

"Building Climate Change Institutions: The Case of Environment & Security"

European Parliament, Paul-Henri Spaak P7C050 - 21 March 2012

The following thoughts have been offered to those giving evidence to the hearings

1. Understanding Climate Change and its implications for Security

(a) It is now believed that climate Change is likely to be 'abrupt' rather than 'linear'. This has important consequences for military planning. ***Do you believe that the impact of Abrupt Climate Change has been adequately taken into account by the politicians and military in your country?***

(b) Cleo Paskal has claimed that the impact of climate change is likely to be greater on some developed societies, such as Europe and the US, because of their lack of resilience, rather than on some developing ones because of their regularly tested resilience. ***Do you believe that the thawing of the Arctic Tundra and the consequent disruption of gas and oil pipelines (and other environment-related disruptions to global oil and gas infrastructure) supports her assertion about the vulnerability of Europe?***

(c) Some maintain that shifts in the jet-stream triggered by the melting of the arctic sea ice are responsible for the heat waves, fires, floods and droughts that Europe has experienced in the last couple of years. Changes in the jet-stream were also held responsible for the Indus flooding, with its impact on the relative security positions of India, Pakistan and China. ***Do you believe that extreme events, such as the Indus flooding, can have immediate security implications?***

2. UNEP & Fast Action

(a) The UNEP-WMO assessment of black carbon and ground-level ozone ([UNEP-WMO 2011](#)), and the subsequent paper in *Science* by the same team 13 January 2012 ([Shindell et al., SCIENCE 2012](#)), calculate that cutting these two local air pollutants using existing technologies can cut the rate of global warming almost in half by 2030 and by 2/3s in the Arctic, with strong collateral benefits for public health (avoiding up to 4.7 million deaths a year) and crops (avoiding up to 4% loss). These benefits are calculated to be worth \$5.9 trillion per year by 2030. UNEP's separate assessment of HFCs ([UNEP 2011](#)), and the subsequent paper in *Science* by the same team 24 February 2012 ([Velders et al., SCIENCE 2012](#)), calculate that reducing the production and use of HFCs can slow warming further by avoiding up to 0.4Wm² by 2050. They note that many countries have proposed phasing down high GWP HFCs using the Montreal Protocol, as it has already phased out production and use of nearly 100 similar fluorinated gases. ***Do you believe that the science behind this is understood widely enough?***

3. The Military and Climate Change

(a) The Solana Paper, endorsed unanimously by the EU leaders, made it clear that there are security concerns related to Climate Change and Environmental Degradation, and that along with the efforts of the UNFCCC, the Military and Security sector have a role to play both for mitigation and preparedness.

Voluntary cooperation between the global military has played an important part in the removal of CFCs under the Montreal Protocol. **Do you believe that a similar role can be played by the military on other climate drivers such as black carbon, ground-level ozone and HFCs? Can the military do more to counter CO2 and the other green house gasses?**

(b) There is much national and international work in this area (European Defence Agency/European Military Staff/NATO). **Do you believe that there is sufficient exchange of best practice in this policy area between the various national militaries?**

(c) Military planning is normally based on an ability to respond to the worst possible threat. For climate change, there is the risk of abrupt and irreversible climate change occurring on a continental or planetary scale. **Should this rule be applied in the case of climate change?**

(d) Scientists are searching for an early warning signal from the climate system that can warn humanity that potentially catastrophic and irreversible changes are near. **Can the military contribute to early warning systems on climate and atmospheric change impacts more effectively than they currently do?**

(e) Mitigating climate change and managing impacts will require more sophisticated governance approaches than most national and sub-national governance systems can provide. **With their skills in designing long-term and integrated scenarios how could the security and military community assist politicians, policy-makers and negotiators in achieving better?**

4. Financial Aspects

(a) The Stern Report was written before the current financial crisis and did not include the military aspects of climate change. **Do you believe that there should be an enquiry, similar to the Stern Report on this subject?**

(b) The military is the largest user of fossil fuels. **Should such a report also look at the so called 'boot print' of the military?**

(c) It is claimed that ensuring efficiency in the use of fossil fuels and switching to more environmentally friendly fuels can lead to substantial savings in military budgets. **Do you believe this to be the case? Could you give specific examples?**

5. Institutional Issues

(a) It has been claimed that the outcome of Durban offers the possibility of separating important issues such as climate and security from the slow pace of negotiations under the UNFCCC between now and 2015. The British Government has argued that this is therefore a moment for institutional creativity separated from the imperatives of the negotiators. **Do you believe this to be the case? What new institutions, formal or informal, do you believe would be helpful?**

(b) Sharing information and dialoguing can be difficult between armies, even those in NATO. The experience of working globally on CFCs under the Montreal Protocol indicates that mutual confidence needs to be built up gradually. It has been suggested that an informal network, led by retired officers, might be the most pragmatic way forward. **Would you agree with such a proposal?**

(c) Some people maintain that unregulated geoengineering of the climate presents the possibility of climate policies being militarised. **Do you believe that UN oversight of the development of geoengineering is an urgent necessity?**