

## Impact of climate Security: Role of Military in South Asia

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### Introduction

Climate security refers to the impacts of climate change on human security, including physical, economic, and social dimensions. It encompasses the negative consequences of climate change on food security, water availability, human health, and displacement, among others. Climate security is becoming an increasingly important issue in the 21st century as the impacts of climate change are being felt worldwide, exacerbating existing security challenges and creating new ones.

The significance of climate security lies in its potential to disrupt global stability, undermine human security, and challenge international peace and security. Climate change impacts vulnerable communities, leading to social and political instability and exacerbating conflict. This highlights the need for an integrated approach to addressing the security implications of climate change, incorporating both the military and civilian sectors.

The current global scenario on climate security is one of growing concern. Climate change is progressing faster than anticipated, and its impacts are more severe than previously predicted. Rising temperatures, sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and changing precipitation patterns contribute to a growing sense of urgency to address the security implications of climate change. In response, the international community has been working to increase its understanding of the

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security dimensions of climate change and to develop strategies to address the challenges it presents.



### **Climate-related security challenges in South Asia<sup>2</sup>**

Climate change is exacerbating existing security challenges in South Asia, including water scarcity, food security, and migration. These challenges are interrelated and have far-reaching implications for human security and regional stability.

- **Water scarcity:** Climate change is exacerbating water scarcity in South Asia, affecting agriculture and food security, human health, and leading to increased tensions over shared

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<sup>2</sup> Simpson, Adam, and Mattijs Smits. 2018. "Transitions to Energy and Climate Security in Southeast Asia? Civil Society Encounters with Illiberalism in Thailand and Myanmar." *Society & Natural Resources* 31 (5): 580–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2017.1413720>.

water resources. As water becomes scarcer, the competition for access to it becomes more intense, leading to social and political instability and exacerbating existing conflicts.

- **Food insecurity:** Climate change affects agricultural production in South Asia, reducing food supplies and increasing food prices. This is having a particularly significant impact on vulnerable communities that are already food insecure, leading to increased malnutrition and hunger. The impact of climate change on food security is also contributing to migration as people move in search of food and other resources.
- **Migration:** Climate change is causing displacement and migration in South Asia, as rising sea levels and increased frequency of extreme weather events lead to the loss of homes and livelihoods. This is exacerbating existing security challenges and contributing to social and political instability. The movement of large numbers of people can lead to increased tensions and conflict, particularly over access to resources such as land and water.

These climate-related security challenges in South Asia are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, contributing to a growing sense of insecurity in the region. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that recognizes the interplay between climate change and existing security challenges.

The security challenges related to water scarcity, food security, and migration in South Asia are significant and are being exacerbated by climate change.



### The role of the military in addressing climate security<sup>3</sup>

The role of the military in addressing climate security is evolving as the impacts of climate change become more severe and far-reaching. The military has a unique role to play in addressing the security implications of climate change, particularly in disaster response, humanitarian assistance, and environmental protection.

- **Disaster response:** The military is often called upon to respond to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods. As the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events increase as a result of climate change, the role of the military in disaster response is likely to become even more important. The military has the logistical capability, expertise, and resources to provide rapid and effective assistance in the aftermath of natural disasters.
- **Humanitarian assistance:** Climate change is exacerbating existing humanitarian challenges in South Asia, including displacement and migration, food insecurity, and water scarcity. The military can play a critical role in providing humanitarian assistance to those

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<sup>3</sup> Tariq, Waseem, A Ghazi, A Muniruzzaman, and Singh. 2016. "Climate Change & Security in South Asia Cooperating for Peace." <https://climate-diplomacy.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/GMACCC%20Paper2%20-%20CCASSA%20Final%20version%20for%20publication.pdf>.

affected by climate change, particularly in situations where access is difficult or limited. The military has the capability to provide secure and efficient transportation, as well as medical and other essential services, to those in need.

- **Environmental protection:** The military can play a role in environmental protection by reducing its own carbon footprint, promoting sustainable practices, and supporting efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change. This can include reducing greenhouse gas emissions from military operations and installations, promoting renewable energy, and supporting efforts to conserve biodiversity and protect natural resources.

The role of the military in addressing climate security is evolving as the impacts of climate change become more severe and far-reaching. The military has a unique role to play in disaster response, humanitarian assistance, and environmental protection and can contribute to addressing the security implications of climate change in South Asia.



### **Military engagement in South Asia<sup>4</sup>**

The military has an important role to play in addressing climate security in South Asia, and there are a number of current initiatives and future prospects for military engagement in the region.

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<sup>4</sup> “CLIMATE SECURITY and the STRATEGIC ENERGY PATHWAY in SOUTH ASIA PART of the ‘WORLD CLIMATE and SECURITY REPORT 2020’ BRIEFER SERIES FEBRUARY 2021 a Product of the Expert Group of the INTERNATIONAL MILITARY COUNCIL on CLIMATE and SECURITY.” n.d. [https://imccs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Climate-Security-and-the-Strategic-Energy-Pathway-in-SOUTH-Asia\\_February-2021.pdf](https://imccs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Climate-Security-and-the-Strategic-Energy-Pathway-in-SOUTH-Asia_February-2021.pdf).

- **Regional cooperation:** Military engagement in South Asia can help to foster regional cooperation and address cross-border security challenges related to climate change. This can include joint military exercises, information-sharing and capacity-building initiatives, and coordinated disaster response efforts. By working together, the military forces of different countries in South Asia can enhance their ability to address the security implications of climate change.
- **Climate-related training and education:** Military training and education can play an important role in raising awareness of the security implications of climate change and preparing military personnel to respond effectively. This can include incorporating climate change into military training and doctrine and providing specialized training on disaster response and humanitarian assistance.
- **Supporting climate mitigation and adaptation efforts:** The military can also play a role in supporting climate mitigation and adaptation efforts in South Asia. This can include providing resources and expertise to support renewable energy development, supporting conservation efforts, and assisting with disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts.

