

## **Preventing or repairing military damage to the environment: an Critical Analysis**

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**Abstract:** *After the attacks of September 11, 2001, federal and state authorities began to wonder what else might offer a tempting target for terror attacks. The environment can also be a conduit for terrorism. Biological elements such as disease-causing bacteria and viruses can become potent weapons when taken out of their natural environment – the biological terrorism. Bio contamination has been a threat not only to the safety of United States of America but to all the nations of the world. Human activities are having great impact on the environment. These are causing greater effects on various factors of the environment and may have far reaching effects on human race and lifestyle.*

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### **Introduction**

Encyclopedia Britannica defines Environment as the complex of physical, chemical, and biotic factors that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival. The Oxford dictionary defines environment as the aggregate of surrounding things, conditions or influences called the surroundings.

The word Environment is derived from the old French word 'Environer' which means to surround, enclose and encircle. It refers to an aggregate of conditions or surroundings in which living beings such as humans, animals, and plants live or survive and non-living things exist. The word Environment was coined by Carlyle in South of Scotland in 1828. The basic components of environment include – Atmosphere or air, Hydrosphere or water, Lithosphere or rock and soil and Biosphere – the living component of the environment. The five basic elements of environment are earth, water, fire, air and space.

The three types of environments include –

1. Natural environment which includes water, light, land, air and all organisms that live in nature.
2. Industrial environment is a term used to describe working conditions that may be outside of optimal. Industrial environments are usually harsher than normal work environments, such as an office. In an industrial environment, people and equipment are exposed to more extreme conditions.
3. Social environment, social context, sociocultural context or milieu refers to the immediate physical and social setting in which people live or in which something happens or develops. It includes the culture that the individual was educated or lives in, and the people and institutions with whom they interact.

Healthy ecosystems include clean water, purified air, maintained soil, regulated climate and recycled nutrients and provide us with food. They provide raw materials and resources for medicines and other purposes. They are at the foundation of all civilization and sustain our economies. Good and healthy environment is a highly essential factor required for sustainable development. However, in the era of modernization, industrialization and development environmental security has become a major concern today.

Five Major Environmental Issues have been listed by UNEP for 2019. These include -

Biodiversity - the most complicated and crucial aspect of our planet.

Water pollution - a massive problem for us and our environment.

Deforestation – the need to have plants and trees to survive.

Pollution – the necessity to have healthy air for breathing.

Climate Change – the effect of changing climate and its implications on the environment.

Though UNDP enlists the above mentioned five problems, there are other problems related to the above mentioned factors. Major current environmental issues may include climate change, pollution, environmental degradation, and resource depletion. The conservation movement lobbies for protection of endangered species and protection of any ecologically valuable natural areas, genetically modified foods and global warming. Environment also faces threat from chemicals, toxics and heavy metals. For the year 2020 apart from the above mentioned environmental issues, Climate crisis, environmental sustainability and Conservation of aspects of environment, another major issue of concern has been Global Public health.

The impacts that these factors have on the environment have become clear and include - Climate change including Global warming, Acid rain, photochemical smog and other forms of pollution, Ocean acidification, Displacement / extinction of wildlife, Resource depletion - forests, water, food.

Another important factor which has far reaching impact on environment is 'Terrorism'. Terrorism has a harming effect not only on economic and social life but also on the environment.

The environmental damages caused by terrorism include terrestrial conflicts, terrorist camps and bases, training activities, the carbon dioxide emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>) related to energy consumption.

Terrorism, as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), is "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." The destruction inherent in any act of mass terrorism inevitably causes secondary environmental pollution effects, many of them serious. Acts of terrorism can also be directed against the environment itself, or specific natural resources such as freshwater, oil, or agricultural products. The secondary environmental effects of terrorism can often be as significant as its primary effects. The attack on the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York City on September 11, 2001, had negative health consequences beyond the staggering loss of life. The collapse of the structures and subsequent fires spewed an enormous cloud of dust and toxins into the air over the city. Pulverized concrete, building materials, heavy metals, and human remains were inhaled by residents and rescue workers in lower Manhattan until a heavy rain three days later washed away most of the dust. The immediate environmental fallout from the WTC collapse contained asbestos and fibrous glass from the building structure; mercury, dioxins, furans, and other cancer-causing toxins from the burning of fluorescent light bulbs and computer screens; heavy metals such as cadmium and lead and volatile organic compounds like benzene. Federal, state, and local agencies went right to work monitoring air quality and cleaning up dust and debris from the WTC collapse, but these actions themselves have serious environmental consequences.

With the passage of time, and through the cleansing effect of rainfall and the specialized cleanup efforts of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), air quality in lower Manhattan has now returned roughly to pre-9/11 levels. However, despite reassurances from the EPA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), residents of lower Manhattan worry about the long-term health effects of dust and particulates deposited on rooftops and windowsills, and in the ventilation systems of nearby buildings.

Without a serious focus on green growth, falling water tables, rising food / water / energy prices, population growth, resource depletion, climate change, terrorism, and changing disease patterns, catastrophic results around the world are likely and will force migrations over the next few decades to make much of the world.

To reduce this potential for conflict, developed societies are being encouraged to recognize that global resource consumption and international security are connected, and that obtaining resources cooperatively rather than competitively will enhance long-term security. International agencies can help to ensure the equitable distribution of critical resources both between and within countries. In addition, nations can contribute their relative expertise to finding new sources of natural resources, to developing substitutes for commodities such as oil and natural gas, and to enhancing conservation and efficiency technology to certify that existing resources are used to their maximum benefit. If poorer citizens can be assured they have access to the resources needed to live, they are less likely to adopt combative ideologies that lead to terrorism.

Protection of the environment is the basic responsibility of all the human beings and the dire responsibility of all the governments. Environmental security is environmental viability for life support, with three sub-elements - preventing or repairing military damage to the environment, preventing or responding to environmentally caused conflicts, and protecting the environment due to its inherent moral value. Environmental protection refers to any activity to maintain or restore the quality of environmental media through preventing the emission of pollutants or reducing the presence of polluting substances in environmental media – and this should be the aim of all countries for making the world a healthy and safe place to live in.

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