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CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

**National Security: Not a Good
Argument for Global Warming
Legislation**

**Testimony before the
Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate**

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My name is Dr. James Jay Carafano. I am the Deputy Director of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies and the Director of Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own, and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and address this vital subject. As President Barack Obama rightly noted in one of his first directives, his “highest priority is to keep the American people safe.”¹ He is right. The preamble of the U.S. Constitution states “providing for the common defense” is among the greatest obligations of government. It is, therefore, judicious and appropriate for the committee to consider the national security implications of major legislation that could well affect our freedoms, safety, and prosperity.

The Clean Energy Jobs and America Power Act (S. 1733) has engendered tremendous controversy. Concerns abound about the legislation's adverse economic consequences, and there is skepticism of its affects on world climate trends. I will focus my analysis and observations on the national security implications of attempting to address climate change through a framework established by national legislation.

The premise behind the proposed legislation is that the United States must create a government-run program to reduce the emission of “greenhouse gases,” including carbon dioxide (CO₂). The bill would establish a complex energy tax scheme to penalize businesses and industries that emit these gases. Proponents of the legislation have argued that passage is essential to advance U.S. national security. Without the law, proponents argue, adverse climate changes will cause nations to fail, natural disasters will yield unprecedented humanitarian crises, and states will chronically go to combat over the remaining resources. Likewise, they conclude that the legislation will break an “addiction to foreign oil[that] hurts our economy, helps our enemies and risks our security.”² I disagree with both conclusions.

I conclude that U.S. long-term national security would not be best addressed through legislation that attempts to regulate carbon emissions. This assessment is based on my experience as a serving military officer of 25 years, much of which revolved around strategy and policy planning; a complementary career as a military historian particularly interested in the relationship between armed forces and society and the intersection of military affairs, scientific, business, cultural, and economic history; and as a professor in post-graduate studies whose research and lectures focus on the methods of analysis used to address complex and intractable public policy and national security issues.

In my remarks today I would like to do three things: 1) address each of the arguments for linking global warming and long-term U.S. security interests; 2) discuss what I think should rightly be

¹ The White House, Presidential Study Directive 1, February 23, 2009, p. 1, at <http://www.hsdl.org/hslog/?q=node/4718> (April 10, 2009).

² United States Senate, “Kerry, Boxer Introduce *Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act*,” press release, September 20, 2009, at <http://kerry.senate.gov/cleanenergyjobsandamericanpower/pdf/pressrelease.pdf> (October 25, 2009).

the focus of analyzing the proposed legislation—the short-term security concerns that I believe might arise if the bill becomes law; and 3) suggest some efficacious options for addressing global warming and energy supply issues in the context of national security.

The March of Folly—Simple Answer to Complex Problems

At the root of my concerns over the proposed legislation is that it frames the challenge of global climate change, governance, political violence, and worldwide energy supplies as a single problem susceptible to resolution by management of a single independent variable. Public policy analysis suggests that cannot be correct.

Global environment, governance, and resources constitute a vast, complex system. A system is “any set of regularly interacting factors and activities that has definable boundaries and that produces measurable outputs.”³ The complexity of a system is determined by the number and diversity of interacting components. When systems become overly complex, their behavior cannot be easily predicted by traditional methods of analysis (breaking a system into its component parts and analyzing elements in detail).⁴ These systems are described as complex “non-linear.” Non-linear environments make it extremely difficult to map the cause and effect between variables. Indeed, in such environments isolating independent variables (a single factor that can be manipulated that will drive the behavior of the whole system) may be impossible. In a complex system, elements are so interconnected and their relationship so multifaceted that their properties cannot be properly understood without assessing their interrelationship with each other as well as their relationship with the wider system and its environment.⁵ Offering simple answers to complex problems will not work.⁶ This is certainly the case in attempting to understand the relationship between global warming and national security.

While it might feel intuitively appropriate to directly connect the dots between the changing global environment and the human response to global warming, an appropriate complex system analysis would warn against such an approach. The issue of just predicting long-term global climate trends is fraught with controversy and uncertainty. Layering social science models upon our current state-of-the-art climate models to predict complex human responses (including how markets, governments, and communities will respond to anything) is little more than an act of making highly subjective assessments.

Fighting Air—Climate Change and Choice

³ Richard L. Kugler, *Policy Analysis in National Security Affairs: New Methods for a New Era* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2006), p. 218.

⁴ L.A.N. Amaral and J.M. Ottino, “Complex Networks: Augmenting the Framework for the Study of Complex Systems,” *The European Physical Journal*, May 14, 2004, at <http://amaral.northwestern.edu/Publications/Papers/Amaral-2004-Eur.Phys.J.B-38-147.pdf> (April 13, 2009).

