



RESOURCE SECURITY WATCH

The American Foreign Policy Council's Review of
Changes to the Global Strategic Environment

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Related Categories: Energy Security; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; International Economics and Trade; Public Diplomacy and Information Operations; Resource Security; Africa; China; Europe; Russia

DROUGHT, FAMINE FACE SOMALIA

After four failed rainy seasons, Somalia is enduring its worst drought in four decades. In a statement issued in early September in conjunction with the release of the UN's "Somalia Food Security and Nutrition analysis report," Martin Griffiths, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, warned that "famine was at the door" and predicted Somalia will be hit sometime in the fourth quarter of this year. Compounding the crisis are decades of conflict and severe economic issues which have resulted in the mass displacement of the local population; experts estimate that nearly one million people have been displaced due to the most recent drought, and 50% of the country's nearly 16-million-person population is now facing crisis hunger levels. Area humanitarian aid workers report malnourished children in similar condition to those during the 2011 Somalian famine, when 260,000 people died (more than half of them children under the age of six). Griffiths' grim estimation predicts one-and-a-half-million children across Somalia will face acute malnutrition by October 2022, if current trends continue. (*Al Jazeera*, September 5, 2022; *Relief Web*, September 5, 2022)

CHINA'S DROUGHT DRIVES THE GREAT POWER COMPETITION CONVERSATION

China is facing its worst heat wave in sixty years, which has caused a drought that is drying up lakes and rivers. Southwestern China, which relies on hydropower as one of its primary energy sources, is now being forced to ration energy. The country's chemical factories and coal-fired power plants, both of which require millions of gallons of water daily for cooling, as well as factories producing auto parts and microchips for global companies, are being forced to temporarily shut down. These environmental complications, in turn, are driving the conversation over competition with China in the West, with experts arguing that the PRC's lack of preparedness to deal with climate-related disasters represents yet another reason to decouple supply chains from China. (*New York Times*, September 8, 2022)

ON COAL, BEIJING STICKS TO THE STATUS QUO

Despite signing on to the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, China's carbon emissions have increased by some 11% since, with 174 new coal mines either planned or under construction. While the non-binding agreement technically doesn't require a reduction in carbon output until 2030, China is nonetheless following a markedly different path from other signatories, including the U.S., who have worked to reduce carbon emissions by pivoting from coal to natural gas production. China, by contrast, has made minimal commitments to reduce its carbon emissions, focusing instead on economic growth and higher living standards. While the CPC is investing in renewables like hydro-electric, wind and solar power, last year coal accounted for nearly 64% of China's total power generation. (*South China Morning Post*, March 6, 2022; *Wall Street Journal*, September 16, 2022)

ANOTHER CASUALTY OF RUSSIA'S WAR IN UKRAINE: FERTILIZER

The consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine continue to mount. Recent months have seen global regions distant from the conflict, including Africa and the Middle East, impacted by energy shortages and food insecurity stemming from the disruptions caused by Russia's ongoing aggression against its western neighbor. Now, a nitrogen fertilizer shortage is hitting farmers as far away as Kenya. Russia, one of the world's principal nitrogen fertilizer suppliers, produces about 25% of global supply. While the war in Ukraine rages on, prices of the product are skyrocketing. According to Jonathan Haines of Gro Intelligence, a data analytics company specializing in global agriculture and climate, the cost of fertilizer has nearly tripled since the onset of the war. Further, due to Europe's natural gas shortages, "50-60% of capacity is just offline for nitrogen fertilizer production in Europe."

The consequences are likely to be profound. Caitlin Welsh, director of the Global Food Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, predicts that the effects of this shortage will be long-term and potentially lead to a food shortage next year. It is a concern shared by the United Nations; in September, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged member states to work to allow for the exportation of Russian fertilizer. "If the fertilizer market is not stabilized," he warned, "next year could bring a food supply crisis. Simply put, the world may run out of food. It's essential that all states remove every remaining obstacle to the export of Russian fertilizers immediately." (*NPR*, September 28, 2022)

THE FALLOUT FROM THE NORD STREAM EXPLOSIONS

In late September, Sweden and Denmark discovered more leaks in the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines carrying natural gas from Russia to Europe. NATO representatives have stressed all indicators point to "deliberate, reckless and irresponsible acts of sabotage," and laid the blame at Russia's feet. EU leaders, who have repeatedly accused Russia of holding the West's energy supplies hostage in retaliation for its support for Ukraine, followed suit and threatened the "strongest possible response" to any attack on Europe's energy infrastructure. Norway, which is not an EU member state, announced the deployment of its military to protect oil and gas installations. Russia, for its part, has denied the accusations, stating that any suggestion it attacked its own pipeline is "predictable and stupid," with the Russian Foreign Ministry instead suggesting Western-led sabotage was the cause of the explosions. (Reuters, September 29, 2022)