

**Summary:** The coincidence of the occurrence of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the publication of President Obama's first National Security Strategy provides an opportunity to make energy and the environment the basis of an integrated 21st-century transatlantic and international diplomacy. The author suggests six ways to do this. First, reducing oil dependence improves national security and is a possible foundation for an increasingly strategic U.S.-EU relationship. Second, the impacts of climate change will have consequences for national security. Third, energy security could be part of the long-term counter-insurgency strategy in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Fourth, China, India, Australia, and the United States could lead efforts to develop effective clean coal technology. Fifth, a comprehensive diplomatic approach will be essential to avert a struggle for fresh-water resources. Sixth, Europe and the United States should refocus their attention on the politics of Eurasian oil and gas pipelines. These and other practical diplomatic steps to create more opportunities to live sustainably should be on the agenda for NATO and other transatlantic and international meetings.

## What Next for Energy and Environmental Diplomacy?

by Marc Grossman\*

It often seems that strategy and events exist in separate universes. But there are moments when we can put our response to a specific event into the context of a larger vision of a world we are working to shape. The coincidence of the occurrence of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the May 2010 publication of President Obama's first National Security Strategy (NSS) offers the opportunity to reflect on the connections between the implications of the spill and the President's vision of a unified diplomatic, defense, development, and homeland security strategy. The BP disaster will end one day. The question for America, its allies, and partners is whether it is possible to forge a common transatlantic and then global strategy on energy security, climate change, and living sustainably on the planet. The first step to creating an international energy security strategy is getting the diplomacy right. We will then need the political will to see it through.

This essay draws on my experiences and observations as a U.S. diplomat to discuss the scope and complexity of

modern environmental diplomacy and makes some specific recommendations about bringing the never-ending swirl of events and the need to direct, shape, and react to them as part of a global strategy into closer orbits.

I came to realize late in my career the profound relationships between consciousness of the environment and almost every other modern diplomatic endeavor. By the late 1990s, individual behaviors that promoted sustainability had become part of many American family and community lifestyles, but the need for diplomacy to go "green" was not yet a broad enough strategic imperative for U.S. national security.

Of course, environmental issues influenced events in my career. Getting ready to take the Foreign Service examination in 1975, I read Harold and Margaret Sprout's *Towards a Politics of the Planet Earth*, an early argument for the "ecological perspective" in international relations.<sup>1</sup> My time as a junior Foreign Service Officer in Pakistan first opened my eyes to the challenges of governance and poverty. But Pakistan also faced huge environmental challenges. Public health, state fragility, internal and external conflict,

\* Some material in this brief is drawn from Marc Grossman's previously published work. See "Diplomacy and the U.S. State Department" in Matthew J. Morgan, ed., *The Impact of 9/11 on Politics and War: The Day that Everything Changed?* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

<sup>1</sup> Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, *Toward a Politics of the Planet Earth* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971).

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and the environment were all connected. As the desk officer for Jordan at the State Department, key environmental issues, like riparian rights to the Jordan River, the debate over whether or not to build the McCarran Dam, and the amount of water in aquifers in Jordan, Syria, and Israel dominated the conversation.

Service in Turkey brought together the threads of the importance of the environment and the connection between diplomatic success and living sustainably on the planet. There was international and domestic debate in Turkey about damming the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for agricultural production and electric power. The fear that the Turks would one day cut off the water flow to Syria was cited by U.S. and Turkish experts as one reason for Damascus' support of the PKK, the anti-Turkish terrorist group. When I met with Secretary Warren Christopher in Jerusalem on one of his visits to the Middle East, he alerted me to the possible need to convince Turkey to provide enough water from their upstream resources to help him promote a Syrian-Israeli peace treaty.

## Don't just talk about energy security; find ways to create it today.

It was in Turkey that the U.S. Embassy in the early 1990s recognized the connection between the U.S. desire to promote civil society and the Turks' emerging interest in environmental issues; the Embassy highlighted the work a group of Turks were doing to protect turtles on the Mediterranean coast and ultimately turned that effort into support, with the help of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, for the creation of a Turkish Ministry of the Environment. American promotion of the Baku-Ceyhan (now Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) oil pipeline had an explicitly environmental component: avoiding large numbers of oil tankers being pushed through the narrow Bosphorus Strait and exposing the ecosystems around Istanbul to risk from explosion, fire, or oil spills.

### Designing a 21st Century Environmental Diplomacy

The opportunities to design a 21st century environmental diplomacy are legion. Here are six possibilities to consider:

**First**, don't just talk about energy security; find ways to create it today. The idea that America could become completely "energy independent" diverts attention from what is a real possibility: promoting energy security as a national security goal.

