Climate Change and Climate Politics

Daniel Moran

Abstract

In his article, NPS Professor of National Security Affairs Daniel Moran shares insights from the introduction to his forthcoming edited volume, *Climate Change and National Security: A Country-Level Analysis*, which will be published by Georgetown University Press in 2011. Moran appraises the intermediate-term security risks that climate change may pose to the United States, its allies, and to regional and global order, and thereby contributed to the growing literature on “environmental security”—a phrase that encompasses a wide range of policy problems. For many, Moran notes, environmental security is chiefly about addressing the challenges climate change may present to humanity and its institutions. Security in this context is to be sought through measures designed to mitigate or adapt to changes in the earth’s ecology, which may some day make current social and economic practices unsustainable.

Others, including Moran, interpret climate change less as a direct threat than as an additional source of stress on the sinews of public life, which may cause fragile governments to fail, or provide new impetus for a range of violent outcomes, ranging from social upheaval to aggressive war. Moran’s book does not seek to comment on the likelihood that the environmental changes foreseen by current earth science will come to pass, nor to evaluate policies that might be chosen in response to them—but instead attempts to lay the problems hypothesized by science on top of the known or anticipated challenges of international life, and to consider what might change as a consequence.

Moran’s article is reprinted with the permission of the publisher and copyright holder, Georgetown University Press. The forthcoming *Climate Change and National Security: A Country-Level Analysis*, is based on the revised and expanded proceedings of a conference held at the Naval Postgraduate School in December 2007, and sponsored by the Long-Range Analysis Unit of the National Intelligence Council, to support the preparation of the National Intelligence Assessment on Climate Change presented to the United States House of Representatives Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming) in June 2008.