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Introduction to Maritime Security: Focusing on Climate Change as a Lever to Generate Public Opinion on the Ocean

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1. Introduction

"Security" is defined in numerous ways, in general, it refers to "protecting the daily life of citizens from a variety of threats."[1] For example, as I write this paper, Russian forces numbering 100,000—the largest armed force since the end of the Cold War—are amassing on the Russia-Ukraine border, leading to heightened tensions.[2] This is a typical security-related case. Meanwhile, there are various threats to and means of ensuring security that can be summarized in a simple and direct proposition, namely, "How do we protect what from what?" One means of ensuring security is through maritime security. Additionally, one of the characteristics of maritime security is that it is an integral part of ocean governance.

Ocean governance is the embodiment of the "comprehensive management of the ocean," which is the objective of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).[3] In addition to "safety," which includes the "maritime security" mentioned above, its other main initiatives are "development" and initiatives related to "the environment."[4] However, as is well known, these initiatives have been undertaken individually or adaptively. Nevertheless, it has become necessary to examine policy issues that straddle the multiple fields of development, the environment, and safety, such as the recent efforts to eradicate illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and conflicts over resource development, or to indicate policies designed to deal with such issues. A prime example of this is how we deal with climate change.[5]

This paper focuses on climate change as a new threat based on the conditions surrounding security and ocean governance and examines its effect on public opinion regarding the ocean.

2. What is climate change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is an international framework for climate change, defines "climate change" as "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time

periods."[6]

The effects of climate change are expected to be widespread, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which was established collaboratively in 1988 by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), published the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report: AR5 in 2014. This document warned that, "Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive, and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems. Limiting climate change would require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions which, together with adaptation, can limit climate change risks."[7] Therefore, the way we handle climate change needs to be strongly promoted as a policy issue. However, in Japan, climate change is recognized as an environmental or economic issue,[8] not necessarily as a security issue.[9]

3. Climate change as a security threat

The common understanding of climate change in Japan has been described above, it is being understood differently abroad. For example, at a summit meeting held in Brussels in June 2021, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) first adopted the NATO Climate Change and Security Action Plan, which clarified its stance on initiatives aimed at climate change.[10] NATO's actions in this regard suggests that, despite Japan's perspective of it, climate change is also a threat to the security of the Indian Ocean region. An analysis has been published that indicates that the currently inactive Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) should function as a framework for discussing the security concerns of the countries of the Indian Ocean region, including the threat of disasters due to climate change.[11] At a meeting of the UN Security Council held in September 2021, António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, spoke about the relationship between climate change policies and peace building and pointed out the possibility that climate change is closely related to security.[12]

The regions and subjects that are the focus of these policies and opinion pieces vary. Nevertheless, one common aspect among them is that climate change is not understood simply as an environmental or economic problem; it is recognized as a problem related to security or as a threat to it. With this context as the base, the following can be considered examples of an accelerating trend: The Leaders' Summit on Climate held in April 2021[13] and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change/UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC-COP 26) held in October 2021[14]. These meetings treated climate change as an important problem in terms of diplomacy and security; additionally, the participation of Cabinet Ministers in charge of security made it clear that climate change was also recognized as threat to security in both name and reality.

4. Climate change from the perspective of the oceans

Climate change has thus come to be firmly recognized as a security threat, but most of the trends and discussions mentioned in the overview above focus on the land. The effects of climate change are observed everywhere on earth; as such, the oceans are no exception. Therefore, after the IPCC published AR5, it released the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC),[15] which is the first report that focuses on the oceans and the cryosphere (e.g., the poles, alpine regions), in 2019. Thus, it cautions about the dangers of climate change.

While it is true that climate change originates on land, the report points out that "the ocean and cryosphere regulate the climate and weather on Earth, supply food and water, support economies, trade, and transportation, shape cultures, and influence our well-being. Many of the recent changes in Earth's ocean and cryosphere are the results of human activities and have consequences on everyone's life." As this statement indicates,[16] the changes occurring in the ocean have an enormous effect.

