

An aerial photograph of a mountain range with a river valley. The mountains are brown and rocky, and the river valley is a dark blue-green color. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

# Moving from Analysis to Action: Developing the Right Toolbox to Tackle Climate Security

**Erin Sikorsky – Director, Center for Climate and Security**

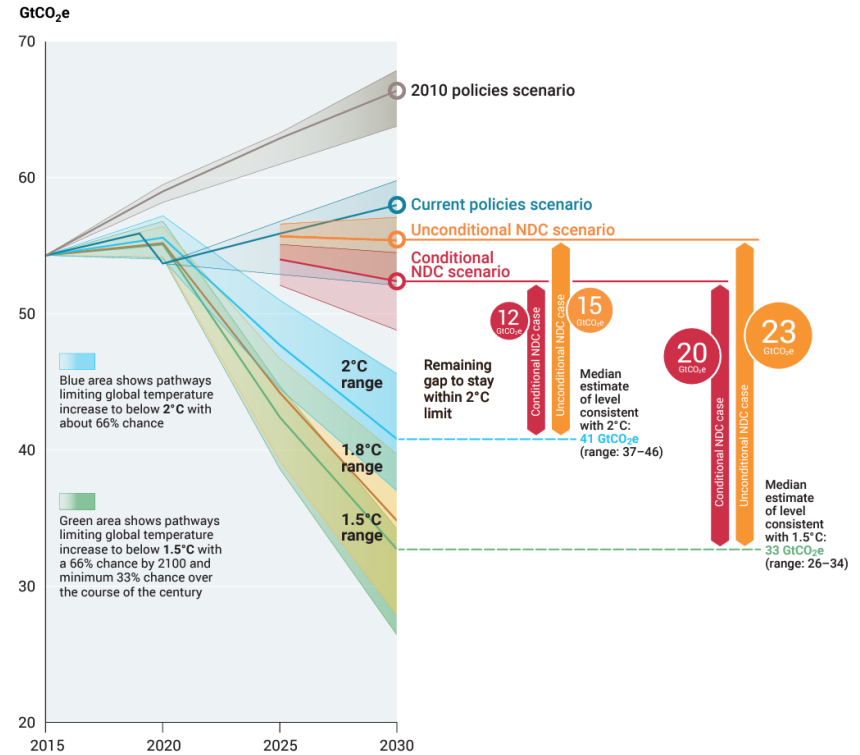
Innovations in Climate Resilience Conference 2023

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# Climate Change: Challenging National Security Assumptions

# UN Reports: Now or Never

- Likely to hit 1.5 degrees warming in early 2030s
- Some climate impacts already irreversible



UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2022

E&ENews  
CLIMATE CHANGE

# The Arctic Is Warming Four Times Faster Than the Rest of the Planet

One study after another is coming to the same conclusion: the Arctic is heating up much faster than earlier research suggested

E&ENews  
CLIMATE CHANGE

# Antarctica's 'Doomsday Glacier' May Be More Prone to Melting Than Expected

Antarctica's massive Thwaites Glacier is melting more slowly than previously thought but also may be more susceptible to even small amounts of ice loss

Article | Published: 02 February 2023

## Future global streamflow declines are probably more severe than previously estimated

[Yongqiang Zhang](#), [Hongxing Zheng](#), [Xuanze Zhang](#), [L. Ruby Leung](#), [Changming Liu](#), [Chunmiao Zheng](#), [Yuhan Guo](#), [Francis H. S. Chiew](#), [David Post](#), [Dongdong Kong](#), [Hylke E. Beck](#), [Congcong Li](#) & [Günter Blöschl](#)

Nature Water (2023) | [Cite this article](#)  
3820 Accesses | 268 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

