

Climate change as a catalyst for rapprochement in international affairs

Rebecca Paxton

2007

Abstract

Disaster diplomacy has been used as a framework for analyzing the changes in international relations between traditionally hostile states following natural disaster events. Environmental diplomacy is similarly used regarding international environmental agreements. They are found to, on occasion, catalyse rapprochement between conflicting parties through improved diplomatic relations. This study analyses whether or not the threat of climate change has an equivalent effect by increasing cooperation, and extending this cooperation into new political areas. It argues that several characteristics of climate change and its policy responses, especially within its current multilateral regime, hinder bilateral cooperation between hostile states, though the implementation of transboundary flexibility mechanisms has the potential to spur cooperation. In contrast, the study found that diplomacy between negotiating states has been extended to unrelated policy fields, especially during the ratification stage of the Kyoto Protocol.

Introduction

International cooperation has become the norm in dealing with many issues of concern that extend beyond country borders. The extent to which states can cooperate and regulate each other's behaviour is especially important when managing the global commons; transnational resources that are owned and controlled by no one, and open for everyone to use. The atmosphere and the climate are examples of global commons.

Human induced climate change through the release of greenhouse gasses, GHGs, into the atmosphere has been hailed as the greatest challenge facing humankind¹. Certainly its effects, though as yet unclear, are likely to affect every facet of life on this planet. Following the Stern report of 2006 and the Fourth Annual Report of the IPCC of 2007, the scientific grounding of human induced climate change has become hard to contest.

Eager scientists, activists, NGOs and politicians all around the world have called for a reaction from their governments and the world community to the mounting evidence, and to take action before it is too late. In response to this, a multilateral regime has been created, and climate change agreements reached, most notably the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC, and the Kyoto Protocol. However, the different situations and incentives of the states involved have hampered this cooperation.

Some of the supposed consequences of climate change are rising sea-levels, changes in local weather patterns with higher frequency and more intense heat and drought, alternating many places with increased rainfall and flooding². It is not difficult to see the link between the process of climate change and the hazard events such as floods and droughts. However, links can be made between climate change and virtually any type of climate related hazard, for example hurricanes, tornadoes,

¹ SCHIPPER, L. & PELLING, M. (2006) Disaster risk, climate change and international development: scope form and challenges to, integration. *Disasters*, 30, 19-38.

² STERN, S. N. (2006) Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change. IN TREASURY, H. (Ed.), Cambridge University press.

snowstorms and severe lightning storms. An increase in the intensity and frequency of natural disasters has already been suggested.

Disaster diplomacy refers to the diplomatic efforts which may take place between two traditionally hostile states following a disaster event, and thereby improving relations between these states, especially when this diplomatic progress is lasting, and is exported to other policy areas. However, just as it is not possible to keep peace where there is no peace to keep, diplomacy is not possible in the absence of dialogue. Within the disaster diplomacy framework, disaster events are seen as catalysts for diplomacy, not its creator. In a sense, the disaster event becomes an excuse for opening lines of communication and cooperation.

The stronger definition of disaster diplomacy limits the diplomatic efforts to taking place within government circles, while the weaker definition also encompasses other actors such as scientists and NGOs. Interest has also been shown for the use of the disaster diplomacy framework for analysing new types of hazards, such as the hazard process associated with climate change³.

However, climate change and disaster events differ both in their phenomenology and in how they are managed in international politics. Disasters are distinct events, occurring in a particular time and location, affect relatively localised areas, and abruptly create humanitarian emergencies in varying scales. Climate change is a process, developing over time within the atmosphere. There is also much insecurity linked to the process. We cannot at present predict exactly how different states and peoples are to be affected, nor over what time period. This insecurity encourages discounting of future, long-term effects for present, short-term benefits. This issue has hampered both climate change negotiations and broader environmental policies since they were first broached.

This essay assesses the possibilities that the threat of climate change is catalysing or may catalyse cooperation and dialogue between traditionally conflicting states, and consists of five sections. The first section highlights the causes and proposed consequences of climate change. The second introduces the concept of disaster diplomacy, followed by a discussion of the differences between disasters and the process of climate change in relation to their ability to affect cooperation. International climate change cooperation, including how the climate change regime may be affecting disaster/environmental diplomacy outcomes, is discussed in section four. Finally the possible extended diplomatic outcomes of climate change cooperation is discussed.

Climate change: Causes and consequences

The Earth's climate, or "average weather", naturally fluctuates, going through successive cycles of warm and cold periods⁴. Persistent and statistically significant shifts in climate trends are considered climate change, and are determined by factors such as the chemical make-up of the atmosphere and amount of solar radiation, which affect the Earth's energy budget⁵. The warming trend which has increased mean surface temperatures by 0.7°C in the past century⁶ is understood to be the product of the altered composition of the atmosphere through rapidly increasing levels of gasses which, once in the atmosphere, trap long-wave solar radiation reflected off the Earth's surface, causing temperatures to rise, hence their name; "greenhouse gasses" (GHGs). These gasses include methane, nitrous oxide and ozone, but the main culprit is carbon dioxide, CO₂, the concentrations of which have increased by over one third since the industrial revolution of 1750AD, when fossil fuels became our main source of energy⁷. While the human effects on climate change

³ KELMAN, I. (2003) *Beyond Disaster, Beyond Diplomacy*. IN PELLING, M. (Ed.) *Natural Disasters and Development in a Globalizing World*. U.K., Routledge.