It is worth recalling the point made by Amory Lovins in *Winning the Oil Endgame*.<sup>2</sup> If the United States were to adopt policies to double the efficiency of using oil, apply creative business models and public policies to speed the profitable adoption of super efficient vehicles, provide one-fourth of U.S. oil needs by a major domestic biofuels industry, and use well-established, highly profitable efficiency techniques to save half the projected 2025 use of natural gas, the United States could eliminate oil dependence. It is no coincidence that major funding for this Rocky Mountain Institute report came from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and that the Institute has pursued an important relationship with America's armed forces. This cooperation not only allows for more efficient armed operations and provides a visible model for American society, but also encourages energy security.

Buying oil from regimes in Tehran and Caracas undercuts American diplomatic leverage. Oil wealth weakens the power of arguments that support political and economic pluralism in capitals like Moscow or Riyadh. Indeed, some analysts have connected Moscow's more "reasonable" policies toward the United States, Europe, and Iran over the past year to Russia's shrinking oil and gas bankroll.

Energy security should be a major transatlantic priority. Raising the level and intensity of energy security in the U.S. diplomatic dialogue with both the European Union and with NATO would be a good place to start. As Tom Friedman asked in 2006, "What will replace the threat of Communism as the cement that holds together the Atlantic alliance?"<sup>3</sup> Energy security should be part of the answer. Greater effort in this area will include groups like the U.S.-EU Energy Council, launched in November 2009,

<sup>2</sup> Amory B. Lovins et al., *Winning the Oil Endgame* (Snowmass, CO: Rocky Mountain Institute, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, "Allies Dressed in Green," *The New York Times*, October, 27 2006.

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to coordinate policies on climate change, conservation, and resilience between the United States and the European Union. Perhaps if the EU's new President and Foreign Minister took a greater interest in these issues an American President might be enthusiastic about attending a U.S.-EU Summit. Indeed, a serious U.S.-EU conversation about energy security might be the foundation for an increasingly strategic U.S.-EU relationship envisioned by commentators such as Ron Asmus, Hans Binnendijk, and Richard Kugler.

NATO also has a role to play in energy security. Energy security should be an important part of NATO's new Strategic Concept, to be issued in Lisbon in November 2010. In a February 2010 speech on the future of NATO, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, "In the 21st century, the spirit of collective defense must also include nontraditional threats. We believe NATO's new Strategic Concept must address these new threats. Energy security is a particularly pressing priority. Countries vulnerable to energy cut-offs face not only economic consequences but strategic risks as well."<sup>4</sup> It is a positive development that those senior leaders asked by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, including former U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright, have included energy security in their recommendations for the Strategic Concept.

As Senator Richard Lugar asserted in Riga in December 2006, energy scarcity and control will be the most likely source of armed conflict in Europe and the surrounding regions in the near future.<sup>5</sup> The 2010 Strategic Concept can lay out a path that NATO, in consultation with the European Union, might take if Poland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, or any other member state is threatened by energy cut-off. The potential threat from terrorism or natural disaster to NATO member states' energy infrastructure is another reason for the organization to review what alliance obligations would be in such cases, since sufficient investment and planning will not happen overnight.

**Second**, keep focused on climate change. The questioning of climate change science, the discovery that some of this science has been politicized, and the perceived failure of

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the UN summit on climate change in Copenhagen in 2009 to produce a follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol have unhelpfully diverted the climate change debate. There are broad national security consequences of both environmental degradation and climate change. Climate change diplomacy cannot stand still. As the GMF-led Transatlantic Task Force on Development argued in 2009, mitigating climate change, reducing the risk of conflict over natural resources, and promoting security, democracy and development, are challenges that we must meet simultaneously.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "Remarks at the NATO Strategic Concept Seminar," (speech delivered at the NATO Strategic Concept Seminar, Washington, D.C., February 22, 2010), <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/02/137118.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Richard G. Lugar, "Energy and NATO" (speech delivered at a GMF conference in Riga, Latvia, November 27, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Gunilla Carlsson and Jim Kolbe, *Toward a Brighter Future: A Transatlantic Call for Renewed Leadership and Partnership in Global Development*, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (Washington, DC: 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Gordon R. Sullivan et al., *National Security and the Threat of Climate Change* (Washington, DC: The CNA Corporation, 2007), <http://securityandclimate.cna.org/>.

