

**Open Panel – European Initiative on Security Studies (EISS)
27 June 2019, Sciences Po, Paris**

Title of the panel: Climate change and security actors

Abstract of the panel:

This panel gathers contributions, which study climate change from the perspective of security actors, on both national and sub-national levels. Defense establishments, military actors and governmental stakeholders are indeed bringing new elements to the traditional debate on environmental and climate security, which received great scholarly attention in recent years. So far, studies on climate security in international relations have mostly focused on governance and international negotiations but have paid little attention to the adaptation strategies of states and local communities. The four papers aim to challenge this traditional perspective drawing on various methodologies and disciplines (anthropology, political science, sociology, economy). They intend to grasp the wide range of policy changes and social interactions conveyed by climate change, and their implications for both security and military actors. These new features include innovative strategic doctrines that study the impacts of climate change on national security, growing day-to-day interactions between military actors and local communities in remote areas because of climate disruption, or new national strategies from security actors who try to cope with climate change in the Polar Regions. All these papers build on recent fieldworks and updated data, while discussing different analytical frameworks that address the complex and often simplified connections between climate change and security.

Panel Chair: Krystel Wanneau (Free University Brussels (ULB) / Laval University)

Participants:

Florian Vidal (Paris II), Dhanasree Jayaram (Manipal Academy of Higher Education – University of Lausanne), Adrien Estève (Sciences Po – CERI), Mikaa Mered (ILERI-NEOMA)

Abstracts:

Florian Vidal (Paris II): *Norway and the Arctic: Climate Policy and Energy Paradigm*

As the Polar region gathers a load of challenges (i.e. climate change, resources management, opening transport routes, etc.) affecting local communities, it engages public authorities and other stakeholders including civil society to meet them. Also, it has been for 25 years a space for backing climate policy and environment. Norway is exposed to major negative impacts due to climate change effects on its territory, specifically on its coastline. Public authorities published key assessments on costs and needed adaptation in the coming decades. Besides, the Nordic country stands as a specific player on the Arctic stage. On the one hand, Norway is committed to implement international agreements to fight global carbon emissions. The country is shifting toward a free-carbon model as transportation and infrastructures has to meet critical objectives to reduce CO₂ emissions. On the other hand, the state is still relying on fossil fuel resources for its economic development, despite the emergency of the climate crisis. For over 50 years, Norway has based its social model on the oil and gas industry. Its government holds several O&G projects in the Barents Sea. This paper will discuss the current strategy in term of energy development. This strategy retains two aspects. The first one is

dedicated to the energy model shifting promoted for internal policies. The second one is oriented to the international energy market as the state and key energy stakeholders maintain O&G projects in the Arctic as the economic future of the country. What are the consequences of such a dichotomy? Is there any division among stakeholders? What are the implications in term of security?

Dr. Dhanasree Jayaram, Assistant Professor, Department of Geopolitics and International Relations, Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE); Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Lausanne, Switzerland - *Regionalisation of Environmental Security and the Role of the Military: South Asia as a Case in Point*

While environmental security is regarded as global challenge, there is an increasing move towards 'regionalisation', with challenges that are shared by countries, characterized by geographical adjacency, historical-cultural similarities and/or institutional frameworks. Also, conflicts related to environmental security are known to be more regionally oriented, at times calling for regional environmental peacebuilding initiatives. Concomitantly, the military's role is increasingly becoming critical in addressing transboundary environmental security challenges such as disasters worldwide. South Asia, a region that is known for political and territorial tensions, has many common environmental vulnerabilities that intermingle with political disputes and hold the potential to trigger (geo)political tensions with military implications. At the same time, there exist formal and informal frameworks, some of which involve military-to-military cooperation, that promote environmental security in the region. However, their scope and efficacy are limited by various factors, including (geo)political. In this context, the paper delves into the concept of environmental security from a regional perspective, by paying equal attention to varying perceptions of environmental security that prevail in individual countries of South Asia. It identifies the primary environmental security challenges in South Asia as well as analyses the interplay between environmental security, (geo)political context and the military's role using examples like the militarisation of Siachen glacier (world's highest battleground). The paper then charts out cooperative frameworks in the region, involving the military (such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium), especially targeted at Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). The paper, in essence, presents the military dimensions of environmental conflict and environmental cooperation in South Asia; and investigates whether the scope for conflict is more than cooperation in the regional context.

Adrien Estève (Sciences Po – CERD): *Climate change and the US military: changes and continuities under the Trump administration*

Over the last decades, the United States Department of Defense has started to think about climate change and its implications for national and global politics. Following Donald Trump's elections, many commentators predicted a substantial revising of both environmental and defense policies at the federal level, which would represent a radical change in comparison to the policies implemented under the Obama administration. Regarding environmental policies within the Department of Defense, we could argue that, if we can identify substantial changes, many programs, bureaus and policies initiated under the Obama administration are still in

operation. It is possible to explain this apparent paradox through a brief history of how environmental and climate-related issues became relevant for the military. In the 90s and the 2000s, the military, under increasing normative pressure, began to adapt its equipment, procedures and doctrines to new sustainable norms (a “greening” of the military). These efforts began in the 80s and the 90s and peaked in the early 2000s with the creation of environmental bureaus charged with enforcing ecological norms and codes of conduct, on both material and operational levels. The most important element, however, is that the Department of Defense started to incorporate climate change into its strategic doctrine. This is partly the consequence of the work of military analysts, think tanks and research centers close to the military establishment. This translation of the issue into military terms stay relevant under the current administration. This paper will present the result of a fieldwork conducted in April 2019 in the United States.

Mikaa Mered (ILERI-NEOMA): *Money Rather Than Muscles: China’s Approach to Post-Polar Arctic Security*

As the Arctic and Antarctic become more accessible and new opportunities emerge thanks to climate change and renewed strategic interest from decision-makers all around the world, new traditional and non-traditional security issues need to get addressed. Indeed, with large parts of the Polar regions entering a new “post-polar” state, and new technologies enabling new legal loopholes to appear, and new power vacuums to materialize, some states manage to build capacity, let alone a strategic edge, in these new geo-political and geo-economic frontier regions. In particular, China has managed to secure a regional leadership position in both Polar regions, in less than 20 years, by taking advantage of all these aforementioned changes. This paper aims at describing China’s Polar influence build-up and assessing its possible associated political costs. Thanks to direct financing capabilities on the one hand, and to a massive scientific capacity build-up on the other hand, China has earned the ability to act on the Arctic actors’ aspirations for economic development and political emancipation and has now earned enough influence, both at the Arctic and Antarctic tables, to start acting on the regions’ long-established governance mechanisms and so-called “diplomatic spirits”. With that said, this paper argues that, while China is clearly challenging the existing Arctic non-traditional security equilibriums and should be able to continue doing so at little political cost, it however cannot afford to force its way in the Arctic from a traditional security point of view.