⁴ IPCC WORKING GROUP 1 (2001) *Climate Change 2001: the Scientific Basis* IN IPCC (Ed.), Cambridge University Press. Ch.1.2 p 91.

⁵ *Ibid* Ch.1.1 p 87

⁶ STERN, 2006 Ch1.2 p5

⁷ *Ibid*

are still contentious, the IPCC concluded that evidence strongly indicates that most of the trends toward global warming seen over the past 50 years are due to human activities⁸.

The current and future effects of climate change on human society are not yet fully known. A global mean temperature increase of at least 2 to 5°C by 2050 is predicted if GHG emissions remain at today's levels⁹, though temperature increases are unlikely to be evenly distributed. The lowest temperature increases are likely to take place over oceans and at low latitudes, while higher latitudes will experience greater increases. The poles are expected to be especially affected, leading to the melting of the icecaps and decreased reflection of the sun's rays¹⁰. It is possible that this may, in turn, affect global ocean currents which help regulate sea and air temperature, cycle nutrients and affect rainfall¹¹.

Climate change is a global process which may affect human societies both through the long-term warming trend and the short-term variability. In the long-term, changes in weather patterns such as increased temperatures, sea level rise and changed rainfall patterns are expected¹². This gradual change will impact upon resource availability and may thereby affect the distribution of power and wealth within and between countries¹³. It is also expected to greatly increase the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots", the developed and the developing. In the short-term, variability in the climate is expected to produce greater extremes in weather conditions, and affect climate related hazards¹⁴. Hurricane intensity is expected to increase, as is the proportion of land area suffering from drought¹⁵.

Though the industrialized nations bear most of the responsibility for the high levels of GHGs in the atmosphere today, it is those least able to affect international GHG reductions that are least capable of adapting to the process, and who are made more vulnerable because of it. The "less developed countries" have contributed less than 25 percent of cumulative GHG emissions since 1850¹⁶, but are most vulnerable to climate change. Not only are they greatly reliant upon primary resource production, they are also more dependent upon the stability of other countries' economies and politics, and susceptible to external shocks. In addition, the full effects of climate change are likely to be felt by future generations, not by those currently emitting GHGs. This further erodes the incentive of current emitters to mitigate climate change. In economic terms, climate change is an "externality"; a cost of an activity which is not borne by those engaging in the activity¹⁷.

It is highly likely that climate change will further increase the difference in living conditions between people in developed and developing countries¹⁸. Even within the borders of a single country, both in the developed and the less developed world, the resource weak, who are not able to adapt their livelihoods to a changing climate, will be worst affected. It is probable that a greater migration from the rural to urban areas, and from developing to the developed states, will follow as a consequence of destroyed livelihoods and resource scarcity, further straining existing infrastructures and resources¹⁹. Factors such as geography, politics, economy, social arrangements and culture, as well as personal health will affect the impact of climate change on peoples' lives, but

⁸ Ibid Ch 1.2 p5

⁹ Ibid Ch 1.4 p12

¹⁰ Ibid Ch 1.5 p13

¹¹ STERN, 2006 Ch1.5 p15

¹² Ibid Ch5 p14

¹³ LUTEBACHER, U. & SPRINZ, D. F. (2001) Problems of Global Environmental Cooperation. IN LUTEBACHER, U. & SPRINZ, D. F. (Eds.) *International Relations and Global Climate Change*. Cambridge, MA & London, MIT Press.

¹⁴ SCHIPPER, L. & PELLING, M. (2006) Disaster risk, climate change and international development: scope form and challenges to, integration. *Disasters*, 30, 19-38.

¹⁵ STERN, 2006 Ch1.5 p15

¹⁶ Ibid Ch7.2 p175

¹⁷ Ibid Ch2.2 p24

¹⁸ Lutebacher and Sprinz, 2001

¹⁹ Lutebacher and Sprinz, 2001 p6

the ability to adapt to and cope with the changing conditions appears to be a luxury of the industrialised world²⁰

This indicates not only that climate change is likely to have a pervasive effect on human society, but also that individual states will have differing incentives take part in climate change negotiations and to implement climate change mitigation policies. It is even possible that some countries, for example Russia, stand to gain from increased global temperatures as colder places may become more habitable, and increase the types of industries and agriculture that can be sustained. The disagreements that have characterised international climate change cooperation can partly be explained by the expectations of states as to the future impacts of climatic change. This relates to the distinct uncertainty of the costs and benefits of climate change²¹. Uncertainty affects the choices of actors in pursuing certain actions. Ideally, uncertainty of the outcomes of climate change would lead to the adaptation of the precautionary principle; a “better safe than sorry” approach. However, the uncertainty of future benefits of climate change mitigation relative to the certainty of its current costs may favour inaction²². The individual understanding of the risks of climate change among the various actors impacts upon their motivation and commitment to climate change cooperation.

Disaster Diplomacy

The concepts of “disaster diplomacy” came into use when asking whether natural disasters could have a catalysing effect on cooperation between countries traditionally perceived as enemies²³. Initial studies of disaster diplomacy focused upon diplomatic efforts at government level, whereas later studies have included cooperation in the scientific community, and between non-governmental actors. The expanding implementation of the disaster diplomacy framework has also given rise to studies of “environmental diplomacy”, which looks at improved relations and cooperation springing from international environmental agreements²⁴.

