

# National Security Significance of a Changing Climate

## Policy Recommendations from Our Experts

January 8, 2021

**All speakers were asked: What is the one policy you would champion/enact?**

*If I could recommend one policy, it would be...*

### For the U.S. Government...

... to restore America's climate leadership by committing to reduce its own emissions not just to zero but net-negative by the end of the century; reassert its leadership role in global climate negotiations; and massively scale up investment in key areas like battery storage and direct air capture.

**Dr. Scott Moore**

... a coordinated federal response, and specific to this conversation, DoD response, to build resilience as essential to our national security, led by federal standards, backed by funded federal data and science, focused on building pre-disaster/hazard mitigation and resilience, prioritizing critical and vulnerable infrastructure, and aligning funding strategies at the federal, State and local level – through a whole of government and community approach. And rejoin the Paris Climate Accords...Immediately.

**Rear Admiral (ret.) Ann C. Phillips**

... champion an integrated planning effort to address concurrent, complex catastrophes and the full spectrum of domestic disasters ranging from wild fires, tropical cyclones, major oil spills, mass migrations, cyber disruptions and indications and warnings of an imminent terrorism threat all in the midst of a pandemic. **Admiral (ret.) Paul Zukunft**

... if the U.S. is to maintain a strategic advantage in the Blue Economy we will need to maintain and support robust and far-sighted R&D programs at academic institutions, while paying careful attention to areas of national security concern through close communications and clearly articulated and well-informed guidelines from the security community. **Dr. Larry Mayer**

... to pay attention to the degree to which Russia sees climate change as an opportunity as well as a threat, both economically and strategically—especially in the Arctic. **Dr. Nigel Gould-Davies**

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... I've been heartened to see that we have a potential vehicle for addressing these concerns through the 2019 Global Fragility Act which is intended to align development, diplomacy, and defense policy in fragile states and authorized some serious money for Prevention and Stabilization \$200 million a year for 5 years and \$30 million a year for five years for a Complex Crisis Fund. That act could be an important vehicle for incorporating climate security concerns, and I know that DOD, State, and USAID have been working to identify focus countries of concern. Unfortunately, the recently released strategy doesn't mention climate change and only mentions natural resource management in passing. I would have the government revisit the 2020 United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability and issue an addendum or update that integrates climate and natural resource management. I would also encourage the new administration to empower the new UN Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and her team to engage the Climate Security Mechanism and see how the Global Fragility Act can complement wider multilateral mechanisms in this space. **Dr. Joshua Busby**

... in the next fiscal year, dramatically increase USAID funding allocations for Central American countries including Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras for climate change adaptation and resilience programs including capacity building for governance. The goal is to reduce incentives for environmental migration. **Dr. Marcus D. King**

... U.S. accession to UNCLOS, which is becoming more important every day as we seek to influence sustainable, global economic growth and development across the world ocean. In addition to U.S. national security interests, our leadership and representation in organizations and procedures under UNCLOS are crucial to advance myriad national interests as well as responsible, international "Blue" economic development relating to important areas such as deep seabed mining, Arctic extended continental shelf determinations, and Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). **Rear Admiral (ret.) Jon White**

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### For the Department of Defense...

... to make sure that military decision-making—including decisions about weapons acquisition, training of forces, strategic planning, investments in installations—account for the future impacts of climate change.

**Hon. Alice C. Hill**

... to integrate climate security across all national security decision making mechanisms and to develop specific measure and metrics of progress by which leaders at every level can hold their units accountable.

**Hon. Sherri Goodman**

... to require all installations that are on the top-ten most vulnerable lists that either OSD or the Services submitted to Congress be required to develop their Military Installation Resilience Plan by the end of 2021. **Hon. John Conger**

... direct the Services to capture the training impacts from climate change factors and establishes metrics to aid in assessing risks and vulnerabilities.

**Ms. Joan D. B. VanDervort**

... to ask how to equip the armed forces? Directing expenditure towards green capabilities and equipment would give the military leverage and, as such, it will be a catalyst for my other suggestions as well. Furthermore, with Defence as an active promotor and user of green technologies, it will also contribute to a competitive technological edge. **Vice-Admiral (ret.) Ben Bekkering**

... we must enable warfighting readiness by continuing to strengthen our resiliency and posture through execution and refinement of our current policies and procedures and remain flexible to adjust and adapt along the way.

**Hon. W. Jordan Gillis**

... implement DoD Directive 4715.21 on Climate Change Adaption and Resilience and report to Congress on how it is being implemented. Instead of having only one office in charge of all climate, this DEPSECDEF signed policy already provides roles and responsibilities across the DOD components. Ensure climate considerations are incorporated through all domains, services, and geographic regions. **CDR Andrea H. Cameron**

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### For the Next Administration...

... for the incoming Administration to support the policies, actions, and legislation of the current Administration that are advanced in NOAA's Blue Economy Strategic Plan for 2021-2025, which are beneficial to a sustainable American Blue Economy Recovery."

**Rear Admiral (ret.) Tim Gallaudet**

... develop a stronger policy regarding the Arctic at the beginning of the next Administration. This can build from strategies that have come from democratic and republican Administrations and pull together the whole-of-government and whole-of-science to provide a better-informed national policy as it pertains to the Arctic. It's time to demonstrate that we are a truly Arctic nation in all aspects—diplomatically, militarily, and economically and invest in domain awareness. **Admiral (ret.) Paul Zukunft**

### Celebrate Our Successes...

... Rather than weighing in on a specific recommended policy, I would like to highlight sections 12304 Alpha, Bravo and Charlie of the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, and thank Members of Congress for providing the authority for Service Reserve Components to assist citizens and communities in the United States during domestic emergencies. **Mr. Stephen Austin**