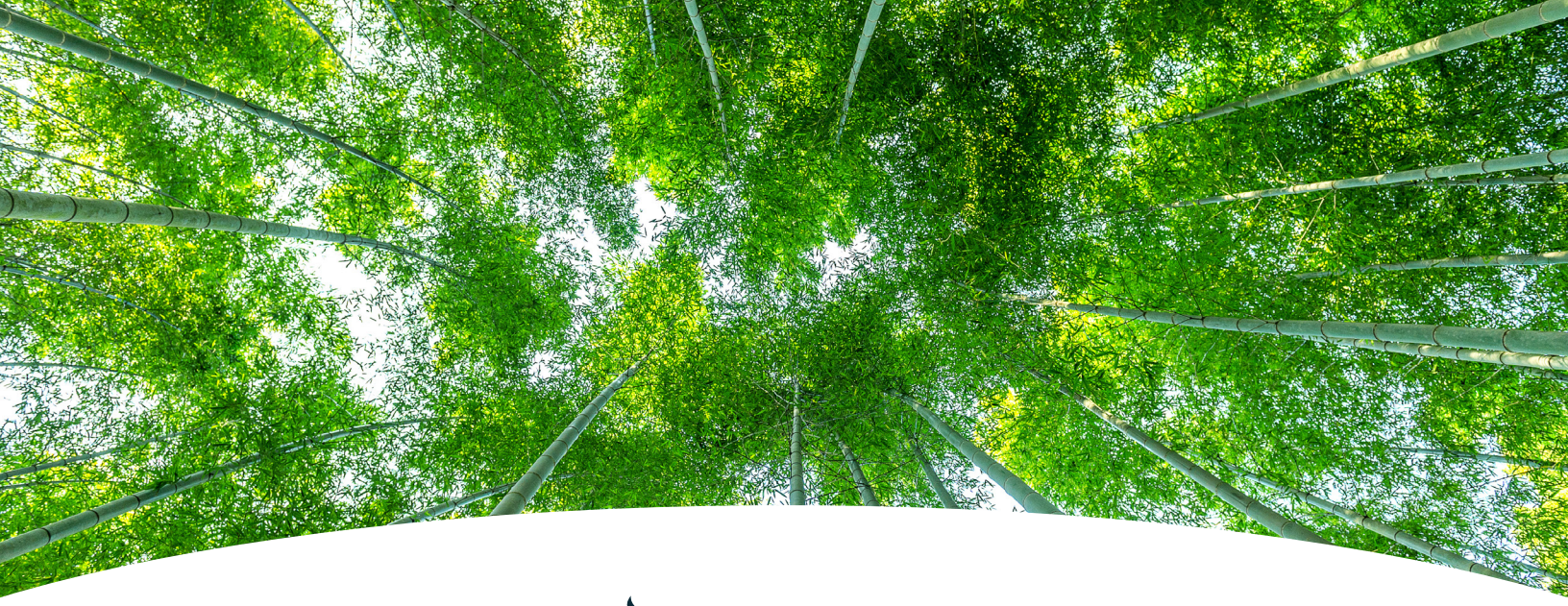

TRUMAN CENTER

Climate & National Security: Supporting COP26 Goals

Talking Points

December 2021

OVERVIEW

Populations around the world are experiencing the tangible effects of climate change as a "threat multiplier" with increasing frequency. Both shocks and stresses of climate events are on the rise, with a recent report from a UN panel of experts calling the situation a "code red for humanity" and underscoring that climate change "is widespread, rapid, and intensifying, and some trends are now irreversible." In this context, the stakes – and expectations – were necessarily high for global leaders at the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Glasgow (COP26). Progress was made, but more must be done to address climate change and its exacerbating risks to national security, economic prosperity, and social and environmental justice.

In the context of COP26's broad goals, this document offers guidance for discussing climate change with U.S. stakeholders who focus on national security.

COP26 GOALS

The Presidency of COP26 declared four main goals for the summit:

Goal 1: Secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5° (or 2.7°) within reach.

Goal 2: Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats.

Goal 3: Mobilize finance.

Goal 4: Work together to deliver on commitments and achieve collective goals.

