

Water as potential source of conflict



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- “The world's next world war will be fought over water “
- 5 billion people could fall victim to water shortages by 2050 (UN Water development Report)
- Water use increased by 1% per year since the 1980s
- Increasing Global water demand: 20 - 30 % above current level of water use
- Over 2 billion people live with high water stress, about 4 billion experience severe water scarcity 1 month/year.

The Nile

- Ethiopia is building Africa's largest hydroelectric dam
- Failed negotiations between Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan
- US called in to mediate
- Egypt fears the potential impact from dam



The Nile cont.

- Decreased water supply in Egypt due to climate changes. Crops abandoned due to insufficient water supply
- Climate change causes double impact on water scarcity for Egypts farmers (heat and dry soil)
- The government has tried to put in measures to tackle this crisis
- Egypt fears decreased water flow from the Nile
- More than 90 % of Egypts Nile water depends on water sources outside their national borders

The Nile cont.

- 2% decrease in water supply would affect 1 million people
- Potential disaster for Egypt's poor
- Big impact on agriculture
- Instability in country due to worsened water situation
- Egypt could be forced to take action

“The only matter that could take Egypt to war again is water” - former president Anwar Sadat

Theories about water and conflict

- It is debated whether water scarcity itself is a source of conflict
- US establishment is already warning of potential conflicts
- Overuse of water could potentially compromise US national security
- Shortages, poor water quality and floods can risk instability and state failure
- Between now and 2040, fresh water availability will not keep up with demand
- Water problems for key countries could put risk to global food markets and hobbling economic growth

Theories about water and conflict

- Allouche suggests that water related conflicts are more likely because of the creation of new political units rather than water scarcity.
- Growing number of water conflicts - recent phenomenon
- Assumed a cause-effect relation between water demand and scarcity
- Transboundary water conflicts has become higher since the emergence of modern nation states
- Allouche means that resource scarcity as a driver of conflict is inconclusive

Conclusion

Historically, water tensions have led to more water-sharing agreements than violent conflicts. (ICA Global water security 2012).

While it may not be the defining factor in generating conflicts, water scarcity can definitely serve as a catalyst to ignite already sensitive situations. Thus, with water shortages more likely to occur in the future, the likelihood of more conflicts erupting due to the effects of water scarcity will also increase.

Water saving methods



Drip irrigation



Restrict water-intensive crops



Water charge

