



ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

finding the ways that work

This Week's Climate Fact

Thursday July 10, 2008

Ignoring climate change undermines national security.

Policymakers are right to ask about the cost and consequences of climate change policy. But which path is more disruptive: solving climate change or ignoring it? In terms of *national security alone*, there is mounting understanding that ignoring climate change is the most costly and dangerous course.^{1,2,3} But don't take our word for it. See what others are saying:

“There are national security ramifications to global warming.”

National Intelligence Director Mike McConnell, “The Spymaster,” *The New Yorker*, 1/21/08

“We already know enough to appreciate that the cascading consequences of unchecked climate change are to include a range of security problems that will have dire global consequences.”

Center for Strategic & International Studies and Center for a New American Security joint report, 11/5/07

“Climate change can act as a threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world, and it presents significant national security challenges for the United States.”

Center for Naval Analysis report, 4/16/07

“Climate change will provide the conditions that will extend the war on terror... More poverty, more forced migrations, higher unemployment. Those conditions are ripe for extremists and terrorists.”²

Admiral T. Joseph Lopez (Ret.), Former Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and of Allied Forces, 4/16/07

“We will pay for this one way or another... We will pay to reduce greenhouse gas emissions today... Or we will pay the price later in military terms. And that will involve human lives. There will be a human toll.”²

General Anthony C. Zinni (Ret.), Former Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), 4/16/07

In confronting climate change, there is no option without costs. But we do have choices. We can invest a modest amount now – less than 1% of GDP in 2030, according to a survey⁴ of independent economic analyses – and get cleaner air, greater energy security, new energy jobs, and a brighter future for our children. Or, by choosing to do nothing, we can pay much more later in greater government spending to maintain public infrastructure, agricultural damage from droughts, the spread of insect-borne disease, increased international instability.

The most damaging thing we can do about climate change is nothing. *It's time to cap emissions.*

¹ CSIS-CNAS Nov. 2007 report: “The Age of Consequences: The Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Global Climate Change”

² CNA 4/06/07 report: “National Security and the threat of Climate Change”

³ Dr. Fingar testimony 6/25/08 “National Intelligence Assessment on the National Security Implications of Global Climate Change to 2030”

⁴ Keohane, Nathaniel and Peter Goldmark. “What Will it Cost to Protect Ourselves from Global Warming?” Environmental Defense Fund 2008.