



By: *Tomorrow's Affairs Staff*

# London at a turning point – climate as a matter of national security



If there was any doubt as to whether the climate and environmental crisis falls within the domain of security, this week's events in London have effectively dispelled it.

According to several reputable British media outlets, a confidential report from the security services assesses that climate change and ecosystem degradation represent a serious and immediate threat to the national security of the United Kingdom.

The risks cited in the document include food supply, the stability of logistics chains, the financial system, and potential migration pressures.

The report, which was scheduled for public release, has been withheld by Downing Street. As a result, the issue of climate has shifted from the professional to the political domain.

Britain is deeply integrated into the global market for food and raw materials, with a significant portion of these flows originating from regions most vulnerable to climate change.

According to the United Kingdom Food Security **Report** 2024, in 2023, domestic production accounted for about 62 per cent of total food consumption, or 75 per cent when considering only domestic products.

This means the country is permanently dependent on imports, especially for fresh fruit and vegetables, and these supply chains are already affected by extreme weather and climate disruptions in exporting countries.

This vulnerability directly impacts the economic stability and living standards of the population. When the intelligence system states that climate is encroaching on security, it does not refer to an abstract threat decades away.

Simultaneously, three processes are directly affecting British security: extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and costly, agricultural yields in countries on which Britain depends are becoming

unpredictable, and major trade and transport routes are strained by geopolitical tensions.

## A new era of threats

For this reason, climate risk is no longer viewed solely as an environmental issue but as a security challenge at the heart of state planning.

It is this shift in approach, according to available information, that explains why the report was withheld. In its own documents, the British state already acknowledges that it is in a "new era of threats".

The National Security **Strategy** 2025 and Strategic Defence **Review** 2025 advance the doctrine of deterrence and readiness for high-intensity scenarios, with a focus on NATO and European deterrence.

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However, if the intelligence sector is simultaneously warning that climate change is undermining the stability of food, water, and energy chains, then "climate" is not a parallel agenda – it is a risk multiplier that alters operational assumptions and budget priorities.

In other words, food and water security is no longer a secondary issue compared to energy. It is a key element of the overall national security strategy.

## A managerial paradox

Why, then, would the prime minister's office delay publication? The delay is not due to risk denial, but rather to a managerial paradox.

If the government releases the document to the public without a prepared response package, it acknowledges a threat without a plan and creates a political cost for itself.

If it withholds the document, the government risks accusations of underestimating its own services and displaying political weakness in addressing real security risks.

The public increasingly perceives the delay in publishing the report as a political issue rather than a technical one.

The media and analysts interpret it as an attempt by the government to avoid opening a new debate at a time when there is already a sensitive **discussion** about the United Kingdom's obligations in funding forest protection and implementing regulations to prevent deforestation in global supply chains.

## From ecology to national security

The essence of the problem does not lie in day-to-day politics but in how the state practically shifts the issue of climate from the realm of ecology to the system of national security. This does not mean establishing a new fund but changing the way the state operates.

Climate risks must become part of strategic stock planning, public investment, and intelligence analysis.

Weather patterns, agricultural cycles, and supply chain stability must receive the same attention as energy and military flows.

Only then does climate become a genuine security priority, rather than a separate administrative task. An equally important change must occur in foreign policy.

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Britain must build long-term partnerships with countries from which it imports food and raw materials – from North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula to Latin America and sub-Saharan

Africa.

These ties should no longer be based solely on trade but on joint projects linking food, water, and energy security.

## Climate as part of security policy

The **report**, Progress in Adapting to Climate Change – 2025, submitted to the government by the UK Climate Change Committee, demonstrates that the pressure is genuine.

The document clearly states that the most valuable agricultural areas in England face increasing risk of flooding, that the modernisation of water and transport infrastructure is delayed, and that state policies are inconsistent and lack a unified plan.

These are not activist claims but the assessment of a body authorised to measure progress and issue warnings when there are none.

The broader international context further illustrates the importance of the British report.



*In the US intelligence community's annual assessment of global threats, climate no longer appears among the top security challenges – Tulsi Gabbard*

While London considers how to incorporate climate risks into the national security strategy, the United States has taken the opposite approach this year—in the US intelligence community's annual **assessment** of

global threats, climate no longer appears among the top security challenges.

This move was interpreted as a political signal that Washington is withdrawing the issue from the security framework, causing concern in European capitals.

If one of the two leading Western powers withdraws from the climate agenda, the other must assume greater responsibility.

Therefore, London is now expected not to remain on the defensive but to publicly and operationally confirm that it regards climate as part of its own security policy.

## From assessment to action

What does it mean to move from assessment to action? Above all, food security must be treated as seriously as energy security was after the 2022 crisis.

This requires long-term supply contracts with countries already affected by droughts and changes in rainfall, joint investments in agriculture and logistics, and clear incentives to expand sources of supply.

