

**Opening Statement of Chairwoman Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA)
At the Joint Hearing of the Intelligence Community Management
Subcommittee
And the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global
Warming
On the National Security Implications of Global Climate Change
June 25, 2008**

MS. ESHOO. Thank you, Chairman Markey. I join you in welcoming our witnesses here today.

I want to start out by noting the historic nature of this hearing. It is extraordinary because it represents the first time that the US government is acknowledging the national security implications of global climate change.

Many of us have believed for decades that this issue has great national security importance. In the 1990s, then-Senator Gore highlighted it and, he pushed to keep this issue on the national agenda as Vice President. The nation then began using intelligence assets and our allies to collect data on climate change. That came to a halt in 2001, and since then, this administration and its Congressional allies have ignored the environment. Yet, recently, outside experts began acknowledging the linkage between the environment and security.

This year, Javier Solana, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, issued a paper calling for coordinated research on mitigation and coping strategies for global climate change. In 2007, the German Advisory Council on Global Change argued for the importance of stopping climate change trends; CNA,

advised by 11 former generals and admirals, released an in-depth report on likely security implications; and the Center for Security and International Studies, and the Center for a New American Security released a joint report on the same.

Last April, after the release of the CNA study, I wrote to the Director of National Intelligence, Mike McConnell, and asked him to undertake a National Intelligence Estimate of “the anticipated geopolitical effects of global climate change and the implications of such effects on the national security of the United States.” He responded that it would be “entirely appropriate for the National Intelligence Council (NIC) to prepare” such an assessment. But when we included a requirement for a national intelligence estimate in the Intelligence Authorization Bill, we were ridiculed on the floor of the House by those who do not believe that global climate change is a national security issue. This report should put those doubts to rest.

I salute our witnesses and the Director of National Intelligence for their work on this assessment. This NIA is the result of just open-source collaboration between the intelligence community and the scientific and academic communities. While I am pleased with the reports’ conclusions, I am disappointed that it is classified CONFIDENTIAL—the lowest level of classified information—a classification level rarely used, but one that prevents this report from being released and discussed in the public domain. I have often noted that the intelligence community over-relies on secrecy and classified

information. In this instance, I believe that the document should not be classified, and hope that Director McConnell will declassify it.

The intelligence community accepted the science as given, without judgment, and still found that there are serious national security implications. Increased global temperatures mean heavy precipitation events, reduction in glaciers and arctic ice, and rising sea levels.

These climactic events will mean crop failures, water shortages, flooding, coastal storms, and increased incidence of infectious diseases. Each of these things leads to instability and, in some cases, to mass migrations as people seek more hospitable climates. Each of these consequences has the potential to aggravate existing US security challenges. We have already seen flooding and storm surges in the United States and Southeast Asia, crises over water shortages in the Sudan and Chad, and expansion of deserts in the Gobi and Sahara. The consequences to the U.S. are striking indeed. We can expect to see worsening drought in the Southwest, intense flooding in the Northeast, damaging storm surges on the Gulf Coast, and a loss of tundra in the north. In each area the predicted consequence comes with a resulting threat to infrastructure, whether it's increased risk of wild fires in the Western U.S., or disruption to pipelines across Alaska. Furthermore, as many as 48 U.S. coastal military installations are endangered by flooding and associated damages.

Some would claim that in discussing the implications of global climate change we are creating a panic because “no one can predict

the weather.” I believe that we must address the foreseeable consequences, and it is the lack of preparedness that should cause the ultimate panic. I would note that in a speech last month, the NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (JOP dee HOOP SKEF-er), described the greatest security challenges facing the alliance. He said the following:

In tomorrow’s uncertain world, we cannot wait for threats to mature before deciding how we counter them. The nature of this new environment is already beginning to take shape. It will be an environment that will be marked by the effects of climate change, such as territorial conflicts, rising food prices, and migration; it will be characterized by the scramble for energy resources; by the emergence of new powers; and by non-state actors trying to gain access to deadly technologies.

Note that the very first threat that he mentioned are the effects of global climate change. There is no question in his mind that climate change poses a national security challenge, and I hope that from this day forward the words “climate change” will be linked with “national and international security”.

I’d like to acknowledge the Committee staff Diane La Voy, Mieke Eoyang, and Josh Resnick for all of their hard work leading up to this important hearing.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.