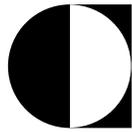


CLIMATE CHANGE AND EU SECURITY POLICY

An Unmet Challenge

Richard Youngs



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About the Author

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Summary

Climate change plays an increasingly important role in European security debates. The European Union (EU) has begun to develop “climate security” strategies that address the strategic and political impacts of climate change. But policymakers are uncertain about how to shape immediate policy responses, and efforts to address various climate-related threats have fallen short. The EU needs to develop a more comprehensive strategy that responds to and prepares for climate-induced geopolitical instability.

Key Themes

- In speeches and policy documents, EU leaders have prioritized climate security. Yet practical follow-through has been limited, in part because Europe has been preoccupied with shorter-term crises that garner more attention.
- Although the EU has committed to a climate security policy based on international cooperation, some member states show signs of being tempted by a logic of isolationist self-reliance.
- Policymakers agree that climate change increases the risk of conflict but have done relatively little to integrate environmental factors into EU conflict-prevention policies.
- Climate concerns are largely absent from European migration policies, including from current trends toward more restrictive immigration regulations.
- European militaries have attempted to address narrow climate-security objectives, such as improving disaster response and reducing their energy consumption.
- Climate change affects Europe’s economic security and brings questions of food security and access to resources to the fore.

Recommendations for EU Policymakers

Address climate challenges through cooperation. European states should avoid the temptation to prioritize self-preservation in the face of scarce resources and instead strengthen their commitment to cooperation-based, collective security.

Integrate climate concerns into conflict prevention. The EU should incorporate climate-related factors into initiatives designed to predict and prevent conflicts, including by improving governance in resource-stressed states.

Adopt a forward-looking response to climate migration. Europe needs a strategy to address climate-induced migration that anticipates migratory flows and potential security risks.

Broaden militaries' engagement with climate security. European militaries must better understand how defense requirements are connected to the effects of climate change and engage with a broader range of climate-related challenges.

Develop a systematic approach to the geoeconomics of climate change. The EU must balance its commitment to free trade and its desire to access resources and renewables while avoiding mercantilist policies.

Incorporate climate concerns into foreign policy. The EU should integrate climate security considerations into all aspects of its foreign policies to move beyond the current focus on short-term climate crisis management.

Introduction

The European Union (EU) is committed to upgrading its security policy and better identifying the long-term challenges to its strategic interests. A December 2013 EU defense summit gave the EU's diplomatic body, the European External Action Service (EEAS), a mandate to draw up a new security strategy. Climate change plays an increasingly prominent part in security debates. The EU was one of the first organizations to identify climate change as a threat multiplier, and it has gradually put in place an impressive collection of policy initiatives designed to integrate climate-related factors into its foreign and security policies.

In addition to these developments in security policy, the EU is making changes to its climate and energy policies. In January 2014, the European Commission proposed energy policy guidelines to be met by 2030 that focused attention on a single, binding 40 percent target for carbon emissions reductions. The EU is also pushing for an ambitious international climate accord to be concluded in 2015 and implemented after the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2020.

These two policy tracks—security and climate change—are linked, and the resultant agenda is one of “climate security.” This concept can be defined as the broad range of foreign policy actions aimed at addressing the strategic and political impacts of climate change.

Much has been written on the way in which climate change is likely to aggravate geostrategic threats. In its fifth assessment report, which was published at the end of March 2014, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stressed the security effects of climate change.¹ While analysts disagree on how serious such effects will be, there is a growing consensus that climate security needs to be taken more seriously. Many predict a worrying cluster of climate-induced effects, including increased conflict and state fragility; mass migrations; tense competition and struggles for scarce resources; a trend toward nervous self-preservation, introspection, and even militarization on the part of major powers; disruptions to the international trading system; and more complex risk management in strategic planning. Many experts believe that climate change is set to become a more serious security challenge than any other issue.

The EU has a mixed record in designing climate security policies to address these issues. Its leaders have acknowledged the need for such policies rhetorically and in a plethora of policy documents, and the EU has made much progress in beginning to address the broader security ramifications of climate

The EU has gradually put in place an impressive collection of policy initiatives designed to integrate climate-related factors into its foreign and security policies.

change. But it needs to do more to develop an effective set of policy instruments that matches the magnitude of the likely threats ahead.

To this end, the EU could and should create a strategy that responds to and prepares for climate-induced geopolitical instability. Good climate security requires several components. The EU must ensure that its internal energy policies are consistent with its external geostrategic aims. It should also introduce more climate specificity into its conflict-prevention initiatives. In addition, European militaries must become more involved in the climate security agenda to prepare for its broader geopolitical consequences, although the securitization of climate change should not entail a narrow militarization. And the EU needs a much clearer and more systematic approach to the geoeconomics of climate change.

