

Transcript of Admiral William J. Fallon (USN, Ret.) in his response to a question on 'climate disruption.'

Recording of the Senate hearing can be found [here](#), beginning at 3:06:00 of 3:28:00

BLUMENTHAL: How big a threat to our national security, is potentially, what we see happening in climate disruption? Uh, the impacts on the availability of sea lanes, water resources in the Middle-East, food resources in Africa...To what extent is climate disruption a national security threat?

FALLON: I think it's a very, very important national security issue. It's one that we understand very little about, in my opinion. Ramifications of the continuation of the current trends provide all kinds of interesting scenarios. So, uh, in one that we've talked about here, the advance of Russia and Putin's opportunism and what the Russians want, and what Putin has in mind for us, he is going to have some significant options pretty soon, when the Arctic continues to lose its ice pack, and become basically accessible twelve months of the year gives them very very interesting opportunities to move things around and act in ways in which they were significantly inhibited in the past. It may give him some other opportunities economically, who knows. The melting of the ice caps, rising sea levels, you pick your scenario here, but the trends are pretty clear that water is coming up and land is going to disappear, and the implications for us and this country, more importantly probably for those that are really in danger, places like Bangladesh are marginally above sea level, and the turmoil that creates...so the problems we deal with, almost every single one of them, has its roots and instability in security, at a very basic level. Not armies, not ISIS running around in pick-up trucks with .50 caliber guns, it's what people feel very close to them. So if they feel threatened in their livelihoods, in their families, and their abilities, then things start to get unraveled, and that's the potential that I think we face. I don't want to lie awake at night wringing my hands over all this stuff over the things we could be doing to try to reverse the trends that appear to be moving on pretty strongly. So that's probably another topic for hours of discussion, but it gets back to one of my points about credibility—our credibility as a country. As the world grapples with these things, that apply to all of us, I think that U.S. leadership ought to be paramount, ought to be in the forefront, and in fact, sometimes we're not there. We're not there. We're not voting, we're you know, whether we're denying or avoiding, we're just defaulting to somebody else. And despite the, sometimes incessant gnawing of people, 'oh the U.S. is always trying to get into this and push...' on the other hand, the world really needs our leadership and involvement. And this is an area where we could probably do some good if we put our minds to this.

BLUMENTHAL: Thank you, and thank you all for being here today.