

## **Climate & Energy Security Envoy (CESE) – The UK Experience**

### **Climate Change and Security**

Climate change is one of the twenty-first century's biggest foreign policy challenges. An effective response to it underpins national security and prosperity. Energy, food, water and climate security are interconnected and inseparable and that as the world became more networked, the impacts of climate change in one country or region will affect the prosperity and security of others around the world. Resource and climate stresses are already feeding into economic and security problems. The global nature of trade, supply chains and commodity prices means that we will all be affected by the impacts of climate change. Different countries will face different challenges. But in a networked world we will all feel the effects. Moreover, the choices other countries make are often determined by the availability of and access to essential life resources - land, energy, water and food.

Climate change will exacerbate this “resource squeeze”, increasing the risk of scarcities and price shocks and multiplying the economic and resource stresses that contribute to tensions and fragility in certain states.

The 2010 United Kingdom National Security Strategy and the subsequent Strategic Defence and Security Review acknowledged that climate change will act as an increasingly powerful amplifier of instability across some of the most volatile regions of the world. There was an urgent requirement for defence and security establishments across the world to consider and respond to climate change as a ‘threat multiplier’ to existing stresses. This would ideally manifest itself in their own strategies (both for responding to the impact of such instability and reducing emissions) and to emphasise the urgency of the global transition to a low-carbon economy, which will limit the threat.

### **The UK Climate & Energy Security Envoy**

To assist in the delivery of these messages from the UK the Ministry of Defence, The Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department of Energy & Climate Change jointly funded across government Climate and Energy Security Envoy post which was established in September 2009 and filled by a serving naval officer – Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti.

The specific objectives of the role were:

- To broaden and deepen debate on the security implications of climate change in priority countries in order to provide key political leaders with additional set of arguments to underpin requirement to factor in to national security thinking.
- To persuade security and defence communities of need to understand the risks and address the consequences of climate & resource insecurity on regional and global stability.

- To embed understanding of climate security across MOD and Whitehall to inform decisions on adaptation and mitigation.

The CESE appointment reflected recognition that a senior military officer was likely to achieve higher level of access and influence within security community than diplomat, particularly in priority countries such as US. This belief has been borne out by experience to date. The United Kingdom believes that the idea, suitably adapted, would be useful for other Member States.

### **Creating an EU Climate & Energy Security Envoy?**

Despite progress to date, factoring the risks associated with climate and resource insecurity into national security thinking and subsequently acting upon the analysis is not yet instinctive. Both within the EU and the wider world achieving this will require the commitment to/endorsement of the respective security communities and in particular the military. In some countries this will require overcoming resistance to accepting the concept of non traditional threats and will need careful handling. Based on experience over the last three years this can best be achieved through military to military engagement. The political conditions for limiting the risks to wider EU prosperity and security through reducing global emissions are still not in place. The job of persuading more countries to consider the security implications of climate change, and encouraging those who do take it seriously to translate this into more work on analysis of the risks and concrete action to address them, is still very much a work in progress. Member states are starting to get traction with key players in key countries, but in order for this to translate into game changing political conditions for a global deal we need to continue this influencing at the highest levels – and by using a senior ranked serving or retired military officer – we can access and influence key areas of government, including those not normally accessible to a “regular” diplomat.