Notwithstanding the undoubted progress made, there is a risk that short-term crises are crowding out climate security from the EU's highest foreign policy priorities. While this focus on immediate concerns may be understandable, the EU must remember that climate security is set to become one of the defining strategic issues in future years and should be kept at the forefront of security strategy upgrades.

New Commitments

Climate change has begun to have an impact on the general definition of European security policy. Energy security, long conceived purely in terms of relations with key oil and gas producers, is now nominally viewed as a broader concept that involves addressing the strategic consequences of climate change.

Official publications, strategies, and rhetoric indicate that both the EU and individual member states recognize the need to address climate security. In 2008, then foreign policy high representative Javier Solana published "Climate Change and International Security," a joint paper with the European Commission. The document recognized climate change as a threat multiplier that needed to be placed at the heart of EU security policy. It warned that the risks were not just humanitarian but also political and strategic, affecting the EU's own interests.²

In a 2008 revision of the EEAS's European Security Strategy, climate change was identified as a core strategic and not merely environmental challenge.³ In July 2011, the EU Council agreed on several conclusions regarding climate diplomacy that promised identifiable action on the security strand of EU climate policy.⁴

In September 2011, the European Commission proposed a more strategic approach to its international energy policies. This new external energy strategy reinforced the commission's commitment to linking climate change policies to the EU's core security policies.⁵ In July 2012, the EEAS released a new strategy document on the Arctic, where climate change has some of its most acute and

obvious impacts on international relations. In this document, the EU committed to strengthening its security role in the Arctic region.⁶

In 2012, the EEAS took over the EU's Green Diplomacy Network, an initiative that brings together EU foreign policy officials working on environmental issues, to help combine foreign policy questions with climate change deliberations. The EEAS has since introduced regular training for officials on the security impacts of climate change and commissioned numerous studies.

European governments have agreed to set aside 20 percent of the 2014–2020 EU budget for climate questions across all policy areas. This fund will help ensure that external relations resources are deployed in a way that meaningfully accounts for the geopolitical dimensions of climate change.⁷

At the end of June 2013, the EU's Foreign Affairs Council adopted conclusions on climate diplomacy and security, together with a new EEAS reflection paper. These documents commit ministers to an annual review of progress made in injecting foreign and security policy parameters into climate change strategies. The reflection paper claims that the EU is now much more “joined-up” in terms of having its mainstream diplomacy dovetail with climate objectives.⁸ Another ministerial meeting in July 2013 focused on water challenges, with the aim of enhancing EU engagement in the Mekong, Nile, and other delta zones beset by worsening water-related tensions.⁹

In addition, the EU has increasingly prioritized climate security in its dialogues with the United States, China, Brazil, and South Africa and at a regional level with Central Asia and the Maghreb. European leaders linked climate change and Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines in November 2013. The EU has also pressed for a new United Nations discussion on climate security in 2014.

Individual EU member states have acknowledged the need to integrate their climate and security agendas. In Germany, the foreign ministry has made “climate and security” a priority “new area of activity.” The minister of state has called for “climate security to be a core topic around which broader international alliances are constructed.”¹⁰ The Federal Foreign Office began increasing its climate change capacity in 2010, and funds for additional posts and a series of practical regional initiatives have been forthcoming.

The 2008 National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom (UK) posited a link between climate change and security, claiming that “climate change is potentially the greatest challenge to global stability and security, and therefore to national security.”¹¹ In 2010, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs William Hague suggested that climate change is “perhaps the twenty-first century's biggest foreign policy challenge.”¹²

At the end of 2011, the UK government committed itself to producing a more political set of climate risk assessments. In the ensuing report, the government attempted to assess how climate change threatened not only to cause direct physical effects, such as temperature increase and drought, but also to

bring “new interests into the geopolitical calculations of states, for which current global governance structures were not designed.”¹³ Recent storms and flooding in the UK have triggered further debate about climate change now representing a matter of national security.

Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Spain have all introduced similar climate security strategies and sponsored a range of dialogues and seminars on this issue.

The French government published an extensive climate strategy in 2011 that also broadened the geostrategic focus of climate action.¹⁴ And individual European governments are united in seeking to embed a climate security remit in the United Nations Security Council, against opposition from most developing states.

Challenges and Shortcomings

This wealth of commitments, at both the member state and EU levels, represents genuine and significant progress. Climate security is now firmly on the EU agenda. However, practical follow-through has been relatively limited in many cases.

