

Lecturer sees global concerns faring well under grass-roots organizations' influence

By John Fulwider
Staff Reporter

The decreasing importance of national governments bodes well for the global environment, a lecturer said Thursday.

Jessica Tuchman Mathews spoke at the Lied Center for the Performing Arts as the fifth and last speaker in the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues lecture series.

Mathews, a columnist for The Washington Post, addressed the intersection of economics, trade and the environment, and the political ramifications.

Mathews said the Cold War's threat of nuclear annihilation blocked out other concerns, such as the earth's environment.

But the present lack of global conflict has freed the voices of grass-roots organizations. Following the Cold War, Mathews said, the importance and influence of non-governmental organizations — NGOs — has steadily increased, while that of national governments has decreased.

"The shift is revolutionary both in its scope and its consequences," she said.

Grass-roots organizations have focused attention on global environmental issues. Mathews said the top global environmental concerns were ozone loss, deforestation, greenhouse warming and loss of biodiversity through species extinction. Top regional concerns were water pollution and shortages and air pollution, she said.

A major factor in the shift from governmental to non-governmental influence on global issues has



Travis Heying/DN

Jessica Tuchman Mathews, a columnist for the Washington Post, talks with Chancellor Graham Spanier before beginning her E.N. Thompson Lecture Thursday at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. Mathews' lecture, titled "Trade, Development, and the Environment," was the last E.N. Thompson lecture of the season.

been the telecommunications and media revolution, she said.

NGO's were strengthened at the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, she said. The use of electronic-mail bulletins on the summit's progress, she said, allowed many people to influence their government's actions at the summit.

With the government losing its ability to analyze and control communications, she said, new voices

are finding outlets and achieving their goals.

"The media are potent destroyers of government control," she said.

Mathews said the top global priority now was agreeing on whether trade measures could be used to protect the global environment.

Contrary to some opinions, she said, international trade agreements, which include environmental regulation, do not stifle economic de-

velopment. She said economic gains from trade liberalization balanced out losses from environmental protection laws.

She said some environmentalists who believed the only way to protect the environment was to restrict economic growth were wrong.

Mathews said a new world order was emerging.

"Albeit a disorderly one," she said.

Senators overhaul legal aid

By Matthew Waite
Senior Reporter

With 14 days left in the Nebraska legislative session, senators have yet to debate the crime bill, welfare reform and the budget bill on the floor.

Instead, lawmakers spent nearly 3 1/2 hours Thursday amending and debating a bill that would provide state funds for a legal defense team for indigent criminals, but fell short of taking substantive action.

Debate on LB646, sponsored by Sen. Doug Kristensen of Minden, passed two amendments overhauling the bill, but a large amount of debate provided senators with a vehicle for several broader arguments.

Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha said he was going to use the bill as a vehicle to repeal the death penalty. Kristensen charged Sen. John Lindsay of Omaha with fanning rural/urban flames. Sen. Chris Beutler of Lincoln said he was losing faith in bills aiding rural counties without reforming inefficient county governments.

Throughout the afternoon, however, Kristensen kept bringing senators back to the original intent of the bill — providing a state-funded legal defense team for indigent criminals.

After an amendment sponsored by Kristensen passed 28-0, the bill allocated general fund money for a 3- to 4-person defense staff for indigent criminals without requiring counties to contribute to the fund.

Sen. Floyd Vrtiska of Table Rock said there was a need for the legal defense provision. Richardson county, which is in Vrtiska's district, found itself in financial trouble recently when it incurred more than \$200,000 in legal defense costs for a high-profile murder case.

"It's a crisis issue as far as I'm concerned," he said.

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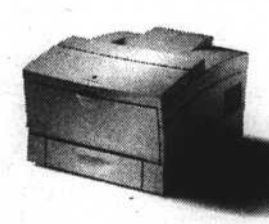
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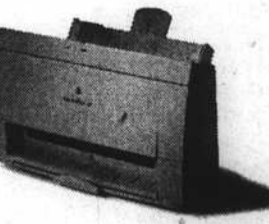
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