Climate change and the military
In China, Russia, the UK and the USA

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Climate change as a security issue

- Great prominence 2007/2008
  - Nobel Peace Prize for IPCC and Al Gore
- But has this translated into security policy?
  - Assumptions, perceptions, understandings, believes
  - Behaviour, practices
- Effects of securitization moves
Earlier analysis of climate change securitization moves

• **Detraz and Betsil (2009)**
  - 23 major documents emerging from the policy debate on climate change between the late 1990s and 2008
  - Predominance of 'environmental security'
  - Few references to 'environmental conflict'

• **Gleditsch and Nordas (2009)**
  - IPCC Reports AR3, AR4
  - Several instances of claims to 'environmental conflict', with little substantiation
Brzoska (2009)

- Five widely received policy reports on security implications of climate change
- Ambiguous mixture of security concepts
- Some references to an 'environmental threat'
- Emphasis on mitigation strategies

Oels (2009, 2011)

- Selected academic and policy literature on climate change and security
- Major discursive shift after 2006 away from causes of climate change to consequences
- Greater emphasis on adaptation and consequence management

Hartmann (2010)

- Diverse set of documents on climate change and security
- Shift towards a “neo-Malthusian degradation narrative”
- Serving the interests of the military
• Brzoska (2012)

• Analysis of 24 national security doctrines and similar

  Dominance of „environmental security“ perspective
  Minority (7 cases) of „environmental conflict“ or „environmental threat“ perspective
  Few suggestions for future role of armed forces
  Few concrete measures

• Analysis of 27 defense planning documents

  - Dominant measure: disaster management (15 cases)
  - 4 cases of planning for mitigation
Case studies of US, UK, Russia, China

- Major military powers
- Major political players in climate change policies

Five core issue areas:

- Mitigation efforts
- Dangers for military installations
- Potential conflict in the Arctic
- Military operations in crisis situations
- Disaster relief
United States

- Mitigation efforts
  - Detailed planning
  - Leading role of the US Naty
  - Recent shift in justification: energy security

- Dangers for military installations
  - Studies particularly by the US Naty

- Potential conflict in the Arctic
  - Embedded in larger Arctic policy
  - National security important element but military component unclear
  - Stress on cooperation

- Military operations in crisis situations
  - General understanding of the importance
  - Studies
  - No concrete planning

- Disaster relief
  - General understanding of the importance
  - Studies
  - No concrete planning
• United Kingdom

• Mitigation efforts
  ■ Detailed planning
  ■ Recent deemphasis

• Dangers for military installations
  ■ Studies with low priority

• Potential conflict in the Arctic
  ■ No specific policy

• Military operations in crisis situations
  ■ General understanding of the importance
  ■ Studies with other UK government departments
  ■ No concrete planning

• Disaster relief
  ■ General understanding of the importance
  ■ Studies with other government departments
  ■ No concrete planning
Russia

- Mitigation efforts
- Dangers for military installations
- Potential conflict in the Arctic
  - Embedded in broader arctic policy emphasising economic and political interests
  - Planning for increased military presence
- Military operations in crisis situations
- Disaster relief
  - Generally accepted as major role for the armed forces
China

- Mitigation efforts
  - Some activities by PLA (tree planting)

- Dangers for military installations
  - Some internal discussion in the PLA

- Potential conflict in the Arctic

- Military operations in crisis situations
  - Some internal discussion in the PLA

- Disaster relief
  - Generally accepted as major role for the armed forces
- **United States**
  - Opposition to Bush-Administration view of climate change
  - Leading role of US Navy
  - Changed emphasis under Obama
  - Mostly studies and trials

- **United Kingdom**
  - Following aggressive climate change policy by the Blair/Brown administrations

- **Russia**
  - Priority of military modernization

- **China**
  - Emphasis on non-controversial activities
  - Internal discussion in the PLA suppressed by the government?