While statements, studies, and conferences have been plentiful, their impact on actual European policies has not been far-reaching. The EU has begun to tackle select elements of climate security, such as preparing for climate-related

humanitarian relief operations. But it has yet to put in place a full-spectrum climate foreign policy. To do so, the EU will have to overcome a number of obstacles—some of its own making—that have prevented it from translating its climate security commitments into practical policy developments.

If anything, the rate of policy innovation has slowed because the EU has been preoccupied with other pressing priorities since 2011. Many climate security strategies were introduced in the years leading up to 2010 and 2011, but their follow-up momentum faltered. The EU

has found itself confronted with so many more immediately urgent challenges—from the economic crisis to the Arab Spring to current tensions with Russia over Ukraine—that in practice climate security has slipped down its list of priorities.

Critics of the EU’s progress on climate security lament that Europe’s strategic planning does not come close to accounting for the profound changes that will occur to global political geography as a result of climate change.¹⁵ High Representative Catherine Ashton has not given a single speech dedicated specifically to the issue. The EU phrases its commitments mainly in terms of “developing a narrative,” “awareness raising,” and “engaging” with business, civil society, other powers, and international organizations—that is, in terms

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that are about the EU's own institutional preparedness, not its commitments to tangible policy outputs.¹⁶

EU institutions themselves bear some blame for the lack of practical progress on climate security. Responsibilities for foreign and security policy, energy security, and climate change are split in confusing fashion among a large number of institutional players. None of these departments is tasked unequivocally with leading on the geopolitical impact of climate change.¹⁷ The same is true at the national level—environment ministries may have adopted the discourse of “geopolitical impact,” but they have fought hard to keep the security community at arm's length.

Notwithstanding a small number of more developed “climate dialogues” that foster informal discussion between different countries, there is little evidence that climate security has become a significant factor conditioning the shape of EU global alliances and strategies for effective multilateralism. Some critics charge the UK and other European states with failing to adjust their international alliances in accordance with how climate change is likely to rebalance global power.¹⁸

The EU is not alone in struggling to put commitments to improved climate security into practice. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has a Smart Energy Team to examine energy efficiency issues but has shied away from explicit coverage of environmental security in its broadest strategic sense. Senior diplomats from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe complain that governments have thwarted their moves to bring climate security into the remit of the pan-European security body.

Europe has been more successful at advancing internal climate objectives than at integrating climate security into its foreign policies. Indeed, many policymakers claim that the EU's greatest contribution to global climate security comes from its own internal policies. EU member states have made progress toward the so-called “20-20-20 by 2020” commitments, a set of targets specified by EU leaders in 2007 on emissions reductions, increased use of renewables, and improvements in energy efficiency. Notwithstanding some critics' claims that progress on emissions reduction has occurred mainly as a result of the recession, not structural change—a recession that has also eaten into research spending on renewables—the EU has made headway on all these goals.

Policymakers make a direct connection between these internal approaches and the foreign policy aspects of climate and energy policy. They are fond of exhorting that changing light bulbs and funding loft insulation are the best contributions to climate-sensitive foreign policy. As a result, the EU's external policy takes the form of seeking to export Europe's internal energy regulations to other countries.

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To be sure, the EU's internal climate change policies do have an impact on global climate security. But the EU tends rather uncritically to presume that the extension of its own rules and templates constitutes a security policy beyond its borders. This is an unduly simplistic assumption that also exaggerates the strength of core, internal EU climate change commitments.

In some senses, the EU's attempt to export its own highly regulatory approach to climate change hinders its ability to effectively address climate security's geopolitical dimensions. Security deliberation tends to get crowded out by the desire to export these regulations. Senior members of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs have admonished the European Commission's

introverted focus on replicating internal market rules and consequent blindness to the international geopolitical dimensions of climate and energy.¹⁹

The EU's attempt to export its own highly regulatory approach to climate change hinders its ability to effectively address climate security's geopolitical dimensions.

The EU's outlook on energy policy is also problematic for the development of climate security because much policymaking effort remains focused on quite traditional parameters of energy security. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, in practice European governments still conceive of energy-related security as being about guaranteeing oil

and, increasingly, unconventional gas supplies far more than it is about preempting climate-induced instability. As a result, most discussions of EU energy security tend to center on various means of energy-market price manipulation and whether these measures are appropriate and effective. At this level, significant differences in member states' energy mixes prevent convergence on prioritizing climate security.

