



# Resource Security Watch No. 35

January 25, 2021 **Annie Swingen, Ashlyn Pearson**

**Related Categories:** Energy Security; Science and Technology; Resource Security; Europe; Japan

## A RENEWED FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN NATIONAL SECURITY

Experts have been urging the incoming Biden administration to adopt a holistic approach in its response to climate change – one that emphasizes the national security dimensions of the phenomenon. In order to "elevate climate as a core national security priority," the new White House will need enhanced cooperation and coordination between the White House, DOD, and DHS, among other federal agencies, the Climate and Security Advisory Group laid out in its September 2019 report. A more recent panel convened by the Center for Climate and Security late last year emphasized this priority, with panelists noting that climate change represents a growing threat to national security and global stability, and arguing that the Biden administration should focus the Pentagon's prodigious budget on procuring "clean energy and preventative technologies to mitigate the effect of climate change." "We have to make climate change a key part of literally every part of government responsibilities we have," argued retired Navy Vice Adm. Dennis McGinn. (*Scientific American*, December 16, 2020)

## DIMMING THE SUN TO PREVENT GLOBAL WARMING?

Members of Harvard University's Keutsch Group, in concert with Sweden's Swedish Space Corporation, are planning an ambitious new geoengineering venture in early 2021. The researchers hope to explore the possibility of releasing sun-reflecting particles into the stratosphere via a balloon and air gondola, in an attempt to mitigate the effects of global warming. This test – known formally as the Stratospheric Controlled Perturbation Experiment, or SCoPEX- will be the first of its kind, and could potentially lead to more studies about the feasibility of releasing a non-toxic calcium carbonate dust into the atmosphere as a way to counteract atmospheric heating caused by the Sun's rays.

The project is not without its detractors, however. Germany's Heinrich Böll Foundation, for instance, has raised concerns that the experiment goes against the 2010 moratorium on geoengineering codified in the UN Convention of Biodiversity. Others have noted that the experiment – and the potential creation of "artificial sunshade" that is its goal – could create unforeseen risks, such as changes to atmospheric conditions and rainfall patterns. (Reuters, December 18, 2020)

## NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS LEAD OTTAWA TO BLOCK CHINESE MINING

Citing national security concerns, the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Canada recently blocked the purchase of a Canadian mining firm, TMAC Resources Inc., by Chinese mining concern Shandong Gold Mining Co. Similar to the U.S. government's interagency Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), Canada's *Investment Canada Act* gives Ottawa oversight over business transactions with foreign nationals as it relates to national security and their relationships with foreign powers.

In this case, the Canadian government's concerns appear to have to do with TMAC's access to strategic minerals. According to *Bloomberg*, TMAC owns the Hope Bay gold mine in Nunavut, Canada's most northerly territory, and that facility would have been included in the \$150 million purchase by Shandong. Given the mine's proximity to the Arctic, such an acquisition could potentially provide China with increased access to the Northwest Passage sea route. (*The Hill*, December 22, 2020; *Bloomberg*, December 22, 2020)

## JAPAN JOINS THE BATTLE AGAINST ILLEGAL FISHING

In early December, Japan joined the U.S. and Europe in their efforts to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing when its legislature, the Diet, passed the *Domestic Trade of Marine Animals and Plants Act*; combined, these markets account for approximately 50-60% of global seafood imports. The new law requires the submission of catch records to the government to establish traceability. For imports, a "certificate of legal catch" from a foreign government will henceforth be required. The IUU fishing industry, valued at over \$36 billion annually, accounts for 20-50% of the global catch and is also closely linked to transnational organized crime, including piracy, human trafficking, drugs and weapons smuggling and money laundering. It also undermines the economic stability of those working in coastal developing states around the world.

The *Act* still requires some refinement. However, international watchdogs like WWF Japan, Seafood Legacy Co., and The Nature Conservancy, among others, are optimistic about the measure, noting that it brings Japanese law in line with the EU and U.S. and increases the likelihood of other nations formalizing similar policies. (Stimson Center, December 4, 2020; *Seafood Source*, December 9, 2020)