



## Climate Change and the Energy Crisis: A National Security Threat

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that climate change is "unequivocal" and "most of the warming of the past 50 years is very likely (90%) due to increases in greenhouse gases." Twelve of the last thirteen years are the warmest years since temperatures were first recorded. Warming temperatures and altered precipitation patterns create an atmosphere for global instability. These environmental changes will spark unprecedented human migrations, increased border tensions, conflicts over essential resources, and greater international demands for rescue and evacuation efforts.

### U.S. Dependence on Foreign Oil Increases Our Vulnerability to Terrorists

#### **The United States is financing hostile regimes.**

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the United States imported nearly 170 million barrels of crude oil from OPEC nations in April 2008. With imported crude costs at record highs, American oil dependence facilitated an \$18 billion transfer of wealth from American consumers to a cartel that includes some of the most dangerous regimes in the world. With prices expected to remain high throughout 2008, the United States will send nearly \$230 billion into OPEC nations' national coffers this year. These petrodollars will be allocated with minimal transparency by a handful of governments that are hostile to both the United States and Israel, creating profound national security risks for our democracies, our economies, and our citizens.

#### **Oil is at the root of international conflicts.** Iran is emboldened by the 132.46-billion barrels of oil

within its borders. In Darfur, oil fields have been a major factor preventing the UN and the world from taking stronger action against the Sudanese government. This silence has led to between 200,000 and 400,000 deaths, countless rapes, and the displacement of more than 2.5-million people. If it were not for oil, the global community would be better equipped to stop Iran's quest for nuclear weapons and the genocide in Darfur.

**Oil infrastructure is vulnerable to terrorist attack.** In a videotape released last December, deputy al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri identified energy infrastructure as a key strategic target. Just two months later, suicide bombers in Saudi Arabia attacked the Abqaiq oil processing facility, where two-thirds of the country's output – 6.8 million barrels per day – is refined.

"Climate change acts as a **threat multiplier** for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world. Projected climate change will seriously exacerbate already marginal living standards in many Asian, African, and Middle Eastern nations, causing widespread political instability and the **likelihood of failed states.**"

-- Center for Naval Analysis,  
"National Security and the Threat of Climate Change"

## Climate Change Will Have Destabilizing National Effects

**Changes in precipitation patterns and glacial melt will reduce fresh water supplies.** Forty percent of the world's population depends on summer melt of glaciers for its water supply, but these glaciers are shrinking. Most countries in the Middle East and northern Africa are already water scarce. The World Resources Institute projects that water scarcity will double by 2040. Already, desertification in the Darfur region has compounded tensions between nomadic herders and agrarian farmers, providing the environmental backdrop for genocide. These tensions could be replayed around the world. Indeed, roughly two-thirds of the Arab world depends on sources outside its borders for water.

**Increasing temperatures will impair food production.** Every 1.8° F increase in temperature can cause a 10% decrease in grain production. The IPCC predicts that declining rainfall can reduce agricultural yields in parts of Africa by 50% by 2020.

**Rising sea levels will displace millions of people.** Two thirds of the world's population lives near coastlines. Rising sea levels will destroy critical infrastructure, contaminate groundwater, and destroy croplands. By 2100, sea-level rise has the potential to displace tens of millions of people from low-lying areas.

"When a government can no longer deliver services to its people, ensure domestic order, and protect the nation's borders from invasion, **conditions are ripe for turmoil, extremism and terrorism** to fill the vacuum"  
-- Center for Naval Analysis, "National Security and the Threat of Climate Change"

## Climate Change Will Have Direct Impacts on Military Systems and Operations

**Severe weather conditions impede military activity.** Climate change will increase the frequency of intense storms and alter precipitation patterns. Weather patterns influence military activity. For instance, during the Persian Gulf War sandstorms delayed or halted operations and damaged military equipment. In March 2003, a major sandstorm forced suspension of military activity for three days in Iraq.

**Military infrastructure is vulnerable to rising sea levels.** In 1992, Hurricane Andrew decimated Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, forcing its permanent closure. In 2004, Hurricane Ivan caused Naval Air Station Pensacola to close for nearly a year. Rising sea levels threaten to inundate military installations worldwide.

**High fuel demand increases the expense of military operations.** In Iraq, 2.4 million gallons of fuel is moved through dangerous territory each day. Fuel demand increases operating costs and makes military troops vulnerable to attack.

*The development of fair, just, and effective climate and energy policies is essential to the economic and social well-being of our country, to our national security, to the maintenance of an independent United States foreign policy, and to world stability. Please support America's Climate Security Act.*

Questions? Contact Jennifer Kefer, Climate and Energy Program Coordinator for the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) -- [jennifer@coejl.org](mailto:jennifer@coejl.org) or 202-212-6034