



Forum: Disarmament Commission

Topic: Redirecting Military Spendings and Efforts Towards
Climate Security

Research reports should be no longer than 15 pages (excluding bibliography)

Introduction

Climate change has evolved from an environmental concern to a growing threat to global security. Although was traditionally viewed as an environmental issue, it has now been recognized as a fuel for conflict and insecurity in various regions around the globe. Its consequences that range from rising sea levels to forced migration are placing pressure on vulnerable communities impacting governments and intensifying already existing competition on natural resources. As climate change continues these challenges grow creating a fundamental shift in how nations can ensure international security stability and peace.

This topic in particular zooms into the lens specific to the need for redirecting military spendings and capabilities toward climate security. As the global military spendings surpass \$2 trillion annually, this topic suggests the action of relocating a portion of these resources and spendings to support climate adaptation. Furthermore, these military institutions possess rapid development capacity that can play a pivotal role in managing climate associated consequences that serve as a threat to global stability.

Some of the key concepts that are central to this topic include “climate security” which refers to the safeguarding populations of ecosystems from climate related risks. Another concept includes dual use military assets which refers to the military resources that can be also used for civilian protection purposes and environmental response efforts. Historically, military budgets and spendings have been directed towards conventional threats and often disregarded environmental associated threats and consequences. However, with the growing concept of sustainable peace climate efforts have been one of the root causes on international instability and are therefore being pointed out to be addressed.

The significance of this issue lies in its capacity to transform global priorities. Climate change has been recognized by various affiliated and credible organizations such as NATO and the United Nations. These bodies have noted climate change as a “threat multiplier” that have the ability to worsen existing tensions and trigger new ones. Therefore, redirecting military efforts to climate resilience acknowledges shifting the security scope to promote sustainable peace.

Definition of Key Terms

Greenhouse Gases Emissions:

Greenhouse gas emissions are the gases that are diffused into the atmosphere that trap heat contributing to an increase in the average temperatures and global warming. Some of the most known gases include carbon dioxide, methane, sulfur dioxide, and nitrous oxide. Many of these gases are released into the atmosphere from military operations like aircrafts, ships, and tanks that run on fuel. These emitted gases contribute to climate change.

Climate Security:

Climate security is the safeguarding of individuals, economies, and ecosystems from the harmful impacts of climate change. It tackles the ways that weather impacts including severe climate, rising of sea levels, drought, and the reduction of natural resources which can intensify humanitarian disasters, political issues, and overall conflict. The aim of climate security is to merge environmental management with peacemaking and safe policies to stay away from climate related insecurities on both local and global scales.

Dual-use military operations:

Dual-use military operations refer to the missions carried out by the militaries that aim to serve two aims which are for security and defense and for environmental and social protection. These operations are newly being introduced to tackle environmental hazards such as climate threats, humanitarian risks. Some of the examples include the establishment of units on aircrafts for evacuation from natural disasters or using the military aircrafts for supply hubs or for medical supplies. These operations were established to enhance efficiency and support the environment.

Redefined Security:

Redefined security is a modern understanding of global security that transcends the usual military threats, such as war and conflict between nations to include other nontraditional threats such as climate change and environmental threats. This broader definition of security reinforces safety and stability and emphasizes sustainability and environmental defense.

United Nations (UN):

It is an international organization that was established in the year 1945 and has 193 member states involved. The primary goal and mission of the UN is to sustain global peace and security, sustainable development is supported, the international law is encouraged, and human rights are both protected and promoted. The UN is composed of various bodies some of which include the General Assembly and other specialized bodies that are specific to the environment and its protection.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):

Commonly referred to as NATO, is a military alliance that was established in 1949, currently consisting of 32 countries coming from the North Atlantic and Europe. Its objective is collective defense meaning that an attack on one member is considered an attack on all members. In the past years it has increasingly addressed climate change through various initiatives promoting the reduction of military carbon footprint.

The European Union (EU):

The European Union is a union of 27 European countries that share knowledge and work together to tackle concepts like trade, climate change, and foreign policies. This union focuses primarily on political and economic sectors. It has been considered a leader in addressing and advocating climate change and its consequences.