The military has an important role to play in addressing climate security in South Asia. Current initiatives and future prospects for military engagement in the region include regional cooperation, climate-related training and education, and supporting climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. By working together, the military forces of different countries in South Asia can enhance their ability to address the security implications of climate change and promote regional stability.



### Climate-Security Nexus in South Asian Geopolitics<sup>5</sup>

The interplay between climate security and regional geopolitical dynamics is complex and dynamic in South Asia, and the climate-security nexus is shaped by a variety of factors, including changing power dynamics and regional stability.

- **Impact of changing power dynamics<sup>6</sup>:** The changing power dynamics in South Asia, including the rise of new actors and shifting alliances, can have a significant impact on the climate-security nexus. For example, new actors such as China and India may bring new

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<sup>5</sup> Werrell, Caitlin, and Francesco Femia. 2017. "Takeaways from Sri Lanka Event: Climate Security in South Asia." The Center for Climate & Security. December 6, 2017. <https://climateandsecurity.org/2017/12/takeaways-from-sri-lanka-event-climate-security-in-south-asia/>.

<sup>6</sup> "Policy Brief Climate Security in South Asia Why It Matters for India Dhanasree Jayaram Climate Security Challenges in South Asia." 2021. [https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/PB%20CS%20why%20it%20matters%20for%20India\\_2eproef.pdf](https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/PB%20CS%20why%20it%20matters%20for%20India_2eproef.pdf).

perspectives and approaches to addressing climate security, while shifting alliances can impact the ability of regional actors to cooperate on climate-related security challenges.

- **Regional stability:** Climate change can exacerbate existing security challenges and contribute to regional instability in South Asia. For example, water scarcity and food insecurity can lead to resource competition and conflict, while displacement and migration can put pressure on already-strained resources and infrastructure. Addressing the security implications of climate change is critical for promoting regional stability and avoiding conflict.
- **Cooperation and conflict:** The climate-security nexus in South Asia is shaped by both cooperation and conflict. On the one hand, regional actors may cooperate to address common security challenges related to climate change, such as joint disaster response efforts. On the other hand, competition for resources and geopolitical rivalries can contribute to conflict and undermine efforts to address the security implications of climate change.



The climate-security nexus in South Asian geopolitics is complex and dynamic, shaped by a variety of factors, including changing power dynamics, regional stability, and cooperation and conflict. A comprehensive approach to addressing the security implications of climate change in South Asia will require cooperation and coordination among regional actors and a commitment to promoting regional stability and avoiding conflict.

### **The future of military engagement in climate security**

The future of military engagement in addressing climate security challenges in South Asia is likely to be shaped by a variety of trends and prospects. Some key considerations include the following:

- **Increased focus on climate security:** Climate change is becoming increasingly recognized as a major security challenge, and military engagement in addressing the impacts of climate change is likely to become more widespread. As the security implications of climate change become more evident, military engagement in addressing these challenges is likely to increase.
- **Technological advancements:** Technological advancements are likely to play a key role in shaping future military engagement in climate security in South Asia. Advances in areas such as satellite monitoring, remote sensing, and early warning systems can enhance the military's ability to respond to climate-related security challenges and improve overall situational awareness.
- **Growing recognition of the importance of non-traditional security challenges:** Climate change is a non-traditional security challenge that transcends traditional geopolitical boundaries. The growing recognition of the importance of non-traditional security challenges is likely to drive increased military engagement in addressing climate security in South Asia.

- **Cooperative regional efforts:** As the security implications of climate change become more evident, regional actors in South Asia are likely to increasingly cooperate to address common security challenges. Military engagement is likely to play a key role in fostering regional cooperation and promoting stability in the region.

The future of military engagement in climate security in South Asia is likely to be shaped by a number of trends and prospects, including an increased focus on climate security, technological advancements, growing recognition of the importance of non-traditional security challenges, and cooperative regional efforts. By staying ahead of the curve and adapting to changing trends and prospects, military engagement can play a critical role in addressing the security implications of climate change and promoting stability in the region.

### **Conclusion: Final Thoughts and Recommendations<sup>7</sup>**

The role of the military in addressing climate security in South Asia is complex and multifaceted. Climate change is exacerbating existing security challenges and creating new ones, and military engagement is becoming increasingly important in addressing the impacts of climate change.

The military can play a critical role in addressing climate security in South Asia, including disaster response, humanitarian assistance, and environmental protection. The military's role is likely to evolve over time, shaped by changing geopolitical dynamics, technological advancements, and growing recognition of the importance of non-traditional security challenges.

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<sup>7</sup> "Climate Security and the Strategic Energy Pathway in South Asia | Planetary Security Initiative." n.d.

[www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org](http://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org). Accessed February 15, 2023.

<https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/news/climate-security-and-strategic-energy-pathway-south-asia>.

To effectively address the security implications of climate change in South Asia, a comprehensive approach is needed that takes into account the interplay between climate security and regional geopolitical dynamics. This requires cooperation and coordination among regional actors and a commitment to promoting regional stability and avoiding conflict.

In conclusion, the role of the military in addressing climate security in South Asia is critical and will continue to evolve in response to changing trends and prospects. By staying ahead of the curve and adapting to changing trends and prospects, military engagement can play a critical role in promoting stability in the region and addressing the security implications of climate change.