

AMERICANS' ROLE IN THE WORLD: The Environment & Health Issues

Points to think about from the National Issues Forum video that you will view at the salon.

Preserving Our Global Future: Facing the Hard Tasks

The most pressing problems facing us today are long-term threats that acknowledge no borders. Problems such as dwindling water supplies, AIDS, and environmental pollution are serious worldwide threats that affect, or will soon affect, all of us. We cannot deal with these problems along. We must commit ourselves to working cooperatively through international organizations and with other nations around the world to ensure a safe and rewarding future for all of us.

Positions in favor

Take the lead in cooperative multinational efforts to deal with global problems such as AIDS and environmental pollution.

Accept and support the goals of international agreements, even if they are less than wholly satisfying.

Share medical knowledge and medicines with other countries to help fight AIDS.

Tradeoffs

Americans may have to make sacrifices (such as not driving gas-guzzling SUVs) if we commit ourselves to international coalitions dedicated to solving worldwide problems.

This approach means that we will need to reconsider the refusal of our government to abide by international agreements, such as the Kyoto accords or the elimination of land mines.

What critics say

Spending billions of dollars trying to solve the world's ills will deprive us of funds needed for domestic needs.

We don't need international agreements to get results. For example, Americans are already working in various ways to improve the environment.

Many of the alarming forecasts about impending global catastrophes are contested opinions. No one can know what the future holds.