

Climate change a growing security threat: Study

'Warming-Induced Drought In Mideast, Africa Is Already Leading To Conflicts Over Food & Water'

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Washington: The accelerating rate of climate change poses a severe risk to national security and acts as a catalyst for global political conflict, a report published on Tuesday by a leading government-funded military research organization concluded.

The Center for Naval Analyses Military Advisory Board found that climate change-induced drought in the Middle East and Africa is leading to conflicts over food and water and escalating longstanding regional and ethnic tensions into violent clashes. The report also found that rising sea levels are putting people and food supplies in vul-



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nerable coastal regions like eastern India, Bangladesh and the Mekong Delta in Vietnam at risk

and could lead to a new wave of refugees. In addition, the report predicted that an increase in catastrophic weather events worldwide will create more demand for American troops, even as flooding and extreme weather events at home could damage naval ports and military bases.

In an interview, secretary of state John Kerry signalled that the report's findings would influence American foreign policy.

"Tribes are killing each other over water today," Kerry said. "Think of what happens if you have massive dislocation, or the drying up of the waters of the Nile, of the major rivers in China and India. The intelligence community takes it seriously, and it's

translated into action." Kerry, who plans to deliver a major speech this summer on the links between climate change and national security, said his remarks would also be aimed at building political support for President Obama's climate change agenda, including a new regulation to cut pollution from coal-fired power plants that the administration will introduce in June.

"We're going to try to lay out to people legitimate options for action that are not bank-breaking or negative," Kerry said.

Pentagon officials said the report would affect military policy. "The department certainly agrees that climate change is having an impact on national se-

curity, whether by increasing global instability, by opening the Arctic or by increasing sea level and storm surge near our coastal installations," John Conger, the Pentagon's deputy under secretary of defence for installations and environment, said. "We are actively integrating climate considerations across the full spectrum of our activities to ensure a ready and resilient force." The report on Tuesday follows a recent string of scientific studies that warn that the effects of climate change are already occurring and that flooding, droughts, extreme storms, food and water shortages and damage to infrastructure will occur in the future.

In March, the Pentagon's

Quadrennial Defense Review, the agency's main public document describing the current doctrine of the US military, drew a direct link between the effects of global warming — like rising sea levels and extreme weather patterns — and terrorism. "These effects are threat multipliers that will aggravate stressors abroad, such as poverty, environmental degradation, political instability and social tensions — conditions that can enable terrorist activity," the review said.

Tuesday's report is an update of a report by the center's Military Advisory Board in 2007, the first major study to draw the link between climate change and national security. NYT NEWS SERVICE