Key COP points of consensus & takeaways include the following:

- Parties approved carbon market and transparency frameworks, concluding the so-called "Paris Rulebook" and paving the way for full implementation (at the Party-level[1]) of the Paris Agreement, which was signed at COP21.
- Developed countries renewed their 2009 COP15 pledges to provide US $100bil in annual climate financing to developing countries, but delayed the timeline to meet that commitment back to 2023.
- Parties established a work program defining global goals on adaptation[2] and strengthened mechanisms supporting countries already addressing and managing significant loss and damage from climate shifts.
- By the end of 2022, parties committed to "revisit and strengthen" their 2030 emission targets to align with the goals of the Paris Agreement to keep global temperature increases to 1.5°C or under.
- Parties agreed to consider further action to curb potent non-CO2 gases (e.g., methane) and explicitly referenced shifting away from coal and phasing down coal and fossil fuel subsidies.
- Parties recognized the importance of protecting and preserving nature for reducing emissions and building resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- Influential coalitions provided additional political and financial momentum to carry parties towards their goals with their own significant adjacent commitments. For example, financial sector representatives pledged to align their work with climate sustainability to facilitate global net-zero emissions by 2050.

1 The "Paris Rulebook" contains the agreed-upon "tools and processes" for implementation of the Agreement at the Party-level. Its purpose is to "translate the … Agreement into a functioning system" by articulating guidelines for "how countries plan their individual contributions, how they implement their efforts and how they review individual and collective progress to strengthen climate commitments over time." It also "address[es] how to track and mobilize finance and support for developing countries to curb emissions and adapt to increasingly severe climate impacts."

2 As defined by the UNFCCC, climate "adaptation" refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. It refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change."

Climate Security Talking Points

General

- As a threat multiplier, climate change and its hazards are exacerbating conditions that lead to mass migration, shifting geopolitical landscapes, and resource-driven conflict.
- Climate change imperils the economy, damages infrastructure, and prevents military readiness. Climate events risk the disruption of vital supply chains; damage to critical infrastructure (including energy transmission); depletion of military readiness; increase mass migration and displacement; and cost taxpayers billions in response, repair, and inefficiencies.
- If climate change rises even 0.5°C more, it will significantly worsen the risk of drought, floods, extreme heat, water stress, food insecurity, and poverty for hundreds of millions of people around the world.
- If the parties to Paris do not aggressively reduce their emissions beyond their original Paris pledges, global temperatures are on-target to rise more than 2°C over pre-industrial levels.
- Climate change affects all aspects of society and everyone in it, so issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion cannot be separated from our solutions. We need to harness the full wealth of our human talent, scientific, intellectual, and other resources to face the challenges that climate change presents. Only through including and reflecting the full diversity of our society in our climate plans will we have the best chance for long-term resilience, security, and success.

Hard Security/Military

- Our reliance on oil endangers the lives of our men and women in uniform, leaves America dependent on hostile regimes, wastes trillions of dollars, and accelerates climate change.
- Investing the resources to restructure our military's dependence on fossil fuels will reduce our entanglements with governments boasting a legacy of human rights violations and a history of hostility towards the United States.
- Climate risks affect the readiness and functionality of the U.S. military by thwarting regular training and evaluation of personnel and equipment and generating higher replacement and repair costs that stretch military resources.
- Climate change's impacts do not distinguish between civilian and military facilities and equipment. Tropical storms and hurricanes, flash floods, sea surges, droughts, and fire have inflicted billions in damage to dozens of U.S. military installations. From Naval Air Station Key West to early warning and communications systems in the Arctic, no service branch has been spared.

GeoStrategic

- With strategic competitors like China increasing their investments in sustainable energy technology, including rapid acquisition of natural resources necessary to develop and manufacture electric vehicles and batteries, the United States needs to make significant investments in the research and production of sustainable energy technology to protect its place as a green tech and green economy leader.
- Rapidly retreating Arctic sea ice introduces new strategic opportunities and challenges for military and commercial expansion in the region, but also increases opportunities and challenges for tensions amongst Arctic nations and between Great Powers - including China, which has declared itself a "near Arctic" nation.
- Effective diplomacy, subnational partnerships, and strategic messaging are essential to meet our national security objectives and countering climate adversaries who would seek to exploit climate related security for strategic advantage. (Alexandra (Xander) Meise, TruCon 2021)

