

55th GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Climate change, migration, violent extremism:
the United Nations' role in preventing conflicts spurred by
the challenges of our time



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UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTÓNIO GUTERRES ON CONFLICT PREVENTION AND ON CLIMATE CHANGE

10 January 2017

Remarks to the Security Council Open Debate on "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace"

António Guterres

"Madame President, may I first of all thank you very much, and thank the Swedish presidency, for convening this meeting and allowing me to have my first formal presence in the Security Council, discussing **what I believe must be the priority of everything we do together – preventing conflict and sustaining peace**. And I believe that the massive attendance that we are registering in this meeting proves that indeed this message is something that we all fully recognize. Thank you very much again.

The United Nations was established to prevent war by binding us in a rules-based international order.

Today, that order is under grave threat.

Millions of people in crisis look to this Council to preserve global stability and to protect them from harm, but the enormous human and economic cost of conflicts around the world shows how complex and challenging this is. Yet **we spend far more time and resources responding to crises rather than preventing them**. People are paying too high a price. Member States are paying too high a price. We need a whole new approach.

It has proved very difficult to persuade decision-makers at national and international level that prevention must be their priority – perhaps because successful prevention does not attract attention. The television cameras are not there when a crisis is avoided.

But most of today's conflicts are still essentially internal, even if they quickly take on regional and transnational overtones. **They are fuelled by competition for power and resources, inequality, marginalization and exclusion, poor governance, weak institutions, sectarian divides**. They are **exacerbated by climate change, population growth and the globalization of crime and terrorism**. With so many factors at work, it takes very little to trigger a crisis that can engulf a country or a region, with global consequences.

But while the causes of crisis are deeply interlinked, the UN's response remains fragmented.

The interconnected nature of today's crises requires us to connect our own efforts for peace and security, sustainable development and human rights, not just in words, but in practice. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on sustaining peace demonstrate strong intergovernmental support for an integrated approach.

The challenge now is to make corresponding changes to our culture, strategy, structures and operations.

We must rebalance our approach to peace and security. **For decades, this has been dominated by responding to conflict. For the future, we need to do far more to prevent war and sustain peace.**

The reforms I am setting in motion aim to achieve this. I have started with the decision-making processes in the Secretariat. The **newly-established Executive Committee** will increase our capacity to integrate all pillars of the United Nations, under a common vision for action.

I have appointed a **senior Advisor on Policy, whose main task will be to map the prevention capacities of the UN system and to bring them together into an integrated platform for**

"Prevention is not merely a priority, but the priority. If we live up to our responsibilities, we will save lives, reduce suffering and give hope to millions."

early detection and action. This work will enable us to link the reform of our Peace and Security architecture with the reform of the UN Development System, while respecting the specific areas of competence of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

But we need the support of both bodies for our efforts to build and sustain peace across the continuum, from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and long-term development.

The primary work of conflict prevention lies with Member States.

L'ensemble du système des Nations Unies doit se tenir prêt à aider les gouvernements à mettre en œuvre l'Agenda 2030, à renforcer la gouvernance et les institutions et à promouvoir l'état de droit et tous les droits humains, qu'ils soient civils, politiques, sociaux, économiques ou culturels. L'initiative des Droits Humains Avant Tout, qui vise également à intégrer les problématiques de la paix et de la sécurité, des droits humains et du développement durable, permettra de continuer à renforcer les capacités de l'ONU dans ce domaine.

Et les **agences humanitaires et les acteurs du développement doivent travailler ensemble pour aider les états à prévenir les crises et à renforcer la résilience de leurs sociétés.** Le dispositif fragmenté actuel ne nous donne pas la capacité de nous attaquer aux causes profondes des conflits.

Il est fondamental aussi de **faire en sorte que les femmes et les filles participent pleinement à l'édification de sociétés inclusives et résilientes.** Lorsque l'égalité de genre imprègne le tissu social, lorsque les femmes et les hommes font face aux difficultés en tant que partenaires égaux, les sociétés ont de bien meilleures chances de parvenir à la stabilité et de préserver la dignité humaine et la prospérité.

Il est aussi crucial **de régler le fléau mondial qu'est le chômage des jeunes, non seulement pour garantir leur épanouissement, mais aussi pour prévenir l'instabilité, les conflits sociaux et réduire l'extrémisme violent.** Combattre le chômage des jeunes doit faire non seulement une priorité absolue des politiques nationales de développement mais une priorité de la coopération au niveau international.

As societies become multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural, **we will need greater political, cultural and economic investments in inclusivity and cohesion, so that people appreciate the benefits of diversity rather than perceiving it as a threat.** All groups need to see that their individual identities are respected, while feeling that they belong as valued members of the community as a whole. Civil society has a role to play in raising the alarm when this respect is threatened or lost.

We must commit to a **surge in diplomacy for peace, in partnership with regional organizations, mobilizing the entire range of those with influence, from religious authorities to civil society and the business community.**

We will launch an initiative to enhance our mediation capacity, both at United Nations Headquarters and in the field, and to support regional and national mediation efforts.

I ask the **Security Council to make greater use of the options laid out in Chapter VI of the UN Charter.** And I am prepared to support you through the use of my good offices and through my personal engagement.

Too many prevention opportunities have been lost because Member States mistrusted each other's motives, and because of concerns over national sovereignty. Such concerns are understandable, in a world where power is unequal and principles have sometimes been applied selectively. Indeed, prevention should never be used to serve other political goals. On the contrary, prevention is best served by strong sovereign States, acting for the good of their people.

But in taking preventive action, we need to avoid double standards. But that does not mean that there are no standards at all. **Preventive action is essential to avert mass atrocities or grave abuses of human rights. And we can achieve this only through reasoned discussion, based on facts and the pursuit of truth.**

Prevention must consistently be seen as a value in itself. It is an essential means of reducing human suffering and enabling people to reach their full potential.

International cooperation for prevention, and particularly translating early warning into early action, depends on trust between Member States, and in their relations with the United Nations.

I stand ready to foster a more trusting relationship and to improve communications with the Council, with consistency, candour and transparency.

Disagreements about the past cannot allow us to prevent us from acting today.

Together, we need to demonstrate leadership, and strengthen the credibility and authority of the United Nations, by putting peace first. Ending the boundless human suffering and the wanton waste of resources generated by conflict is in everyone's interests.

This Council, working with the Peacebuilding Commission, all other parts of the United Nations system, and regional organizations, can enable faster preventive action when the warning signs are there. The cost of inaction is simply too high.

War is never inevitable. It is always a matter of choice: the choice to exclude, to discriminate, to marginalize, to resort to violence. By restoring trust between governments and their citizens and amongst Member States, we can prevent and avoid conflict.

But peace, too, is never inevitable. It is the result of difficult decisions, hard work and compromise. We should never take it for granted; but should prize and nurture it in every country, at every time.

Prevention is not merely a priority, but the priority. If we live up to our responsibilities, we will save lives, reduce suffering and give hope to millions.

Allow me to repeat the appeal I made ten days ago in my first message as Secretary-General: Let us make this year, 2017, a year for peace. I think it would be naïve to say that 2017 will be a year of peace, but at least it is our obligation to do everything we can to make it a year for peace.

Thank you very much.”

