

Strained Stability: Climate Change and Regional Security in Southeast Asia

Esther Babson

American Security Project

About ASP

- ▶ Founded 2005 by then Senators John Kerry, Chuck Hagel, Warren Hart and Gary Rudman
- ▶ Non-partisan, national security research organization
- ▶ Focus on the critical long term national security threats
- ▶ Board of Directors and Consensus for American Security include retired flag officers, government leaders, policy makers, and private sector stakeholders



Summary

- ▶ The coastal communities in Southeast Asia will face some of the worst impacts of climate change.
- ▶ The secondary effects from climate change will impact fisheries, undermining community security.
- ▶ Adaptation methods will define security outcomes for communities.
- ▶ Southeast Asia must prepare for increased migration and decreased community security. Bolstering community resiliency to these threats will be critical for ensuring stability.

What is Climate Security?

- ▶ Climate change is an “accelerant of instability” or threat multiplier
- ▶ Environmental changes due to climate change will lead to secondary and tertiary impacts
- ▶ Ex: Warmer temperatures-extreme and frequent drought-crop failure-instability

Southeast Asia Background



▶ Included Countries:

▶ Cambodia

▶ Indonesia

▶ Malaysia

▶ Myanmar

▶ Philippines

▶ Thailand

▶ Vietnam

▶ Environment: Tropical

▶ Religion:

▶ Most practiced faith: Islam (40% Muslim); Buddhism & Christianity

Current and Predicted Climate Impacts for Southeast Asia

- ▶ Oceans have absorbed 93% of the extra energy from greenhouse gases and approximately 30% of the anthropogenic CO₂
 - ▶ The IPCC predicts that mean sea surface temperature will increase up to 3 °C by 2100
- ▶ Southeast Asia
 - ▶ Temperature
 - ▶ Increased .2 °C per decade since 1960s
 - ▶ Predicted up to 6 °C by 2100
 - ▶ Sea Level Rise
 - ▶ Predicted to endanger 2/3 of Asian cities

Southeast Asia Effects

- ▶ Fisheries are a primary source of food and income for hundreds of millions of people and generates billions of dollars for the region
- ▶ Impact on Fish Stocks
 - ▶ Increasing temperatures and acidity
 - ▶ Loss of coral reef habitat
 - ▶ Altered species diversity and distribution
- ▶ Overfishing, combined with climate change, threatens the survival of communities
 - ▶ Livelihood
 - ▶ Sustenance

Impacts on Security

- ▶ **Adaptation Options**
 - ▶ Migration
 - ▶ Economic shifts
 - ▶ Illicit activities
- ▶ **Security Outcomes**
 - ▶ Economic instability
 - ▶ Political instability
 - ▶ State collapse



Recommendations

- ▶ **Increase intelligence sharing and coordination between countries combatting piracy, terrorism, and radicalization**
- ▶ **Develop processes to manage increased migration (both internal and international)**
- ▶ **Bolster community resiliency to threats**
- ▶ **Respond to climate change**

Questions?

- ▶ **Contact:**
- ▶ **Esther Babson**
- ▶ **American Security Project**
- ▶ **ebabson@americansecurityproject.org**