⁵ Yaneer Bar-Yam, “Multiscale Representation Phase I,” New England Complex Systems Institute, August 1, 2001, at http://www.necsi.edu/projects/yaneer/SSG_NECSI_1_CROP.pdf (April 13, 2009).

⁶ James Jay Carafano and Richard Weitz, “Complex Systems Analysis: A Necessary Tool for Homeland Security,” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2261, April 16, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/bg2261.cfm>.

Attempting to address national security in the context of climate challenge is problematic. The folly of simplicity is perhaps best illustrated in Jared Diamond's highly regarded study *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (2005). Diamond lists a daunting 12 factors that historically contributed to the collapse of a society—and these are only the factors directly controlled by humans.⁷ It is worth noting that Diamond is able to detail how this myriad of forces and choices interacted with one another only through the hindsight gained through hundreds of years of historical and archeological research. *Collapse* illustrates the immense difficulty of mapping cause and effect in complex human-environment systems. Additionally, the ability to apply any lessons to the future is complicated by the fact that both human institutions and the natural environment are continually changing and changing each other. His work should, in fact, be seen as a cautionary tale against relying on predictive social science models to interpret complex systems behavior.⁸

History is in fact littered with case studies that suggest straight-line mapping of human-environment interaction is problematic. Since the 1950s, for example, historians have been debating the “seventeenth century crisis” in history as a particularly difficult age.⁹ A drop of global temperature, known as the “little Ice-Age” was one of many factors that researchers have cited to account for the political, economic, and military upheaval of the period. Decades of debate, however, have achieved no consensus on cause-and-effect relationships. For example, while the period did see more wars and an increase in human mortality, this age also accounts for the emergence of political stability, scientific discovery and innovation, and the rise of economic productivity in future great powers like Britain and France. If anything, the process of constructing a compelling paradigm has left scholars skeptical of “social-scientific” explanations of history, yet alone suggested any confidence in predicting the future.¹⁰ Anticipating with certainty how climate change will affect human progress is a march of folly.

Indeed, there are many variables other than climate that affect how humans respond to climate change and, in turn, change their behaviors to try to impact climate change and its consequences. For example, while the emission of greenhouse gases has been skyrocketing across the globe in the last decades, political violence has been in decline. This case has been made by at least two independent academic assessments.¹¹ In the short term, many factors impact on the capacity of humans to govern themselves. On the global scale, human responses rather than long-term environmental trends prove the most dominant.

⁷ Ralph Doty, “Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed,” *Human Ecology Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2005), p. 76-77.

⁸ Scott E. Page, “Are We Collapsing? A Review of Jared Diamond’s *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*,” *Journal of Economic Literature*, December 2005, p. 1050.

⁹ See Eric Hobsbawm, “The General Crisis of the European Economy in the 17th Century: I,” *Past & Present*, 5 (May 1954), pp. 33-53; “The Crisis of the 17th Century: II,” *Past & Present*, 6 (November 1954), pp. 44-65.

¹⁰ J.B. Shank, “Crisis: A Useful Category of Post-Social Scientific Historical Analysis?” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 113, No. 4 (October 2008), pp. 1090–1099.

¹¹ J. Joseph, et al., *Peace and Conflict 2010* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers and the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, 2009), p. 1, at http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/pc/executive_summary/exec_sum_2010.pdf (October 25, 2010); Human Security Project Research Group, “Human Security Brief 2007,” 2008, at http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/pc/executive_summary/exec_sum_2010.pdf (October 25, 2009).

In short, viewing climate change and national security together as a single complex model makes little sense. The global climate has always been changing. Adapting to these changes and human efforts to manage their surrounding environment is a permanent feature of human competition. The environment does not cause wars—it is how humans respond to their environment that causes conflicts.

Climate change does not necessarily ensure that there will be more or less conflict. For example, as the Arctic ice melts and the environment becomes more benign, Arctic waters will become more available for fishing, mineral and energy exploitation, and maritime transport. Nations will compete over these resources, but it is how they choose to compete—not the change in the weather—that will determine whether war breaks out.

Furthermore, any changes in the climate, for better or for worse, will occur gradually over decades. Thus, there will be ample time to adjust national security and humanitarian assistance instruments to accommodate future demands. Those adjustments can and should be made with the most appropriate instruments, which might comprise any or all of the elements of national power including diplomatic, economic, political, and informational tools as well as the armed forces.