19 January 2017

Remarks at the special session on "Cooperation for Peace: Tackling the Root Causes of Global Crises"

António Guterres

“We see a proliferation of new conflicts; old conflicts seem never to die. **Conflicts are becoming more and more interlinked, more linked with the new threat of global terrorism.**

In many situations they are **internal conflicts, asymmetric, with terrible violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.** They are the result of fragilities of states, of institutions, of societies, and in a world where power relations became unclear – not only unpredictability and impunity tend to proliferate, but it is very difficult for the international community to prevent crises and to timely solve them.

At the same time, if one looks at **the interconnection of the global megatrends -- population growth and movements of people, climate change, food insecurity, water scarcity – we see how they are more and more inter-combined, enhancing each other and creating situations in which more people are displaced or tension, conflicts can emerge.**

Even if one looks at the amazing results of globalization and technological progress, a huge increase in world richness, the fact that trade has multiplied enormously in the last decades, if one sees how living conditions have improved and even how absolute poverty has dramatically decreased, the truth is that inequalities have also terribly increased and that has created, especially because of the globalization of communication, that everybody now is aware of what is happening everywhere, that has created a huge frustration in many sectors of the population, frustration that leads to the divorce between public opinion, societies and not only political establishments but also international organizations even like the UN.

“Prevention needs to be a comprehensive approach, and for an organization like the UN, prevention needs to bring together its three pillars of action: peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights.”

Now, in this context, it is clear that **we need a surge in diplomacy for peace, and I think it is one of the key functions of a Secretary-General is to get personally involved in trying to create conditions for some of these conflicts at least to find a way to be resolved.**

And I think there is only one way to do it. It is to convince the parties to the conflict and the countries that have influence on the parties to the conflict that **today’s wars are wars that nobody wins**; everybody is losing, and that wars that are becoming not only a terrible source of suffering for the populations of the countries involved but a threat to regional stability and today, if you look at Syria, or Iraq, or Afghanistan, **they also are responsible for this dramatic increase in global terrorism.**

And so, I think that with the threat that is so clear, the countries involved should understand that they need to come together and put an end to this conflict and the pressure over them is, I think, one of the functions that the Secretary-General of the United Nations needs to be able, together with many other actors, and also respecting the leadership of Member States, the Secretary-General should be able to push more strongly, in order to be able to at least minimize some of the terrible consequences that we are now facing.

But it is clear for me that the priority for an organization like the UN and I would say the priority for the international community must be prevention - prevention of conflict, but not only of conflict – prevention of natural disasters and a certain number of other forms and other threats that undermine the well-being of the population of our planet.

Prevention cannot be – especially when we speak of **the prevention of conflict – cannot be reduced to some form of diplomatic action.** No, prevention needs to be **a comprehensive approach**, and for an organization like the UN, prevention needs to bring together its **three pillars of action: peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights.** And needs to recognise that the best prevention for conflict and the best prevention for other negative impacts on societies is, of course, sustainable and inclusive development.

In that regard, we need to take advantage of the ambitious agreements of last year – the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the agreement to 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals, and agree to mobilize, not only governments, not only civil society, academia, but the business sector in order to take advantage of these agreements and to be together in a **new form of partnership able at transforming those agreements into areas of action that help to prevent conflicts and other dramas that we face in today’s world.**

And that means that we **need to invest in the resilience of societies.** We need to invest in the strength of state institutions and civil societies. We need to invest in the protection of human rights. We need to invest in the empowerment of women. But also in addressing the scourge of youth unemployment that is probably the worst problem we are facing in today’s world, with

consequences not only for the well-being of the people involved and the societies but also for global security, as young unemployed people in several parts of the world are the largest area of recruitment for terrorist groups.

But also to invest in addressing the basic needs of the population - from education, from health, water, sanitation, and to bring humanitarian and development actors together, namely in the fragile situations that we face in many parts of the world.

And, at the same time, recognizing that all societies are now multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multicultural, to invest in the social cohesion of those societies; for diversity to be a richness, not a threat. For people to be able first of all to see their identities valued, but also for people to feel that they belong to the larger community for societies being inclusive and cohesive, not to become a source of confrontation, not to become a source of instability, as we unfortunately see in many parts of the world, including in the developed world.

Now, in a context like this, and to be able to address these challenges, I think it is very important for the UN to recognise the need to reform. And I would select three main areas of reform: **first of all, reform of our peace strategy and architecture.** Today, essentially the UN is known because of the peacekeeping missions, and **peacekeeping consumes about seventy percent of our budget.** And **most of our operations take place in countries where there is no peace to keep; peacekeepers become inevitably parties to the conflict, and in a number of situations, that creates extremely difficult environments and facilitates the kind of abuses that also tarnish the image of the UN.**

We need to make sure that prevention and sustaining peace in countries that finally emerge from conflict must be the priority of the priorities, and hopefully limit our peacekeeping efforts in the future much more, thanks to our capacity to prevent crises and to allow for stability to be preserved in societies.

The reform of the peace and security areas of the UN, the reform of the UN development system, based on coordination and accountability, to be able to fully support countries in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and finally our management reform. The staff rules, the financial rules, the budgetary rules of the UN – if they were the result of a conspiracy not to allow the UN to work, we would probably be the same that we have. Obviously, there was no conspiracy, but what has happened is that, in the logic of a bureaucracy, central control has tended not to allow the normal development of adequate procedures – decentralizing, simplifying things, and the difficult relationship between the so-called western countries and the G77 in the General Assembly, and the so-called Fifth Committee, with the mistrust that exists, has created a tendency for micromanagement that, for instance, doesn't allow me to create a post at a low professional level in any part of the world without going to the General Assembly.

Now, we need to engage with all Member States to make them understand that there is a win-win strategy if it is based on simplification, decentralization, more flexibility and in a culture of transparency and accountability. Only a reformed UN can be the engine of one international community able to transform prevention into a true priority and we know that that would not be easy, because cameras are not there when a conflict is prevented; cameras are only there when a conflict finally takes place.

And the second aspect that I believe is absolutely crucial is the enhancement of a new generation of partnerships, partnerships not only with governments, not only with civil society and academia but equally partnerships with the business community in the context of the perspective of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change, creating the conditions for an inclusive and sustainable development - the best way to prevent crises and conflicts in today's world.

I think it is important to notice, if one looks at the debate that took place here in the World Economic Forum, that today there is a perfect conscience that business of businesses is not only business, and we have seen how social corporate responsibility has developed, we have seen how philanthropy has expanded tremendously in the last few years. But, what I am particularly

interested in the alignment of the core business of the private sector with the strategic goals of the international community.

I think that we have gone already very far when one looks at the green economy and when one looks at the efforts to tame climate change. It is clear now that it is good business to invest in the green economy and that the green economy has created a large number of opportunities for profitable investment for the private sector. I would say that when we look at the threats that exists today between climate change and the possibility of less supportive action by some governments, I will say that the best allies of all those that want to make sure that the Paris Agreement is implemented, the best allies today in the world are probably in the business sector and it is very important to fully mobilize them.