A study of disaster diplomacy concerning the diplomatic relations between Greece and Turkey after the 1999 earthquakes, suggests that disaster events may have a catalysing effect on diplomatic relations²⁵. Territorial disputes initiated and ossified hostilities between the countries from the 1950s, and relations further deteriorated in the late 1990s over conditions for Turkey’s EU membership²⁶. Despite these conflicts, Greece was the first country to offer Turkey assistance when, on the 17th August 1999, an earthquake devastated the northwestern city of Izmit. Not only government aid, but also private donations from Greece were substantial. In return, Turkey was quick to respond with similar assistance as Athens suffered its own earthquake less than one month later. Relations between the two countries decidedly improved following these disaster events, and remains cordial. Greece has even become a supporter of Turkish EU membership²⁷.

However, it is important to note that cooperation and dialogue between the foreign ministers George Papandreou of Greece and Ismail Cem of Turkey had been initiated prior to the disaster events, and provided a channel for the rapid offer of assistance following the Turkish earthquake. This and other studies show that disaster diplomacy leading to extensive and continued improved relations is dependent upon a pre-existing dialogue. It cannot on its own create cooperation²⁸.

²⁰ Stern, 2006 Ch2.3

²¹ Lutebacher and Sprinz, 2001

²² Stern, 2006

²³ KELMAN, I. (2006a) Acting on disaster diplomacy. *Journal of International Affairs*, 59, 215-241.

²⁴ KELMAN, I. (2006b) Disaster Diplomacy: Hope Despite Evidence? *WorldWatch*.

²⁵ KER-LINDSAY, J. (2000) Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of 'Disaster diplomacy'? *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 14, 215-232.

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ KELMAN, I. (2006a) Acting on disaster diplomacy. *Journal of International Affairs*, 59, 215-241.

This study also shows that disaster diplomacy does not merely refer to the diplomacy of humanitarian relief, though this is an important aspect. Disaster diplomacy is not confined to the politics of disaster management, but can open the doors for increased dialogue and cooperation in wider policy areas, such as trade, migration and development. Because of this, a solid base for improved diplomatic relations can be build with long-term effects.

However, there are also several examples of disaster events or environmental issues not substantially affecting diplomatic relations, and even souring relations between countries. The United States and Cuba share significant disaster risks from tropical cyclones and hurricanes, some of which strike both countries in a single event. Hazard related cooperation could significantly lessen the risks for both countries, yet the US and Cuban governments have remained hostile toward each other since Castro came to power in Cuba in 1959. Though a significant amount of cooperation exists between scientists and meteorologists in the two countries, disaster diplomacy at government level is not taking place²⁹. It is believed that some within the US government recognise that disaster events may help destabilize the Cuban regime, and have in the past been hesitant in offering humanitarian aid to the country. The Cuban government has, for its part, refused U.S. humanitarian aid, dismissing it as “humiliating, hypocritical and unacceptable”³⁰. Although interaction takes place on an individual to individual, scientist to scientist basis, effective networks for disaster risk reduction can not be created until the governments are willing to cooperate.

The above studies indicate that other factors, such as the desire and domestic support for rapprochement, have a greater impact upon the nature of diplomatic relations, especially in the long-term. Kelman points out that the positions and motivations of individual leaders also have an important influence upon the possibilities for rapprochement³¹. For example the U.S. hostility toward Cuba is based to a great extent upon a dislike of Castro, who in turn has a great distrust for the American government³². The timing of the disaster event in relation to the conflict continuum is therefore likely to be important, as relationships and public opinion is dynamic. Understanding of the factors which contribute to positive diplomatic outcomes is far from complete, and is an important challenge for the study of disaster and environmental diplomacy, as well as for the wider international relations study.

There are fewer studies relating to environmental diplomacy, though the studies that do exist often pertain to specific localised issues. For example it has been proposed that the contested Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, be used as an international biosphere reserve to settle the sovereignty disputes. This feature of environmental diplomacy is also true of disaster diplomacy in general, where there has so far also been a focus upon distinct events or conflicts.

It is now being suggested, however, that both climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts may enable disaster diplomacy. Mitigation in this respect refers to altering human behaviour to reduce the extent of human induced climate change, and adaptation refers to altering behaviour to lessen human vulnerability to climate change. The suggested broader scope of disaster diplomacy opens for the study of international environmental management regimes as catalysing international relations. However, neither disaster diplomacy nor environmental diplomacy may provide an adequate interpretive framework for climate change cooperation.

Difference between disasters and climate change

Several types of natural hazards may be linked to climate change. Some hazard events are directly related to climate such as severe storms, droughts, hurricanes, tornadoes and floods, while some

²⁹ GLANTZ, M. H. (2000) Climate-Related Disaster Diplomacy. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 14, 233-253.

³⁰ Ibid p242

³¹ Kelman, 2006b

³² Glanz, 2000

have a strong human component, as with landslides and forest fires. Natural hazards belong to larger natural systems such as weather systems and/or tectonics, but on their own natural hazard events are not sufficient to produce natural disasters. Natural disasters occur only when human vulnerability and natural hazards converge. Climate change is believed to affect these wider systems in a way that may produce more frequent and more intense natural hazard events, making them harder to cope with and adapt to³³.

Despite the connections between climate change and natural disasters, and although both have a significant anthropogenic component, climate change and disaster events are distinctly different in character and in the policy and cooperation responses they elicit. In addition, many environmental issues are more closely akin to disaster events than climate change in these respects. These differences may affect whether or not climate change can be analysed within the disaster diplomacy and environmental diplomacy frameworks.