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Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia — will face the prospect of food shortages, water crises, and catastrophic flooding driven by climate change that could demand an American humanitarian relief or military response.”<sup>8</sup>

Among the most telling areas of focus for the retired generals and admirals in the CNA study was the recognition that melting ice in the Arctic will have national security consequences for the United States and NATO ally Canada. As *The Economist* reported in October 2009, in the open waters of the Arctic once covered by ice, resource companies see new access to oil and gas, traders see routes from Europe to Asia, governments see possible new borders, and military leaders see the need for new equipment and troops. The NATO Secretary General is quoted as saying that, “We can’t wish away the security implications of the fact that ‘an entire side of North America will be more exposed’”<sup>9</sup>

The littoral States around the Arctic — Russia, Canada, the United States, Denmark, and Norway — have all begun to act. In August 2009, Norway moved its operational command north of the Arctic Circle. Moscow sent a submarine to plant a corrosion-resistant metal flag on the floor of the Arctic Ocean, staking a symbolic claim to the resources four kilometers below the North Pole. Russia is also upgrading its northern fleet, which includes 18 icebreakers. Canada is building new patrol boats and opening a refueling station on Baffin Island. In September 2009, two German merchant vessels became the first commercial ships to travel from East Asia to Western Europe via the Northeast Passage from Russia through the Arctic.

As U.S. Navy Captain James Kraska reminds us, in January 2009, the United States announced an Arctic policy based on defense, navigation, and homeland security.<sup>10</sup> Any successful American diplomatic campaign to protect U.S. national interests and those of its allies will need to be backed by building and deploying more icebreakers and a clear-eyed political-military consideration of U.S.-Canadian and U.S.-NATO strategies for the area. But U.S. Arctic diplomacy should also create the possibilities of

furthering scientific cooperation between Russian and American oceanographers or American and Canadian scientists. It would include encouraging — and perhaps even joining — military exercises such as those held in the Barents Sea by Russia, Norway, Finland, and Sweden. Other possibilities include full transparency of military transits in the High North and increased American attention to the Arctic Council, an organization that consists of the United States, Russia, Canada, Norway, Iceland, and Denmark. The six nations agreed in May 2008 to use the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to settle disputes over ownership of the extended continental shelf, even though the United States has not yet ratified the law. U.S. diplomacy in this area (and others) would be enhanced by the U.S. Senate’s ratification of the Law of the Sea Convention.

## Start talking about energy security as part of our long-term counter-insurgency strategy in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

**Third**, start talking about energy security as part of our long-term counter-insurgency strategy in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This is a new way of thinking about the nexus between our national security and other nation’s energy challenges. Secretary Clinton has argued that in Pakistan, modern, reliable energy infrastructure can help to undercut extremism by delivering the key ingredient to economic growth. In an April 2010 interview with the State Department’s “Conversations with America” program, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, the Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, described the State Department’s reorientation toward the energy needs of Pakistan’s 175 million people as a major shift in the strategy to combat extremism in the country.<sup>11</sup>

Recognizing that fuel and electricity are crucial for the educational, economic, and commercial activities that can provide an alternative to extremism, Secretary Clinton

<sup>8</sup> John M. Broder, “Climate Change Seen As a Threat to U.S. Security,” *The New York Times*, August 9, 2009, 1.

<sup>9</sup> “Mirror, Mirror on the Wall,” *The Economist*, October 10, 2009, 64.

<sup>10</sup> James Kraska, “Northern Exposure,” *The American Interest*, Vol 5, No 5, May-June 2010, 61-68.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. State Department, Transcript: “Conversations with America: A Discussion on Afghanistan and Pakistan,” April 19 2010, [http://www.state.gov/s/special\\_rep\\_afghanistan\\_pakistan/2010/140670.htm](http://www.state.gov/s/special_rep_afghanistan_pakistan/2010/140670.htm).

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made energy a highlight of her first trip to Pakistan as Secretary of State in October 2009, announcing six new energy projects.<sup>12</sup> The six projects, known as the Pakistan Signature Energy Program, are aimed at repairing Pakistan's electricity infrastructure, improving management of power generation facilities, and promoting energy efficiency, using energy as part of a strategy to address problems that promote extremism.

