

Abstract

Evolving Perceptions of Environmental Security in NATO

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Since the endorsement of the New Strategic Concept in 1991, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has defined the environment as an element of allies' security. However, it was as early as in the 1960s that NATO began to address environmental issues. In the 1970s and 1980s, NATO set the environment as one of its political agendas, expecting that its actions in the environment would contribute to the improvement of the relationship with communist countries. The decade after the end of the Cold War manifested a clearer securitization process in the environmental sector. NATO engaged in environmental challenges with former communist countries so that such collaboration would help build confidence with those countries and construct a cooperative security system in Europe. In the aftermath of the terrorist attack in 2001, NATO began to underscore the globalization of security and discuss environmental issues in military terms. Its "comprehensive approach" includes partnerships with non-allied countries and international organizations, as well as civil-military cooperation. NATO emphasizes its military asset in dealing with climate change. Facing a geopolitical change in the Arctic, some allies are demanding the reinvigoration of collective defense function.

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