Natural disasters are discrete events, localized in time and space, with geographically limited physical effects, often to within a country or region. As such they may elicit local or hazard specific risk reduction responses, rather than responses addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability such as socio-economic underdevelopment, the structure of international trade or bad governance³⁴. Responses are based on previous experience with certain events in certain places, and with the understanding that similar events are likely to reoccur and have similar outcomes. For countries in close proximity to each other that share natural hazard threats, cooperating on disaster management issues may prove beneficial for both parties through reduced risk and increased capacity to respond to and recover from disasters. Similarly, many environmental issues dealt with through international cooperation, are issues which are specific to a time and place. The establishment of cross-border wildlife reserves for example is a response to the needs of that area at that time.

In contrast, it is not yet universally accepted that climate change is taking place, or that it has been responsible for any discrete events. It is understood to be a gradual process, though its speed and direction is largely unknown. This creates two problems for policymakers. First, as a future event which may or may not have destructive consequences, climate change is uncertain, and the possible long-term effects are easily discounted against very real short-term issues, for example the strength of economies or winning elections. Second, it is hard to prepare for changes when not much is known about how or to what degree one is to be affected. As has been the case in climate change negotiations in the past, uncertainty has led to varying levels of concern and commitment from states in different positions, and even from successive governments of states over time.

Disaster events are also distinct because the consequent humanitarian emergencies and the social, political and economic upheaval offer opportunities to form new relations between states on humanitarian grounds. Though sometimes viewed with scepticism, humanitarian assistance is considered apolitical and has cut across many lines of enmity in times of need³⁵. This feature of humanitarian aid is especially useful because neither the donor nor the recipient is seen to be losing face, as neither party need bow down to conditions placed by the other. Nor does there appear to be any benefit for the "hostile" donor country in offering aid when this may help maintain political stability in the recipient country, propping up the government with which they are in conflict. Finally humanitarian aid may significantly bolster public support for reconciliation, as conflicts are set aside in order to address more immediate and more basic concerns. Keridis argues that humanitarian aid "underscores the fact that humans, irrespective of their differences, belong to the universal community of mankind"³⁶.

³³ Schipper and Pelling, 2006

³⁴ WISNER, B., BLAIKIE, P., CANNON, T. & DAVIS, I. (2006) *At Risk-Natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters*, London & New York, Routledge.

³⁵ KERIDIS, D. (2006) Earthquakes, Diplomacy, and New Thinking in Foreign Policy. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 30, 207-214.

³⁶ Keridis, 2006 p210

Though a global process, climate change is likely to affect every person in every country in a different way. In addition, different countries are seen to be unequally responsible for the current high concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere and unequally situated to cope with the effects of climate change. Because of this, its management is distinctly political, and its wide-ranging impacts make it harder to bypass issues of conflict in bilateral climate change cooperation. The advantage of building bridges without losing face may be lost.

The atmosphere, as a resource, is non-excludable. Every person and every state has access to it, and can, for example, emit possibly climate changing GHGs into it. However, its use is a rival, as it is degraded by continued pollution³⁷. This open access situation is characterised by what is known as “the tragedy of the commons”, in which the benefits of emitting greenhouse gasses are gained solely by the emitter, while the cost of this pollution i.e. climate change is shared with all others, not only in space, but also in time. There is therefore little incentive for individuals, industries or states to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, as they will be at a competitive disadvantage with other states.

In contrast, climate change, if imagined as a resource, can be characterised as a public good. Access to its effects is non-excludable, and they are non-rival, as effects on one state do not diminish effects on any other state. This means that the benefit of reducing emissions is shared with all other states, independent of whether or not they reduce their emissions, whereas the cost is borne solely by the state that carries out the reduction. This can be contrasted with the effects of responding to natural disaster events. As these events are localised, the benefits gained by donating assistance is concentrated in the recipient state or region. Most of disaster diplomacy studies highlight the political goodwill created when donor governments respond to disasters with emergency assistance. This goodwill is unlikely to be as pronounced, when the country reducing its emissions or supporting emissions reductions in the recipient country also benefits from the reductions.

In addition, as climate change is a long-term process and reductions of GHG emissions a long-term solution, it may be more closely related in the diplomatic sense to long-term assistance for vulnerability reduction, which has not been investigated in the disaster diplomacy framework, except for in the realm of science. Perhaps this can be taken as an indication of the different political consequences of the very public emergency aid and the subtler development and risk reduction aid, and climate change mitigation.

Climate change and cooperation

Because every country is affected by the cumulative global GHG emissions – the effects of climate change on each state are not proportionate to its GHG emissions – there is a need for global efforts to effectively combat human induced climate change³⁸. In addition, as every state benefits from any other state’s reductions, global efforts to reduce free-riding is deemed necessary. As there is no global government with authority to regulate state activities, this must be done through interstate cooperation³⁹. In order to face these challenges, inclusive and binding agreements on combating climate change and an international climate change regime have been negotiated.

Currently, climate change cooperation is pursued under the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UNFCCC, and through the mechanisms outlined in the Kyoto Protocol. The UNFCCC was ratified by 189 countries, and entered into force in March

³⁷ DALY, H. E. & FARLEY, J. (2004) *Ecological Economics-Principles and Application*, Washington, Island Press.

³⁸ ASHEIM, G. B., FROYN, C. B., HOVI, J. & MENZ, F. C. (2006) Regional versus global cooperation for climate control. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 51, 93-109.