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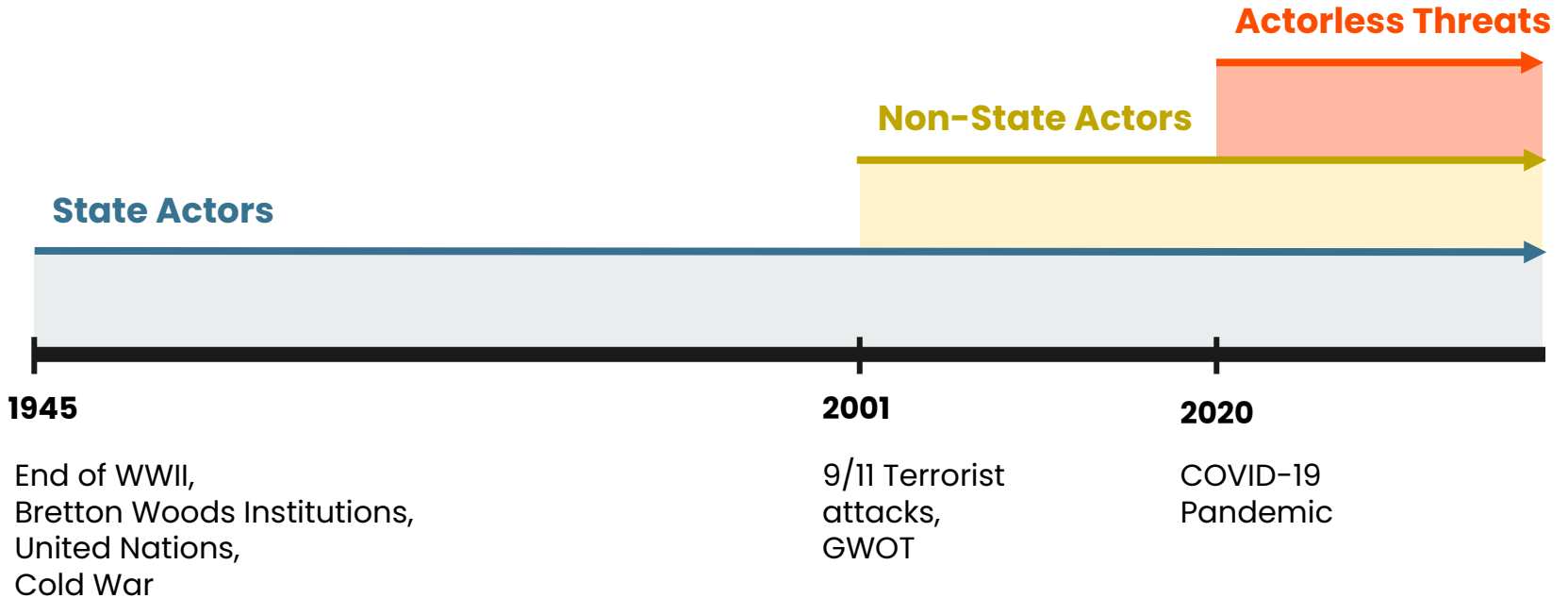
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Science

## Climate change: Global sea level rise could be bigger than expected

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# Evolution of National Security Risk





# “The Future Ain’t What it Used to Be”\*

- End of stationarity – more frequent & more intense hazards
- Challenges to planning assumptions
- Gap between institutions and reality



Soldiers dig a trench around a burning tree trunk while supporting firefighting response efforts at the Dixie Fire in Plumas National Forest, Calif., Sept. 7, 2021. Photo by Army Sgt. Yesenia Barajas

\* Often attributed to Yogi Berra, but also the title of a Meatloaf song

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# Climate Security Risk Pathways



## RISK PATHWAYS

- Critical infrastructure & military readiness
- State fragility and conflict risk
- Competition between & among states

## FRAMING CLIMATE SECURITY

- **Wrong:**  
Rack & Stack; All or Nothing
- **Right:**  
Systemic Risk; Structural Force
- Opportunities as well as risks



# Military Response

- Damage to facilities
- Threats to readiness
- Risk of exacerbating tensions



Military Deployments in Response to Climate Hazards:  
September 2022–March 2023

# Climate Change & Geopolitics

- Competition in new frontiers
- No set rules of the road
- Relations with allies & partners
- Leadership in developing world

## Q4 What are the top 3 challenges facing Southeast Asia? (check 3 responses)

Country	Deterioration of human rights conditions	Domestic political instability (including ethnic and religious tensions)	Increased military tensions arising from potential flashpoints (i.e. SCS, Taiwan Strait, Korean Peninsula)	More intense and frequent weather events resulting from climate change (droughts, floods, cyclones, rising sea levels, etc.)	Terrorism	The threat to health from the COVID-19 pandemic	Unemployment and economic recession	Widening socio-economic gaps and rising income disparity
ASEAN	12.6%	35.1%	29.9%	37.5%	5.2%	76.0%	63.0%	40.7%
Brunei	12.1%	12.1%	33.3%	39.4%	9.1%	69.7%	78.8%	45.5%
Cambodia	23.1%	30.8%	30.8%	42.3%	0.0%	76.9%	53.8%	42.3%
Indonesia	15.5%	31.8%	26.4%	29.5%	5.4%	84.5%	67.4%	39.5%
Laos	10.0%	27.5%	7.5%	17.5%	12.5%	90.0%	85.0%	50.0%
Malaysia	16.2%	48.7%	23.9%	22.2%	2.6%	71.8%	70.1%	44.4%
Myanmar	7.1%	45.5%	13.5%	29.5%	9.6%	87.8%	69.9%	37.2%
Philippines	13.4%	11.9%	37.3%	59.7%	3.0%	80.6%	65.7%	28.4%
Singapore	6.3%	36.7%	33.5%	45.6%	7.6%	63.3%	55.1%	51.9%
Thailand	31.3%	52.7%	16.8%	19.8%	3.1%	64.9%	55.0%	56.5%
Vietnam	3.4%	20.0%	59.4%	61.7%	1.7%	77.7%	54.3%	21.7%

Note: For the 2019 and 2020 Surveys, the question posed to respondents was: "What are your top 3 concerns for security challenges facing Southeast Asia?" We decided this year to broaden the question to top 3 challenges and presented 8, instead of 5 options.

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# A Climate-Strong National Security Approach



## Key Workforce Issues

- Scientific & data literacy
- Mainstream, not siloed, approach
- Leverage predictive capabilities



## Whole of Government Approach

- Investments across the 3 Ds – Development, Diplomacy and Defense
- Stronger partnerships between national security agencies and scientific agencies
- Stronger partnerships between federal national security community and state/local governments

# Questions?

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