Therefore, although more assertive initiatives are needed, this means the ocean may change into something that needs to be protected from a setting where security measures have been implemented until now. In addition, economic initiatives are also essential in order to guarantee the sustainability of any initiatives undertaken. Managing these issues is the central task of ocean governance. This may be the start of a shift from viewing climate change as a "mainly terrestrial" problem to viewing it as a "mainly oceanic" problem in the world's diplomatic and security policies.[17] In addition, this shift is supported by the fact that the basis for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is formed by "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG 13)" and "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources (SDG 14)."[18]

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I focused on climate change as a new threat based on the conditions surrounding security or ocean governance and examined its effects on creating public opinion regarding the ocean. Through my analysis, I determined that handling climate change is not only a security issue, but also an opportunity to achieve a new way for ocean governance and sustainable development. I would like to include some personal views based on these findings.

As I explained comprehensively in this paper, most of the threats to security and items that need to be protected originate from either people or groups such as nations. However, although climate change is caused by human activities, it manifests in specific phenomena in the form of abnormal weather events, such as typhoons and snowstorms. These phenomena can cause severe damage to nations and peoples. Therefore, to put it in common parlance, "this is no time to engage in war lightheartedly."

At the same time, traditional security threats such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine will not

disappear anytime soon. Hence, the construction of international relations that represent a balance of power is an initiative that will reduce war comparably and gradually. In addition, at the closing of the virtual IPCC meeting, the Russian representative stated, "Let me present an apology on behalf of all Russians not able to prevent this conflict."[19] As is apparent from this statement, although there will be major relapses and progress will be gradual, a trend toward a new international order is arising. Therefore, although climate change is an unprecedented and amorphous threat, through our attempts to deal with it, I believe we can expect new public opinion regarding the ocean to arise, which will represent a breakaway from the current "human against human" situation.

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[1] Abe H, Uchida M, Takayanagi S. eds. *Glossary of Modern Political Science* [new edition], Yuhikaku, 1999, p. 14. A specific definition would be that security is "a policy structure that should be understood comprehensively within the context of how (military/diplomatic means, methods such as those that appeal to domestic solidarity/that are useful externally) to protect what (values such as life and property, political freedom, economic prosperity, and cultural traditions) from what (threats such as military invasion, terrorism, crime, economic blockade, and natural disaster)."

[2] "US Secretary of State: Russian military maintains force of 100,000 at Ukrainian border," Nihon Keizai Shimbun (online), January 8, 2022, 6:03. "Russia fabricates excuse to justify invasion: US Intelligence Agency" Reuters (Japanese-language site), February 4, 2022, 11:58. Subsequently, on February 25, 2022—shortly before this article was completed—Russia invaded Ukraine in a move that was similar to its handling of the "Prague Spring" during the Cold War. "Russian military invades Ukraine, Putin announces military operation: US President calls for a 'decisive response,'" Jiji-tsushin (online), February 24, 2022, 13:42.

[3] Terashima H, "Problems with and future prospects for ocean governance: The formation of ocean order and the development of sustainability," Policy Opinion [*seisaku opinion*], No. 45, October 2016, pp. 1-8.

[4] Akimoto K, "The Oceanic trilemma initiative: The fusion of security and ocean management as a clue," *Ocean Newsletter* No. 6, November 2000, pp. 6-7.

[5] Regarding the term "climate variation," a distinction is made in the field of physical oceanography between climate variation and climate change. The former refers to cases in which the climate deviates from standard conditions because of some intrinsic factor, and that deviation is relatively large. However, the latter refers to cases in which standard conditions change over longer periods, and in many cases, this change is the result of some external action in the atmospheric and oceanic systems that produce the climate variation. Yamagata T, "Considering climate problems," *Ocean Newsletter* No. 200, December 2008, pp. 6–7. Nevertheless, in the present paper, I will use "climate change" to indicate "climate variation" in accordance with the usage of the terms by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and related ministries and agencies.

[6] UNFCCC, Article 1, paragraph 2.

[7] IPCC (translated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Japan Meteorological Agency, and the Ministry of the Environment) *Fifth Assessment Report (Comprehensive Report), Summary for Policy Makers and Glossary*, Ministry of the Environment, 2016, pp. 8-16.

[8] Komori Y, "Toward comprehensive climate security" (Part 5, Chapter 2) in Sakaguchi H, supervising editor, *Climate Security: Global Warming and a Free and Open Indo-Pacific*, Tokai Education Research Institute, September 2021, pp. 249-265.

