
A satellite image of Earth from space, showing the Americas on the left and a large, swirling cyclone over the Atlantic Ocean. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Ultimate Climate: Looking at Climate Through the Complexity Lens

Ruth Greenspan Bell

An aerial photograph of a wetland or marsh area. The landscape is characterized by a complex network of green, vegetated islands and peninsulas separated by brown, silty water. The water appears to be a mix of natural channels and man-made ditches. The overall scene is a mosaic of green and brown, with some areas of more dense vegetation and others of open water or mudflats.

Trends for the next decade: Don't
Invest Your Entire Retirement Savings
In A Single Stock !

WHY?

- Enormity/interconnectedness of the threat –
 - Planet is “single interactive system;” significant changes do not happen in isolation
 - Humans depend on nature; therefore, changes in the natural earth system inevitably lead to social changes
 - Impacts are economic, social and psychological (don’t underestimate the psychological parts)

REDEFINING THE CHALLENGE

- This is about fundamentals: how humans use energy
- Requires many levels of change from power sources to individual consumption

A world map with a color gradient representing projected temperature changes. The colors range from red (indicating warming) to blue (indicating cooling). The map shows significant warming over land and in the northern hemisphere, with the most intense warming (red) concentrated in the Arctic region. The oceans show more moderate warming (orange and yellow), while some areas in the southern hemisphere show slight cooling (light blue).

Smart Policy Makers will:

- Align the policy tools with the problem.
- Consider climate as the threat multiplier it is.
- Engage the best people; give climate the attention it deserves.

A satellite image of a river delta, likely the Amazon, showing a complex network of waterways and land. The image is used as a background for the slide.

International Changes: Accelerate movement toward alternative pathways

- Open more lines of discussion and communication
- Consider narrower institutions focused on specific problems and solutions (i.e. separate out GHG reporting and monitoring from broader mitigation and adaptation negotiations)
- Demonstrate smaller measures of progress as stepping stones toward bigger ones; consider requirements and verification that becomes more stringent over time as countries develop mutual trust; graduation (to recognize changes in status) with pre-agreed measures and markers
- Show progress can be made even without the participation of some of the major players.
- Be flexible enough to respond to unexpected opportunities.

An aerial photograph of a river delta, likely the Mississippi River Delta, showing a complex network of waterways and land. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the title and a bulleted list. The background image shows the intricate patterns of the river branches and the surrounding land, with some areas appearing more developed or irrigated.

Threat Multiplier Frame:

- Climate change does not belong in the environmental ghetto.
- It is about how rising temperatures -- and the consequences of rising temperatures -- deepen historic challenges. Think about
 - Food security
 - Poverty
 - Health
 - Conflict/geopolitical stability/national security
 - Infrastructure development

A world map with a semi-transparent overlay showing climate change data. The overlay uses a color scale from green (cooler) to red (warmer), with significant red areas in the tropics and parts of the mid-latitudes. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean, showing the Americas on the left and Europe/Africa on the right.

Treat Climate Change As The Issue of Human Survival That It Is:

- When climate change = security challenge → can provide leverage necessary to pursue different and broader strategies.
 - US Department of Defense: rarely uses words “climate change” but is radically improving its energy efficiency to save lives in the field & control its massive fuel bill.
 - US intelligence agencies now focus on climate change exacerbating conflicts over water.
- Give the climate portfolio to our best diplomats; make it their priority

Arms control formerly had a similar, fuzzy feeling, largely promoted by “do-gooders.” Today, this issue is at the core of foreign policy, not the periphery.

Resources

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