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THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE AND SECURITY

Fact Sheet: Climate as a Security Risk According to Secretary of Defense, General James Mattis, USMC (Ret)



Under both Republican and Democratic Administrations, senior U.S. military, national security and foreign policy leaders have recognized the security risks of climate change, and urged a response that is commensurate to the threat. The latest to join this list is Secretary of Defense, General James Mattis, USMC (Ret), (March, 2017)

In his responses to the Senate Armed Services Committee's Questions for the Record, Secretary Mattis stated:

- “Climate change is impacting stability in areas of the world where our troops are operating today. It is appropriate for the Combatant Commands to incorporate drivers of instability that impact the security environment in their areas into their planning.”
- “Climate change can be a driver of instability and the Department of Defense must pay attention to potential adverse impacts generated by this phenomenon.”
- “As I noted above, climate change is a challenge that requires a broader, whole-of government response. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of Defense plays its appropriate role within such a response by addressing national security aspects.”
- “I agree that the effects of a changing climate — such as increased maritime access to the Arctic, rising sea levels, desertification, among others — impact our security situation. I will ensure that the department continues to be prepared to conduct operations today and in the future, and that we are prepared to address the effects of a changing climate on our threat assessments, resources, and readiness.”