drugs.

# COKE DUSTERS

## BY MICHAEL MASSING

IF THE State Department has its way, the next round in the war on drugs will take place in the skies over Peru. Frustrated by its inability to halt the flow of cocaine into the United States, the department plans to use specially equipped planes to dump herbicides on Peruvian coca fields, then repeat the strategy in other coca-producing countries. If all goes well, officials say, they could cut South American coca production in half by 1993.

There's a hitch, though. Environmentalists are in an uproar over the toxic effects of Spike, the herbicide in question, and Eli Lilly and Co., the manufacturer, has responded by refusing to sell it to the State Department. Nonetheless, the department is forging ahead with plans to mount one of the most expensive chemical operations abroad since the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Environmental concerns, which have dominated news coverage of the Spike controversy, are only part of the problem. South American peasants consider herbicides a threat to their agricultural livelihood, and the use of Spike would enable Marxist guerrillas to expand their political base. Latin American governments rightly fear the long-term economic and political repercussions. This is not to mention the unfortunates who would have to pilot the low-flying airplanes, and thus risk being shot at with everything from bullets to shoulder-launched Stinger missiles.

The Spike program is yet another example of the costly subordination of our foreign policy to a probably futile supply-side approach to the drug problem. The question isn't just why the State Department wants to use an indiscriminately toxic chemical like Spike to wipe out coca plants, but why the State Department is so involved in the drug problem—a fundamentally domestic problem, after all—in the first place.

The target of the State Department's wrath is a hardy three- to four-foot-high plant with bright green leaves and dark red berries. For centuries coca was cultivated in tranquillity by the indigenous peoples of Peru and Bolivia, who chewed its leaves to gain warmth and suppress appetite. But when demand for cocaine soared in the late 1970s, Colombian traffickers flocked to Peru and Bolivia, encourag-

Michael Massing, a New York writer, is a 1989 Alicia Patterson fellow.



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