

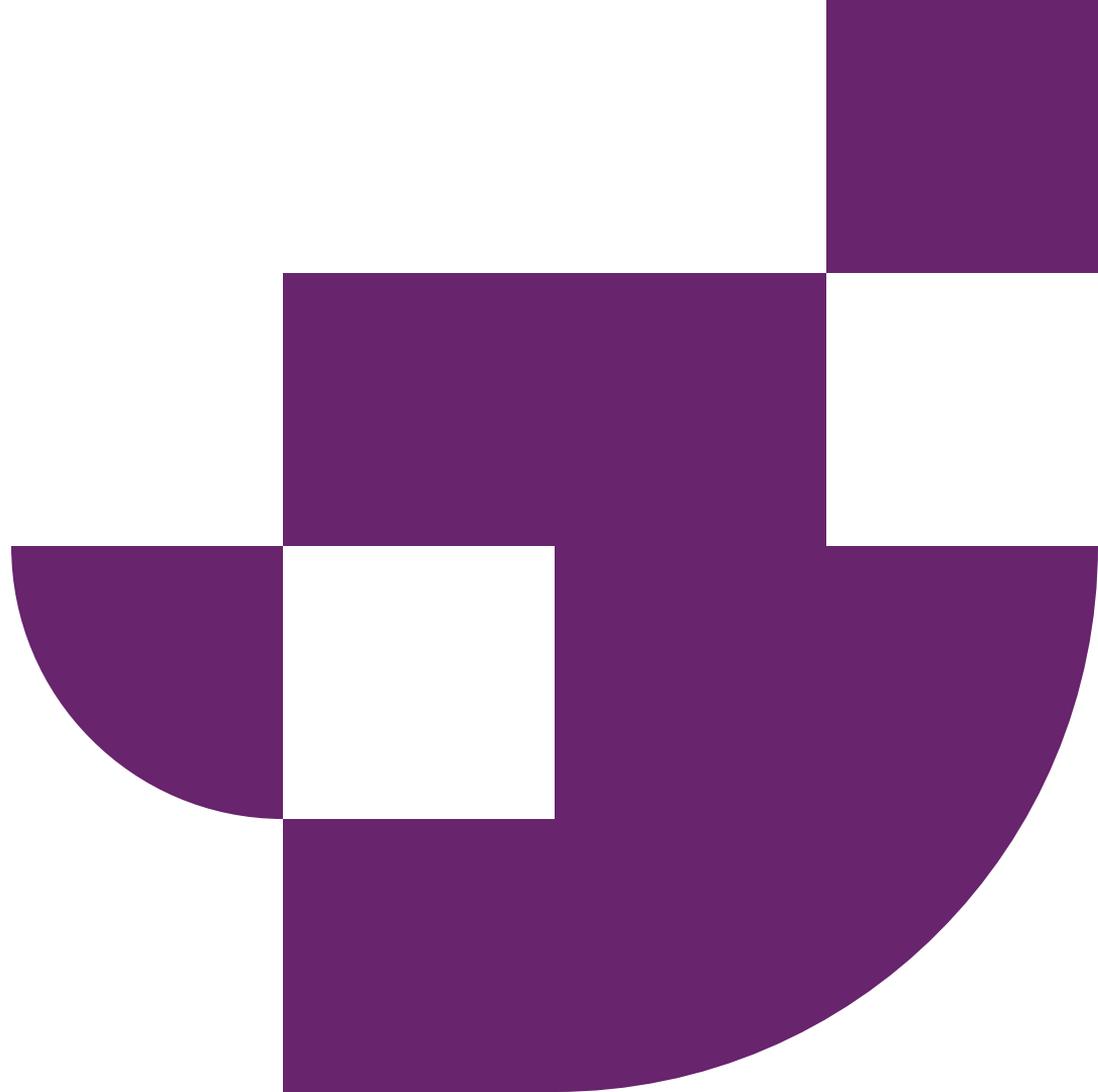


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# COVID-19 and Climate Security Policy

Russian-British SPERARE Workshop

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# Climate Security: A Contested Concept

- Security resides at the core of our conception of the world
- Traditional, statist views of security increasingly supplemented by human and ecological forms of security
- Climate security does not exist outside of what we make of it

# Climate Security Policy

- Last ten years: increasing engagement with climate-security nexus
- Absorption into high-level security forums (UN Security Council, Munich Security Conference, etc.)
- Dominant trend: climate change as “threat multiplier”
  - Climate stresses will exacerbate existing tensions
  - It is easier to draw causal connections with humanitarian disasters than outright conflict
  - Fits into trends of some military doctrines to focus on civil emergencies

# Climate Security Policy

- The climate impacts on militaries is evolving but increasingly acknowledged
- National security concerns from climate change are, in some ways, more predictable than other threats.

## Dangers:

- Securitization of climate
- Climatization of security

# Covid-19 Implications on Climate Security: Similarities

- “A dress rehearsal for climate change”
- ”A disease of the Anthropocene” – biotic mixing
- Globalisation of trade/commerce/transportation/populations
- Long emergencies and “tipping points” for irreversible change
- Threat multiplication
- Vulnerabilities
- Risks/costs of inaction are far greater than proactive policies

# Covid-19 Implications on Climate Security: Differences

- Scale and speed of pandemic exceeds climate change
- Pandemics have a longer human history
- Viral outbreaks identified as preeminent threat in national security strategies for years
- Cause-effect dynamic easier to establish in Covid-19 crisis
- Closer integration of security and health communities(?)
- No vaccines for climate change

# Covid-19 Implications on Climate Security: Impacts

- “Green Recovery” / “Build Back Better”
  - Inclusion of climate into economic stimulus/relief packages
- Focus on combating inequality and climate/Covid injustice as a pathway of security
- Diversion of funds from climate policy
- Prevalence of misinformation

# Covid-19 Implications on Climate Security: “Solutions”

- “Climate change is not an issue; it’s an era” (Steffen)
- A reorientation of security priorities/objectives
- Commitment to science and evidence-based decision making
- Directed funding towards climate resilience
- Multilateral cooperation across domains.
- Better coordination between UN agencies – appointment of new Environmental Security Advisor (+ John Kerry as new climate envoy at US State Dept).
- Training of military and peacebuilding personnel

# Conclusions

1. Discussions of climate security will likely spread
2. Important similarities and differences between climate crisis and Covid-19 pandemic
3. Climate security policy should heed lessons from the pandemic:
  - Monitoring and info-sharing
  - Whole-of-society approach
  - Reformed multilateralism