

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HEARING CHARTER

The National Security Implications of Climate Change

Thursday, September 27, 2007
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Purpose:

The purpose of this hearing is to examine current thinking on the nature and magnitude of the threats that global warming may present to national security, and to explore the ways in which climate-related security threats can be predicted, forestalled, mitigated, or remedied.

Among the many direct consequences of warming temperatures may number: flooding, drought, soil and coastal erosion, melting of glaciers and sea ice, and change in the range of disease vectors. Such phenomena can lead to water shortages, diminution of food supplies from both agriculture and the oceans, the spread of disease to new areas and the emergence of new diseases, increased risk of fire, and decreased production of electrical power. Through famine, epidemic, and competition of resources, these can contribute to the breakdown of civil order – and, where governments are already stressed, disintegration of the state – as well as rampant human misery, mass migration, the rise of extremist ideologies, and armed conflict. This hearing will look at the current state of research into these possibilities, as well as the strategic thinking that is being developed in hopes of anticipating and coping with such threats.

In so doing, the hearing should help the Committee in identifying new areas of research, or new emphases in existing areas, that have begun emerging with the recently burgeoning of attention to the links between climate change and national security.

Background:

The Committee on Science and Technology has long been a leader in bringing the importance of climate change to the attention of the nation and in advocating measures to deal with this critical problem. It played a crucial role in the creation of the U.S. Global Change Research Program in 1990 and, just this June, reported out a measure, H.R. 906, amending that original act. This legislation would require the President to present to Congress a quadrennial assessment that analyzes, among other things, “the vulnerability of different geographic regions of the world to global change, including analyses of the implications of global change for international assistance, population displacement, and national security.”

In addition, both Houses of Congress are now considering legislation that would put Federal intelligence experts to work studying the connection between climate change and national security. Both H.R. 2082 and S. 1538 would direct the Director of National Intelligence to submit to Congress, within 270 days of enactment, “a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on the anticipated geopolitical effects of global climate change and the implications of such effects on the national security of the United States.” The provision was inserted into the Senate version of the bill via an amendment offered by three Democrats and three Republicans.

Even with the legislation pending, the National Intelligence Council (NIC) has begun working with the U.S. Global Change Research Program and the Joint Global Research Institute, a collaborative effort of Battelle Memorial Institute and the University of Maryland, on a study of the sort the bills describe. Whether the study will be published as an NIE or a National Intelligence Assessment is to be determined closer to publication, which is expected in early 2008.

This legislation parallels the rise in prominence in policy circles of the issue of global climate change’s potential impacts on U.S. national security. Early this year the Global Business Network, a private consultant, issued a report titled *Impacts of Climate Change: A System Vulnerability Approach to Consider the Potential Impacts to 2050 of a Mid-Upper Greenhouse Gas Emissions Scenario*.

A report to be considered at this hearing appeared shortly thereafter: The CNA Corporation, which incorporates the Center for Naval Analyses, produced *National Security and the Threat of Climate Change*. The Subcommittee will receive testimony on this report presented by a former

U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon Sullivan, USA (Ret.), who chaired the Military Advisory Board that CNA formed in conjunction with this project. At about the same time, the Strategic Studies Institute of the Army War College and the Triangle Institute for Security Studies jointly held a colloquium on “Global Climate Change: National Security Implications” two of whose speakers, Dr. Butts and Prof. Andrew Price-Jones of Colorado College, will also be among the witnesses at this hearing.

Awaiting publication within the next year is a report, to be titled “The Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Global Climate Change,” based on a year-long review by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Two men involved with its production will testify at this hearing: Mr. James Woolsey, the former Director of Central Intelligence, who wrote one of the three climate-change scenarios that make up the report; and Dr. Alexander Lennon, who is serving as co-director of the report for CSIS.

Witnesses:

Panel One

General Gordon R. Sullivan, USA (Ret.), is the former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army and is serving as the Chairman of the Military Advisory Board that The CNA Corporation formed in conjunction with its report *National Security and the Threat of Climate Change*.

Mr. James Woolsey, a former Director of Central Intelligence and currently Vice President of Booz Allen Hamilton, is the author of a chapter of the forthcoming Center for Strategic and International Studies report “The Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Global Climate Change.”

Panel Two

Dr. Kent Hughes Butts is the Director of National Security Issues at the U.S. Army War College’s Center for Strategic Leadership.

Dr. Alexander Lennon is a Research Fellow in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and co-director of the forthcoming CSIS report “The Foreign Policy and National Security

Implications of Global Climate Change.”

Dr. Andrew Price-Smith, is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Colorado College, Director of the Project on Health and Global Affairs, and author of the book *The Health of Nations: Infectious Disease, Environmental Change, and Their Effects on National Security and Development*.