³⁹ VOGLER, J. (2001) Ch.11: Environment. IN WHITE, B., LITTLE, R. & SMITH, M. (Eds.) *Issues in World Politics*. 2nd ed. New York, Palgrave.

1994⁴⁰, and further Conferences of the Parties, CoPs, have taken place roughly every year since then. The CoPs have become the main decision making arena for international climate change policy⁴¹, and it was at COP 3 in 1997 that the Kyoto Protocol was adopted⁴². This protocol outlines means for mitigating and adapting to climate change, and sets binding emissions reduction targets and timeframes for industrialised countries (Annex-1 countries)⁴³.

Though there is some precedent for multilateral environmental negotiations being hampered by international conflict, for example the Soviet block's refusal to participate in the Stockholm Conference⁴⁴, multilateral negotiations are often seen as more resilient than bilateral treaties in times of conflict⁴⁵. Multilateral negotiations are often attended by several hostile parties, and agreements are reached and maintained despite the bilateral conflicts between negotiating members. The Antarctic Treaty System negotiations saw Britain and Argentina seated at the negotiation table despite the concurrent Falklands war, and even North Korea joined the negotiations though only as a non-voting member⁴⁶. This feature of multilateral agreements may suggest that the multilateral climate change framework has the potential to bring together conflicting parties and reach agreements on the specific issue, where bilateral agreements would not be sought or would be marred by the disputes.

However, this does not mean that the multilateral negotiations increase dialogue between hostile parties, as there may be no need for them to deal with each other directly. It has also been asked, especially in relation to the Antarctic Treaty System, whether the success of multilateral agreements in bringing together parties may be due to an understanding that the diplomatic effort be limited to the matter at hand, and not affected by unrelated conflicts⁴⁷. In this sense, climate change negotiations may hinder disaster/environmental diplomacy by making it unnecessary for conflicting states to deal with each other directly.

Though the multilateral framework may not pre-empt regional or bilateral cooperation, it may reduce the incentive to initiate such cooperation, especially for states in conflict. Within the multilateral climate change negotiations distinct sub-groupings of states have emerged beyond the traditional UN regional groups⁴⁸, but these groups are to a great extent based upon traditional political divisions. Pre-existing groups such as the E.U., the Group of 77 and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries cooperate in negotiations and coordinate their positions in order to increase their strength in negotiations⁴⁹. This indicates that historical differences have precedence over specific climate related diplomacy⁵⁰. For example, the G-77 consists of 130 member states with diverse interests and concerns. It includes small island states and low-lying countries which are

⁴⁰ UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 29.01.2007a)

http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/items/2627.php. UNFCCC

⁴¹ ORR, S. K. (2006) Policy Subsystems and Regimes: Organized Interests and Climate Change Policy. *The Policy Studies Journal*, 34, 147-169.

⁴² UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 29.01.2007c) UNFCCC party groupings at

http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention_bodies/negotiating_groups/items/2834.php. UNFCCC.

⁴³ Lutebacher and Sprinz, 2001

⁴⁴ Vogler, 2001 p205

⁴⁵ UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION (2005) The effect of armed conflict on treaties: an examination of practice and doctrine at http://untreaty.un.org/ilc/documentation/english/a_cn4_550.pdf. IN ASSEMBLY, U. N. G. (Ed.), UN.

⁴⁶ Kelman, 2003

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 29.01.2007b) Kyoto Protocol at

http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php. UNFCCC.

⁴⁹ ROWLANDS, I. H. (2001) Classical Theories of International Relations. IN LUTERBACHER, U. & SPRINZ, D. F. (Eds.) *International Relations and Global Climate Change*. Cambridge, MA & London, MIT Press.

⁵⁰ DEPLEDGE, J. (2002) The Opposite of Learning: Ossification in the Climate Change Regime. *Global Environmental Politics*, 6.

especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change induced sea-level rise⁵¹, as well as OPEC countries, which are economically vulnerable to reductions in global fossil fuel consumption.

Historical divides have helped create one of the major rifts in climate change negotiations; that existing between the political North and South, i.e. between the developed and the developing world. Equity as well as questions over the role of adaptation issues pits the political hemispheres against each other in negotiations. Negotiations between the two factions is marred by distrust and misunderstanding, and relations between them are seen to be deteriorating as a consequence⁵².

A second rift exists within the northern community between those states or groups of states supporting the Kyoto Protocol and those who oppose it, or who disagree over elements of it. The E.U. is a strong proponent of the current climate change regime, and is seen by many to be taking a leading role in mitigating climate change⁵³. When, in 2001, the US withdrew from the Kyoto agreement, the relationship across the Atlantic was significantly chilled⁵⁴. In order for the Kyoto Protocol to enter into force, at least 55 members of the UNFCCC needed to ratify, and the ratifying industrialised countries needed to make up 55 percent of total Annex-1 CO₂ emissions for 1990⁵⁵. Without US and Australia, who also refused to ratify in 2003, this threshold became decidedly harder to meet⁵⁶. In addition, US defection was likely to make other states question both the effectiveness of the agreement, and their economic and trade position upon ratification, as they would likely be at a competitive disadvantage relative to non-ratifying countries, who would not need to internalise the cost of emissions reductions⁵⁷. Despite these differences however, climate change related partnerships are in place between Kyoto and non-Kyoto member states⁵⁸.