But even in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, a calculation that was recently made shows that the returns on investments that can be generated by the full implementation of those goals would mean something in the order of magnitude of \$30 billion per year. Which means that we have here an opportunity both to generate investments that are attractive for the private sector but simultaneously to allow for the private sector to play an absolutely essential role in making sure that those goals are effectively achieved. Because without the private sector we will not have the necessary innovation, we will not have the necessary capacity to discover new markets, new products, new services and to be able to develop new areas in the economy. Without the private sector, we will not create enough jobs, we will not bring enough dynamism and stability to the societies that need to be enhanced with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

And that is why I believe that there is now an opportunity for a new platform of partnership, at a higher level. A platform for partnership that can now serve not only to implementing the goals and defining the past, but addressing the challenges that we will be facing in relation to the future and namely the impacts that have been discussed so many times in this World Economic Forum, the so-called fourth industrial revolution, and the challenges that the international community faces in areas like genetic engineering or artificial intelligence and the problems of cyber-space, in which is my deep belief that only with a very strong dialogue and partnership between governments, international organizations and the private sector, it would be possible to transform them in instruments that would allow for fantastic increase in the well-being of people and avoid the risks that would be a nightmare for mankind as, unfortunately, a totally unregulated form of research in some of these areas would eventually generate.

Thank you very much.”

13 June 2017

Secretary-General's remarks at High-level Dialogue on Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia

António Guterres

“We know that the spread of terrorism and violent extremism are threats to global peace, stability, and development.

Acts of terrorism make protracted conflicts even more difficult to resolve.

At the same time, terrorist organizations have become increasingly transnational, enabling and inspiring attacks and radicalizing individuals, particularly youth, outside of conflict zones.

These attacks have led to a tragic loss of life and other forms of damage.

They also represent a direct assault on the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For all these reasons, preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism is deeply rooted in the United Nations' renewed focus on prevention and sustaining peace.

We will only succeed in effectively addressing this transnational threat if we develop multilateral solutions, and if we are cognizant of the need to frame these efforts within our broader commitments to respect human rights and promote gender equality.

To move this agenda forward, I recently presented a proposal to the General Assembly, to create a new Office of Counter-Terrorism, headed by an Under-Secretary-General.

This reform will provide stronger leadership, enhance coordination and coherence across the system, strengthen capacity building support, mobilize political will and build robust partnerships to ensure a balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.”

30 May 2017

Address on Climate Action at New York University Stern School of Business

António Guterres

“I would like to thank everyone at New York University, and especially the Stern School of Business, for your warm welcome and your role in making today's gathering possible.

Let me also thank all of you for being here to discuss the crucial challenge of climate change and how we must address it.

I can think of no better audience – this wonderful mix of scholars and scientists, students and activists, investors and entrepreneurs – the people who, together, are making climate action real.

And I can think of no better place to have this conversation than here at NYU and the Stern School, where you are dedicated to cultivating solutions and a new generation of leaders.

This notion of inter-generational responsibility is very much on my mind.

My grandfather was born in 1875. He could not have imagined the world we live in today.

Now I have three grand-daughters of my own – the oldest is eight. I cannot imagine the world they will inhabit decades from now, when they will be my age.

But not knowing is no excuse for not acting to ensure that we do not undermine their future.

I want my grandchildren to inherit a healthy world, free of conflict and suffering -- and a healthy planet, rooted in low-carbon sustainable solutions.

That is my wish for everyone, everywhere. To get there, we have our work cut out for us.

Allow me to be blunt. The world is in a mess.

Countries and communities everywhere are facing pressures that are being exacerbated by megatrends – like population growth, rapid and many times chaotic urbanization, food insecurity, water scarcity, massive movements of population and migration... the list can go on and on.

But one overriding megatrend is far and away at the top of that list – climate change.

Climate change is a direct threat in itself and a multiplier of many other threats -- from poverty to displacement to conflict.

The effects of climate change are already being felt around the world.

They are dangerous and they are accelerating.

And so my argument today is that it is absolutely essential that the world implements the Paris Agreement – and that we fulfil that duty with increased ambition.

The reason is three-fold:

Climate change is undeniable. Climate action is unstoppable. And climate solutions provide opportunities that are unmatched.

Let's start with the reality of climate change today.

The science is beyond doubt.

The world's top scientists have been shouting it from the rooftops.

Climate action is gathering momentum not just because it is a necessity but also because it presents an opportunity to forge a peaceful and sustainable future on a healthy planet.

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has put it and I quote: “Human influence on the climate system is clear. The more we disrupt our climate, the more we risk severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts.”

Dear friends,

If anything, that disruption is happening even faster than expected.

Last year was once again the hottest on record. The past decade has also been the hottest on record.

Every geo-physical system on which we depend is being affected, from mountains to oceans, from icecaps to forests, and across all the arable lands that provide our food.

Sea ice is at a historic low; sea levels are at a historic high, threatening the existence of low-lying island nations and cities.

The seas are also being affected by warmer temperatures, rapid acidification and coral bleaching, endangering the marine food chain on which so many livelihoods and economies depend.

On land, glaciers are retreating almost everywhere – a risk to the breadbaskets of the world as rivers fed by glaciers run dry.

Soon the famous snows of Kilimanjaro will exist only in stories.

Here in the United States, only 26 of Glacier National Park’s glaciers remain. When it was made a Park in 1910, there were around 150. I hope you will never have to rename it “no-Glacier National Park”!

Further north, we see an unfolding crisis of epic proportions.

The ice caps in the Arctic Ocean are shrinking dramatically. Some even predict that the Arctic Ocean could be ice-free by the summer of 2020.

That would be catastrophic for Arctic wildlife. It would be a death-blow to the ways of life of indigenous peoples. And it would be a disaster for the world.

Why?

Because ice reflects sunlight. Dark water much less. That means warming will accelerate.

Frozen tundra will thaw earlier and freeze later, releasing vast amounts of methane into the atmosphere.

Methane is a far more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

This will mean more ice melting from the Greenland ice cap.

It could alter the Gulf Stream and affect food production, water security and weather patterns from Canada to India.

We are already seeing massive floods, more extreme tornadoes, failed monsoons and fiercer hurricanes and typhoons.

But slow-motion disasters are also speeding up.

Areas where drought once struck every decade are now seeing cycles of five or even two years between droughts. Moreover, dry spells are lasting longer, from California to the Sahel.

Dear friends,

The moral imperative for action is clear.

The people hit first and worst by climate change are the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized.

Women and girls will suffer as they are always the most disproportionately affected by disasters.

The nations that will face the most profound consequences are the least responsible for climate change and the least equipped to deal with it.

Droughts and floods around the world mean poverty will worsen, famines will spread and people will die.

As regions become unliveable, more and more people will be forced to move from degraded lands to cities and to other nations.

We see this already across North Africa and the Middle East.

That is why there is also a compelling security case for climate action.

Around the world, military strategists view climate change as a threat to global peace and security.

We are all aware of the political turmoil and societal tensions that have been generated by the mass movement of refugees.

Imagine how many people are poised to become climate-displaced when their lands become unliveable.

Last year, more than 24 million people in 118 countries and territories were displaced by natural disasters.

That is three times as many as were displaced by conflict.

Climate change is also a menace to jobs, to property and to business.

With wildfires, floods and other extreme weather events becoming more common, the economic costs are soaring.

The insurance industry raised the alarm long ago. They have been joined by many others across the business community.

They know that the time has come for transformation.

Dear friends,

Climate action is gathering momentum not just because it is a necessity but also because it presents an opportunity – to forge a peaceful and sustainable future on a healthy planet.

This is why governments adopted the Paris Agreement in 2015, with a pledge to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius and as close as possible to 1.5 degrees.

