

Threat of climate change to the us



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America's Biggest Threat: Climate Change

It is no secret that in its short history, America has faced many challenges and overcame the obstacles in its path. Threats will never cease to exist for any nation in the world short of the success of world peace. The United States today faces many potential threats, but what is considered the greatest of them all? China, Russia, Cyberwarfare, and many more are places and things the U. S. is dealing with currently. While these are things, the U. S. should keep a close eye on; they are not the most substantial threat. The greatest threat is one that will not be faced through pure military might or political negotiations. It is one that not only threatens the United States but the world and could be the biggest challenge the U. S. faces; Climate Change.

Climate Change has had a monumental impact on the frequency and intensity of natural hazards in the U. S. and around the world. In 2018 alone the U. S. experience 14 separate billion-dollar event putting it at the 4th highest number of events since the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration began tracking this kind of information in 1980. Not only was it the 4th in regards to events but also cost, which totaled at 91 billion dollars. The increased frequency of these billion-dollar events put a strain on the already slipping American economy. The most impactful events cause the local economy to decline for a considerable length of time. Infrastructures get demolished, and those not covered by insurance lose their homes unable to rebuild. Of course, the President can call for a state of emergency which gives way to a substantial dole out of federal aid to the affected communities. America's national security relies on a consistently strong

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economy and cutting unnecessary federal spending. The climate change's influence on natural hazards and its ever-increasing devastation creates a challenge to the government with its usage of resources and unplanned financial support in the aftermath of said destruction.

In addition to climate change affecting everyday communities, it is also a danger to the U. S. military installations. More than two-thirds of the military's operationally critical installations are threatened by climate change, according to a new DoD report. The report mentioned was a, "Report on Effects of a Changing Climate to the Department of Defense," submitted to Congress. The report listed hundreds of military installations that had been or will be in danger due to climate change and natural disasters. While Congress did not assess all of the reports listed installations, it selected "79 mission assurance priority installations based on their operational role," which included Air Force, Army, and Navy bases. (Report on Effects of a Changing Climate to Dod Report). In the assessment of those 79 installations, The services reported that 53 of the 79 faced current threats from flooding; 43 of the 79 face current threats from drought and 36 of the 79 faced current threats from wildfires. Citing increased exposure to recurrent flooding, drought, desertification, wildfires, and thawing permafrost, the report highlights how climate change affects U. S. military readiness to respond to national security emergencies.

The report and its findings should concern Congress and the American people. America is a nation that relies on its military forces, especially considering its involvement in overseas affairs, not to mention their utilization in recovery and rebuilding of domestic natural disasters. For even

a handful of Military bases to be shut down for a month cripples our operational capabilities, hinders informational gathering and delays forward deployment of troops.

In addition to the effects that take place domestically, the climate change in places like the Arctic sea is also of consequence. The ice covers a pathway that would connect the U. S. to China and Russia. With the melting of the poles, this pathway is at risk to open up, making it available to pass through and exposing North America to foreign military vessels. Protecting the opening of this passageway would become an expensive mission for the U. S Navy and one that the U. S. could not afford to be delayed or hindered due to downed installations.

Roughly One-hundred and forty million people live in areas inside the United States that have inadequate air quality measures. It is stated that there are 200, 000 American fatalities every year because of poor air quality brought about by unacceptable levels of ozone that stem from things such as street transportation and electrical power. Smog contamination is only going to intensify in the coming years, affecting people with and without respiratory illnesses, and in turn, multiplying the number of people influenced by atmosphere related diseases. Heatwaves are also identified with environmental change and undermine general wellbeing on account of the potential for death coming about because of extraordinary temperatures. As indicated by the CDC, “ Heat waves are currently the deadliest of the ‘ weather-related exposures’ and account for more annual deaths than hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and tornado disasters combined.”. The direct connection to the increase of heatwaves and the subsequent

droughts, make a perfect environment for mosquitos, ticks, and other insects to create and spread many infections, some of which America has already experienced, such as Malaria, West Nile, and more. If these trends continue, then the annual death toll of American citizens will continue to increase with no solution in sight. The safety of the public should be one of the most important focuses of the government of a nation, yet the increase of climate-related deaths threatens that safety.

Ultimately, Climate change has been a subject many in America have disregarded as a fallacy ignoring the evidence of its existence. How can a Nation turn its focus to deal with the ever occurring outside threats if it does not acknowledge the internal threats? The damage to the economy, military capabilities, and public health will be detrimental to the current world power that is the United States. In a weakened state, the U. S. will become increasingly vulnerable to foreign attacks, whether militarily or politically.

- Climate Change Threatens A Majority Of Mission-critical ...” *New York Times* . N. p., n. d. Web. 26 Sep. 2019 <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/01/18/dod-majority-of-miss>.
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