The EU's commitment to the climate change regime has forced it to make serious concessions to those less enthusiastic states or groups of states, especially with regard to the use of flexibility mechanisms to reach the Kyoto agreement's emission targets⁵⁹. These flexibility mechanisms allow market forces to rule how and where states or industries reach their reduction targets, for example by allowing them to gain emissions credits for reductions they make in other countries⁶⁰. The market could steer emission reduction projects to countries in which the cost of reduction is low. In addition, carbon trading, a flexibility mechanism which exists within a system of emission's ceilings, allows a country which is able to reduce its emissions to below the upper limit, to sell its remaining quota⁶¹. This issue supplies one of the few exceptions to the traditionally based alliances of UNFCCC sub-groupings. The past East/West Cold War divide has been breached through the creation of the Umbrella Group consisting of the previous JUSSCANNZ countries; Japan, US, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand, less Switzerland, and the Russian Federation and Ukraine⁶². Recently the Environmental Integrity Group has been formed as Switzerland joined Mexico and the Republic of Korea against the market mechanisms.

⁵¹ AOSIS (1999) Tourism and Sustainable Development at <http://www.sidsnet.org/aosis/statements/02.html>. IN DEVELOPMENT, C. O. S. (Ed.).

⁵² Depledge, 2002

⁵³ Vogler, 2005

⁵⁴ SCHREURS, M. A. (2005) Global Environment Threats and a Divided Northern Community. *International Environmental Agreements*, 5, 349-376.

⁵⁵ OTT, H. (2001) Climate change: an important foreign policy issue. *International Affairs*, 77, 277-296.

⁵⁶ THOMPSON, A. (2006) Management under Anarchy: The International Politics of Climate Change. *Climate Change*, 7-29.

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ AUSTRALIAN GREENHOUSE OFFICE (2005) Bilateral Climate Change Partnerships Programme. IN HERITAGE, D. O. T. E. A. (Ed.), Australian Government.

⁵⁹ Thompson, 2006

⁶⁰ STOWELL, D. (2005) *Climate Trading - Development of Greenhouse Gas Markets*, New York, Palgrave.

⁶¹ UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 13.01.2007) 'Emissions Trading' at http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/emissions_trading/items/2731.php. UNFCCC.

⁶² Depledge, 2002

Though the flexibility mechanisms have so far been a source of much disagreement within the climate change negotiations, they are in themselves a possible source of climate change related disaster diplomacy. The central mechanisms within the Kyoto Protocol are the Joint Implementation Mechanism, JI, the Clean Development Mechanism, CDM, which emerged from initial talks over joint implementation, and emissions trading. JI was particularly controversial when it was initially discussed, as it allowed countries to gain emissions credits by providing financial or technological backing for emissions reductions projects in other countries. Though its proponents argued this would aid them in meeting their targets at the lowest cost, its opponents, notably developing countries and environmental NGOs argued it would be hard to monitor compliance, and that it was allowing large emitters to transfer the responsibility for GHG emissions⁶³. Currently Joint Implementation takes place only between parties to the Kyoto Protocol with binding emissions targets (other annex-1 countries), and is seen as having most potential for countries with transition economies⁶⁴. It is expected to be used extensively between the E.U. states which have pooled their emissions targets, and the new E.U. members who are not part of this “bubble” in the first Kyoto commitment period⁶⁵. JI is also closely connected to the emissions trading mechanism, which is also likely to require high levels of cooperation and regulation between states. However, because these mechanisms are not yet fully implemented, it is too early to predict in what ways, if at all, diplomacy between conflicting states will be affected.

The CDM mechanism was, in contrast to the JI, given a “prompt start” after the Marrakech round of the COP in 2001⁶⁶. CDM was developed to assist not only the annex-1 countries in meeting their obligations under Kyoto, but also to assist non-annex-1 countries to continue development in a sustainable manner⁶⁷, by encouraging investment in emission reduction projects in developing countries⁶⁸. Though private investment in CDM is especially sought, government cooperation will likely be required in order to monitor and coordinate efforts. Being of mutual benefit to both the recipient and the annex-1 source country, CDM provides incentive to increase cooperation between hostile states, based upon the market forces mentioned earlier. By November 2004, however, CDM projects were only operating in 29 countries, none of which are associated with conflicts with annex-1 countries⁶⁹.

Diplomacy beyond climate change

A key feature of disaster and environmental diplomacy is their ability to facilitate diplomatic relations in policy areas beyond disaster or environmental management, thereby creating a broad basis for continued cooperation. As a complex issue expected to affect the entire spectrum of human society, climate change may well encourage dialogue in areas outside those relating directly to mitigation or adaptation. Sand argues that several regimes for international standard setting not directly related to climate change, including the World Health Organization, have already dealt with issues related to GHG and global warming, which may in time come to supplement the climate change regime⁷⁰.

The ratification phase of the Kyoto agreement was especially important for the extension of diplomacy beyond issues of climate change. This is the period between COP 3 in 1997 and the

⁶³ Lutebacher and Sprinz, 2001

⁶⁴ Stowell, 2005

⁶⁵ ARMENTEROS, M. F. & MICHAELOWA, A. (2003) Joint implementation and EU accession countries. *Global Environmental Change*, 269-275.

⁶⁶ UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (2001) COP7 - Marrakech Final Report at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/pdf/marrakech_report.pdf. Marrakech, UNFCCC.

⁶⁷ Stowell, 2005

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Schreurs, 2005

⁷⁰ SAND, P. H. (1991) Institutions for Global Change: Wither Environmental Governance? *Policy Studies Journal*, 19, 93-102.