Supplanting Marketing—Energy Security’s Trojan Horse

The Clean Energy Jobs and America Power Act also purports to address U.S. national security by addressing concerns over energy security. Proponents claim that government manipulation of energy markets will reduce U.S. dependence on foreign energy sources and correspondingly increase American security. This logic is also flawed from the start. Global energy markets are complex systems as well. It would therefore be equally prudent to be skeptical of simple cause-and-effect plans.

History is again instructive. In response to the “energy crisis” during the 1970s, the U.S. government took a plethora of actions, implementing a proactive policy to address energy supplies, particularly oil. There were numerous pieces of new legislation, implemented by an alphabet soup of overlapping federal agencies, as well as a host of actions undertaken directly by a succession of presidents. The level of government interference with the nation’s energy markets was unprecedented, and these efforts had impacts that usually ranged from ineffective to downright counterproductive.

At almost every turn, Washington took an already challenging energy situation and made it worse through its own policy blunders. The federal government’s newly created maze of economic and environmental regulations and the agencies implementing them greatly hampered domestic energy supplies and limited the ability to respond to events. In retrospect, government policies contributed to the harm at least as much as any foreign entity. The errors of the 1970s should serve as a cautionary tale as America again faces similar challenges.¹²

¹² See Ben Lieberman, “Crisis! What Crisis?: America's Response to the Energy Crisis,” in James Jay Carafano and Richard Weitz, eds. *Mismanaging Mayhem: How Washington Responds to Crisis* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2008), pp. 113-129.

Likewise, today legislators should be wary of the desire to impose simple solutions on complex systems and expect the results to be both readily anticipated and inevitably constructive. Even if U.S. energy policies could drive global energy markets in any direction Americans chose (a big “if”), that impact would likely have both positive and negative effects on U.S. Security. For example, although the U.S. is heavily dependent on foreign energy, much of it comes from Mexico and Canada, nations friendly to America and among our largest trading partners. In the short term, one of the most significant impacts of the long-term declining reliance on carbon fuels would be a significant loss to their economies—perhaps a destabilizing one. On the other hand, policies that in the short term might drive up the price of oil would put more money in the hands of countries like Venezuela and Russia, whose foreign policies often clash with the United States. Likewise, adding new transaction costs on energy supplies that increase costs may also unduly weaken the U.S. economy. Simply supplanting market forces is unlikely to prove a panacea for improving U.S. security. The U.S. cannot be confident that by imposing new controls on U.S. energy production and consumption America will become axiomatically less dependent on foreign energy sources.

Simple Answers—Danger Zone for Complex Problems

Indeed, whether the case is trying to link global energy supplies or global temperature to American security, using analysis that suggests employing a single process to guide changes to complex systems might not only be wrong, but could be detrimental—the equivalent of the cure being worse than the disease.

The deleterious effect of using simple mandates to manage complex systems is best illustrated through an examination of the adoption of the Program-Planning Budget System (PPBS) by the Pentagon in 1960s. The premise of PPBS was that linking analysis, planning, strategic decision-making, and the day-to-day management of defense activities into a unified process would make the allocation of resources more rational, relevant, and effective. It failed to achieve that goal. Simply controlling the “machinery” of Pentagon decision-making did not actually allow the Secretary of Defense to produce optimum results, particularly in regards to fighting the Vietnam War. While it empowered Defense Secretary Robert McNamara to impose his “will” upon the decision-making process inside the Pentagon, “planning proved to be an impediment to effective strategic thinking and action, whether one favored hawkish military strategies or dovish political ones...the problem was not that PPBS tried to dictate these choices directly so much as that, by virtue of how it necessarily worked—what planning excluded as well as included—it influenced strongly how others made those choices.”¹³ In the end, prescriptive policies just implemented bad decisions faster.

The challenge of dealing with global warming through legislative fiat risks a similar fate. By overly structuring the response to complex system problems, the Congress will have an uncertain impact on the system—there is little question, however, that Congress will have a dramatic impact on those elements of the system to which cause and effect can be readily linked. Thus, Congress would be wise to limit analysis and debate over the costs and benefits of the Clean Energy Jobs and America Power Act to factors where cause and effect can be more clearly mapped.

¹³ Henry Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1994), pp. 120-121.

The Real Issues for the Energy Act

While the long-term impacts of climate change on national security can be debated, the short-term impact of legislation to curb emissions is more readily apparent. A study by The Heritage Foundation's Center for Data Analysis on a similar companion bill proposed in the House finds that the law would make the United States about \$9.4 trillion poorer by 2035. Much of this decline would be from reduced economic productivity and job loss. In particular, under the House legislation there would be 1.15 million fewer jobs on average than without a cap-and-trade bill.¹⁴ Other economic concerns include rising deficits and continued devaluing of the dollar.

