

U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Senator Richard G. Lugar
Opening Statement for Climate Change and Global Security:
Challenges, Threats and Diplomatic Opportunities
July 21, 2009

I join the Chairman in welcoming our distinguished panel. I am especially pleased that our good friend Senator John Warner has joined us today. His views on national security matters are deeply respected, and we are honored that he has come to share them with the Foreign Relations Committee.

To adequately prepare our military forces for future threats, we need to understand how climate change might be a source of war and instability. Climate change projections indicate greater risks of drought, famine, disease, and mass migration, all of which could lead to conflict. We also must ensure that our military infrastructure can adapt to new circumstances, a component of which is developing secure alternative sources of fuel.

The United States is confronted by a cluster of national security threats that arise from our economic and cultural reliance on fossil fuels. First, we face a current dependence on oil, a large percentage of which is controlled by hostile or unstable regimes concentrated in the volatile Middle East. This increases our vulnerability to natural disasters, wars, and terrorist attacks that can disrupt the lifeblood of the international economy. It also means that we are sending hundreds of billions of dollars each year to authoritarian regimes. This revenue stream emboldens oil-rich governments and enables them to entrench corruption, fund anti-Western demagogic appeals, and support terrorism. Second, we face the prospect of manipulation of oil and natural gas supplies by producers seeking political leverage. Nations experiencing a cutoff of energy supplies, or even the threat of a cutoff, may become desperate, increasing the chances of armed conflict, terrorism, and economic collapse. Third, we face longer term prospects of declining global oil production. As we approach the point when the world's oil-hungry economies are competing for insufficient supplies of energy, oil will become an even stronger magnet for conflict. And fourth, we face international crises arising out of drought, food shortages, rising seas and other manifestations of climate change. Any of the threats in this cluster could be a source of catastrophe for the United States and the world.

This list does not necessarily exhaust the possibilities. But it underscores one of the dilemmas for national security planners, namely, that these threats are not identical. Each has a unique time horizon and a unique threat intensity. Some steps, such as developing renewable fuels may be useful in addressing the entire cluster of threats. But some steps that might be beneficial for climate change are not necessarily helpful in addressing other threats in the cluster.

For example, expanding offshore oil drilling and opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil exploitation are generally opposed by climate change advocates. Yet, increasing domestic oil production could help hedge against midterm energy vulnerabilities. Similarly, encouraging nuclear power development overseas would produce climate change benefits, but the national security risks have to be managed very carefully. Further, region by region, military planners are likely to have divergent priorities depending on the immediacy of various threat scenarios.

Thus, our task is not just to anticipate all possible national security threats that might emerge in the future due to climate change and our dependence on fossil fuels. We have to develop timelines that compare the relative immediacy of these threats. Then we have to make rational choices about where and how to apply limited national security resources.

The American military is at the forefront of those working to develop energy resources that do not depend on the good will of unpredictable and sometimes hostile regimes. America is rich in coal, as are large developing nations like China, India, and Ukraine. Coal remains a big part of the energy plans of many countries. The United States and the world are unlikely to be able to deal with climate change without progress on clean coal technologies. The Pentagon is experimenting with coal-to-gas and coal-to-liquid technologies to fuel America's military. As the

Pentagon moves to expand the use of coal fuels, it should simultaneously work to develop cost-effective carbon sequestration methods and cooperate with other agencies and entities engaged in this endeavor.

As I have mentioned in previous hearings, as we consider how to address climate change, we should give priority to steps that would simultaneously yield benefits for other U.S. priorities, such as bolstering energy security, generating export markets for high technology industries, strengthening our rural economy, and improving air quality.

I thank Senator Kerry for holding this hearing and look forward to the testimony of our panel.

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