Conflict Triggers and Human Security

- Climate change's threats to human security press on long recognized social and economic triggers of human conflict, especially allocation of scarce resources. Conflict over increasingly scarce potable water, in particular, is expected to further drive the displacement of the most vulnerable, exposing millions to human rights abuses and exploitation.
- Sudden onset climate-related events (e.g., hurricanes, wildfires) and slow onset climate-related events (e.g., changing agricultural and water access patterns) continue to displace communities around the globe, forcing people to move in search of safer places to live.
- With climate-related and other environmental disasters displacing three times more people within their own countries than direct violence and conflict, the federal government recognizes climate displacement has raised humanitarian and national security concerns that must be addressed, in part, through consideration of migration pathways.
- Because climate change can force populations to cross borders and attempt to resettle outside their home countries, supporting foreign governments to reduce climate-related security risks while increasing regular migration pathways to the United States would enhance global stability and position the U.S. to capture the benefits of migration while promoting peace, security, and human rights.
- Populations that are especially vulnerable to stresses on natural resources and climate hazards are more susceptible to recruitment and radicalization from extremist groups as they are forced to fight for resources and opportunities. Destabilized regions require intervention, expenditure of military and humanitarian resources, and further contribute to political, economic, and social instability around the world. (DASD Chidi Blyden, TruCon 2021).

Subnational and Community Impacts

- Top financial regulators have warned that climate change is an emerging threat to the American economy. Climate disasters cause significant property damage, job loss, and commercial disruption. As of October 2021, eighteen climate disasters this year have resulted in more than $18 billion in U.S. economic losses.
- Climate devastation increases pressure on local economies and development partners forced to seek out emergency funding to rebuild infrastructure and respond to immediate humanitarian needs. (DASD Chidi Blyden, TruCon 2021).
- The cumulative effects of climate change strain the financial and human resources of local, state, and national governments. Recognizing this, the bipartisan infrastructure bill of November 2021 designated $47 billion for climate resilience to help communities prepare for the increasingly severe natural disasters exacerbated by climate change that are expected in the coming years. While substantial, this funding is insufficient to cover the nationwide cost of climate adaptation and resilience. For example, Texas lawmakers are seeking $26 billion to fund a flood risk reduction project for the city of Houston alone.
- As local governments experience the devastating impacts of climate change first-hand, more are mobilizing for climate action domestically and internationally. Many local leaders are ramping up engagement in global city climate networks, including C40 Climate Action Cities and ICLEI. The Cities Race to Zero campaign is working through groups like these to recruit more than 1000 cities worldwide to pledge to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieve net-zero by mid-century.

Financing & Investment Opportunities

- For the United States and all the parties of the Paris Agreement to reach the carbon emission reduction and clean energy targets[3] necessary to limit post-Industrial warming to 1.5°, we need to see an increase in investment and application of green energy technology, and we need all sectors – public, private, and civil society – working towards that objective. (Alexandra (Xander) Meise, TruCon 2021)
- Developed countries failed to fulfill their 2020 Copenhagen promise to offer at least $100 billion in annual climate action support for developing countries. On the cusp of COP26, the United States pledged to dedicate at least $11.4 billion annually by 2024; at COP26 additional countries renewed their promises to support the $100+ billion collective target. These sovereign-level commitments are only a first step: the UN Environmental Programme has estimated that by 2050, the adaptation costs facing developing countries will reach $280-500 billion annually.
- At COP26, nearly 500 private sector global financial services firms agreed to align $130 trillion in financial assets with the Paris Agreement's climate goals. Public and private sector investing in resilient infrastructure and climate-sustainable economic activities will create jobs, cut costs, and generate trillions of dollars in economic benefits. The United States can be a global leader in this space and strengthen support for global resilience funding by continuing to invest itself in climate adaptation and transitions to climate forward-looking economies.

To learn more about Truman Center for National Policy's work on climate security, or to speak with one of our experts, please email: **press@trumancnp.org**.

3 These targets include a 50% reduction in emissions by 2030 and net-zero global emissions by 2050.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

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Alexandra A.K. Meise (Truman Senior Fellow for Climate & Energy Security), "Addressing International Climate Displacement: Using Executive Authority to Rebuild U.S. Soft Power," commentary for the University of Pennsylvania's Perry World House series on Climate Change & Geopolitics (Fall 2021)

Mark Nevitt (Truman Defense Council Member), "What You Need to Know About the New Climate Security Reports," published by Lawfare (October 2021)

TruCon 2021 Climate and National Security: Green Tech as Foreign Policy panel recording featuring Alexandra (Xander) Meise, *Truman Senior Fellow for Climate & Energy Security; Shannon Kellogg, Vice President of Public Policy, Amazon;* Karen Karniol-Tambour*, Co-Chief Investment Officer for Sustainability, Bridgewater Associates; Board of Directors, Truman Center for National Policy;* Anna Shpitsberg*; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Transformation;* Chidi Blyden, *Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense.* (October 2021)

Truman Center for National Policy's Q&A series on COP26, featured on Instagram and Twitter during COP26 (November 2021)