

Testimony of

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Before a Joint Hearing of the

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Subcommittee on Intelligence Community Management

and

House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC

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Dear Chairwoman Eshoo, Chairman Markey, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this joint hearing of your Committees. I would like to submit my statement made at UN Security Council on 17 April 2007 for the record.

Observations made at the UN Security Council 17 April 2007

The Text of the contribution of the then UK Foreign Secretary

I will now make a statement in my capacity as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom.

For the United Kingdom, as for my Belgian colleague and many others who have spoken today, climate change is transforming the way we think about security.

Over the past couple of years, the threat we face has grown larger in scale and sharper in outline. Recent scientific evidence has reinforced, and in some cases exceeded, our worst fears. It has given us a picture of the physical impacts on our world that we can expect as our climate changes. And those impacts go far beyond the environmental. Their consequences reach to the very heart of the security agenda.

- The consequences of flooding, disease and famine and from that migration on an unprecedented scale.
- The consequences of drought and crop-failure and from that intensified competition for food, water and energy.
- The consequences of economic disruption on the scale predicted in the Stern Report and not seen since the end of World War II.

Charged as we are with the maintenance of international peace and security, this Council can make a unique contribution in the building of a shared understanding of what an unstable climate will mean for our individual and collective security.

We can and, I believe, we must. Because this Council deals, day in day out, with those very kinds of tensions and conflicts that an unstable climate will make yet more frequent and even more dangerous. As a group of the most respected retired US Admirals and Generals said in a report published just yesterday climate change is a 'threat multiplier for instability'.

Listening to the debate, I am struck by the widespread recognition that there are significant links - already being experienced by some countries - between the impacts to be expected from climate change and the increased risk of conflict and insecurity within and between states.

The UK fully agrees that full account should be taken of climate risks as we address the root causes of conflict. Like other members of the Council, I welcome the Secretary General's offer to assist us in this.

The fact that so many non-members of the Security Council have chosen to speak today is a reflection of the bitter truth that that instability will often be visited first and hardest on the already most vulnerable.

President Museveni of Uganda, whose economy depends on hydropower from a reservoir that is already depleted by drought, has called climate change an act of aggression by the rich against the poor. He is one of the first leaders to see this problem in security terms. He will not be the last.

Climate change is a security issue: but it not a matter of narrow national security - it has a new dimension. This is about our collective security in a fragile and increasingly interdependent world.

The UK proposed this debate during its Presidency because we felt that, by facing up to the implications of climate change for that collective security, the world will take wiser decisions as we begin to build a low carbon, global economy. Not at the cost of development but to enable us to build a new model of sustainable development.

Of course - as a number of colleagues have said - other organs of the United Nations have particular responsibilities in respect of climate change. But this is not a question of either/or. The UK would welcome substantial debates in the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social

Council - indeed I made this issue and its effect on security a particular feature of my own address to the General Assembly last September. And I am very well aware that the focus of the Commission on Social Development this year will be energy.

This debate has already shown that climate change is not just an issue of grave concern - but of common concern.

So I judge that we need to embark upon a shared endeavour. If it succeeds, we will all enjoy a better prospect of security: climate change is a threat that can bring us together if we are wise enough to stop it from driving us apart.