

Areas of Consensus

1. The deterioration of climate/weather conditions increasingly affects U.S. national security interests and therefore, encompasses critical factors in strategic and operational decisions made by the U.S. military.
2. Severe climate/weather conditions currently exert major stresses on U.S. military strategic preparedness, infrastructure viability, and options for military operations.
3. Scientists confidently predict the continuing deterioration of climate conditions and the rapid increase in the severity of domestic and international weather events.
4. The U.S. military requires proactive strategic policies to address real-world consequences of extreme weather, including societal instability/collapse, mass human migration, widespread infectious disease outbreaks, and severe food insecurity.
5. Avoiding security crises from which recovery is not ensured relies on U.S. leadership in global efforts to mitigate/adapt to the rapidly changing, severe climate/weather conditions now being observed and anticipated.
6. Effective government-private sector partnerships are essential to protect the industrial infrastructure now underpinning superior U.S. military capabilities from deteriorating through the impact of changing climate/weather conditions.
7. Continuous, candid dialog among state, regional, and local governments, the private sector, public advocacy groups, the scientific community, and the public is necessary to enhance understanding and build consensus for decisions addressing the consequences of changing climate/weather conditions.

"The U.S. Army War College (USAWC) and Institute on Science for Global Policy (ISGP) jointly organized and convened the Climate Impact on National Security (CINS) conference series, to address ever-increasing concerns over how climate change affects U.S. national security. Climate change's impact on the U.S. armed forces' ability to protect and promote U.S. interests, at home and abroad, is a high-priority research topic for the USAWC.

ISGP, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, shares concern over national security issues created by climate change, while not expressing, advocating, or promoting any specific policy positions. Rather, it facilitates the communication of credible scientific and technological options to those who make or significantly influence domestic and international policies.

The CINS conferences are part of the ISGP's and USAWC's efforts to conduct ongoing dialogue and critical debates examining the role of science and technology in advancing effective domestic and international policy decisions. Publications and podcasts of the ISGP Forum and USAWC are available at <http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/> and <http://scienceforglobalpolicy.org/publications/>, respectively."

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Climate Impact on National Security

Why does climate matter for the security of the nation and its citizens?

A series of critical evaluations and recommendations focused on how current and deteriorating climate/weather conditions impact U.S. national security and U.S. military missions, domestically and internationally.



Prioritized Actionable Next Steps

CINS conferences focused on (i) critically evaluating specific cases where changing climate conditions currently, or are reasonably anticipated to, impact U.S. national security interests and (ii) prioritizing actionable next steps to strengthen U.S. military capabilities to fulfill its national security missions in deteriorating climate/weather environments.

The often-contentious debates throughout society concerning the significance of climate issues in policy decisions take on specific and urgent tones when viewed through the lens of U.S. national security and U.S. military actions.

Urgent Actions

- Prioritize and codify climate issues in military strategic planning focused on decisions to identify, prevent, and/or ameliorate severe climate/weather conditions that accelerate and/or exacerbate societal instabilities, human migration, and disease outbreaks directly affecting U.S. national security interests. ●●
- Engage Congressional representatives on how changing climate/weather conditions are degrading critical U.S. military infrastructure, operational readiness, and training options, especially in vulnerable regions (e.g., an increasingly navigable Arctic Ocean). ●●
- Use return on investment criteria (e.g., resiliency and prosperity of proximal communities) to evaluate operational viability of U.S. military bases, facilities, and installations requiring reinforcement, relocation, and/or closure in view of climate/weather changes. ●●●
- Develop collaborative policies and identify resources aligning federal, state, and local priorities to address the climate/weather impact threatening the operational effectiveness and long-term viability of U.S. military bases, facilities, and installations. ●●
- Analyze how climate issues impact the capability of the private sector to continue supporting U.S. military security policies and operational readiness and how these relationships affect commitments to the viability of specific U.S. military bases, facilities, and installations. ●●●
- Develop risk-based training protocols that prepare U.S. military personnel to operate in severe climate/weather conditions increasingly found in real-world societal emergencies that threaten U.S. national security interests. ●●
- Avoid conflicting, ineffective actions by sharing information among public and private sector stakeholders at national, state, regional, and local levels on observed and predicted climate/weather vulnerabilities and on corrective options. ●●
- Prioritize the strategic role of food insecurity, often aggravated by severe climate/weather conditions, in supporting U.S. and third-party programs focused on promoting food security in fragile communities facing collapse and mass human migration. ●●●