In some ways, the focus now attached to the shift from coal to gas that has taken place in the United States has begun to cut across climate security policies. Environmental concerns are holding back the development of shale gas in Europe far more than they have done in the United States (albeit with member states adhering to radically different positions on the issue). Yet, the advent of unconventional sources of oil and gas has once more tipped energy security debates, which had been moving toward renewables, back to a focus on access to hydrocarbons. The energy policy rethink triggered by the crisis with Russia over Ukraine and Crimea has focused mainly on diversification toward other sources of gas.

Climate-Induced Fragility

Overcoming these shortcomings will be central to the EU's ability to confront the strategic and political risks accompanying climate change effectively. An area of increasing concern is how climate change affects EU strategies in the area of conflict prevention and resolution. The EU's stated priority has been to address underlying governance problems in fragile and developing states,

where climate stresses could exacerbate conflicts to the point where containment-based strategies would be insufficient.

Yet even though European policymakers agree that climate change is likely to augment the risk of civil conflict in resource-stressed societies, responses to this sort of “climate conflict” remain underwhelming. Recognition of the link between climate change and conflict has not prompted any significant upgrade in EU conflict-prevention efforts nor has it led to qualitatively different approaches to conflict resolution that are directly tied to climate-related risk indicators.

European governments have in practice done relatively little to integrate climate change factors into their conflict-prevention policies as they operate on the ground. A report by the Swiss Peace Foundation notes that little has been done to move forward with the aim of devising an “environmental peacekeeping” strategy.²⁰ When EU leaders released a ten-year update of the Program for the Prevention of Violent Conflict—the so-called Gothenburg program—in 2011, the revision made no mention of any climate-related factors.²¹

A few conflict-prevention initiatives related to climate security do exist. The European Commission–managed Instrument for Stability supports projects in crisis situations.²² In 2011, a modest 1.5 million euros (over \$2 million) of the instrument’s total budget of 15 million euros (nearly \$21 million) was allocated for “natural resources and conflict.”²³ Officials insist that after 2014, the Instrument for Stability will place more stress on climate-driven conflict.

In 2013, the EU advanced a 150 million euro (over \$200 million) program to strengthen resilience to climate change in the Sahel that is directly linked to security interventions in Mali. The EU also funds two programs, Clima East and Clima South, aimed at making states in the European neighborhood more resilient to climate change. Spain is coordinating a southern Mediterranean water security initiative through the Western Mediterranean Forum, commonly known as the 5+5 dialogue.

As part of its conflict-prevention efforts, the EU has sought to enhance its early warning systems to help predict future crises and conflicts. The European Commission’s Crisis Room, regional crisis response planning officers stationed around the world, the Joint European Situation Center, a European rapid alert system, the EEAS Conflict Prevention Unit, and the EU Military Staff all have roles in early warning. However, early warning responsibilities specifically linked to climate change are still not clear or easily operational. And no climate-related factors are incorporated into the way potential crises are monitored. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency created an early warning unit for climate crises, but nothing so systematic has been developed in European states.

Instead, the EU’s focus has been on disaster response much more than disaster preparedness. It advanced further its “comprehensive approach” to conflict in 2013, but this strategy did not have any apparent operational consequences related to climate-induced instability. And while the EEAS has coordinated

with African states and China on joint climate challenges, tangible operational change is hard to detect.

Some member states have begun integrating climate considerations into their conflict-prevention policies. The British government's internal watch list of fragile countries and annual horizon scans to identify potential threats work with climate-related indicators. UK conflict strategy documents list climate triggers as one of the factors prompting an ongoing effort to upgrade and fine-tune conflict-prevention efforts.²⁴ The Danish government has created a Peace and Stabilization Fund that will finance new climate security projects. The German Federal Foreign Office has explored the notion of Track II initiatives to engage with groups most affected by climate change.²⁵ Germany now explicitly advocates "conflict-sensitive adaptation practices" to prevent or minimize the anticipated adverse effects of climate change when it comes to conflict. In particular, Germany is exploring linking Track I and Track II approaches and using climate funds for governance challenges in fragile regions.²⁶

Yet there is a widespread consensus among policymakers that the changes flowing from such formal initiatives are at present no more than embryonic. A 2012 independent assessment of the UK's Conflict Pool, an interdepartmental body that funds conflict-prevention activities, concluded that the country's basic policy had in practice not changed.²⁷ A similar stasis is evident elsewhere. While Spanish ministers have made increasingly bold statements acknowledging the climate-conflict connection,²⁸ the link between the Ministry of Defense and the secretary of state for climate change is relatively weak. Spain

has created a much-lauded Military Emergencies Unit that is intended to connect the Ministry of Defense to other state bodies, but insiders acknowledge that this unit has not yet led to any change in the broader gamut of Spanish conflict-prevention policies.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) criticize European governments and the EU collectively for failing to incorporate the underlying drivers of instability into more climate-sensitive conflict-prevention policies. As a result, there is still no granular means of assessing the

risk of climate-induced conflict and instability. Governments have struggled to incorporate climate-specific elements into their traditional conflict-prevention programs because they admit that their climate specialists have yet to engage fully and systematically with the conflict agenda.

