

Caux Dialogue on Land and Security

addressing the human connections between poverty, conflict and
environmental degradation

Caux, Switzerland, 10 – 14 July 2015

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Speaking notes for Keynote Speech delivered on 10th July 2015 at Caux Dialogue on
Land and Security 2015

Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti, CB.

Rear Admiral NEIL MORISETTI, CB. A former commander of the UK Maritime Forces, Admiral Morisetti later served as United Kingdom Climate and Energy Security Envoy from 2009 –13, and in 2013 was the UK government’s Special Representative for Climate Change.

- Thank you very much for inviting me to join you at this dialogue and the opportunity to speak today.
- At the outset I would wish to acknowledge the expertise that is in this room, across a breadth of activities related to land security.
- Such a gathering provides a real opportunity to build relationships and explore practical solutions to one of the greatest 21st century challenges.
- With that in mind some of you might, therefore, be surprised to find a retired naval officer delivering one of the keynote addresses.
- However, the reality is that there is an increasing recognition amongst the security community that environmental risks pose a threat to

national security as much as they do to human security, and therefore must be reflected in their strategic analysis.

- Of particular concern is the impact of a changing climate on the availability of secure, sustainable and affordable supplies of those key natural resources that are essential for growth and prosperity, FOOD, WATER, ENERGY and LAND.
- This is not about militarising the issues, there is no security solution to climate change.
- Rather it is about understanding the security implications of a changing climate and how they impact on all of us, irrespective of where we live in the world.
- This afternoon I intend to address five areas:
 - What is the issue or challenge,
 - Who does it impact upon,
 - What needs to be done,
 - In what manner does it need to be achieved, and,
 - How can you assist in the process.
- The views expressed are very much my own, based on my experience both within government and now working both in a university and as a non executive director in the energy sector.
- Some of you may question the relevance or disagree with my analysis; so be it but that will hopefully ensure that we have a good discussion afterwards!

So what is the problem?

- 21st century is proving to be a pretty challenging one, across all aspects of society, including economic, health and social.

- The security situation is no different.
- We are living in a world that is more unstable and volatile than we would wish for.
- The threats to geopolitical stability are greater than many would have expected at the turn of the century.
- And let's be clear, geopolitical stability is not an end state in itself, rather it is a fundamental pre-requisite for sustained economic growth, well being and alleviation of poverty.
- Some of those threats can be described as traditional, for example, state on state; *Eastern Europe or SE Asia*.
- Some fall into the category of terrorism: *AQ/ISIL/BH*
- Others would be described as non traditional, amongst which I would include the impact of a changing climate, be it extreme weather events or the onset of long term trends.
- That is not to say that climate change will be the direct cause of conflict.
- Rather it is the second and third order effects that will act as stress or threat multipliers.
- For example, Increased temperatures, changes to rainfall levels and patterns, increased acidity in oceans, or rising sea levels when they result in loss of land or livelihood add to the stresses that already exist in societies.

Who will this impact upon and what are the consequences?

- The consequences of a changing climate will affect all of us but the direct impact is likely to be felt by the most vulnerable. Those who live in parts of the world already affected by stresses.
- Parts of the world that are already experiencing food or water shortages, health problems or demographic issues, or all of these.

- Countries where there has been conflict in the past and where it is likely to be the case in the future. Conflict that frequently occurs because the governments of those countries do not have the necessary capacity or resilience to manage the stresses.
- Those countries are in a belt around the world; a belt that has considerable overlap with the map of the world's dry lands.
- The consequences of this, many of you will know much better than I can describe.
- Whether it be reduced crop yields, increased desertification, or migration of fish stocks, the effects are likely to be the same: shortages of essential food stocks and increased prices.
- At a time when populations are growing and individuals aspirations are rising.
- This in turn adds pressure on societies, which CAN manifest itself in the form of increased instability or risk of conflict, the effects of which are felt many miles beyond those directly affected.
- As your introductory flyer for this dialogue highlights, 80% of conflict now occurs in dry lands. Instability in these regions impacts on the availability of adaptation finance and the ability to address the wider challenges of poverty alleviation.
- But we live in a globalised world and events such as the Arab Spring, Syria and conflict in the Sahel have consequences for all. *Describe, including oil prices, terrorism at home.*
- It is therefore in all our interests to act.