General Overview

As the average global temperatures continue to escalate, the globe is facing increasingly complex threats and issues reshaping the foundations of global peace and security. Climate change is not only impacting and stimulating extreme weather hazards but is also disrupting ecosystems and destabilizing availability of various resources. These events threaten national stability and are creating new conflicts and tensions between nations. Along with these threatening issues, military spendings are continuing to rise globally. In the year 2023, global military spendings were marked as the highest level recorded in years. In contrast, the spendings directed towards climate

adaptation efforts. Funds remain insufficient and for vulnerable communities in specific. This imbalance lies in the root of the topic. Redirecting military spendings towards climate security efforts is a field that prioritizes international peace, cooperation and security.

According to history, militaries have been structured and prepared around traditional threats and conflicts. However, in our current time, militaries have been challenged by nontraditional threats one of which are the consequences of climate change. These new environmental risks are being identified by credible organizations such as the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization and major threats to our globe that can spark large conflicts. In volatile regions in particular, like those in South Asia, many conflicts have been rising creating regional instability and insecurity. In this context, reallocating military spendings to climate resilience plays a vital role in reducing this newly sparked conflicts in regions.

Redirecting military spendings is not an implication of a weakened security system, but it rather represents a reframing of what defines security in the 21st century that we live in. In other words, the definition of security has evolved over the years and has now become strongly intertwined with the concept of climate change. This redirection requires core military strengths such as quick logistics, engineering skills, and high coordination. Investing in these skills and strengths will open doors for identification of the percentages of the military spendings that should be redirected and to which effort in particular. For example, some of the spendings can be shifted towards the investment in dual use infrastructure to reduce impacts of extreme weather conditions on regions.

At an international level, redirecting military spendings will leave room for diplomatic engagement and cooperation. The consequences associated with climate change create a shared sense of urgency therefore encouraging joint desire for creating initiatives that shed light on climate adaptation. These initiatives can serve as a method of continuous dialogue between member states and peace building efforts which will ultimately promote international security. Overall, this topic aligns with the theme “deliberate to liberate” as it requires and encourages all nations of the globe to make conscious, and strategic decisions to tackle the rising conflict of climate

insecurity.

Subtopic 1: Military Infrastructure for Climate Adaptation and Disaster Response:

As climate change continues to grow the disasters have become more frequent and severe. For that reason, the role of military infrastructure in supporting climate adaptation has gained significant importance. This revolves around the idea that the infrastructures that are traditionally built for military purposes like air defenses, airfields, naval ports and others have unique properties that make them suitable for environmental issues. These infrastructures are well suited as they possess capabilities such as rapid development, high capacities, and other properties that have the potential of being used for climate adaptation and disaster response. In addition, they often are well equipped for rapid relief responses. By upgrading this infrastructure for dual use with the support of the redirection of military spendings climate adaptation of response will be promoted and ultimately an aspect of climate security can be restored. New additions would include new military assets for disaster relief, evacuation plans, and support of civilian authorities in times of disaster. In this way, global peace will be promoted as military operators will maximize the utility of existing resources and will be protecting human lives while also promoting environmental stability.

Subtopic 2: Military Technology for Climate Mitigation and Security:

As we are in a digital age, military technology is increasingly being explored for its high potential of promoting climate mitigation and security. Technological advancements have tremendously improved military operations which can now be used for climate monitoring. Military technology innovations can now be altered in purpose of significantly improving aid prevention and response for environmental driven crises. As sustainability occupies that focus of globe, military operators tend to consider climate mitigation of security in their new military technologies and innovations. For example, one sustainable military technological innovation the use of renewable energy sources for fueling aircrafts which aim to reduce carbon emissions and therefore mitigating the growth of climate change and its risks. This shift could be birthed in

many nations by the redirection of their militaries spendings towards sustainable purposes to maximize the efficiencies of their technologies and to promote climate security in their nations.