The EU has made progress on integrating climate concerns into its development agenda, an approach that offers a more comprehensive strategy of conflict prevention. The EU has created initiatives to improve poor communities' access to energy. Policymakers argue that this strategy lends a distinctive dimension to conflict prevention and is centered more on mutual human security concerns than purely traditional state interests. European Commissioner

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for Climate Action Connie Hedegaard insists that a focus on access to energy in development aid is and must continue to be the leading edge of the EU's linking of security and climate change policy.²⁹ A commission communication in March 2013 promised to merge development and climate change issues into a single, seamless antipoverty policy.³⁰ And the EU's attempts at advancing climate security have been primarily through the mainstreaming of adaptation initiatives into holistic development aid programs.³¹

Some observers, however, doubt that increases in European financing for development-based adaptation programs have a strong or direct relevance to climate security. Critics say the EU's approach almost dampens the security logic by implying that the issue is little more than a need for more sustainable development. Moreover, most development agencies still resist their aid being used for anything with security overtones, and donors have yet to fully incorporate conflict sensitivity into their adaptation funding. In large part, these problems stem from the fact that EU governments conceive of adaptation too narrowly as a matter of providing protective physical infrastructure or renewable projects; in fact, it is a matter of improving governance to enhance resilience to climate stresses.³²

Critics also worry that the EU risks pursuing an approach to scarce resources that actually renders such clashes more likely in the long term. Commercial EU policies have long been oriented toward extracting energy resources for European use.³³ This approach reflects a fundamental unresolved tension at the heart of European policies: Is the EU's security priority bringing scarce energy resources into Europe, or is it ensuring that these resources are distributed, both internationally and within locally fragile contexts, in the kind of equitable fashion that reduces the likelihood of conflict? So far, policy outcomes suggest the EU has sought to straddle these two approaches without a clear prioritization or acknowledgement of the trade-offs involved.

Changing Migration Patterns

The EU lacks a clear, forward-looking strategy to address migration that occurs as a result of climate change. Rhetorically, European ministers repudiate the strategy of implementing increasingly restrictive immigration policies—the “fortress Europe” approach—to manage climate migration. The stated preference is for a more subtle strategy based on cooperation with third countries aimed at managing the impact of climate change on migratory flows.

In practice, European policy on climate and migration remains ambivalent. EU member states have gradually tightened rules on migration into Europe, but the influence of climate-induced migration in explaining these policy trends has been negligible. Indeed, it is striking how absent climate concerns have been from the evolution of European migration policies. The European

Parliament has criticized EU institutions for failing to devise contingency plans for an increase in climate-driven migration.³⁴

The EU lags behind the United States in preparing for climate migration. U.S. government bodies have begun running exercises focusing on the impact of displacements within other regions. In contrast, European organizations have not mapped what migration flows are likely from different parts of the world as a result of climate change. EU bodies have not included migration in their climate risk assessments because of uncertainties over its scale and nature, and this issue is still not part of interregional negotiations, say, between the EU and the African Union.³⁵

Rhetorically, however, EU leaders acknowledge that climate migration may well become a problem. The so-called Stockholm program, agreed upon in 2009 as the EU's main strategy for internal security, calls for greater focus on climate change as a driver of security-relevant migratory flows. A strategy paper for a European Commission project with a 180 million euro (nearly \$250 million) 2011–2013 budget that includes funds for “cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum” explicitly commits to working more on the nexus between climate change and migration.³⁶

In April 2013, the EU published a working document on climate change and migration. The paper was prepared by the Development and Cooperation Agency rather than by the directorate covering internal security. In line with recent research, it downplays the likelihood of mass migration flows into Europe resulting directly from climate stress in developing states. Instead, it highlights movement within developing countries themselves and the problem of internally displaced people. The paper's focus is on development-related resilience building, and it states that the EU's core policy aim should be improving development opportunities to allow people to remain in local communities as resources become scarcer.