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In Afghanistan, we might be able to bind counter-narcotics and environmental goals. For example, poppy seeds harvested for opium and heroin are often rich in oils. In an experiment in 2005, farmers in Australia used biodiesel made from poppy seeds to run their tractors. The EU, NATO, and the United States should fund a crash program to discover if Afghan poppies have high oil content. If so, poppies could be grown in a controlled manner and legally licensed, and the Afghan government could build plants to turn the poppy into biodiesel and sell it on the market in South Asia. The advantages would be manifold: less illicit poppy, less money to fuel narco-terrorism, and perhaps some small impact on the amount of pollution put into the air by trucks in the region. To get the project jump started, the U.S. military and NATO forces should be first in line to purchase this biodiesel if it turns out poppies can be converted in this way.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Kaufman, "Clinton Announces Projects to Improve Pakistan's Energy Sector," *America.gov*, October 28, 2009, <http://www.america.gov/st/scaenglish/2009/October/20091028152138esnamfuak0.6514856.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Marc Grossman, "Fight Drugs and Global Warming Together," *German Marshall Fund of the United States Blog*, 14 September 2007.

**Fourth**, launch a major push led by China, India, Australia, and the United States (other participants welcome) to produce in the shortest possible time the most effective clean coal technology. China, India, Australia, and the United States will continue to use their vast coal resources well into the middle of the 21st century. As an Atlantic Council report on U.S.-China cooperation in low emission coal technologies pointed out, China and the United States have, to date, independently focused on developing a portfolio of low-emission coal technologies to improve cost effectiveness and lower energy intensity. There is a need to determine which technological concept should best be pursued. Why not do this as part of an international effort involving joint coordination of research and development, coordinating policy and capacity building to facilitate deployment and intellectual property sharing and developing an agenda to "cross breed" clean coal projects to maximize their impact?<sup>14</sup>

**Fifth**, focus on the global need for clean water, starting with a transatlantic effort to direct Western development assistance to this question. Only 2.5 percent of the Earth's water is fresh. Less than one percent of the world's fresh water is accessible for direct human use. The looming struggle for water resources is a textbook example of how only an integrated, simultaneous, and comprehensive diplomatic campaign can properly address modern challenges. Waterborne diseases cripple developing economies and societies. There is also a crucial link between water and food production: it takes about one liter of water to produce one calorie from food crops. There is also a key connection between water and the production of power, a key determinant to successful societies in the 21st century. In the United States, power plants draw almost the same daily volumes of water as agriculture.

The possibilities in this arena for modern diplomacy, the chance to think in new ways about what issues are important, how they are connected, and how to achieve simultaneous success, should be a 21st century diplomatic priority. An example of this kind of thinking is the 2007 proposal by the Atlantic Council of the United States for a "Marshall Plan" for energy, water, and agriculture in developing countries. The Council's idea is to harness public and private

<sup>14</sup> John R. Lyman, Program Director, "US-China Cooperation on Low Emissions Coal Technologies: Realities and Opportunities," *The Atlantic Council*, Washington, DC, December 2009, 1-3.

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institutions to focus attention, resources, and effort on the need to develop energy, water, and agriculture resources in developing countries in a complementary manner, increasing the probability that environmentally sustainable economic prosperity could be achieved in a world facing a growing scarcity of water resources.<sup>15</sup>

**Sixth**, refocus transatlantic attention on Eurasian pipeline politics. America and Europe must again pay sustained diplomatic attention to the politics of oil and gas pipelines from Central Asia, which are needed to diversify energy supplies. We can actively support what was once a major Western objective: creating an East-West Energy Corridor. Important oil and gas pipelines that run through Turkey, like the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline that began to move Caspian oil in 2006, already contribute to diversity of supply. The South Caucasus pipeline (Baku-Erzurum-Ceyhan) began to move natural gas that same year. The Shah-Deniz gas pipeline taps Azeri oil fields in the Caspian Sea and then transports the gas across Georgia and Turkey. In November 2007, Greece and Turkey inaugurated a pipeline that will bring natural gas from the Caspian Sea to Europe. Greece is already building an extension to run under the Adriatic Sea to Italy, which would give Italy and Central Europe access to Caspian resources in 2012.

The United States can join the European Union in active support of one of the big infrastructure projects in the world today: the construction of the Nabucco natural gas pipeline, designed to stretch 2,000 miles to bring natural gas from the Caspian Sea, through Turkey, to Austria.<sup>16</sup> The goal in building Nabucco is to diversify Europe's natural gas supplies by using Middle Eastern and Central Asian gas reserves that would not pass through Russia or be controlled by Russian energy giant Gazprom. The idea for this pipeline has been around for a decade, but three important events have increased the possibilities of success. First, the European Union has put its financial backing behind Nabucco. In March 2010, the European Commission announced that it was willing to invest \$200 million in the project. While this represents only a fraction of the overall cost, the signal is important. Second, in July 2009,

Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Turkey signed an agreement in Ankara that cleared away significant bureaucratic underbrush and opened the door to construction. Third, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki announced at that same meeting in Ankara that Baghdad was prepared to supply the proposed Nabucco pipeline with 15 billion cubic meters of gas per year by 2015. That would fill half the line's capacity and start to address the project's greatest obstacle so far: a dearth of committed gas. Until al-Maliki's offer, Azerbaijan was the only country considered to be a serious potential supplier to Nabucco. Other countries with natural gas supplies — Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Iran — are at the moment not viable partners.

