

BRIEFING ROOM

Fact Sheet: Prioritizing Climate in Foreign Policy and National Security

OCTOBER 21, 2021 • STATEMENTS AND RELEASES

From Day One, the Biden-Harris Administration has prioritized addressing the climate crisis both at home and as a core element of our national security and foreign policy. The climate crisis is reshaping our physical world, with the Earth's climate changing faster than at any point in modern history and extreme weather events becoming more frequent and severe. In just 2021, wildfires raged across the western United States, throughout the Mediterranean region, and eastern Russia; Europe, China, and India experienced extreme flooding, and the world has suffered unprecedented levels of drought. The scientific community is clear: human activities have directly contributed to climate change. We are already experiencing the devastating impacts that climate has wreaked on almost every aspect of our lives, from food and water insecurity to infrastructure and public health, this crisis is exacerbating inequalities that intersect with gender, race, ethnicity, and economic security. We have reached a point where we cannot reverse some of the changes to the climate system.

Today the Biden-Harris Administration released a suite of analyses from core national security and foreign policy components of the U.S. Government, in coordination with the National Security Council staff, that will serve as a foundation for our critical work on climate and security moving forward. Today's announcements fulfill key requirements of both the January 27 Executive Order (EO) 14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad to put the climate crisis at the center of U.S. foreign policy and national security and the February 29 Executive Order (EO) 14013 on Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs to Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration.

Today's announcements also reinforce the President's commitment to evidence-based decisions guided by the best available science and data. While national security agencies led the development of these analyses, the nation's premier science agencies played a central role in ensuring the best available science and data were included in each product.

ODNI National Intelligence Estimate on Climate Change. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) oversaw the development of the first-ever National Intelligence

Estimate (NIE) on Climate Change. The NIE is the most authoritative assessment from the Intelligence Community (IC) and represents the consensus view of all 18 IC elements. The U.S. Federal Science Agencies provided the baseline observational data and climate modeling that enabled the IC to conduct the geopolitical analysis of the implications and risks to the United States. Signed by Director Haines on [October 20, 2021], the NIE meets the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 14008, Section 103 (b).

Climate change will increasingly exacerbate a number of risks to U.S. national security interests, from physical impacts that could cascade into security challenges, to how countries respond to the climate challenge. While the IC judges that all of these risks will increase and that no country will be spared from challenges directly related to climate change.

The three broad category of risks are: 1) increased geopolitical tension as countries argue over who should be doing more, and how quickly, and compete in the ensuing energy transition; 2) cross-border geopolitical flashpoints from the physical effects of climate change as countries take steps to secure their interests; and 3) climate effects straining country-level stability in select countries and regions of concern.

The full unclassified findings of the National Intelligence Council's National Intelligence Estimate on Climate Change are available [here](https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/NIE_Climate_Change_and_National_Security.pdf) :

https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/NIE_Climate_Change_and_National_Security.pdf

Department of Defense Climate Risk Analysis. Both climate change threats and the global efforts to address climate change will influence U.S. defense strategic interests, relationships, competition, and priorities. The Department of Defense (DOD) Climate Risk Analysis (DCRA)—the first Pentagon report focused on the strategic risks of climate change—provides a starting point for a shared understanding of these risks and lays out a path forward. The DCRA describes how DOD will integrate climate considerations into strategic, planning, budget, and other key documents, as well as engagements with allies and partners. Inclusion of climate considerations across these documents will ensure that DOD considers the effects of climate change at every level, which will be essential to train, fight, and win in an increasingly complex environment.

Signed by Secretary Austin on October 8, 2021, the DCRA meets the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 14008, Section 103(c). As the global and cross-cutting consequences of climate change increase demands on the Department of Defense, the DCRA provides a starting point for a shared understanding of the strategic and mission risks of climate change and lays out a path forward. Climate considerations will be included in key DOD documents, such as the

forthcoming National Defense Strategy, which guides the ways DOD meets national security challenges. Additionally, the DCRA will inform how the Department incorporates climate considerations into its engagements with allies and partners. For example, DOD worked closely with NATO Allies to develop a Climate Change and Security Agenda and subsequent Action Plan in June of this year.

With a focus on strategic and mission risk, the DCRA is complementary to the recently released Climate Adaption Plan (CAP), which is focused on ensuring that DOD can operate under changing climate conditions. DOD will also work in coordination with allies and partners, to prevent, mitigate, account for, and respond to defense and security risks associated with climate change.

The full unclassified version of DOD's Climate Risk Analysis is available here.

<https://media.defense.gov/2021/Oct/21/2002877353/-1/-1/0/DOD-CLIMATE-RISK-ANALYSIS-FINAL.PDF>

Department of Homeland Security Strategic Framework to Address Climate Change. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is on the frontlines of the climate crisis, with a duty to safeguard the homeland from today's increasingly severe, frequent, and destructive climate change related emergencies, forecasting and preparing for future risks and opportunities created by tomorrow's challenges. DHS supports all communities by leading through acute crises and envisioning the actions needed to increase our future resilience. As part of that mandate, today DHS is releasing the Strategic Framework for Addressing Climate Change, signed by Secretary Mayorkas on [October 20, 2021], to lead adaptation to changes in the climate risk landscape resulting from strategic competition, demographic trends, aging infrastructure, and emerging technology.

The Strategic Framework will guide DHS's implementation of President Biden's Executive Order on addressing the impacts of climate change at home and abroad, and includes the five lines of effort: empowering individuals and communities to develop climate resilience; building readiness to respond to increases in climate-driven emergencies; incorporating climate science into strategy, policy, programs, and budgets; investing in a sustainable and resilient DHS; and ensuring the DHS workforce is informed on climate change. The need to achieve equity will be a guiding principle throughout each line of effort described in the Strategic Framework.

The Framework was developed through the first-ever DHS Climate Change Action Group (CCAG), comprised of senior officials from across the Department and focused on promoting resilience and addressing multiple risks, including flooding, extreme heat, drought, and

wildfires.

The Strategic Framework can be found here: [DHS Strategic Framework for Addressing Climate Change | Homeland Security](#)

Report on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration. In Executive Order 14013, President Biden called for an assessment of the impact climate change is having on migration. This assessment marks the first time the U.S. Government is officially recognizing and reporting on this linkage. The report identifies migration as an important form of adaptation to the impacts of climate change and in some cases, an essential response to climate threats, to livelihoods and wellbeing; therefore it requires careful management to ensure it is safe, orderly, and humane. Development and humanitarian assistance programs help address underlying causes of forced migration and displacement in the face of insecurity. Addressing individuals' human security can decrease the likelihood of migration and the second-order implications for international security. It is critical to approach these efforts in a way that acknowledges that in almost all cases climate change is not the sole driver of migration.

The National Security Council staff is also establishing a standing interagency working group on climate change and migration to coordinate U.S. Government efforts to mitigate and respond to migration resulting from the impacts of climate change. Through this working group, representatives from across the scientific, development, humanitarian, democracy and human rights, and peace and security elements of the U.S. Government will work together to coordinate U.S. policy, strategy, and budgeting affecting populations vulnerable to climate impacts. Given that climate-induced weather extremes will grow in severity in unexpected ways, this working group will provide a venue for developing long-term strategies consistent with the evolving scientific understanding of climate impacts, such as those communicated through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.S. National Climate Assessment.

The Report on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration can be found here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Report-on-the-Impact-of-Climate-Change-on-Migration.pdf>

###