



CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20318-9999

6 May 2019

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

I am writing in response to your 16 April letter on the subject of climate change. First, I agree with the intelligence community's assessment of current and future national security risks posed by climate change. Changes in the global climate are likely to have significant impacts, including mass migration and shortages of food and water. As you know, such effects breed instability and are historically proven to be sources of conflict. Furthermore, I expect extreme weather associated with a warming globe to result in the U.S. military being tasked to assist with an increasing number of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions. These missions, like any other operational requirement, affect readiness and reduce our capacity to respond to other world events.

The Joint Staff, Services, and Combatant Commands currently take the effects of climate change into account during operational planning. As evident from the testimony of the six four-star officers you quoted in your letter – this topic is taken seriously by the U.S. military.

On the Department of Defense efforts to reduce the overall effects of climate change, improve climate change resilience, and implement Government Accountability Office recommendations to adapt overseas infrastructure, I respectfully refer you to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, as I have no authority in those specific areas in my role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Thank you for your leadership in this important area. Should you require additional information, I am available to meet at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. F. Dunford, Jr.", is positioned above the printed name and title.

JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR.
General, U.S. Marine Corps