What needs to be done and how?

- As I explained at the outset there is no security solution to the problem that I have described and whilst the implications must be reflected in National Security Strategies, and military forces need to

adapt their plans to ensure they are able to meet their responsibilities, the solutions lie elsewhere.

- Addressing the pace and nature of the changing climate must be a priority. We know what needs to be done and over what time frame.
- I am convinced that the technology is there to achieve what we seek, as is with a bit of persuasion the finance, but I am not so sure about the political appetite, the evidence to date would seem to indicate that it is not there. *Paris*
- But more about that later.
- However, it is not just about addressing climate change, it is also about acting through adaptation to address the many other factors.
- We know that there is an issue about land use, that is why you are here; the expertise is in this room to address issues relating to land availability and productivity. Similarly, for water management.
- But it is also necessary to address health issues, urban planning, transportation and most importantly governance.
- And here lies the real challenge. Just as in each of the individual areas I have highlighted there are issues of divided responsibilities the same and more applies to delivering the collective response.
- Ultimately this is a risk management challenge but to achieve a reduction in the risks to an acceptable level it is necessary to look beyond the traditional boundaries, both within public and private sector, at all levels, international, national and local.
- Firstly, there needs to be an acknowledgement that business as usual is not sustainable. Relatively easy if you are one of those who is already affected by these issues, less so if living in a world of plenty.
- Those who insist that we need greater certainty or more evidence are simply procrastinating. The evidence is there, it is simply a case of

looking out of the window, and anyway we never have a 100% certainty about any threat.

- It needs to be recognised that these are main stream issues that require to be addressed now.
- From a security perspective that is challenging with other threats to be addressed and the same can be said in other areas, but nonetheless these are issues of the day.
- It should be acknowledged that this is a complex problem with many interrelated issues and therefore producing a coherent response will be challenging.
- Yes, as highlighted in the recent G7 report on *taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*, it is important to ensure that the broader impacts of any action taken are understood and unintended negative effects are minimised. However, in the main it is not a complicated issue.
- 21st Century challenges require 21st Century solutions. Ones that recognise that action is required across all of society.
- To produce effective solutions to the problems it will be necessary to not only work across government but between the different sectors.
- One size will not fit all and frequently the best answer lies at the local or regional level.
- For the national and international community the focus must be on setting the conditions to enable others to deliver.
- All pretty straightforward, so why are we not there?
- What more can you do?

How can you assist the process?

- Foremost must be the education of policy makers and their advisors, both in the specifics of the individual areas but also, in today's immediate society, of the need to think long term, or strategically.

- Delivery of any respective strategies requires a clear understanding of the issues and a willingness to focus beyond short term imperatives.
- There has to be recognition that there will need to be upfront investment but the returns, especially when the co benefits are included, are greater.
- How do we get to such a position?
- The information needs to be presented in form and fashion that policy makers are happy with, and in a language they understand.
- No good giving a Minister or advisor 50000 words and telling them the answer they are looking for is probably on page 87, although they will have to interpret the findings to fit their case.
- Whether it be scientific, economic, or social related material the research community has to become intelligent suppliers, in just the same way that they should expect policy makers to be intelligent customers, who ask the right questions in the first instance.
- Would ask you to bear that in mind over the next few days as you discuss options and possible solutions.
- UCL has set up a new department to address just this issue in relation to Science, Technology and Engineering.
- The narrative is key. Arguments for action are rarely successful if only focus on negative or down side. Important to highlight opportunities and benefits, including avoided costs.
- An example of this is the health benefits of addressing climate change. Many report highlight the health benefits of energy efficiency and reduced emissions, as does the recently published Lancet Commission on Climate Change and Public Health. But to get Health Ministers on side you need to explain how this will help arrest the exponential growth in costs, 15% GDP for developed countries and 8% for developing.

- Why worry about Health Ministers, well reality is that if we are to develop sustainable strategies across the world it is no good just Environment or Energy Ministers calling for them, need to make case with Defence, Foreign Policy, Aid, Finance and others.
- Nobody said that it would be easy! However.....

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More information about the Caux Dialogue on Land and Security 2015 is available at www.landlivespeace.org.