

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT, COMMITTEE  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**by**

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**Chairman, Military Advisory Board**

**To The CNA Corporation Report**

**“National Security and the Threat Of Climate Change”**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, for the opportunity to appear before you on this important issue. Today I am here as Chairman of the Military Advisory Board to The CNA Corporation report on “*National Security and the Threat of Climate Change.*” The Advisory Board consists of 3 and 4 star Flag Officers from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps. Our charge was to learn as much as we could in a relatively short period about the emerging phenomenon of global climate change using our experience as military leaders to process our learning through a national security lens. In other words, what are the national security implications of climate change?

When I was asked to be on the Military Advisory Board, I was both pleased and skeptical. Pleased because of one simple and straightforward fact—I am 70 years old, I have served my country for over 50 years in both peace and war and now in the late stages of my life I feel as if the sacrifices I and my soldiers, colleagues, friends, and my family made for America are now being overtaken by a much more powerful and significant challenge to the well-being of our nation.

Having said this, I must admit I came to the Advisory Board as a skeptic. There is a lot of conflicting information on the subject of climate change and like most public policy issues in America, many opinions, on the subject.

After listening to leaders of the scientific, business, and governmental communities, my colleagues and I came to agree that global climate change is and will be a significant threat to our national security and in a larger sense to life on earth as we know it to be.

The potential destabilizing impacts of climate change include: reduced access to fresh water; impaired food production, health catastrophes – especially from vector- and food-borne diseases; and land loss, flooding and the displacement of major populations.

What are the potential security consequences of these destabilizing effects? Overall, they increase the potential for failed states and the growth of terrorism; mass migrations will lead to greater regional and global tensions; and conflicts over resources are almost certain to escalate.

The findings of the Military Advisory Board are:

- **First, projected climate change poses a serious threat to America's national security.**  
Potential threats to the nation's security require careful study and prudent planning—to counter and mitigate potential outcomes.
- **Second, climate change acts as a threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world.**  
Many governments in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East are already on edge in terms of their ability to provide basic needs: food, water, shelter, and stability. Projected climate change will exacerbate the problems in these regions and add to the problems of effective governance.
- **Third, projected climate change will add to tensions even in stable regions of the world.**  
Developed nations, including the U.S. and countries in Europe, may experience increases in immigrants and refugees as drought increases and food production declines in Africa and Latin America. Pandemics and the spread of infectious diseases, caused by extreme weather events and natural disasters, as the U.S. experienced with Hurricane Katrina, may lead to increased domestic missions for U.S. military personnel—lowering troop availability.
- **And, fourth, climate change, national security and energy dependence are a related set of global challenges.**  
As President Bush noted in his 2007 State of the Union address, dependence on foreign oil leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes and terrorists, and clean domestic energy alternatives help us confront the serious challenge of global climate change. Because the issues are linked, solutions to one affect the others.

The recommendations of the Military Advisory Board are:

- **First, the national security consequences of climate change should be fully integrated into national security and national defense strategies.**  
As military leaders we know we cannot wait for certainty. Failing to act because a warning isn't precise is unacceptable. Numerous parts of the U.S. government conduct analyses of various aspects of our national security situation covering different timeframes and at varying levels of detail. These analyses should consider the consequences of climate change.
- **Second, the U.S. should commit to a stronger national and international role to help stabilize climate changes at levels that will avoid significant disruption to global security and stability.**  
All agencies involved with climate science, treaty negotiations, energy research, economic policy, and national security should participate in an interagency

process to develop a deliberate policy to reduce future risk to national security from climate change. Actions fall into two main categories: mitigating climate change to the extent possible by setting targets for long-term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to those effects that cannot be mitigated.

