
MILITARY TARGETS CLIMATE CHANGE FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS

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Submitted by jim

Climate Change to Challenge US Military: Report

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Washington — Climate change will pose profound strategic challenges to the United States in coming decades, raising the prospect of military intervention to deal with the effects of violent storms, drought, mass migration and pandemics, The New York Times reported.

Citing military and intelligence analysts, the newspaper said climate-induced crises could topple governments, feed terrorist movements or destabilize entire regions.

Analysts, experts at the Pentagon and intelligence agencies for the first time are taking a serious look at the national security implications of climate change, the report said.

Recent war games and intelligence studies conclude that over the next 20 to 30 years, vulnerable regions, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia, will face the prospect of food shortages, water crises and catastrophic flooding driven by climate change that could demand an US humanitarian relief or military response, the paper noted.

An exercise at the National Defense University last December explored the potential impact of a flood in Bangladesh that sent hundreds of thousands of refugees streaming into neighboring India, touching off religious conflict, the spread of contagious diseases and vast damage to infrastructure, according to The Times.

"It gets real complicated real quickly," the report quoted as saying Amanda Dory, deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy, who is working with a Pentagon group assigned to incorporate climate change into national security strategy planning.

A changing climate presents a range of challenges for the military, the paper pointed out, because many of its critical installations are vulnerable to rising seas and storm surges.

In Florida, Homestead Air Force Base was essentially destroyed by Hurricane Andrew in 1992, and Hurricane Ivan badly damaged Naval Air Station Pensacola in 2004, The Times noted.

Military planners are studying ways to protect the major naval stations in Norfolk, Virginia, and San Diego, California, from climate-induced rising seas and severe storms.

Another vulnerable installation is Diego Garcia, an atoll in the Indian Ocean, that serves as a logistics hub for US and British forces and sits a few feet above sea level.