I applaud the immense efforts of my predecessor, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who brought the essential stakeholders to the table and helped forge this landmark Agreement.

It is worth taking a moment to step back and reflect on the unity that was forged in Paris.

It was a remarkable moment in the history of humankind.

The world came together for the first time to address this global challenge collectively. And it did so at a time of division in so many other areas.

There has been nothing like it in terms of enabling the global community to work on an issue together that none of us can solve on our own.

Today, it is increasingly understood that implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goes hand-in-hand with limiting global temperature rise and increasing climate resilience.

As of today, 147 Parties representing more than 82 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions have ratified the Paris Agreement.

Every month, more countries are translating their Paris pledges into national climate action plans.

Yes, not everyone will move at the same pace or with equal vigour.

But if any government doubts the global will and need for this accord, that is reason for all others to unite even stronger and stay the course.

It is reason to build ever broader coalitions – with civil society and business, with cities and states, with academia and community leaders.

Indeed, all around the world, cities, regions, states and territories are setting their own ambitious targets.

Thousands of private corporations, including major oil and gas companies, are taking their own action. They know that green business is good business.

It is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.

Some may seek to portray the response to climate change as a fundamental threat to the economy. Yet what we are witnessing in these early years of a systemic response is the opposite.

We are seeing new industries. New markets. Healthier environments. More jobs. Less dependency on global supply chains of fossil fuels.

The real danger is not the threat to one's economy that comes from acting. It is, instead, the risk to one's economy by failing to act.

The message is simple: The sustainability train has left the station. Get on board or get left behind.

Those who fail to bet on the green economy will be living in a grey future.

On the other hand, those who embrace green technologies will set the gold standard for economic leadership in the 21st century.

Last year, solar power grew 50 per cent, with China and the United States in the lead.

Around the world, over half of the new power generation capacity now comes from renewables. In Europe, the figure is more than 90 per cent.

The falling cost of renewables is one of the most encouraging stories on the planet today.

In the United States and China, new renewable energy jobs now outstrip those created in the oil and gas industries.

China aims to increase its renewable energy by about 40 per cent by 2020.

Major oil producers are also seeing the future and diversifying their economies. Even Saudi Arabia announced plans to install 700 megawatts of solar and wind power.

And industry experts predict India's solar capacity will double this year to 18 gigawatts.

Boosting energy efficiency is also crucial – for reducing climate risk and for increasing profits.

The International Energy Agency has indicated that investing in energy efficiency could increase global economic output by \$18 trillion dollars -- more than the outputs of the United States, Canada and Mexico combined.

Future spending on energy infrastructure alone could total some \$37 trillion dollars.

Now if that is the case, it is crucial for such massive investments to be sustainable and climate-friendly; otherwise, we will lock ourselves into bad practices for decades to come.

Given the facts about youth unemployment, air pollution and climate change, surely it is common sense to put our investments where they will generate the most savings, create the most jobs, deliver the biggest health dividends and have the most impact against global warming.

Surely that is why nearly two dozen of the world's most successful business leaders, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists plan to invest in a fund called Breakthrough Energy Ventures, led by Bill Gates, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with clean energy technology.

It is why green bonds are starting to come in many different shades as the size of the market for securities designed to benefit the environment is on track to double again – from \$93 billion dollars in 2016, to \$206 [billion dollars] this year.

It is why 60 per cent of the world's 500 largest asset owners are taking steps to recognize the financial risks associated with climate change.

And it is why more than 7,000 cities in the newly launched Global Covenant of Mayors have agreed to report their emissions and climate progress according to a standard set of tools that are more rigorous than those currently used by many countries.

Here I want to salute my Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. He is showing great leadership in mobilizing mayors and cities to build the resilient and dynamic cities of the future.

Dear friends,

Science is speaking to us very clearly about what is happening. Innovation is showing us very clearly what can be done.

If we want to protect forests and life on land, safeguard our oceans, create massive economic opportunities, prevent even more massive losses and improve the health and well-being of people and the planet, we have one simple option staring us in the face:

Climate action.

Today, I call on all leaders of government, business and civil society to back the most ambitious action on climate change for the benefit of this generation and generations to come.

[As] Secretary-General, I am committed to mobilize the world to meet this challenge.

I will do so in at least five concrete ways.

First, I will intensify high-level political engagement to raise the bar on climate action.

The Paris pledges are historic but still do not go nearly far enough to limit temperature rise to well below 2 degrees and as close as possible to 1.5 degrees.

Commitments so far could still see temperatures rise by 3 degrees or more.

So we must do our utmost to increase ambition and action until we can bend the emissions curve and slow down global warming.

Most immediately, I will also press for ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Next week's Ocean Conference at United Nations Headquarters is yet another opportunity to build momentum.

Second, I will rally the full capacity of the United Nations development system behind climate action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially at the country-level. Because that is where true change will be achieved.

As we support Member States, I will continue to emphasize the urgency of empowering the world's women and girls. There can be no successful response to a changing climate without also changing mind-sets about the key role of women in tackling climate change and building the future we want.

Third, I will use the convening power of the United Nations to work with Governments and all major actors, such as the coal, oil and gas industries, to accelerate the necessary energy transition.

Eighty per cent of the world's energy still comes from fossil fuels – oil, gas and coal. We cannot phase out fossil fuels overnight. We have to engage the energy industry and governments to use fossil fuels as cleanly, sparingly and responsibly as possible, while transforming our energy systems.

I will work with all actors to promote a global energy transition, the greening of investments in infrastructure and transport, and progress on carbon pricing.

More and more politicians, policy makers and business actors are calling for a carbon price as the green economy's missing link.

Putting a price on carbon at a global scale could unleash innovation and provide the incentives that industries and consumers need to make sustainable choices.

Fourth, I will work with countries to mobilize national and international resources to support mitigation, adaptation, resilience and the implementation of their national climate action plans.

And I will focus on strengthening resilience of the small island states against the existential threat that climate change poses to them.

I will encourage developed countries to fulfil the pledges they have made to support developing countries – including for the Green Climate Fund.

As a matter of global solidarity, the international community must also help developing countries increase their capacity to generate their own resources and to gain access to capital markets. The international financial institutions have a key role to play to help deliver innovative financing that matches the enormous needs.

And fifth, I will encourage new and strengthened partnerships for implementing the Paris Agreement through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. We need to harness the enormous potential of these partnerships.

In all these areas, I will use every possible opportunity to persuade, prod and push for progress. I will count on the vital forces of civil society to do the same.

Looking further ahead, I also intend to convene a dedicated climate summit in 2019 to make sure we reach the critical first review of Paris implementation with the strong wind of a green economy at our backs.

Let me also stress that my door is open to all who wish to discuss the way forward, even those who might hold divergent perspectives.

The climate conversation should cease to be a shouting match.

Yet, there will continue to be strong differences about how to achieve our climate goals.

Yet it is also clear that the journey from Paris is well under way. The support across all sectors of society is profound. The transition in the real economy is a fact.

There will be bumps along the path; that is understandable in a family of over 190 nations.

But with everyone's participation, the world can bring the Paris Agreement fully to life.

I look forward to continuing to engage all countries in forging a truly shared vision of the way ahead that leaves no one behind.

Dear friends,

Let me conclude where I began -- with all of you and with the power of people to make a difference.