The aim is not to close the market but to create a safety net that mitigates the risk of disruption.

Infrastructure must be designed for a reality in which climate disturbances have become the norm, not the exception.

**In the energy sector, Britain has demonstrated an ability to adapt, but in the water, transport and storage sectors, it still falls short of its own security needs**

Each new road, bridge, port or water supply system must be built with the expectation that it will be exposed to floods, heatwaves and droughts. Such an approach is now a necessity, not a choice.

In the energy sector, Britain has demonstrated an ability to adapt, but in the water, transport and storage sectors, it still falls short of its own security needs.

The intelligence system must expand its remit to include monitoring climate risks in the same way it monitors political or military threats.

Thematic units and working groups already exist, but they lack operational connectivity.

Ongoing risk analysis is required, bringing together in real time weather forecasts, crop conditions in exporting countries, port and fleet capacity, inventory levels, price and currency movements, and the risk of unrest in regions on which Britain depends.

Only when such data become part of regular security reports will climate issues cease to be merely declarative and become part of everyday state planning.

## A new reality

The defensive strategy changes imperceptibly but profoundly. The Strategic Defence Review 2025 refers to a "new era of threats" and the need for "wartime readiness", but the reality is that armed forces are increasingly operating in climate-driven circumstances—remediating the effects of floods, fires and droughts, or assisting partner nations facing the same problems.

This is not a replacement for traditional security tasks but an additional burden that consumes the same personnel, resources and budget.

When climate risk is officially recognised as a security threat, it is acknowledged that some military resources must be redirected towards resilience and logistical readiness, rather than solely focusing on armed forces.

## Financial policy must adapt to the new reality in which food and water have become a security issue

The Ministry of Finance should look at investments in ports, warehouses, cold storage, and domestic processing not only as economic projects but also as measures that directly strengthen the state's resilience.

Such investments have security significance and must be part of long-term planning, not a temporary expense.

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In practice, the line between climate, security and industry expenditures is increasingly blurred, which presents the government with demanding fiscal decisions about how to allocate limited resources.

In terms of foreign policy, climate security is no longer an abstract issue.

The Amazon and other major rainforests directly influence the rainfall and agricultural cycles on which Britain's food supply depends.

Therefore, investing in their protection is not merely a humanitarian gesture but a means of securing the domestic market.

This is precisely why the postponement of the report has attracted so much attention—it comes at a time when significant international meetings on the financing of forest protection are being prepared.

Politicians often perceive the word "fund" as a new expense, yet from a security standpoint, it represents an investment that averts far greater harm.

## Security and climate part of the same problem

In the coming months, the government will have to decide whether to acknowledge the scale of the problem or continue to delay action.

Maintaining the status quo would mean a continued gradual weakening of the resistance system—a process that remains invisible while everything is functioning but becomes fatal when the first serious disturbance occurs.

The publication of the report and the initiation of measures would carry a political cost, but at the same time, it would create an opportunity for responsible planning and a clear strategy.

The most likely outcome will be the gradual incorporation of climate issues into the security framework through concrete but limited steps.



*In the coming months, the government will have to decide whether to acknowledge the scale of the problem or continue to delay action - Keir Starmer*

This may include new supply and storage agreements, changes to public investment criteria, the establishment of a permanent climate risk team within the National Security Council, and the inclusion of these risks in regular intelligence assessments.

While this approach will not trigger a sudden political upheaval, it could prompt the country to begin adapting before it is forced to do so.

The political cost is inevitable, regardless of the choice. The difference is that one solution provides time and resilience, while the other offers only a semblance of peace until the next crisis.

As the United States excludes climate change from its security assessments, Britain has an opportunity to take the opposite stance and thereby strengthen its own reputation and negotiating position in Europe, particularly in agriculture, trade, and industrial policy.

At a time when droughts and floods have become part of economic reality, a country that incorporates climate risks into its security system in time will be more prepared, resilient, and politically stable than one that reacts only when the damage becomes apparent.

This is not a debate about political ambitions but about the allocation of real risks. It concerns ports and warehouses, contracts, currencies, supply chains, and whether the next disruption will affect the very products whose shortages are causing panic and political pressure.

That is why the withheld report is more important than the current controversy. It shows that security and climate have become part of the same problem and that it is no longer possible to separate them. From that moment, the question is no longer whether to react, but how quickly and in what order.

A reasonable forecast does not require a grand plan or spectacular announcements but rather a series of thoughtful decisions that connect domestic and foreign policy.

This means stricter criteria for public investment, greater capacity for storing and distributing food and water, new agreements with exporting countries, and redirecting some of the climate funds to security programmes.

If the state acts in time, the next warning from the intelligence services will not be that the report has been stopped, but that measures have already been taken and the crisis has been averted. At this point, that would be the only proof that the system works.