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Climate Security: Depictions of Environment and Earth in the Securitization of Space

The cultural production of climatic insecurity is among the most interesting features of the present moment, and its recent and very rapid reconfiguration of mainstream scientific, environmental, economic, and security discourses deserves close attention. Not surprisingly, the notion of an insecure and unstable earth system is itself an ambiguous and shifting construct, one assembled from diverse cultural elements and invested with multiple meanings. Though these elements are sometimes of ancient origin, and marked by diverse histories and debates, the current configuration of “climate security” is quite new, at least in the form underpinning the surge of interest in environmental crisis shown by western intelligence, security, and military planning agencies. This paper explores how climate security concerns have emerged from the intersections of earth system science and state securitization projects, and it illuminates how warnings of abrupt climate change are articulated to contemporary proposals to securitize global space.