

Backdraft: The Conflict Potential of Climate Change

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BACKDRAFT: The Conflict Potential of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

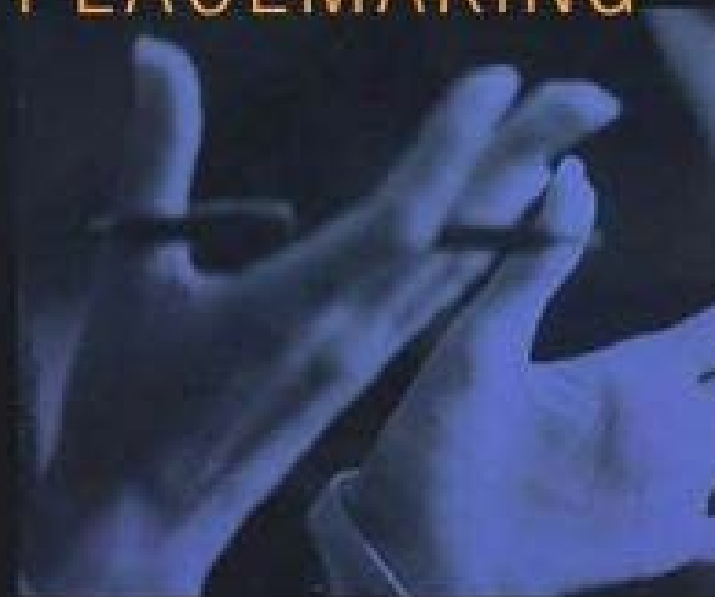
EDITED BY Geoffrey D. Dabelko, Lauren Herzer, Schuyler Null, Meaghan Parker, and Russell Sticklor



VOL. 14 | ISSUE 02



ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEMAKING



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Category 1 Climate & Conflict Links: Direct Climate Change Impacts

- Increased frequency, intensity, and/or variability of
 - Floods
 - Droughts
 - Extreme weather events
- Rising sea levels
- Increased reach of tropical diseases with warming temperatures
- Loss of natural water storage from seasonal snow melt and glacial melt declines
- Loss of seasonal sea ice

Category 2 Climate & Conflict Links: Indirect or Knock-on Climate Impacts

- **Migration** of people away from coastal and chronic drought areas
- Undercutting **economic** activity
- Decline in **agricultural** productivity
- Loss of productivity from **marine** and coastal ecosystems
- Newly open **transportation** routes and new resources accessible in the **Arctic**

Bulk of the Attention

- Are there links between climate impacts and violence? Stability?
- What impacts for wider security?
- What impacts for security institutions?



Category 3: Conflict Potential of Responding to Climate Change

- Responses to climate change could:
 - create conflict and undercut stability if done poorly
 - lower vulnerability & build resilience to benefit peacebuilding if done well



Therefore Challenge is...

- First do no harm with climate interventions
 - Avoid creating new conflicts
 - Avoid exacerbating existing conflicts
- More positively, find ways to make climate response part of larger peacebuilding or stability approach
- Capture co-benefits

Conflict Potential of Addressing Climate Change



- Increased biofuels
- Increased third country land purchasing/leasing
- Increased payments for forest set-asides
- Increased hydro
- Increased solar
- Increased nuclear

Conflict Potential of Addressing Climate Change

- New list of strategic minerals to supply a green economy
 - similar resource curse dynamics?
- Geo-engineering



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Why take Backdraft potential seriously?

- Climate response and transition to green economy so important
- Avoid undercutting rationale & support for climate response
- Potential for conflict & peacebuilding



Takeaways 1

- Must go in with eyes open
- Climate responses can be done well or poorly in many ways & must consider conflict & peacebuilding
- Direct policy relevance: Need for systematic conflict sensitive climate interventions
 - Some progress in developing principles

Takeaways 2

- Requires cross-sectoral collaborations and a seat at the table for non-traditional climate actors/solutions
- Research agenda: Peacebuilding co-benefits from climate response even less well understood than conflict potential
- History yet to be written

Many thanks!

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