

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/natural-security/>

Andy Karsner, senior strategist and “Space Cowboy” at X, argues that in our globalized world, environmental threats to natural security have become more consequential in frequency and severity than military threats to national security. He proposes that humankind can adapt and protect itself intelligently by “designing systems at a commensurate global scale of interdependence” to ensure the safety of our food and water supplies.



Transcript

What do you think the future looks like now with Natural Security? - Yeah, well, you can have Natural Security without National Security, but you can't have National Security without Natural Security.. And we're just trying to help people think through things.. I'm an old cold warrior, like I said, I got to take down the Berlin Wall.. The truth is most of the foreign policy complex never took off their cold warrior jackets.. The world changed, then we became a globalized planet.. Truthfully the world changed 50 years ago when for the first time in my lifetime we saw images of a blue marble from another celestial body.. For the first time ever, we understood we were interconnected.. That was the aha moment but we were still in cold war, we were still very factionalized.. We had the UN aspiration and all the beauty that was launched there and were woods.. But the truth is we weren't living up to it, to a degree, the end of the Cold War meant a recognition of interdependence on an unprecedented level..

And if you were a trader or a developer or an investor or a financier, you just called it globalization, or Tom would call it, the world is flat.. And I'm part of all these organizations, Trilateral Commission Council on Foreign Relations, et cetera and everybody still has a bit of that Cold War patina.. They're still wearing the jacket.. They haven't really left the Letterman's jacket behind and said, "What is the new thing" And it's the same right now with globalization, that interdependence was far more than free trade flows and 20 foot containers from China, and how many toys could we get, how cheap at Walmart, that globalization was how do we treat the global comments that are unaccounted for, but that ultimately are the safety and the security and the quality of our species existence.. Things that we have taken for granted because we thought they were inexhaustible or without impact, we now know that it's beyond a shadow of a doubt that when you can hit 70 degrees in the Antarctic peninsular that was once completely frozen and lose the last an ice shelf when you are losing permanently the ice cap in the North and all the reflectivity that goes with it.. And because we can't rephrase Greenland, we know we have permanently messed with things.. So we can't necessarily undo the damage, but we can adapt and protect ourselves intelligently by designing systems that commensurate global scale of interdependence.. So when we talk about Natural Security, we're basically saying, "Look, I'm not worried anymore" about those big goosestepping Chinese and Russian parades of the communist past and we're viewing stand and the missiles they're going to launch in Kim Jong-un and that whole drama, it's a pain, you gotta manage it.. There's a human diplomatic area, but it's not nearly as consequential as the frequency and severity of natural changes that are occurring that are going to affect our food supply, our water supply, our capacity to insure ourselves from damages and flooding in the streets in Miami and elsewhere...