Kyoto Protocol coming into force in 2005⁷¹(Thompson, 2006). During this phase, the E.U. and other parties heavily invested in the agreement needed to gain support in order to meet the 55 percent implementation threshold. When the US, as the world's largest GHG emitter, withdrew its support in 2001, the E.U. faced a considerable challenge in convincing non-committed states to ratify the agreement, and more hesitant states such as Canada, Japan and Russia, increased their bargaining power⁷². The COP meeting in 2001 saw the E.U. take a decidedly more flexible stance than previously, significantly weakening the agreement.

In particular, the support of Russia, the world's second largest GHG emitter, was vital. However, Russian ratification was far from guaranteed, especially since US defection meant the loss of a market for Russian emission credits, superfluous due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. By playing on its pivotal position, the Russian government hoped to gain political and economic advantages, some wholly unrelated to the climate change negotiations, such as visa access to the E.U. and support for Russian admittance to the World Trade Organisation⁷³. By using this leverage, Russia succeeded in gaining significant concessions related to Kyoto, and E.U. backing for WTO membership. Russia ratified the Kyoto Protocol in November 2004⁷⁴.

In addition to the larger industrialised countries, the transition economies of Eastern and Central Europe were at an advantage. Even if Russia did not ratify the agreement, the threshold of 55 percent could still be met if Japan and a number of smaller states ratified. Some of these smaller states were seeking membership to the E.U. during the Kyoto ratification period. Accession to the E.U. would provide the benefits of free trade and adoption of the Euro⁷⁵. However, it would also require the alignment of their environmental policies with that of the E.U.'s extensive environmental regulations. Of the five Central European countries which joined the E.U. during the period prior to Kyoto entering into force, all ratified the agreement prior to E.U. membership⁷⁶. Although granting membership based entirely upon Kyoto ratification is highly unlikely, the improved bargaining position of these countries, as well as the converging environmental policies, may have made their accession easier.

However, the relative gains of the countries in a bargaining position may be a hindrance to cooperation and a source of conflict within the climate change negotiations. The developing countries have had especially little influence, and the US especially great influence on the trajectory of the regime⁷⁷. Because many of the developing countries are mainly reliant upon agriculture as opposed to industry, their GHG emissions do not "buy" them influence in the climate regime.

In addition, the climate regime and its regulations may come into conflict with other international regimes, especially the WTO because of its restrictions on subsidies which may be need to promote the use of cleaner energies and technology⁷⁸. Issues of government procurement and imposed regulations and standards may be seen to disadvantage foreign goods or services, and may both require considerable diplomatic efforts and cooperation between regimes, and cause considerable conflict between the parties to these regimes.

⁷¹ Thompson, 2006

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ KARAS, J. (2004) *Russia and the Kyoto Protocol: Political Challenges*. London, The Royal Institute of International Affairs.

⁷⁴ UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 03.02.2007) 'Kyoto Protocol Status of Ratification' at http://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/background/status_of_ratification/application/pdf/kp_rat_131206.pdf. UNFCCC.

⁷⁵ ZHU, X. & IERLAND, E. V. (2006) The enlargement of the European Union: Effects on trade and emissions of greenhouse gases. *Ecological Economics*, 1-14.

⁷⁶ UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 03.02.2007) 'Kyoto Protocol Status of Ratification' at http://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/background/status_of_ratification/application/pdf/kp_rat_131206.pdf. UNFCCC.

⁷⁷ Thompson, 2006

⁷⁸ Ibid

Conclusions

Because of the global causes and effects of climate change, and because a global effort is needed for effective mitigation, opportunities for increased cooperation and changes to traditional relationships between states may emerge. This has prompted questions of whether the threat of climate change is catalysing dialogue and improved relations between traditionally hostile states, as has occasionally been seen following disaster events. Termed “disaster diplomacy”, lasting improved relations that extends beyond disaster management, environmental agreements or in this case climate change policy, may be used by governments or organisations to orchestrate peace between states.

However, climate change as a process taking place over an unknown period of time, with unclear consequences on a global scale has very different characteristics from the distinct and localised disaster events as well as from many of the studied environmental issues. This essay suggests that the possibilities for climate change related diplomacy leading to rapprochement may be severely restricted when compared with disaster events, by the social and political responses it elicits.

The global multilateral framework which currently dominates climate change negotiations may be unable to promote improved diplomatic relations between conflicting states despite its ability to bring parties to the table. Regional or bilateral negotiations, which bring hostile countries into direct negotiations, may create more opportunities to improve relations, but they are likely to be time consuming and complicated even if they are initiated, which is by no means certain. This highlights a key finding in disaster and environmental diplomacy; that it does not take place where there is no dialogue or desire for normalcy between the parties. It also begs the question of the purpose of humanitarian assistance or environmental agreements including those concerning climate change. Are they first and foremost intended to deal with a distinct environmental issue, or is their function building peace and helping create an overall more sustainable world⁷⁹?

Within the climate change negotiations, the ratification phase of the Kyoto agreement presented particular possibilities for extending diplomatic relations beyond those relating to climate change. Because of the abstention of major parties, those states which had delayed in ratifying the agreement gained bargaining power and were able to extract considerable concessions from the committed states, especially from the E.U. Russia secured the support of the E.U. for its membership bid to the WTO, and it is possible that Central European states improved the likelihood of accession to the E.U.

The findings presented in this study do not support a hypothesis that climate change is catalysing rapprochement between enemy states. It does not however, rule out the possibility of future changes in this respect. This will however largely depend on factors other than climate change negotiations, such as economics and popular support for normalizing relations. However, climate change negotiations are affecting other areas of diplomatic relations, and as the importance of climate change as a foreign policy issue increases, so will its bearing in relation to other issues.

