

On the connection between nuclear war risk and climate change

Karl Hans Bläsius, 18.12.2020

Link to this document www.fwes.info/akav-klima-20-1-en.pdf

See also <https://unintended-nuclear-war.eu/> and <https://mgak.eu/gb/>

Since 2007, the doomsday clock has also taken into account climate change and progress on international agreements to limit global warming. Climate change will lead to various regions becoming uninhabitable. Rising sea levels threaten many regions in Asia in particular. Particularly affected are the large river deltas, where more than 200 million people live. Extreme heat waves could make parts of North Africa and the Middle East uninhabitable, according to a report by the Max Planck Society on 29 April 2016. More than 500 million people live there and are already severely affected by climate change.¹

If large numbers of people have to leave their homes because they are uninhabitable as a result of climate change, this will inevitably lead to more political crises, tensions and perhaps even armed conflicts between states. The same applies to the struggle for increasingly scarce resources such as water or raw materials, which are needed by the industrialised nations.

US political scientist Michael T. Klare sees great dangers from climate change in regions that are already unstable (e.g. India, Pakistan). A lack of water and food caused by climate change could lead to the collapse of societies and strengthen terrorism, with the risk that nuclear weapons of such nations could fall into the wrong hands.²

Climate change and the risk of nuclear war can also have a negative impact on each other. Arms races worsen relations between nuclear powers, which can lead to a decline in willingness to reach climate agreements between these nations. Without an appropriate agreement, climate change will worsen, which may lead to nations being pressured on environmental issues, becoming unstable, further arming and possibly using military force, including nuclear weapons.³

Climate change will also increase the dangers posed by early warning and decision-making systems. Alerts in such tense situations are more likely to be taken seriously and could lead to nuclear war by mistake.

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¹ <https://www.mpg.de/10479763/klimafluechtlinge-naher-osten-nordafrika-klimawandel>

² Michael T. Klare: All Hell Breaking Loose - The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change, Henry Holt & Company Inc, 2019, see also: <https://www.thenation.com/article/nuclear-defense-climate-change/>

³ Jürgen Scheffran: Climate Change, Nuclear Risks and Nuclear Disarmament – from Security Threats to Sustainable Peace. Hamburg: World Future Council, 2011, https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WFC_2009_Climate_Change_Nuclear_Risks_and_Nuclear_Disarmament.pdf