Subtopic 3: Recognizing the Environmental Impact of Military Operations:

Military operations are among the largest contributors to environmental degradation, often generating ecological concerns and issues. Military operations include large scale weapon testing, base construction, resource intensive operations and other intensive exercises. These operations, although may not seem too bad, have been leading causes of pollution, soil erosion and contamination, habitat disruption and increased greenhouse gas and carbon emissions which are all key contributors to global warming and ultimately climate change. In addition, in regions where war and conflict is more frequent, more military operations are being carried out leading to increased consequences and their severity on the environment. Acknowledging these impacts is crucial for promoting sustainability and reducing the consequences and ultimately urging armed forces and individuals involved in military operations to monitor their ecological footprint. In doing so, military operators will not only be aligning with their activities but will also reinforce climate security and international stability and peace.

Major Parties Involved

Party 1: The United Nations (UN)

The United Nations plays a pivotal role in addressing the link between climate change and global security as it has effectively integrated the concept of climate change in its broader peace and security agendas. Some of the key programs that they have created include the United Nations Environment program (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which both aim to support sustainable resources and sustainable infrastructure which led to the formal recognition of the climate related issue and the security risks and consequences that tagged along.

Party 2: The European Union (EU)

The European Union is considered an advocate for climate security and possible strategies for its promotion. The EU has participated and created initiatives and deals that strive for environmental security. Some of these include the European Green Deal and the EU Climate security Nexus. These initiatives both shed light on the importance of acknowledging ecological risks in the foreign policies. Moreover, the European External Action Service (EEAS) has is another initiative that has developed programs that aimed to address climate conflict prevention in volatile regions in Africa and the Middle East in particular.

Party 3: The United States of America (USA)

The United States of America is one of the leading military spenders across the globe and play a pivotal role in promote international security. For that reason, they stand with high relevance for this topic as they demonstrate how military efforts can be strategically used to support climate adaptation and therefore aligning with national security efforts. In the past few years, USA has recognized the way in which climate change impacts its stability and security. In fact, the US department of defense (DoD) has acknowledged climate change and labelled it as “national security risk” and therefore included its adaptation efforts in its new plans and strategies. There are evident efforts done by the USA one of which includes the Paris Agreement that focuses on the integration of climate resilience efforts into defense and new foreign policies. In addition, the US military have been responding to climate related disasters shedding light on the way in which defense resources can be reused in purpose of meeting environmental missions.

Timeline of Events

Date	Event
1972	Marks the first Un conference on international environmental threats.
2009	The UN secretary general releases a report on “Climate change and possible security implications”.
2014/3/31	Climate change was recognized as a “threat multiplier” by the United States’ Quadrennial defense review team.
2015/12/12	At the United Nations Climate Change Conference, the Paris Agreement and legally binding treaty on climate change was adopted by 196 nations motivating them to reduce their carbon emission in purpose of limiting global warming.
2018/11/23	The U.S. fourth National Climate Assessment which reported the climate threats on military preparation was published and inspired investments on vulnerable military bases.
2019/06	The European Union initiated and launched its roadmap for climate change and defense which aimed for nations to incorporate climate change considerations into member nations’ security and defense plans.
2021/06/14	The NATO Climate Chang and Security Plan was implemented.
2021/12/13	The UN security council vetoed a climate-security resolution sparking global debate on the issue.
2022/04	The DoD of the U.S. delegated “climate literacy” ensuring that all directives confirm that all personnel consider climate risk in the strategies and operations.
2022/07	NATO commits to greenhouse gas reductions and the net zero target

	pledging a 45% reduction in greenhouse gases emitted by the military by 2030 and carbon impartiality by the year 2050.
2022/10/13	Climate change was named as the “greatest and existential” national security threat by the U.S. national security Strategy leading to a boost in climate integration in defense policy.
2023/06	The European Union issued a Joint Communication document on Climate Security Linkage which reinforced climate security integration in their foreign policy.
2023/07/10	The European Union launched a finalized version of their roadmap for climate security and defense which includes dual use infrastructure and enhanced readiness precautions for climate crises.
2025/05/31	Analysis revealed and noted that only 2 out of 30 European countries have explicitly joined the net zero military emissions urging nations to take greater accountability.

Attempts to solve the issue

“The Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Hostile use of Environmental Modification Techniques”, 10 December 1976 (A/RES/31/72)

This resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly which aims to prohibit the use of environmental modification techniques for hostile military purposes. Although it is not directly linked to the redirection of military spendings it serves as a foundation of international norms on the environmental responsibilities of military operations. This resolution marked as one of the first steps of preventing militaries from causing and contributing to environmental harm.

“Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict” 25 November 1992 (A/RES/47/37)

This resolution was created and adopted by the UN General Assembly calling on member states to respect the international law regarding environmental protection specifically in times of conflict and war. This resolution was also created to promotes the training of military in more environmentally friendly manner. Despite the fact that this resolution

focuses on environmental degradation caused by military actions it reinforces the idea that militaries should be considering the environment more often.

“Protection of Environment in Relation to armed conflicts” 7 December 2022 (A/RES/77/04)

This resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly however was specifically suggested by the International Law Commission (ILC) and it was created to emphasize on the importance of encouraging sustainable military practices and reducing the environmental harm triggered by these operations. This resolution reflects a growing awareness and expands the legal guidance on environmental protection during military operations.

Possible Solutions

Addressing the growing threat of climate change through the reallocation of military resources requires innovative, practical, and sustainable suggestions. These solutions must go beyond raising awareness and must aim to reshape the global perspective on global peace on security by emphasizing on the significance of the consequences associated with climate change on the environment. Some of the possible solutions include:

Development of Dual-Purpose Military Infrastructure:

This solution suggests the designing of military bases with the purpose of serving traditional defense needs as well as climate related actions. These dual use structures can act as emergency shelters in times of military instabilities or extreme weather events. They can also be used as supply hubs for civilian aid, or coordination and logistical centers for environmental or social needs. By developing multipurpose military infrastructure, militaries can be more equipped to facilitate mass evacuations. Creating dual purpose infrastructure enables flexibility ensuring that future military plannings are more efficient leaving room for the new reallocations of their spendings for climate purposes. In doing so, climate security can be restored as military armed forces can be equipped to respond to conflict and environmental disruptions.

Establish Climate Security Innovation Hubs:

The investment in climate security innovation hubs involves the creation of platforms to encourage individuals to innovate and utilize their creativity along with technology to produce items that aim to promote climate security. These hubs are proposed as research and development centers that collaborate with institutions, universities, or Non-governmental Organizations ensuring that the focus is to create technologies that address both defense and climate security obstacles. Green technologies can be developed, as well as renewable energy operated systems and other technological innovations that meet the purpose of achieving environmental stability. The primary goal of these hubs is to foster innovation in purpose of reducing military footprints and maximize the ability of respond of the consequences paired with climate change. In this way, the broader society can be benefited, and national security and stability can be fostered.

Establish International Guidelines and Regulations for Sustainable Military Operations:

This solution proposes the development of standardized international guidelines specific to sustainable military operations. Some of the suggest bodies that can help achieve these protocols include the UN or NATO. These international guidelines call for more sustainable actions done by the militaries. For example, stronger waste management systems at military bases, conscious land use, and detailed emission tracking and analysis. After these guidelines and regulations are established, they can then be integrated into peace making agreements, defense criteria's, etc ensuring that sustainability becomes a formal irreplaceable part of military policies across the globe.

Guiding Questions

1. To what extent is planet protection a part of national defense systems?
2. Has your country taken any efforts to reduce the Greenhouse gas emissions from their military operations?
3. What are the reasons behind higher expenses directed towards on military weapons instead of climate adaptation efforts?
4. Can armies protect civilians without the use of weapons?

5. Should climate hazards be treated and responded to like national emergencies?
6. What are some of the ways in which militaries can reduce their carbon footprint?
7. To what extent does the carbon footprints of militaries contribute to intensified climate change?
8. How can we ensure militaries are staying sustainable and reducing their emissions?
9. What is meant by the term “redefined security”?
10. How can initiatives on climate security reduce conflicts between nationals?
11. What are the key consequences of climate change and their impact on global peace?
12. How can countries balance between climate security and international security?
13. What are some of the efforts evident from your country to tackle the consequences of climate change?

Appendix

- https://www.project-casa.org/climate-and-security-action-news/nato-and-the-new-climate-change-and-security-centre-of-excellence?utm_source=
- [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/2404 fs milex 2023.pdf?utm_source.com](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/2404_fs_milex_2023.pdf?utm_source.com)
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