References

- AOSIS (1999) Tourism and Sustainable Development at <http://www.sidsnet.org/aosis/statements/02.html>. IN DEVELOPMENT, C. O. S. (Ed.).
- ARMENTEROS, M. F. & MICHAELOWA, A. (2003) Joint implementation and EU accession countries. *Global Environmental Change*, 269-275.
- ASHEIM, G. B., FROYN, C. B., HOVI, J. & MENZ, F. C. (2006) Regional versus global cooperation for climate control. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 51, 93-109.

⁷⁹ Kelman, I. (2007) personal communication to Rebecca Paxton on 26.01.2007

- AUSTRALIAN GREENHOUSE OFFICE (2005) Bilateral Climate Change Partnerships Programme. IN HERITAGE, D. O. T. E. A. (Ed.), Australian Government.
- DALY, H. E. & FARLEY, J. (2004) *Ecological Economics-Principles and Application*, Washington, Island Press.
- DEPLEDGE, J. (2002) The Opposite of Learning: Ossification in the Climate Change Regime. *Global Environmental Politics*, 6.
- GLANTZ, M. H. (2000) Climate-Related Disaster Diplomacy. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 14, 233-253.
- IPCC WORKING GROUP 1 (2001) Climate Change 2001: the Scientific Basis IN IPCC (Ed.), Cambridge University Press.
- KARAS, J. (2004) Russia and the Kyoto Protocol: Political Challenges. London, The Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- KELMAN, I. (2003) Beyond Disaster, Beyond Diplomacy. IN PELLING, M. (Ed.) *Natural Disasters and Development in a Globalizing World*. U.K., Routledge.
- KELMAN, I. (2006a) Acting on disaster diplomacy. *Journal of International Affairs*, 59, 215-241.
- KELMAN, I. (2006b) Disaster Diplomacy: Hope Despite Evidence? *WorldWatch*.
- KER-LINDSAY, J. (2000) Greek-Turkish Rapprochement: The Impact of 'Disaster diplomacy'? *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 14, 215-232.
- KERIDIS, D. (2006) Earthquakes, Diplomacy, and New Thinking in Foreign Policy. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 30, 207-214.
- LUTEBACHER, U. & SPRINZ, D. F. (2001) Problems of Global Environmental Cooperation. IN LUTEBACHER, U. & SPRINZ, D. F. (Eds.) *International Relations and Global Climate Change*. Cambridge, MA & London, MIT Press.
- ORR, S. K. (2006) Policy Subsystems and Regimes: Organized Interests and Climate Change Policy. *The Policy Studies Journal*, 34, 147-169.
- OTT, H. (2001) Climate change: an important foreign policy issue. *International Affairs*, 77, 277-296.
- ROWLANDS, I. H. (2001) Classical Theories of International Relations. IN LUTEBACHER, U. & SPRINZ, D. F. (Eds.) *International Relations and Global Climate Change*. Cambridge, MA & London, MIT Press.
- SAND, P. H. (1991) Institutions for Global Change: Wither Environmental Governance? *Policy Studies Journal*, 19, 93-102.
- SCHIPPER, L. & PELLING, M. (2006) Disaster risk, climate change and international development: scope form and challenges to, integration. *Disasters*, 30, 19-38.
- SCHREURS, M. A. (2005) Global Environment Threats and a Divided Northern Community. *International Environmental Agreements*, 5, 349-376.
- STERN, S. N. (2006) Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change. IN TREASURY, H. (Ed.), Cambridge University press.
- STOWELL, D. (2005) *Climate Trading - Development of Greenhouse Gas Markets*, New York, Palgrave.
- THOMPSON, A. (2006) Management under Anarchy: The International Politics of Climate Change. *Climate Change*, 7-29.
- UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (2001) COP7 - Marrakech Final Report at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/pdf/marrakech_report.pdf. Marrakech, UNFCCC.
- UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 03.02.2007) 'Kyoto Protocol Status of Ratification' at http://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/background/status_of_ratification/application/pdf/kp_rat_131206.pdf. UNFCCC.
- UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 13.01.2007) 'Emissions Trading' at http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/emissions_trading/items/2731.php. UNFCCC.
- UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 29.01.2007a) http://unfccc.int/essential_backfound/convention/items/2627.php. UNFCCC

- UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 29.01.2007b) Kyoto Protocol at http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php. UNFCCC.
- UNFCCC SECRETARIAT (visited 29.01.2007c) UNFCCC party groupings at http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention_bodies/negotiating_groups/items/2834.php. UNFCCC.
- UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION (2005) The effect of armed conflict on treaties: an examination of practice and doctrine at http://untreaty.un.org/ilc/documentation/english/a_cn4_550.pdf. IN ASSEMBLY, U. N. G. (Ed.), UN.
- VOGLER, J. (2001) Ch.11: Environment. IN WHITE, B., LITTLE, R. & SMITH, M. (Eds.) *Issues in World Politics*. 2nd ed. New York, Palgrave.
- WISNER, B., BLAIKIE, P., CANNON, T. & DAVIS, I. (2004) *At Risk-Natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters*, London & New York, Routledge.
- ZHU, X. & IERLAND, E. V. (2006) The enlargement of the European Union: Effects on trade and emissions of greenhouse gases. *Ecological Economics*, 1-14.