

Advice from Our Experts

January 8, 2021

All speakers were asked: what is one piece of advice you give about this topic?

One piece of advice for this audience would be...

Learn and Lead...

... to learn everything you can about climate change since it will become the defining issue during your career and that of your fellow service members.

Hon. Alice C. Hill

... make sure you think about climate security as a national security issue rather than an environmental issue. **Hon. John Conger**

... to raise your climate ambition now, wherever you are in the national security community. 2021 will be a unique moment for climate action that can have a lasting impact for generations. **Hon. Sherri Goodman**

... educate yourself about climate impact, and about climate as an impactor of national security. Our changing climate will affect every aspect of our professional and personal lives into the distant future, we must prepare and plan to manage that risk - to do that we need to continually build our knowledge and understanding of the challenge and impacts. We no longer live in a static world. Standards related to infrastructure and a host of other critical needs must be updated to account for climate impact over time. Science evolves, so education and awareness are essential to prepare for our climate changed future. **Rear Admiral (ret.) Ann C. Phillips**

... take climate change off the back burner. It's time to adopt aggressive and decisive actions to build resiliency because climate change has the ability to degrade readiness over time, giving our adversaries greater opportunities. Not to take action leaves readiness at risk.

Ms. Joan D. B. VanDervort

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... encourage everyone to acknowledge that runaway climate change itself is a security threat. For many years, the climate security community has focused on climate impacts and how to adapt to them. Reducing greenhouse gases was likely seen as controversial and likely to risk politicizing the climate security space, which has enjoyed more bipartisan support. However, unless we move swiftly to clean energy and to decarbonize our energy systems, the effects of climate change will prove unmanageable and beyond the coping capacity of even rich countries like the United States. **Dr. Joshua Busby**

... planning efforts tend to be stove piped, and provide a false sense of security in the ability of federal, state, local and tribal resource capacity to address concurrent, complex catastrophes. Furthermore, there are no protocols in place to ameliorate the potential of these catastrophes becoming super spreader events for the further proliferation of the COVID-19 pandemic. At a minimum, first responders must be vaccinated, beginning with our Armed Forces. Case in point: Our Forces deploying to Iraq were vaccinated for Anthrax as a condition of deployment and military readiness. Our military DSCA first responders should follow this same protocol. Finally, we must resurrect the National Level Exercise program to address concurrent, complex catastrophes followed with a strategic narrative to address our resource constraints that will require a triaged approach to first minimize loss of life. **Admiral (ret.) Paul Zukunft**

... to loudly advocate for a true U.S. national maritime strategy that addresses sustainable, blue economic growth that is balanced by environmental concerns and national/global security interests in the face of climate change and other ocean stresses that threaten the health and prosperity of humanity and all other life on our planet. **Rear Admiral (ret.) Jon White**

... over the next five to ten years, we must continue to feature energy and environment resilience as prominent aspects of our operational planning strategy. **Hon. W. Jordan Gillis**

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Who Can Help...

... get to know your Army Reserve. Everything is about relationships. Knowing who and what is available in the area across the Services, in addition to other federal, state, and local resources. Let us know if you are interested in visiting any of our Army Reserve Centers, training exercises or meeting with anyone from the leadership team(s). I know that it is challenging during COVID-19, but we can meet at least virtually. We want to continue to work and partner with the other Services and see how we can best support civil authorities. **Mr. Stephen Austin**

Understand Climate Science and Technology ...

... creative and ground-breaking R&D is difficult to do in isolation -- we have to be careful not to assume that by definition the U.S is leading the world in ocean science and technology – remembering that hubris leads to downfall!
Dr. Larry Mayer

... to leverage emerging technologies identified in [NOAA's six science and technology Strategies/Plans](#). **Rear Admiral (ret.) Tim Gallaudet**

A Global Issue Needs Global Leadership...

... as important as mitigation is, we can't ignore adaptation. Almost no matter what we do, we'll be living with some degree of climate change, and unless we plan now for the resources and institutions we'll need to adapt, poor and marginalized people around the world will suffer. **Dr. Scott Moore**

... to understand the magnitude of climate-driven environmental migration as one of the most important emerging security issues and support a globally-recognized classification that provides migrants additional human rights protections. **Dr. Marcus D. King**

... to understand that Russia, under its present leadership, is unlikely to see combating climate change as a basis for significant cooperation with the West. On the contrary: in important respects it sees global warming as something likely to confer competitive advantage on Russia.
Dr. Nigel Gould-Davies

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... in August 1941, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill drafted the Atlantic Charter. This one-pager, with eight straightforward bullets, laid down how a post-world war 2 world should look like. It is a brief and inspiring document, that went on to become the basis for the UN Charter and Treaties of regional organizations like NATO and the EU.

I feel the debate on climate change needs an equally compelling sound bite, appealing to most if not everybody. A charter that would still call for a rules based international order, would still seek inclusive political and economic development, would still call against suppression, would still seek to prevent conflict through arbitration, but would place a climate change response at the heart of it! So perhaps, in 2021, 80 years on, it is time for an Ocean's Charter! **Vice-Admiral (ret.) Ben Bekkering**