

# Climate Effects on US International Interests

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## Key Message 17.1

### Interdependent, Systemic Climate-Related Risks Increasingly Affect US Interests

In a globally connected world, climate change impacts on US interests are multifaceted, interconnected, and frequently exacerbated by social unrest and environmental degradation (*likely, high confidence*). The scale and speed of climate-related impacts to US interests are expected to increase, due in part to underlying interdependencies and to the projected intensification of climate change (*likely, high confidence*). Emerging systems- and scenarios-based approaches to integrative planning are being applied to account for interdependencies and competing priorities (*likely, high confidence*).

## Key Message 17.2

### Climate Change Exacerbates Risks to National Security

Climate change can contribute to political and social instability and, in some instances, to conflict (*likely, high confidence*). It impacts the operations and missions of defense, diplomacy, and development agencies critical to US national security (*very likely, high confidence*). The US Government, bilaterally and in collaboration with international partners, is increasingly addressing these implications through a range of diplomatic, development, and defense responses (*very likely, high confidence*).

## Key Message 17.3

### Climate Change Presents Risks and Opportunities for US Economics, Trade, and Investments

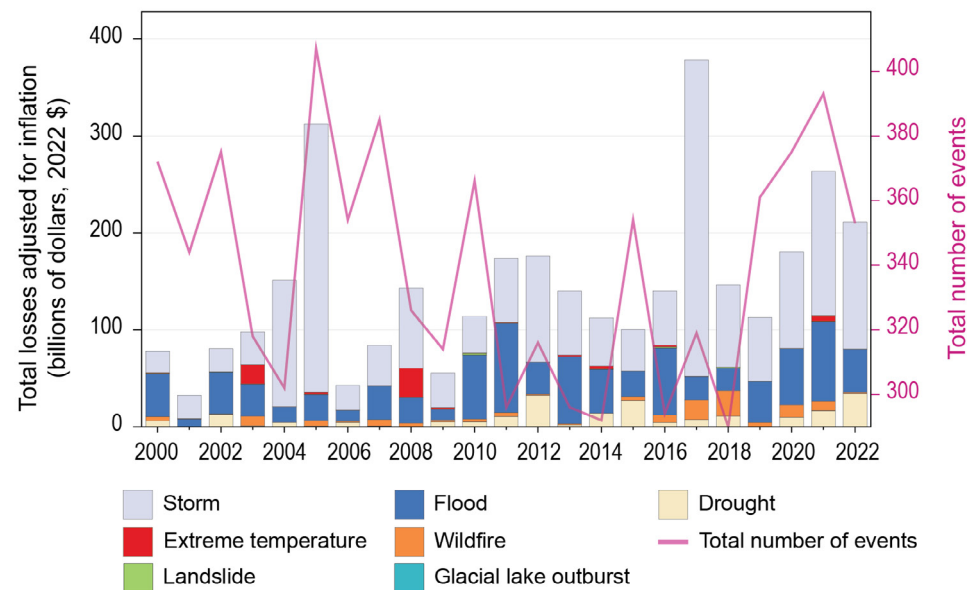
The physical impacts of climate change are increasingly affecting global and regional economic growth (*very likely, high confidence*). These impacts have important implications for US economic, trade, and investment interests (*likely, medium confidence*). Global mitigation and adaptation responses by governments and businesses will likewise impact US economic interests, presenting both risks and potential opportunities for the US economy (*likely, medium confidence*). Public- and private-sector institutional, regulatory, financial, and market-based frameworks for climate mitigation and adaptation will influence these risks and opportunities (*likely, medium confidence*).

## Key Message 17.4

### Climate Change Undermines Sustainable Development

Climate change undermines the world's ability to develop sustainably, reverses development gains, and exacerbates inequities (*very likely, high confidence*). Climate finance is increasing, but global flows continue to fall short of needs (*likely, high confidence*). Accelerated deployment of adaptation and mitigation action at scale can yield substantial benefits for sustainable development (*likely, medium confidence*). Climate action is most effective when co-developed and grounded in equity, local ownership, and inclusive governance (*likely, medium confidence*).

#### Climate-Related Disasters and Economic Losses



**This figure shows global trends in the number, growing costs, and increasing diversity of types of climate-related natural disasters since 2000.**

**Figure 17.3.** The total global losses associated with climate-related disasters have risen over the last two decades, with growing diversity in the types of climate-related events that lead to disasters (e.g., drought, wildfires, floods) and some annual spikes in storm-related losses. There is little correlation between losses and total number of disasters (suggesting increased losses may derive from increased severity of disasters, increased value of assets, reporting discrepancies, or a combination of these). Figure credit: DOI, Winrock International, NOAA NCEI, and CISESS NC.

#### Recommended Citation

Hellmuth, M.E., F.H. Akhtar, A.H. Cameron, C.A. Corner-Dolloff, G.D. Dabelko, T. Dinku, J.L. Koh, D. Mason, R.S. Pulwarty, L.I. Sperling, and M.F. Zermoglio, 2023: Ch. 17. Climate effects on US international interests. In: *Fifth National Climate Assessment*. Crimmins, A.R., C.W. Avery, D.R. Easterling, K.E. Kunkel, B.C. Stewart, and T.K. Maycock, Eds. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA. <https://doi.org/10.7930/NCA5.2023.CH17>