



“The possible security implications of climate change were far less obvious... however, that indirect relationship between security and climate change in no way diminished the urgency of supporting the most vulnerable countries.”

Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN¹



Brazil is the largest country in South America and in the Southern Hemisphere. It shares common boundaries with every South American country except Chile and Ecuador.² Climate change is a serious concern for this country, particularly with regards to deforestation of the Amazon rainforest.³ With some predictions for changes in precipitation, much of the forest is in danger due to the combined effect of drought and heat. As the world’s largest carbon sink, there is a clear link between the health of the Amazon and the health of the planet. The rain forests, which contain 90-140 billion metric tons of carbon, help stabilize local and global climate.⁴

Summary

Country: Brazil

Region: South America

ASP Assessment:

Vulnerability: Medium

Perception of Climate Change: Environmental Threat

Capacity: Medium

Preparedness: Medium

Overall Assessment: Medium

The Climate Threats

Regional Disaster Vulnerability

- Increased and more severe flooding
- Forest fire, drought, and erosion⁵
- Loss of crops⁶

The Need to Adapt

- Brazil’s cities feature favelas, or slums, that lack infrastructure.
- Weak government institutions make long term planning difficult.
- As some of the world’s most productive agriculture, farmers will have to adapt⁸

Links Between Climate and Conflict

- High numbers of low-skilled workers migrating both internally and across borders, with social disruption
- Increased droughts may lead to local conflicts over water sources, particularly as upstream dams change the amount of downstream water supplies⁷

Direct Threats to Homeland Security

- With huge expanses, patrolling the Amazon frontier is virtually impossible
- Increased population density causing dislocation among large, stressed populations⁹



How is the Country Preparing for Climate Threats

Preparing for Disaster Response

“Human beings don’t control nature, but we can build mechanisms to better resist natural phenomenon, save lives and prevent people from losing their homes.”

– Dilma Rousseff, President of Brazil ¹⁰

Planning for Homeland Security Threats

“The sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment are essential aspects to the development and to the integration of the area. The densification of the presence of the State, and in particular of the armed forces, along our borders, is a necessary condition to conquer the objectives of stabilization and integrated development of the Amazon.”

– Brazil’s Ministry of Defense, The National Defense Policy 2005¹²

Breaking the Link between Climate and Conflict

“Defense planning includes all regions and, in particular, the vital regions where there is a larger concentration of political and economic power. Complimentarily, it prioritizes the Amazon and the South Atlantic due to their wealth of resources and access vulnerability on their terrestrial and maritime borders.”

- Brazil’s Ministry of Defense, The National Defense Policy 2005¹¹

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Analysis

Brazil is aware of the threats of climate change, but mostly sees this as a problem to be dealt with by traditional environmental measures alone. This is a mistake. One of the main security priorities for the Brazilian military is developing situational awareness in the vast Amazon basin. The threats of climate change could massively change the region’s ecology and its ability to host a substantial population. The military can and should help build awareness of both the effects of climate change on the region and man-made deforestation. The latter is likely to be a sign of other criminal activity. Monitoring the Amazon can also help prepare for climate change. Like India, Brazil’s planning for the threats of climate change may be hampered by its stance in the UN negotiations, where it refuses to call climate change a security threat. Until it addresses this contradiction, Brazil rates as, “vulnerable, but partially prepared.”

The American Security Project’s Global Security Defense Index on Climate Change is an examination of how international governments and militaries plan for and anticipate the strategic threats of climate change.

For more information and references see:

globalsecuritydefenseindex.org/