[9] However, in May 2021, the Ministry of Defense established the "Climate Change Task Force" chaired by the Deputy Minister of Defense to coordinate investigations throughout the Ministry of the effect that climate change has on security. Summary of the minutes of the 1st Ministry of Defense Climate Change Task Force Conference, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/meeting/kikouhendou/pdf/gijigaiyo_01.pdf (accessed on February 1, 2022). In addition, the "2021 Defense White Paper" included a section on "The effects of climate change on the security environment and the military." It explains the awareness of the problem worldwide as well as the initiatives being taken in countries throughout the world, and it states that there is heightening awareness of climate change as a security threat. Ministry of Defense, 2021 Defense White Paper: The Defense of Japan, Nikkei Insatsu, September 2021, pp. 161-163.

[10] Nagashima J, "Climate change as a security threat: From the perspective of improving the resilience of the army," https://www.spf.org/iina/articles/nagashima_07.html (accessed on February 1, 2022).

[11] Arjun Gargeyas, "Climate Change Is the Biggest Threat to Indian Ocean Security," https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/climate-change-is-the-biggest-threat-to-indian-ocean-security/ (accessed on February 1, 2022).

[12] In this speech, he pointed out the following issues and concerns: 1. The number of people who were forced to move in 2020 owing to climate change and failures in environmental management was 30,000,000, and 90% of them

left countries whose ability to adapt to climate change was the lowest. Many of the countries that accepted these climate refugees are also developing countries that are experiencing the effects of climate change themselves, which puts pressure on the citizens and budgets of the accepting countries. The problem of climate refugees, therefore, sparked problematic repercussions in many neighboring countries. 2. In order to restrict temperature elevation to within 1.5℃, GHG emissions worldwide must be reduced by 45%. The countries of the world need to begin an ambitious review of NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) prior to COP 26, and in order to achieve that goal, specific measures need to be started immediately. 3. There is a need for measures to mitigate climate change as well as measures to adapt to and prevent disasters caused by climate change. Half of all funds should be allocated to climate change measures. In the absence of measures to adapt to climate change and measures to prevent natural disasters, it will be impossible to maintain peace and security in the world. UN chief: Window to avert devastating climate impacts "rapidly closing," https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1100912 (accessed on February 1, 2022).

[13] Climate Summit Special Feature, https://www.iges.or.jp/jp/projects/summit-climate (accessed on February 1, 2022).

[14] Kameyama Y, "The closing of COP 26: What was decided during the first COP held in the 'decisive ten years?" https://www.nies.go.jp/social/navi/colum/cop26.html (accessed on February 1, 2022).

[15] Ministry of the Environment, "The release of the 'Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere' (SROCC; Results of the 51st General Meeting) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), https://www.env.go.jp/press/107242.html (accessed on February 1, 2022). With the release of the SROCC, the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation released its policy recommendations under the title "Ten Recommendations based on the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere." The Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, "Ten Recommendations based on the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate and The Future of the Ocean: A Turning Point for the Ocean and Cryosphere," https://www.spf.org/global-data/opri/news_191015_IPCC_Rec.pdf (accessed on February 1, 2022).

[16] Ministry of the Environment, "Summary of the IPCC 'Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere,'" http://www.env.go.jp/earth/ipcc/special_reports/srocc_overview.pdf (accessed on February 1, 2022).

[17] Komori Y, "A study on new ocean security oriented toward dealing with climate change: Aiming toward abandoning a 'terrestrial-centric' view," in *OPRI-SPF MARINT Quarterly Report*, No. 34, November 2021, pp. 162-170.

[18] In the "wedding cake model" for SDGs released by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, SDG 17 is at the apex and 16 goals are arranged in three layers (economy, society, and biosphere). SDG 13 and SDG 14, which are foundational SDG goals, are in the biosphere layer. The SDGs wedding cake, https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-news/2016-06-14-the-sdgs-wedding-cake.html (accessed on February 1, 2022).

[19] "Russian representative on climate change 'apologizes for conflict,' Researcher at UN closed session on the Ukraine situation," Asahi Shimbun (online), February 28, 2022, 11:22.