AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY COUNCIL



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Related Categories: Science and Technology; Resource Security; Africa; Europe; Middle East

TACKLING AFRICA'S FOOD AND FLOODING CRISIS
According to a recent UN World Food Programme (WFP) situation report, deadly floods are affecting five million people across 19 Central and West African countries, wiping out croplands, destroying homes while displacing hundreds of thousands of people and killing hundreds more. "This catastrophe resulting from climate change is one of the most severe the region has known for years, acting as a multiplier of misery for communities already struggling to keep their heads above water," Chad's interim leader, Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno, has confirmed. Experts like Ibrahim Raji, a Middlesex University-based climate researcher focusing on the region lay blame at the foot of "government negligence to environmental related issues like climate change over a period of time."

With the flooding exacerbating the region's food insecurity, the WFP is supplying a three-month emergency assistance package focusing on 427,000 flood-hit Africans residing in a number of countries, including the Central African Republic, Chad, the Gambia, Nigeria, Sao Tome & Principe, and Sierra Leone. In addition, WFP is implementing an "Anticipatory Action" program like the one already being implemented in Niger, to establish early warning systems to better prepare governments for impending climate extremes as well as mitigation measures. (Reliefweb, October 17, 2022; *New York Times*, October 17, 2022; Associated Press, October 22, 2022)

ANTICIPATING AN ENERGY TRANSITION
A report from the International Energy Agency (IEA) back in October found that fossil fuel demand will peak or plateau within a few decades. With current policies and electric vehicle sales increasing rapidly, the Agency predicts, natural gas, a low-carbon emitting fuel source, will temporarily replace oil and coal as the primary energy source until renewable energy infrastructure can completely replace fossil fuels. "'The energy world is shifting dramatically before our eyes. Government responses around the world promise to make this a historic and definitive turning point toward a cleaner, more affordable and more secure energy system'," notes the IEA's executive director, Fatih Birol. (PBS, October 27, 2022)

U.S., UAE BUILDING CLEAN ENERGY FRAMEWORK
The United States and the United Arab Emirates have signed a memorandum of understanding that calls for $100 billion in investments toward clean energy. The deal will bankroll efforts by the newly-created "Partnership for Accelerating Clean Energy" (PACE) to add up to 100 gigawatts of clean energy globally by 2035. The PACE framework centers on four pillars, according to the State Department: 1) Clean Energy Innovation, Deployment and Supply Chains, 2) Carbon and Methane Management, 3) Nuclear Energy, and 4) Industrial and Transport Decarbonization. It is intended as a way for the U.S. and UAE to invest in clean energy technologies in "emerging economies" through a series of commercial investments and strategic investments. The memorandum has political overtones as well; the United Arab Emirates, an OPEC nation, will host the COP28 climate conference in 2023, and as such is eager to present itself as a global leader on climate. (U.S. Department of State, November 1, 2022; Reuters, November 2, 2022)

THE FIGHT OVER FRENCH WATER
France, which faced its worst-ever recorded drought last summer, is increasingly dealing with water scarcity issues. In recent years, to counter the negative effects of a warming climate, the French government has been building reservoirs across the country to aid farmers during crop seasons. The move, however, is far from uncontroversial. On one hand, the government of French President Emmanuel Macron is calling the resource husbanding strategy a necessary adaptation to climate change. On the other, opponents believe the privatization of water resources is being done for the benefit of the large, commercial farmers rather than smaller farms which do not have the resources to keep their crops alive during a climate crisis.

The debate isn't strictly academic. In November, frustration with the government's water plan culminated in protests in crop fields with police in riot gear shooting tear gas to protect water reservoir assets. During these protests, in an act of what French interior minister Gérald Darmanin described as "eco-terrorism," protesters dug up and destroyed some sections of water pipes to prevent the reservoir from being fed. (*New York Times*, November 27, 2022)

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