A sharp decline in economic productivity would like have a deleterious impact on U.S. security. For example, a collapse in U.S. economic growth would result in even more draconian cuts to the defense budget, leaving America with a military much less prepared to deal with future threats. Indeed, if America's military power declines, there would probably be more wars, not fewer. Likewise, a steep drop in American economic growth would lengthen and deepen the global recession. That in turn will make other states poorer, undermining their ability to protect themselves and recover from natural disasters.

A consequence of passage of this legislation is that it may well create the world we want to avoid. The law would ensure a steep decline in U.S. economic competitiveness and military preparedness. The consequences of a weak America would inevitably lead to a string of national security crises and an undermining of the nation's capacity to deal with natural disasters here and abroad. It would seem in examining the national security implications of climate change, scrutinizing the short-term impact of the legislation would be much more important to address.

Likewise, proponents of the bill must also speak to concerns that any law will not impact global warming in any significant manner. According to climatologist Chip Knappenberger, similar legislation proposed in the House would moderate temperatures by only hundredths of a degree after being in effect for the next 40 years and no more than two-tenths of a degree at the end of the century.¹⁵ EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson concurred, recently saying, "US action alone will not impact world CO2 levels."¹⁶ Additionally, the impact of "managing" greenhouse gases on the environment also remains a subject of great controversy. For example, as Senator Inhofe noted in a floor speech, S. Fred Singer, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Virginia, who served as the first director of the U.S. Weather Satellite Service and more recently as a member and vice chairman of the National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmosphere, said that "no one knows what constitutes a 'dangerous' concentration. There exists, as yet, no scientific basis for defining such a concentration, or even of knowing whether it is more or less

¹⁴ William W. Beach, David Kreutzer, Karen Campbell, and Ben Lieberman, "Son of Waxman-Markey: More Politics Makes for a More Costly Bill," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2450, May 18, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/EnergyandEnvironment/wm2450.cfm>.

¹⁵ Chip Knappenberger, "Climate Impacts of Waxman-Markey (the IPCC-Based Arithmetic of No Gain)," MasterResource, May 6, 2009, at <http://masterresource.org/?p=2355> (August 3, 2009).

¹⁶ Press Release, "Jackson Confirms EPA Chart Showing No Effect on Climate Without China, India," U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, July 7, 2009, at http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Minority.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=564ed42f-802a-23ad-4570-3399477b1393 (August 3, 2009).

than current levels of carbon dioxide.”¹⁷ In short, if these concerns are valid, the legislation argues for taking on significant short-term risks to the U.S. economy and our security for uncertain gains in environmental quality.

Other Options

I am not suggesting that the United States “do nothing” to protect its national security, ensure abundant supplies of energy, and contribute in a meaningful manner to the stewardship of the global environment. What I am saying is that if we must act with deliberation and speed, we should act where we can act with greater confidence in our outcomes. In this respect, there are options for enhancing national security, improving our ability to adapt to global climate change, and enhancing the dependability and availability of clean energy that the Congress should consider. These would include:

- **Fund defense adequately.** Regardless of how the climate changes or the status of energy supplies, the U.S. will need a military that has sufficient resources to conduct current operations, maintain a trained and ready force, and prepare for the challenges of the future. Spending significantly less than 4 percent of GDP on defense for the next five to 10 years would shortchange the military. Such under funding would ultimately produce a hollow force that is either too small, unable to sustain current operational demands, not ready, or at a technological disadvantage on the battlefield. Congress can provide adequately for national security by making a firm commitment to fund the national defense at no less than 4 percent of GDP for the next 10 years. This commitment would require Congress to add roughly \$400 billion to the defense budget for from FY 2009 to FY 2012. A portion of this money would be allocated to ongoing operations, while the remainder should go to the core defense program, with a special emphasis on developing and deploying the next generation of weapons and equipment.¹⁸
- **Restrain non-defense discretionary spending.** The best tool the U.S. can have to face the future is a strong economy. Imbalances in the level of federal spending and the allocation of federal dollars threaten both the competitiveness and the security of the U.S. Spending not related to defense and post-9/11 operations has increased by 49 percent since 2001, or 5.9 percent annually, compared to 4.2 percent growth under President Bill Clinton. Since 2001, spending on education has grown by 7.5 percent per year, health research by 7.3 percent, and international affairs by 8.0 percent. At a time when defense and homeland security priorities require especially tight non-security budgets, Members of Congress have not made necessary trade-offs. Instead, they have *accelerated* the growth of non-security spending.¹⁹
- **Use the military appropriately.** Remaining an integral part of the global economy is vital to long-term U.S. national security and the country’s continuing economic competitiveness. Rather than attempting to defend, protect, control, or secure any means

¹⁷ Senator James M. Inhofe (R-OK), "The Science of Climate Change," Senate floor statement, July 28, 2003, at <http://inchofe.senate.gov/pressreleases/climate.htm> (August 3, 2009).