Climate change is an unprecedented and growing threat.

The arguments for action are clear.

So are the immense opportunities for peace and prosperity if we act quickly and decisively.

All of us – governments, businesses, consumers – will have to make changes. More than that, we will have to “be” the change.

This may not be easy at times. But for the sake of today's and future generations, it is the path we must pursue.

This is my message to all the world's leaders.

Students, scientists and others such as you across the world helped to put the climate challenge on the table.

If we work together as a global community, we can emerge stronger, safer and more prosperous for our shared future and the future of all of our grandchildren like my three granddaughters.

Thank you very much.”

MIGRATION AND CONFLICT

13 May 2016

Conflict Is Key to Understanding Migration

Jean-Marie Guéhenno

<http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/63578>

The West's current focus on the refugee crisis in Europe obscures the larger truths of a global crisis of displacement that endangers the international order. This is a crisis largely born out of war, and one that will be with us for decades to come. Understanding this reality is essential if Europe is to mount an effective response.

Deadly conflict, above all, is driving the massive exodus of refugees. Wars in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria alone were responsible for more than half of the world's refugee population as of mid-2015. Forty million people—two-thirds of the world's forcibly displaced—are displaced within their own countries by conflict and violence. The Middle East, with its political upheaval and conflict in recent years, has seen the fastest increase in forced displacement. Since March 2011, the Syrian war alone has accounted for almost 12 million displaced people, one-fifth of the world's total displaced and over half of the country's population.

After a period during which wars declined in number, in the past half decade there has been a rise in armed conflicts, and clashes have become more deadly. In today's wars, civilians are also targeted with impunity by the fighting parties, and international humanitarian norms to protect civilians are routinely violated.

While the stream of refugees trying to enter Europe has helped catapult this issue to the front pages of the Western media, states adjacent to wars have seen far larger influxes of refugees. Western audiences are barely aware that the three countries that sheltered the most refugees as of mid-2015 were Turkey, Pakistan, and Lebanon. Nor are Westerners fully conscious of the conditions endured by the 2.5 million people forced from their home countries to Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda. At the end of 2014, some 86 percent of the world's displaced were living in developing countries that already struggled with enormous economic, development, and governance challenges. The lifecycle of a refugee crisis is a long one. The average time a person spends as a refugee stood at a record seventeen years in early 2014, while the rate of those returning home was the lowest in decades.

Moreover, refugees create risk factors for new cycles of conflict, generating further refugee flows. Countries that host disproportionately large numbers of refugees without adequate support can be destabilized, exacerbating existing economic, political, and security strains. The legacy of today's refugee populations is a generation of young people who lack economic prospects, political representation, or even participation; around half of refugee children receive no schooling. In this situation, refugees, who in some cases encounter hostility from their host countries' populations and security forces, can be targets for radicalization by extremist groups.

No one can claim to accurately predict future wars and the impacts they will have on refugee flows, but there are clear risks of worsening conflict. Continued chaos in the Middle East would generate more terrorism and refugees, while sub-Saharan Africa has the potential to become a major source of conflict and transnational terrorism. The International Crisis Group's early-warning work highlights an extensive list of potential conflicts spanning all corners of the globe—in contexts from instability in the Lake Chad basin and state fragility in Central Asia to the resurgent Kurdish conflict in Turkey and transnational crime in Mexico and Central America, to name a few.

On a larger scale, the conflicts driving today's refugee crisis are symptomatic of the breakdown of the international system built over the past seventy years, increasing the risk of violence and weakening the world's collective capacity for conflict management. Geopolitical shifts, intensifying rivalries between major powers, and rising regional tensions have fueled conflict and made wars harder to end. A decade and a half of poorly conceived, hubristic interventions has triggered a backlash toward isolationism and parochialism and weakened the rules-based international order. This undermines

support for the legitimate, UN-backed engagements needed to prevent and contain local crises. Divisions within the EU show how the refugee crisis places further strain on the values and political solidarity that underpin the bloc.

There are some important direct consequences of the crisis, the foremost being the need to better finance humanitarian responses, respect the rights of refugees, support states that host refugee populations, and improve refugees' conditions and prospects.

Ultimately, however, policymakers need to address the major conflicts that are the principal drivers of displacement. Efforts to resolve the wars in Syria and elsewhere have been intermittent and only half engaged. The crisis must highlight the importance of more determined and single-minded diplomacy, without allowing attention to be constantly distracted by the next day's headlines. Policymakers must do more to de-escalate the international and regional geopolitical rivalries that feed off wars, do better at conflict prevention, and pay more attention to the political, economic, and development failures and grievances that turn into violence.

Looking to the longer term, the international community, and particularly permanent members of the UN Security Council, need to lead the way in rebuilding the international community's credibility. The world needs to shore up multilateralism, reinforce institutions that were created to strengthen peace and security, and stop the steady erosion of international law. The primacy of international humanitarian and human rights law must be reasserted so that civilians caught up in conflict are protected rather than targeted.

The refugee crisis goes beyond human tragedy and threatens key precepts of the global order. Recognizing that this is a long-term problem, responsible countries must adopt a long-term mind-set to deal with it. This presents difficulties for policymakers, who are under tremendous pressure to find immediate answers. It has taken the arrival of the refugee crisis on the beaches and in the cities of Europe to drive home the need for a sustained political will to find solutions to the wars that have sent their victims to European shores.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno is the president and chief executive officer of the International Crisis Group.

13 April 2016

Migration, Conflict and Security in the Post-2011 Landscape

Tamirace Fakhoury

<http://www.mei.edu/content/migration-conflict-and-security-post-2011-landscape>

In the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring, migratory movements and forced displacements from Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Iraq, and Syria have evolved into an integral component of global conflict dynamics. Governmental and public debates worldwide have focused intently on the migration question, conferring upon it the status of a primary non-traditional security threat.

This essay suggests lines of inquiry for a research agenda on why migration has arisen both as a consequence and a driver of conflict in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. First, I shed light on conflict-induced migration flows and their determinants in the post-2011 landscape. Then I highlight how displacement has become both a consequence and a driver of new types of conflict and vulnerability. Third, I show how migration flows and patterns have become closely intertwined with the construction of security and power. Last, I raise the question of whether or not the post-2011 migrant crises have provided opportunities for political reform.

Conflict-induced Migration Flows

The post-2011 upheavals in the Middle East have generated new and unprecedented waves of mass forced migration. These have affected the Middle East states system, as well as the governance of migration, both at international and regional levels. While the Tunisian, Libyan, and Egyptian uprisings have triggered new migratory tendencies, by far the most acute post-Arab

Spring migrant crisis is the Syrian one. With 4.2 million nationals forcibly displaced outside Syrian borders and about eight million internally displaced, the international system is grappling with the most shattering mass forced migration episode since World War II. Large-scale refugee flows from conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, and Sudan are also to be factored into the analysis.

Determinants of Mass Migration

The primary drivers underlying the latest migration flows from the Arab world are bad governance, lack of economic opportunities, crackdown on liberties, erosion of state structures, intrastate ethnic conflicts, and political violence. The most acute flows have been primarily motivated by existential fears and violent conflicts.

