



If you want peace, protect earth's climate from disruption.

Has climate change played a role in the on-going turbulence in Syria and Egypt?

Egypt is the largest importer of wheat in the world. In the case of Egypt climate disruption caused poor harvests in the Ukraine and Russia (due to an historic heat wave) and Canada and Australia (due to successive years of drought and excessive rainfall), which exacerbated already low world grain stocks reducing the amount of wheat available to importing countries. At the same time China's wheat harvest was reduced by drought necessitating imports which further raised prices in an already tight market.

A large portion of the Egyptian population relies on government assistance to buy bread. Wheat prices rose. Bread prices rose. People for whom bread represents 30% of their caloric intake couldn't get what they needed. They weren't starving. By itself a bread crisis could not topple the entrenched Mubarak government, but as an important background issue it was a potent multiplier of other grievances.

Syria's case is more directly climate related but made much worse by the policies of the Assad government. At the same time that the country was in the midst of a "biblical" drought and millions of farmers and herders were giving up on their water-starved farms and moving to cities and looking for work

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there alongside already displaced Iraqis and Palestinians, the government was encouraging the cultivation of water-hungry cash crops such as wheat and cotton. The government then compounded its mistake by selling Syrian grain stocks to take advantage of the high world grain prices. Again, weather was only one factor but a potent one in the growing unrest. The example of the Arab Spring, plus growing poverty, brought the street protests and a subsequent violent response from Assad resulting in a complex civil war. All of this and not just the use of poison gas is the background to US bombing threats!

The climate disruptions that we can trace in the Syrian and Egyptian conflicts are significant but pale in comparison to the violence that could result from the large scale changes we have every reason to expect in coming decades from Climate Change.

Even now India and Pakistan are jostling for control of the Himalayan rivers that bring water to both as well as other Asian nations. What would a clash between these two nuclear-armed giants look like? Where will Bangladeshis (or many other coastal or island peoples) go when the sea covers more and more of their land? Their neighbors already have deeply impoverished populations that would be hard-pressed to absorb refugees. As areas become too hot and dry to support their populations and as other areas are depopulated by floods, where will all those people go? Will they just politely starve to death or will they (following the usual human propensity) try to grasp what they need to survive? What are the chances for peace in such scenarios?

**If you want peace, we invite you to
work with us to solve the climate crisis!**

(360) 352-6327

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