¹⁸ James Jay Carafano, Baker Spring, and Mackenzie Eaglen, "Providing for the Common Defense: What 10 Years of Progress Would Look Like," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2108, February 19, 2008, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/bg2108.cfm>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

of domestic or global production, the greatest degree of security comes from having access to the global marketplace and obtaining goods, resources, and services based on market decisions from friendly suppliers. It is in the vital interest of the United States to uphold the principle of freedom of the seas and to promote and protect the ways and means of free trade among nations acting in accordance with the rule of law. To accomplish this, the United States should retain the capability to use all of the instruments of national power—including military, diplomatic, law enforcement, intelligence, economic, and informational power—in any theater where U.S. interests could be at risk.²⁰

- **Reorganize key non-military instruments so that they are more effective.** Again, regardless of how climate and energy supplies evolve, U.S. power must be used effectively to advance U.S. interests. In particular, key non-military instruments such as foreign assistance and public diplomacy are in need of serious reform. Traditional foreign assistance programs have a very poor track record for improving governance, economic growth, or civil society. Of equal concern, U.S. instruments for public diplomacy have atrophied since the end of the Cold War and are in serious need of reform. Neither challenge is being adequately addressed by the current administration.²¹
- **Ensure that any effort to reduce reliance on foreign oil is grounded in policies that are best for the economy.** Reducing oil imports from unstable or unfriendly regimes should be done in a way that minimizes the economic cost to Americans. Policies such as raising taxes on gasoline while mandating or subsidizing expensive or unproven alternative fuels and vehicles lead to large costs with marginal—or even negative—results. The first steps in reducing reliance on foreign oil are to make full use of domestic petroleum reserves and to remove disincentives to investment in oil production from friendly nations. These should be coupled with efforts to encourage diversification away from petroleum, which will be best achieved not by government fiat, but by the private sector–led development of alternatives that can compete in their own right. Domestically, the federal role should be limited to conducting basic research and removing regulatory and tax barriers that impede private-sector innovation. In addition, restrictions on international growth in alternatives, such as the tariffs that limit ethanol imports into the United States, should be eliminated.²²
- **Use free markets to advance a green energy and environment agenda.** Trade measures in carbon-control legislation may appear necessary for protecting U.S. competitiveness and promoting broader international participation in such schemes. However, in reality, such measures will likely create a more hostile trade environment that costs U.S. firms access to global markets.²³ Rather than using trade policy as a weapon, America should keep markets open. Policymakers—regardless of the shape of any final climate bill—should maintain the integrity and freedom of global markets as a

²⁰ Stuart M. Butler and Kim R. Holmes, “Twelve Principles to Guide U.S. Energy Policy,” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2046, June 26, 2007, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/EnergyandEnvironment/bg2046.cfm> (October 25, 2009).

²¹ Helle C. Dale and James M. Roberts, “State Department Strategy Review Flawed from Start,” Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2659, October 20, 2009, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/ForeignAid/wm2659.cfm> (October 25, 2009).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Ray Walser, “Meeting Energy Challenges in the Western Hemisphere,” Heritage Foundation *Heritage Lecture* No. 1079, Delivered March 11, 2008, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/h11079.cfm>.

means to transfer clean technologies, keep international investment flowing, and promote economic growth and prosperity in the U.S. and around the world.²⁴

A Better World

Both the advocates and critics of the Clean Energy Jobs and America Power Act share common goals. They want a world where the U.S. remains safe, free, and prosperous. They want a future where the U.S. is a worldwide leader in the stewardship of the global environment, the advancement of freedom and justice, and sustainable growth. My testimony today is intended to help bridge the gap between them—not by rejecting the notion that the U.S. should deal responsibly with the challenges of global climate change, but by suggesting there are real limits to knowing how we can shape the future—and we should focus our initiatives on what we can know.

Thank you for the opportunity to address these vital issues. I look forward to your questions.

²⁴ Daniella Markheim, “Climate Policy: Free Trade Promotes a Cleaner Environment,” Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2408, April 24, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/tradeandeconomicfreedom/wm2408.cfm>.

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