

Pentagon report warns of climate change threats to national security

October 13, 2014

Climate change “poses immediate risks to U.S. national security,” according to a Pentagon report released on October 13. The report lays out an “adaptation roadmap” that identifies challenges that may be exacerbated in the future by rising global temperatures and outlines strategies to manage them.

The report identifies climate-specific risks, such as military bases affected by rising sea level or increased demand for disaster relief after severe weather events, as well as broader issues, such as climate acting as a “threat multiplier” that will complicate issues such as infectious disease and armed insurgencies. The roadmap emphasizes the importance of domestic and international cooperation in facing these challenges that will cross agency lines and national borders.

Critics of the report suggested that resolving ongoing military conflicts in Syria and Ukraine may be a more appropriate use of the Pentagon’s time and resources. However, defenders of the report point to the role climate plays in current and future humanitarian issues that can increase tensions in unstable regions, leading to unrest and potential military involvement.

Sources: Department of Defense, E&E News