- **Third, the U.S. should commit to global partnerships that help less developed nations build the capacity and resiliency to better manage climate impacts.** Some of the nations predicted to be most affected by climate are those with the least capacity to adapt or cope. This is especially true in Africa. The U.S. should focus on enhancing the capacity of weak African governments to better cope with social needs and to resist to overtures of well-funded extremists to provide schools, hospitals, health care, and food.
- **Fourth, the Department of Defense (DoD) should enhance its operational capability by accelerating the adoption of improved business processes and innovative technologies that result in improved U.S. combat power through energy efficiency.** DoD should require more efficient combat systems and include the actual cost of delivering fuel when evaluating the advantages of intervention in efficiency.
- **And, fifth, DoD should conduct an assessment of the impact on U.S. military installations worldwide of rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and other possible climate change impacts over the next 30 to 40 years.** As part of prudent planning DoD should assess the impact of rising sea levels, extreme weather events, drought, and other climate impacts on its infrastructures so its installations and facilities can be made resilient.

Climate change, National Security and energy dependence are inter-related. Hoping that these relationships will remain static is simply not acceptable given our training and experience as military leaders.

The path to mitigating the worst security consequences of climate change involves reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. There is a relationship between carbon emissions and our national security. I think that the evidence is there that would suggest that we have to start paying attention.

The federal government and the Department of Defense can help and lead in this area. DOD is the largest energy user in the US government and one of the largest energy users in the nation. One of our key vulnerabilities on the battlefield today is transportation of fuel for combat use. We are using a lot of fuel in Iraq, and the Army in particular is experiencing battlefield casualties on their fuel convoy's – they are difficult to protect – so to the extent that DoD can develop new technologies to protect the troops by improving energy efficiency, so too can those technologies be beneficial to our country. In fact, a Defense Science Board study now underway and another one in 2001 said that the energy challenges of our nation and those of our military are similar and that DoD can

lead in resolving our nation's energy challenges even as DOD meets its own challenges in this area. In a very real sense, the buying power of the federal government can help lead our nation to low carbon energy futures.

In closing I would say that most of us on the Military Advisory Board were in the service through the Cold War. All of us served for over 30 years. Most of us retired in the '90s. Very high levels of catastrophe could have occurred at that time, and by investing in military preparedness we were able to avert the dangers of that time. In our view, there's a lot of uncertainty here, but we need to be paying attention to what might happen and what is happening around the world from the threats of climate change.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you here today. Mr. Chairman, I request my statement and the report to be entered into the record.

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GENERAL GORDON SULLIVAN  
USA, Retired July 1995

General Sullivan was the 32nd Chief of Staff - the senior general officer in the Army and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As the Chief of Staff of the Army, he created the vision and led the team that helped transition the Army from its Cold War posture.

During his Army career, General Sullivan also served as Vice Chief of Staff (June 1990-June 1991); Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (July 1989-June 1990); Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized), Fort Riley, Kansas (June 1988-July 1989); Deputy Commandant, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (March 1987-June 1988); and Assistant Commandant, U.S. Army Armor School, Fort Knox, Kentucky (November 1983-July 1985). His overseas assignments included four tours in Europe, two in Vietnam and one in Korea. He served as he served as Chief of Staff to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney under the first Bush Administration.

General Sullivan was commissioned a second lieutenant of Armor and awarded a bachelor of arts degree in History from Norwich University in 1959. He holds a master of arts degree in Political Science from the University of New Hampshire. His professional military education includes the U.S. Army Armor School Basic and Advanced Courses, the Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College.

General Sullivan is currently the president and chief operating officer of the Association of the United States Army, headquartered in Arlington, Virginia. He assumed his current position at the Association in February 1998 after serving as president, Coleman Federal in Washington, D.C.

He is the co-author, with Michael V. Harper, of *Hope Is Not a Method* (Random House, 1996), which chronicles the challenges of transforming the post-Cold War Army. Gordon Sullivan is a trustee of Norwich University and serves on the boards of several major corporations, including Newell-Rubbermaid, Shell Oil and Getronics Government Solutions, L.L.C. He is also a director of the Atlantic Council of the United States and the George C. Marshall Foundation and the Chairman Emeritus of the Marshall Legacy Institute.