At the same time, the European Commission acknowledges that more needs to be done to assist relocation where this would help improve access to resources. It admits that so far no more than a few limited projects have been funded to give substance to this approach and points to the fact that recipients' country strategy papers still include no mention of the climate-migration link that would serve as a basis for practical aid programming decisions.³⁷

European diplomats argue that the focus needs to be on intraregional flows and not on migration into Europe. They contend that climate migration may be of more indirect than direct concern to Europe: displacements from one developing state to another, or from one region to another within the same state, may trigger conflict and instability that then affect Western interests. Several new cooperation programs focus on this dimension of climate migration—although funds remain limited compared to those pumped into standard border controls.

Many developing countries have urged the EU to afford climate migrants the status of refugees. But EU member states have not supported the idea of a new category of “climate refugee,” arguing that this designation could prejudice the reception and resources given to those fleeing acute political violence as a matter of absolute urgency. The EU’s aim is more modestly to get climate factors incorporated into international rules on internally displaced persons. The Directorate General for Home Affairs has suggested a status of “permanently forced migration” as a new category to get around the refugee problem. The April 2013 working document argues there is no need for “refugee-type protection” specifically on climate-related grounds.³⁸

Military Engagement

European militaries have increasingly acknowledged the risks posed by climate change, despite it not constituting a traditional threat. Yet armed forces’ engagement has been limited to relatively narrow questions of disaster response and greening military operations. European militaries have inched toward broader deliberation of the geopolitical effects of climate change, but so far only cautiously. Moving forward, militaries will need to better understand how defense requirements are integrally connected to the effects of climate change.

The UK in particular has incorporated climate planning into its defense policy and introduced more systematic coverage of climate change into its military staff colleges. It also created the post of climate and energy security envoy.³⁹ Spain’s Military Emergencies Unit was formed to respond to climate disasters. Defense strategies in Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and the Czech Republic all mention climate security, albeit in somewhat low-profile and unspecific fashion.

European defense ministries are now fully engaged on the question of how climate change is likely to impose new requirements on their operations. They are still in the process of taking the next step to envisioning how climate change could alter geopolitics and shift the broader contours of defense policy.⁴⁰

Skeptics have long feared an overmilitarization of climate issues, but in practice militaries and the wider EU security establishment remain extremely circumspect. EU planners have begun to assess climate factors as part of conflict management scenario building and to tighten coordination with the EU’s Civil Protection Mechanism, which facilitates cooperation in EU emergency responses.⁴¹ However, while European militaries have started to take climate security seriously, there is little evidence that preparedness for armed interventions is a central part of this agenda.

Although several EU documents have given operational content to defense policy coordination—including the EU Concept for Military Planning at the

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Political and Strategic Level, the EU Concept for Military Command and Control, the EU Concept for Force Generation, and the EU Military Rapid Response Concept—a 2012 European Parliament report found these documents to be bereft of climate-related considerations.⁴²

A number of Common Security and Defense Policy missions have been deployed to climate-stressed areas where environmental factors are seen as contributing to instability. These programs include the maritime mission Atalanta off the Horn of Africa and security training initiatives in the Sahel (especially in Niger and Mali in 2012 and 2013, respectively). Many policymakers see such deployments as a harbinger of future defense requirements. The EU has invested heavily in a Global Monitoring for Environment and Security system that is now being rolled out, with a range of satellites and other capacities that will help collect information concerning the environment and security.

However, while such missions and support reflect an evolution in military thinking, they have been extremely low key and do not represent major deployments triggered primarily by climate factors. No EU military deployment has been permitted to safeguard oil and gas supplies coming into Europe, as one might expect in a realist geostrategic scenario. Policymakers acknowledge that progress on reconfiguring militaries for climate security threats has been slow and limited.

Analysts have suggested that climate change's most notable impact on military configurations will be the onus it places on defending home territories against extreme weather.⁴³ The EU agreed to an adaptation strategy in April 2013 that was focused on such initiatives. The strategy recognizes that internal adaptation measures remain at “an early stage” in Europe. Fifteen member states have national adaptation strategies that are just beginning to engage in meaningful projects. The new strategy commits the EU to better exchanging member states' best practices; pressuring all member states to implement national strategies; and conducting EU-wide vulnerability assessments that will culminate in “comprehensive threat and risk assessment reports” to be produced jointly by the European Commission and the high representative in 2015.⁴⁴

Progress has also been made on military greening. The European defense establishment has begun to shift away from fossil fuels to more sustainable sources in an effort to reduce energy consumption. In June 2012, the European Defense Agency launched a program called Military Green to coordinate the plethora of member state plans in this area.

In short, European militaries are now focused on running effective operations in climate-stressed environments, dealing with extreme weather events, and reducing their own energy consumption. Yet, by their own admission, they have not yet fully addressed the broader climate-engendered changes to geopolitics. Militaries still think in terms of the national interests to be defended against climate change, not the broader impact on human security—and not

the need to address proactively the root causes of threats to individuals' rights and livelihoods.