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Many challenges remain before actual construction on the pipeline can begin. Nabucco still has no formally committed suppliers; al-Maliki's offer is not a firm promise and Iraq needs energy laws and foreign help to expand its gas production. Some experts also argue that there is less need for Nabucco now that deposits of shale gas have been discovered in Western Europe. The appointment of Ambassador Richard Morningstar as Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy in April 2009 gave the United States an important voice in the diplomacy needed to get Nabucco built. Morningstar should focus on making al-Maliki's offer of gas for the pipeline concrete, and work closely with EU leaders to keep them focused on the strategic benefits of the pipeline, including diversity of supply and promoting better relations with Turkey. By participating, Iraq would take another vital step toward economic success and stability. If gas could be available for the pipeline from northern Iraq, this would be a possible basis for further Turkish-Kurdish reconciliation. Morningstar must also work closely with the govern-

<sup>15</sup> Richard L. Lawson, "A Marshall Plan for Energy, Water, and Agriculture in Developing Countries," (Washington, D.C.: The Atlantic Council of the United States, 2007), [http://www.acus.org/files/publication\\_pdfs/1/070628\\_Marshall\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/1/070628_Marshall_Plan.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Marc Grossman and Simon Henderson, "Foreign Pipeline Plan Matters," *Dallas Morning News*, July 20, 2009.

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ment of Azerbaijan to encourage long-term commitment of gas from Azerbaijani fields and the Caspian; part of this endeavor would be to support diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh; Secretary Clinton's July 2010 visit to Baku and Yerevan was a very welcome development as is her continued focus on getting Turkey and Armenia to open their land border and establish full diplomatic relations. Morningstar should also work closely with U.S. and international companies so that, like Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, the pipeline is commercially viable.

There are many other environmental and energy opportunities for energy/environmental diplomacy. It is time to solve trade and other disputes between the United States and Canada so Washington and Ottawa can pay attention to the energy security agenda, including, as we have seen, issues of NATO strategy and questions in the High North. The North American Energy Initiative, first proposed by President George W. Bush to integrate the energy resources and economies of Canada, Mexico, and the United States, can be revitalized. U.S. relations with Brazil will encompass energy security as well, especially in areas of biofuels and recent massive discoveries of oil off Brazil's coast. In addition to participating in a project to find clean coal technologies, U.S. relations with China and India can be increasingly based on green policies and technologies, especially since China is already leaping ahead in the production of solar, wind, and rail technologies.

## Conclusion

The opportunity for U.S., transatlantic, and global leadership is to connect what is happening in the Gulf of Mexico with the larger challenges of energy security, highlighted in documents like President Obama's National Security Strategy. There are, of course, many other domestic and international priorities, but speaking clearly about the practical diplomatic steps that can be taken now to create more possibilities to live sustainably on the planet in the future should be on the agenda for NATO at Lisbon and at other transatlantic and international meetings that follow.

It has become perhaps trite to say that crises are also opportunities, but it is not wrong. Oil washing up on the beaches of the Gulf Coast and the new National Security Strategy of the Obama Administration might not seem at first glance

dots waiting to be connected, but any list of global challenges for a 21st-century transatlantic and international diplomacy must surely have energy and the environment high on that integrated agenda.

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## About GMF

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STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is a nonpartisan American public policy and grantmaking institution dedicated to promoting greater cooperation and understanding between North America and Europe. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working on transatlantic issues, by convening leaders to discuss the most pressing transatlantic themes, and by examining ways in which transatlantic cooperation can address a variety of global policy challenges. In addition, GMF supports a number of initiatives to strengthen democracies. Founded in 1972 through a gift from Germany on the 25th anniversary of the Marshall Plan as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has seven offices in Europe: Berlin, Bratislava, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, and Bucharest.

## About the Transatlantic Climate Bridge



This paper would not have been possible without funding from the "Transatlantic Climate Bridge," an initiative jointly launched by the German Federal Foreign Office and the German Federal Environment Ministry to connect and support those working to address the challenges of climate change, energy security, and economic growth at the local, the state, and the federal level in the United States and Germany.