- Improve the effectiveness of satellite observational systems measuring data needed to help mitigate and/or adapt U.S. military operations to changing climate/weather conditions. ●●
- Accelerate modernization of Arctic infrastructure to guarantee free access and support for U.S. military operations and U.S. commercial interests. ●●
- Improve the characterization of the Arctic region in support of access to energy and mineral resources, navigable maritime shipping routes, and recreational travel. ●●●
- Enhance crisis response readiness (e.g., search/rescue capabilities, assistance for threatened civilian communities) in the rapidly changing Arctic environment. ●●●

Immediate Concerns

- Expand options to meet new climate/weather challenges to strategic U.S. security policies and operational readiness by promoting innovative improvements in the entrepreneurial, industrial defense infrastructure underpinning current and future U.S. military capabilities. ●●●
- Develop strategic training protocols and innovative equipment needed to protect the physical safety of military personnel and to optimize operational performance in missions conducted under adverse climate/weather conditions (e.g., limited water, extreme heat). ●●●
- Support proactive operational decisions anticipating U.S. military operations conducted under extreme, arduous climate/weather conditions requiring special equipment, training, and strategic planning. ●●●
- Integrate scientific expertise into U.S. military strategic and operational decisions on climate risk assessment, resiliency, mitigation, and adaptation resulting from the increasing frequency and severity of civilian homeland emergencies and climate-related international societal stresses. ●●●
- Expand research on the factors linking severe climate/weather conditions to the acceleration and/or exacerbation of societal instabilities and human migrations directly threatening U.S. national security interests. ●●●
- Strengthen coordination of policy and operational decisions with state, regional, and local officials to determine common priorities and coordinate actions addressing changing climate/weather conditions while ensuring that credible scientific information informs all stakeholders. ●●●
- Accelerate deployment of clean-energy platforms for U.S. military bases, facilities, and installations while promoting opportunities to meet analogous civilian energy and environmental interests. ●●●
- Support global efforts that increase options to prevent, detect, and treat infectious disease outbreaks impacting U.S. military operations and/or underlying societal instability affecting U.S. security. ●●●

- Evaluate the impact of climate issues on the capabilities and priorities of the industrial defense infrastructure essential to current and future U.S. military performance and readiness (e.g., manufacturing capability, critical material development and deployment, personnel education and training). ●●●
- Institute "table-top" exercises for military, private sector, academic government, and public stakeholders focused on examining the potential impact of changing climate/weather conditions in national, state, regional and local arenas. ●●●
- Integrate consideration of climate issues into professional U.S. military educational and training systems addressing tactical, operational, and strategic decisions. ●●●
- Prioritize the identification and analysis of postulated threats arising from the impact of deteriorating climate/weather conditions on human geography (e.g., food security and migration) in U.S. military strategic and operational planning. ●●●
- Conduct resilience planning and testing across the full life cycle of weapon systems to ensure their functionality under conditions of extreme heat and periodic excursions involving other challenging environmental stresses. ●●●
- Prioritize geographical, geopolitical, and economic expertise concerning factors impacting global societal instability and prosperity in U.S. security decisions. ●●●

Long-Term Decisions

- Recognize that a strong, respected U.S. diplomatic voice in determining policies and practical actions focused on global climate issues remains a cornerstone for U.S. military options vis-à-vis U.S. national security interests. ●●●
- Strengthen and expand U.S. leadership in international partnerships focused on mitigating, forestalling, and/or adapting to changing climate/weather conditions worldwide. ●●●
- Reaffirm the critical linkage of the diplomatic-military nexus in successfully addressing U.S. national security interests, especially with respect to changing climate/weather issues. ●●●
- Shape and utilize international agreements defining both U.S. military and commercial sector options for free global navigation rights in naval operations and commercial priorities for access to energy, minerals, and fishing. ●●●
- Leverage the innovative and financial strengths in the existing and emerging U.S. entrepreneurial infrastructure to develop and deploy technologically advanced options for meeting the U.S. military challenges presented by changing climate/weather conditions. ●●●

- Legend
- Research ● Education/Training ● Relationships ● Planning
 - Communication ● Infrastructure