EU engagement is limited in areas where climate-related, cross-border tensions have surfaced—for example, in the Nile basin. So far, much of the focus has been on military involvement in disasters caused by extreme weather events rather than on the broader climate-related shifts in international relations.

While the UK government has begun to build climate risk factors into its scenario building for humanitarian response planning, the broader implications for geopolitics are acknowledged to have fallen outside the purview of military and other strategic planners.⁴⁵

There is general agreement that European defense establishments lag behind the U.S. military's engagement with climate change issues. Under the 2007 Global Climate Change Security Oversight Act, the United States initiated a far more systematic program of research on global climate change's impacts on military requirements, operations, doctrine, organization, training, material, logistics, personnel, and facilities and on the actions needed to address such impacts. The U.S. Defense Department's 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review refers to climate change as an "accelerant" of instability and generally accords the issue a higher profile than most European defense documents.⁴⁶ On homeland defense, the EU also lags well behind the evolution in U.S. military planning.⁴⁷

Still, there are fears that European militaries have disingenuously overreacted in an attempt to use the climate security agenda as a means of reinforcing their own claims to resources and influence within government. While such concerns are not entirely unfounded, there is insufficient evidence so far to sustain the claim that EU climate security policies have become overly militarized.

Militaries still think in terms of the national interests to be defended against climate change, not the broader impact on human security—and not the need to address proactively the root causes of threats to individuals' rights and livelihoods.

The Geoeconomics of Climate Change

Climate change is already affecting European economic security. The prospect of scarcer resources resulting from climate change has brought questions of food security and access to renewables to the fore—and, along with them, debates over free trade, protectionism, and mercantilism.

In some ways, this geoeconomic dimension of climate change has affected EU policy more than the hard security aspects. However, a fundamental tension remains evident: the EU sees free markets as necessary to get increasingly scarce resources to where they are needed and facilitate the spread of renewables, but many see globalization as sustaining the economic model that lies at the very root of global warming. Emerging EU policy mixes support for open markets with government-backed commercial diplomacy. It seeks to strike a balance between interdependence and autarky as the driving logic of security.

Much of the European Commission's rhetoric is favorable to free market policies.⁴⁸ The EU has pressed the World Trade Organization (WTO) to open up a new list of "green goods" for liberalized exchange. In December 2012, the EU finalized its first so-called green free trade agreement with Singapore, a framework that provides special trade rules for and lifts barriers to a range of green technologies. Indeed, the EU sees including green clauses in bilateral free trade agreements as a means of circumventing paralysis within the WTO on liberalizing green trade. The EU now aims to transfer the green trade provisions of the agreement with Singapore to other accords.

Some diplomats claim that freeing up trade in renewables is the most geostrategically vital part of the climate security agenda. They argue that the WTO needs to guard against the kind of export bans on food to which some governments have resorted since droughts hit many parts of the world in 2009 and 2010. They also posit that free trade routes are essential to a secure supply of raw materials.⁴⁹ As a result, their core aim is to keep the integrity of supply chains intact in states affected by climate instability.

Climate change and the attendant effects on agriculture have given rise to a global debate on food security. The WTO met in Bali in December 2013 and agreed to a modest pact on cutting customs barriers only after long arguments on the subject. Such fundamental differences persist on food security that it had to be parked for future discussion; the EU and the United States oppose countries like India contravening WTO rules to control agricultural production and distribution in the name of food security. While

EU agricultural support has fallen (in 2011 it was about one-quarter of its 2001 level), its past protectionism in this sector dents Europe's credibility in opposing developing countries' determination to increase trade-distorting support and mitigate price rises in the name of food security.⁵⁰

The EU's rhetoric is that of positive-sum market interdependence, but at least some European policies betray a more mercantile outlook. One leading team of experts detects signs of a protectionist stance toward green trade.⁵¹

An October 2013 Citibank report observes a new "energy Darwinism" as competitive support for different technologies has intensified.⁵² Also in 2013, a Chatham House report noted the same trend toward resource nationalism and climate-driven protectionism in many countries.⁵³

Climate change has not convinced governments to support reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, which worsens scarcity in developing states and so feeds instability and conflict as climate impacts begin to hit. From a development point of view, officials insist the imperative is to restrict big companies from buying up large tracts of land in poor countries to grow their own food in an effort to hoard resources as a preventive measure against climate change.