Some characteristics constitutive of the post-Arab Spring conflicts seem likely to transform temporary forms of displacement into longstanding or permanent ones. First, the protracted nature of the violent conflicts in Iraq and Syria suggests that return migration will not be an option for many in the foreseeable future. Second, intercommunal tensions have led to the emergence of homogeneous enclaves in certain regions in Syria, Iraq, and Libya, signifying a de facto redrawing of borders and a permanent displacement of communities. Third, the erosion of state structures in some Arab countries has been a key driver for the departure of people and their search for safer zones of habitation. Fourth, the crackdown on liberties, which has been a classical 'push factor' for Arab migration, will likely continue into the future. The return of the deep state in Egypt in the post-Mubarak era has, for instance, prompted the departure of key intellectuals and activists.

Migration, Instability, and Conflict: A Mutually Reinforcing Dynamic

While being the consequence of intrastate conflicts, the recent acute refugee inflows—especially from Syria—have themselves generated new conflict dynamics and inequities in the Middle East and within Europe.

In the so-called first asylum countries, the refugee influx has exacerbated societal tensions. For example, Egypt initially welcomed refugees from the Syrian war with much enthusiasm. However, since 2013, anti-Syrian discourse and incidents of security crackdown on Syrians without legal residency status have been on the rise. The situation in Jordan and Lebanon is similarly complex. While Jordan has welcomed around 700,000 refugees, Lebanon currently hosts the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. In both countries, the refugee crisis has strained national resources and an already deficient infrastructure, prompting nationals to express worries about their own future livelihoods and wellbeing. Since 2014, Lebanon has tightened rules governing Syrian refugee arrivals and residency. Jordan, for its part, has restricted refugee mobility outside of the camps.

Meanwhile, the influx of refugees and irregular migrants into Europe has provoked contentious policy debates on responsibility sharing. The question of whether the refugee surge constitutes a national and societal threat has polarized public and media debates. In the last two years, the European Union has tightened border control and surveillance. Furthermore it has engaged in negotiating with its southern neighbors on ways to manage human flows. The European Union has been negotiating strategies with Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey meant to curb refugee flows to Europe. It has also been negotiating with Sub-Saharan countries, such as Niger, to stem the tide of transit migrants heading to Europe via Libya.

Types of Vulnerabilities

In this context, refugees have been subject to various types of vulnerability, be it existential, economic, or political. While there are internationally recognized definitions of refugees, national

governments have at times altered such definitions and tightened control over human flows through border detention, building fences, or adopting restrictive registration procedures. This has cast a pall over the application of a rights-based refugee regime. In Lebanon, inconsistent procedures have been applied when it comes to Syrians' legal residency status and renewals, leaving many in a state of illegality. In Jordan, many have not been able to obtain a legal residency status as they are unable to submit original documents required by the Jordanian government.

Such vulnerabilities are not limited to displaced people originating from Arab Spring countries. They also affect migrants who use some Arab Spring countries as transit routes to Europe. A case in point are African migrants transitioning through Libya to reach Europe via the Mediterranean, following a traditional transit that has now become one of the deadliest in the world.

Migration and authoritarian backlash

The fears of post-Arab Spring migrants are, however, not only existential, economic, or related to deportation and eviction. Though not many dare to voice their fears, many refugees and diaspora communities from the Arab world are concerned about potential backlash or reprisal on the part of their autocratic homeland. In Lebanon, nongovernmental organizations relate that some Syrian refugees have been reluctant to register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (U.N.H.C.R.) for fear of reprisals from the Syrian regime if they were to return to Syria. These fears are not only limited to refugees. For instance, with the rise of the regime of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Egyptian communities living in the West are afraid of being politically active, with some activists voicing a fear of reprisals should they venture to visit Egypt.

Migration, struggles and divisive debates

In yet another perspective, countries that have welcomed post-Arab Spring refugee flows have lately become the sites for political contestation and polarized public debates. In several European states, important policy and public concerns have been raised regarding the radicalization of Muslim communities against the backdrop of the rise of the Islamic State.

In the wake of the Cologne attacks in Germany, the initial open door policy that Chancellor Angela Merkel adopted vis-à-vis Syrian refugees late in the summer of 2015 has triggered divisive debates and demonstrations pitting pro-immigrant against anti-immigrant Germans. For example, the public sphere has been flooded with concerns over the compatibility of refugees' sociocultural background with Western values.

Such divisive debates are not only restricted to Europe. In the Arab world, the fear that Syrian refugees are likely to transport their homeland's conflicts to the country of reception has influenced refugee policies. In Lebanon, the non-encampment policy is to a great extent motivated by a deep-seated fear that refugee camps could become proxy battlefields.

Migration as a leverage and security card

Against this backdrop, one cannot but factor in the extent to which the 'human flows' card has been leveraged to advance state interests or instrumentalized into a security concern. A case in point is Turkey. Through its initial open door policy and several attempts to improve refugee law, Turkey has drawn on its role regarding Syrian refugees to enhance its normative power in the Middle East, and to show that it can outperform the European Union. In return for Europe's demands that Turkey collaborates in stemming the Syrian refugee tide, Ankara has called for visa waivers and for resuming negotiations over Turkey's E.U. membership.

The various ways in which governments have dealt with and represented refugee flows indicate a growing tendency to perceive migration through the security threat prism. Refugees fleeing political unrest have been either welcomed or sidelined in accordance to whether or not they

were perceived as political or religious threats. Ankara, for instance, has favored Sunni Syrian refugees. In contrast, policy makers in Lebanon portray the increase in the numbers of these same refugees as a threat to Lebanon's delicate sectarian power. In Europe, some officials, such as ones in France and Slovenia, have called for granting Syrian refugees asylum on the basis of whether or not they are Christians. In light of the 2015 Paris attacks, governors of some American states have expressed a refusal to accept Syrian refugees under the pretext that they represent security threats.

In this context, one cannot but briefly allude to the security dilemmas that the post-2011 refugee crises have raised for the European Union. Of major importance is the E.U. refugee quota scheme, which has spurred a divisive debate over refugee sharing, especially the extent to which E.U. member states should take in forcibly displaced people. Controversial questions have arisen in this regard: to what extent should European governments share migration pressures with their southern neighbourhood? While Germany has pressed other European states to take part in the refugee quota scheme, Hungary, for instance, has criticized it on the basis that it poses challenges to internal societal cohesiveness.

The European Union has furthermore capitalized on its partnerships in the Middle East to limit migratory flows to the Northern shore of the Mediterranean. In the past few years, Europe has closely cooperated with Arab countries that are first asylum or transit migration countries (namely Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia) in an attempt to control migratory flows to Europe. Methods of cooperation in migration governance range from information sharing to offering incentives such as refugee facility funds or mobility partnerships enhancing cooperation with the union in return for increased border policing.

Academics, NGOs, and civil society activists have criticized this politics of extraterritorial border controls for shifting the focus away from human security to state security. They have furthermore decried the increased militarization of regional migration governance. For instance, critics have decried the suspension of Operation Mare Nostrum between Italy and Libya in October 2014, which had, up to that point, searched for and rescued migrants in the Mediterranean. It has been replaced by Triton, a smaller scale Frontex operation focusing on border protection. Still, downsizing rescue operations has not discouraged migrants from coming. The shipwreck disasters over the last two years are sizeable. Finally, critics have lamented NATO fleet's deployment in the Aegean sea in February 2016 with the purpose of forcing back boats carrying migrants to Turkey.

Migrant Crises as Drivers of Good Governance

Migrant crises have both arisen as a consequence of existing conflicts and served as the driver of new ones. At the same time, they have paradoxically provided opportunities for improving governance. The current refugee crises have triggered worldwide policy and public debates on how to overhaul deficient migration governance at international, regional, and national levels. The vibrancy and intensity of such deliberative debates are unprecedented.

At the international level, they have exposed the various flaws of global governance, given that international structures have so far failed to provide sustainable solutions to the refugee crises or to their primary political and economic causes. Against this backdrop, the crises have acted as strong reminders that a global shift of perspective on conflict management is required. There is a rising consensus today that we cannot merely look at waves of displacement through the lens of humanitarian relief. Rather, such crises require durable solutions, namely, pacifying the conflicts that constitute the root causes of displacement. The migrant crises have also revitalized dormant discussions on a global refugee regime and about mechanisms of global cooperation that would facilitate responsibility sharing.

At both the national and regional levels, the refugee flow has created opportunities for countries welcoming Syrians, Iraqis, and Afghans to improve humanitarian protection and strengthen the

civic sphere. Turkey, for instance, has had to improve its asylum procedures. The European Union is currently overthinking its common asylum policy, debating whether the Dublin system is suitable to deal with conflict-induced mass migration. Lebanon and Jordan have been under increasing scrutiny to reform legal residency procedures for Syrian refugees.

While some media outlets and anti-immigrant platforms in recipient countries have portrayed refugee inflows as a societal and terrorist threat, activists, academics, and artists have tried hard to debunk such assumptions. There is growing realization that credible research is needed to produce rights-based policies and dispel stereotypes depicting refugees coming to Europe as ISIS members.

Shift in Perspective?

The latest migrant crises have arisen as the consequence of a fragile regional order in which some states are undergoing a process of dismantlement. At the same time, they are a wake-up call, demonstrating that conflicts such as those in Syria or Afghanistan will indeed have domestic consequences for the industrialized nations. 'Complex interdependence' suggests that we can no longer assume a separation between the Southern and Northern shores of the Mediterranean, let alone between the global North and the global South.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONFLICT

9 March 2015

Does climate change really cause conflict?

Amy Westervelt

<https://www.theguardian.com/vital-signs/2015/mar/09/climate-change-conflict-syria-global-warming>

Humans have fought over resources for millennia, so recent studies indicating a link between severe drought and the civil war in Syria shouldn't come as a complete surprise. That said, some researchers warn we might be jumping to conclusions too quickly.

Any attempt by scholars over the past several years to link climate change with conflict has been hotly contested, and not just by climate deniers. Many respected conflict researchers believe that climate change is happening, that humans are contributing to it, and that it's a big problem, but that focusing on it as a cause of war may be wrongheaded.

The problem is both scientific and social. "If you want to show that climate change has contributed to an increase in civil violence, then you need to control for other factors," explains Andrew Solow, senior scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts. "This is a fundamental scientific principle. But it is difficult to do."

Half a dozen or so researchers have attempted to do this, and a few have come close. In 2013, Stanford researchers Sol Hsiang and Marshall Burke, for example, conducted a meta analysis of 50 studies on conflict and climate change and found that higher temperatures and extreme precipitation tend to correlate with greater incidence of conflict.

But dig into any particular case and the connection is less clear-cut. "The factors influencing civil violence can be quite complicated and vary in complicated ways from situation to situation," Solow says. "It's like what [Tolstoy] said about unhappy families: they are all unhappy in different ways."

In many cases, the researchers themselves are appropriately cautious when making any claims about the connection between climate and conflict. In a statement that accompanied Hsiang and Burke's study, for example, Hsiang wrote: "There's no conflict that we think should be wholly attributed to some specific climatic event. Every conflict has roots in interpersonal and intergroup relations. What we're trying to point out is that climate is one of the critical factors [that] affect how things escalate, and if they escalate to the point of violence."

Although some have criticized the pair's attempts to quantify how climate change impacts the risk of conflict, the bulk of the criticism – both of the Stanford study and the more recent study linking climate change with the conflict in Syria – has been of the media's oversimplified take on the research.

Advertisement

Each time a study on this connection is released, the majority of headlines tend to be along the lines of "War Linked to Global Warming." Newspapers might be excused for using such headlines as opposed to the more accurate but unwieldy: "Global Warming Might Exacerbate Some of the Factors that Can Lead to Conflict". But scientists warn that when discussing these issues, nuance is important.

"I have tremendous respect for the authors of the recent study of violence in Syria," Solow says. "But given the history of Syria and the region generally, I find it hard to believe that, but for the drought, this violence would not have occurred."

Edward Carr, a University of South Carolina geography professor, has been a particularly vocal opponent of such reductive takes on climate change and conflict. When Hsiang and Burke's paper came out, Carr explained his criticism of work connecting climate change and conflict as being driven by a deep concern "that work on this subject (which remains preliminary) might disproportionately influence policy decisions in unproductive or even problematic directions (such as by contributing to the unnecessary militarization of development aid and humanitarian assistance)".

Climate as threat multiplier

It might be more accurate to consider climate change in the way that the Pentagon has come to think of it: as a “threat multiplier”.

“Rising global temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, climbing sea levels and more extreme weather events will intensify the challenges of global instability, hunger, poverty and conflict,” Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said in a statement announcing the US defense department’s 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap.

Pete Newell, a retired army colonel and a consultant to the defense department and other government agencies, says he has seen the impacts of water and energy scarcity firsthand in conflict zones. “In my personal opinion, that underlies a lot of the issues and conflict,” Newell says. “I saw it a few years ago, watching tribes along the Iraq-Iran border going to war over water rights. And it’s becoming worse as populations migrate to urban coastal centers and those areas’ ability to provide services are overwhelmed. As a precursor to conflict, lack of access to basic human needs is a major driver and it’s only getting worse.”

Focus on access, not climate

Researchers searching for the climate-conflict nexus wouldn’t disagree with Newell, necessarily, so much as expand upon this line of reasoning.

“I’ll put this in a crude way: no amount of climate change is going to cause civil violence in the state where I live (Massachusetts), or in Sweden or many other places around the world,” Solow says. “If we want to reduce the level of violence in other places, then it would be more efficient to focus on these factors: to bring people out of abject poverty, to provide them with the technology that loosens the connection between climate and survival, to reduce corruption, and so forth, rather than on preventing climate change. I sometimes have the feeling that some people only care about human suffering if it can be traced to climate change.”

25 July 2016

Climate change increases the risk of war, scientists prove

Ian Johnston

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change-war-risk-increase-syria-isis-heatwave-drought-a7155401.html>

Heatwaves, droughts and other severe weather events are increasing the risk of wars breaking out across the world, scientists say they have proved.

The researchers carried out a statistical analysis of the outbreak of armed conflicts and climate-related natural disasters between 1980 and 2010.

Their findings – that nearly one in four conflicts in ethnically divided countries coincided with “climatic calamities” – suggest that war should be added to the usual list of problems likely to be caused by global warming, such as sea level rise, crop failures, water shortages and floods.

Environmentalists have warned that if temperatures rise significantly over the next century, large areas of the planet could become uninhabitable, forcing millions of people to migrate elsewhere and significantly increase the risk of conflicts breaking out.

But the new research, by academics in Germany, found there was already a statistical link between outbreaks of widespread violence and extreme weather events.