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The International Energy Agency complains that financial support to renewables has been unacceptably high in nine EU member states and is a sign of a new green mercantilism.⁵⁴ The European Commission has pushed to keep non-EU biofuels out of Europe through regulations regarding the biodiversity of where fuels are grown, as concerns increase over the “indirect” impact of biofuels. France has focused increasingly on the export of nuclear technology, which other member states judge to be a security risk.⁵⁵ In April 2014, the large member states teamed up to derail the European Commission’s plans to restrict subsidies to renewable energy sources.

In addition, there is a new focus on governments supporting companies to gain contractual access to scarce resources. In October 2012, the commission presented an update of EU industrial policy that promised “raw materials diplomacy” to secure access to vital supplies.⁵⁶ The British government has launched a new action plan for resource security that focuses in particular on guaranteeing access to specialty metals used in low-carbon technology.⁵⁷ The EU’s Energy Roadmap 2050 states that decarbonization should be a competitive boon for the EU as an “early mover” in the global market for renewables.⁵⁸ This sort of government-backed commercial diplomacy has become more prominent in recent years because Europe has begun to lose ground in green technology to China and other rising powers.

The mercantile line is especially evident in the unbending EU insistence on more restrictive intellectual property rules in relation to low carbon technologies. The EU maintains a firm line on this issue even though it complicates a number of free trade talks.

Developing countries frequently complain that the EU is engaged in a quick grab for large-scale renewable projects oriented toward exporting energy to European markets rather than in a genuine partnership to maximize renewables’ potential for host societies as well. Environmental NGOs worry that European governments are pumping funds into large-scale, export-oriented renewables projects that are likely to worsen local conflict dynamics. In addition, there is no clear EU position yet on geoengineering. Member state governments express concerns over “rogue research” while also funding their own explorations into geoengineering solutions.

Overall, European governments seem not to judge the sharing of new technologies as strategically more important than the profits of a small number of private companies. These governments often seem intent on protecting renewables’ market shares and profits to the detriment of an overarching geopolitical interest in disseminating new technologies.

Building on Achievements

European leaders are beginning to recognize the gravity of the threats associated with climate change, but there is ongoing debate over the best security response to these challenges. Some analysts argue that climate change must propel governments toward deeper, positive-sum, liberal cooperation. More than any other issue, they insist, climate security requires outward-looking international cooperation. Other experts suggest that climate change will drive governments toward more isolationist foreign policies based on self-protection. Pessimists fear that self-preservation will become the dominant logic of Western security strategies, reflecting a “lifeboat scenario” in which countries shut themselves off from international developments and focus independently on their own survival.

In practice, European policies currently hover uneasily between these two responses. In their basic approach to climate security, European governments are hedging between deeper international cooperation and self-reliance.

Policy outcomes do not yet appear wholesale to reflect arguments that the only way to guarantee security in a world ravaged by extensive warming is through the lifeboat solution. There is little evidence that European governments are inclined toward a strongly militarized approach. The EU has inched in an ad hoc fashion toward a balance between state and human security logics in its climate geostrategy. To date, the EU’s approach to climate change is best described as “securitization lite.”

Yet, a concern is evident among diplomats that climate insecurity may challenge the liberal-cooperative approach in the long term. Building on its accumulating set of climate security initiatives, the EU can make a number of improvements to prevent this from happening.

The EU needs to attach greater priority to deeper international cooperation in pursuit of collective security and qualitative change in the nature of economic growth. It should map out more sharply defined policies on these matters as part of its mainstream, day-to-day foreign policies in addition to current efforts within areas of designated “climate crisis” management.

The EU also needs to move from climate security to a broader, more encompassing climate foreign policy. While the self-defined security community has begun to come to terms with the implications of global warming, the EU needs to markedly intensify its efforts to integrate climate concerns into foreign policy as a whole.

Many remain skeptical of the climate security agenda because they conflate securitization with militarization. In fact, militarization of this agenda should be limited—but that does not mean that climate security is not needed. More strongly embedded international regimes will be required in all areas of

In their basic approach to climate security, European governments are hedging between deeper international cooperation and self-reliance.

security and crisis management than currently exist. And the EU must move beyond debating climate security merely in terms of Europe having to defend itself against instability that originates “out there” and recognize the need to mitigate the way its own policies often magnify global threats.

The EU cannot ensure security simply by spending modestly higher amounts on conflict prevention, adaptation, or the dissemination of renewables in developing states, however necessary and welcome such steps are. More profound adjustment is pending on the very essence of how EU foreign and security policy interacts with and seeks to shape the global order. Here, the EU has an opportunity to build upon advances made in the last decade to assume more farsighted leadership on issues of global climate security.

This paper is based on the author's forthcoming book, Climate Change and European Security, to be published by Routledge in October 2014.

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