Dr Carl Schleussner, of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said: “Devastating climate-related natural disasters have a disruptive potential that seems to play out in ethnically fractionalised societies in a particularly tragic way.

“Climate disasters are not directly triggering conflict outbreak, but may enhance the risk of a conflict breaking out which is rooted in context-specific circumstances. As intuitive as this might seem, we can now show this in a scientifically sound way.”

The idea of linking conflict to natural disasters has been controversial. Some previous studies which compared wars to temperature, for example, did not find a link.

However for this study, described in a paper in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* journal, the researchers used data from international reinsurance firm Munich Re.

This was then combined with information about conflicts and an index used to quantify how “ethnically fractionalised” countries are.

Globally, there was a nine per cent coincidence rate between the outbreak of armed conflicts and natural disasters like droughts and heatwaves. But, in countries that were deeply divided along ethnic lines, this rose to about 23 per cent.

Dr Jonathan Donges, who co-wrote the paper about the study, said: “We've been surprised by the extent that results for ethnic fractionalised countries stick out, compared to other country features such as conflict history, poverty, or inequality.

“We think that ethnic divides may serve as a predetermined conflict line when additional stressors like natural disasters kick in, making multi-ethnic countries particularly vulnerable to the effect of such disasters.”

The paper said many African and Central Asian countries were “among the most fractionalised”, making these areas “potential hot spots of armed-conflict outbreak risk”.

Climate models also suggest that these areas can expected “a substantial increase in extreme event hazards”.

“Projections of overall conflict risk up to 2050 ... find these regions to be particularly endangered, which highlights the relevance of our findings in the wider context of conflict prevention and development,” the paper says.

“Recent analyses of the societal consequences of droughts in Syria and Somalia indicate that such climatological events may have already contributed to armed conflict outbreaks or sustained conflicts in both countries.

“Similarly, a prolonged drought might have contributed negatively to the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan.

“Further destabilisation of Northern Africa and the Levant may have widespread effects by triggering migration flows to neighbouring countries and remote migrant destinations such as the European Union.”

The paper stressed that the root cause of these conflicts were “case specific” but cautioned that natural disasters had the potential “to amplify already existing societal tensions and ... thus to further destabilise several of the world’s most conflict-prone regions”.

27 November 2009

Does climate change cause conflict?

Mark Notaras, United Nations University

<https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/does-climate-change-cause-conflict>

Does climate change cause conflict? It really depends on who you ask.

Warming increases the risk of civil war in Africa is the title of a new research paper tabled in the Proceedings of the United States National Academy of Sciences. The report claims that temperature rises in Africa have coincided with significant increases in the likelihood of war.

But not everyone agrees that there is a direct link between climate change and increased conflict, in an ongoing academic debate that goes all the way to the top of the United Nations.

Increases in the risk of civil war

In 2007, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon described the conflict in Sudan’s Darfur region as the world’s first climate change conflict. The assumption was that water scarcity from changed rainfall patterns resulting from climate change contributed to this conflict. His thinking reflects findings to date that the incidence of conflict is likely to be higher in years of lower precipitation.

This week, researchers Marshall B. Burke and his colleagues from several American universities have published what they say is “the first comprehensive examination of the potential impact of global climate change on armed conflict in sub-Saharan Africa”.

From a regression analysis of historical data, the authors find that there is a relationship between past internal conflict in sub-Saharan Africa and variations in temperature (but not precipitation) and that there are “substantial increases in conflict during warmer years”.

In numerical terms, a 1% increase in temperature leads to a 4.5% increase in civil war in the same year and a 0.9% increase in the following year. By the year 2030, based on averaged data from the 18 climate models used, this will translate to approximately a 54% increase in armed conflict incidence in the region.

The researchers argue that conflict will derive from economic uncertainties resulting from temperature-related yield declines in societies heavily dependent upon agriculture. This is because research to date has found that “economic welfare is the single factor most consistently associated with conflict incidence”.

The debate heats up

Much of the doubt about the relationship between climate change and conflict results from the inherent complexities of war and peace. With so many political, social, economic and environmental factors playing a role in either preventing or stimulating conflict, applying quantitative analysis and then trying to predict the chance of future conflict is problematic.

Dr. Vesselin Popovski, Senior Academic Programme Officer and head of the United Nations University Institute of Sustainability and Peace’s Peace and Security Section, argues that there is an indirect link between climate change and conflict.

“There is no doubt that impoverishment and human insecurity may arise as a result of climate change, if preventive measures are not undertaken. However, there is missing evidence that global warming directly increases conflict.”

Popovski cites a prominent study by scholars from the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo that claims that “the causal chains suggested in the literature have so far rarely been substantiated with reliable evidence”.

“The causes of conflict are primarily political and economic, not climatic. Warlords — who foster conflict — may exploit draught, flooding, starvation, agricultural or natural disasters in their strategies, like they did in Somalia and Darfur. But what will drive their fight is not the rain, the temperature, or the sea level — they will always fight for the same goals of power, territory, money, revenge, etc.”

Popovski questions the idea that increased resource scarcity always leads to conflict. He suggests that scarcity of water or other critical resources might do the opposite, encourage cooperation, as it has done in the Lake Chad or Nile Basins.

“When people face climate dangers or scarcity, they may decide to fight, but similarly they may decide to co-operate. If we take the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia for example, what it produced was more cooperation among states and peace in Aceh.”

So, what about the suggestion that climate changes will force people to move to less arid or drought prone areas already inhabited by other people, as is predicted in the Horn of Africa, for example?

“It has always been the case that people have moved to places where they can enjoy better livelihoods, either as a result of human or naturally induced pressures. We need to be prepared to meet the challenges of human migration and dislocation, be they produced by civil wars or climate change. Operationally there is not much of a difference — UN humanitarian agencies need to offer people on the move the same elements for survival and safety: food, shelter, medicines, trauma relief, etc.”

The importance of being cautious

Climate change is increasingly being talked about as a threat to US national security. In the popular media we are warned about “food shortages, water crises and catastrophic flooding” in “vulnerable

regions” demanding “an American humanitarian relief or military response”. The military strategists in the Pentagon are certainly taking the idea of climate wars seriously.

As Bradford Plummer cautions in *The New Republic*, the “security argument” is often employed, without solid analysis and evidence, as a means to convince people about climate change.

At a time when the risk of inaction is growing, fueled by the influence of climate sceptics with increasingly audacious tactics, it is critical that those researching the potential impacts of climate change upon conflict are more careful than ever.

The authors of this most recent paper agree that further research is required to fully understand the relationship between climate change and conflict. The evidence, like that which has been assembled in establishing the case that humans have induced climate change, will probably take many years to compile and require the cooperation of the best experts across a range of disciplines.

“What I would like to see is the five top natural scientists and the five top political scientists together in the same room being asked the same question: how do we develop good governance and reduce both conflict and climate disasters?” says Popovski.

“However, when addressing the root causes of human suffering, it would be better not to confuse armed conflict and climate change. The causes of armed conflict are different from the causes of climate change and need to be accordingly addressed. The consequences of the two could be similar, as many correctly point out — dislocated people — and helping war refugees and climate refugees can and should employ the same management techniques.”

“With the added bonus of knowing about temperature changes in advance, the world has much more time to anticipate future conflicts, deal in preventive diplomacy and develop strategies for good governance.”