

# KEYNOTE

## POLICY, POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL ARENAS

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Good Morning. As always it is a great pleasure to appear before a group of people dedicated to an important and worthy environmental and health issue. While I am not a scientist or engineer and, thus, can say little or nothing of value on the technical aspects of the conference subject, I have spent many years as an environmental policy person dealing with the entire range of people involved in implementing the Montreal Protocol in the policy, political and international arenas. Thus, I will say a few words about the overall status of environmental matters in the US and around the world and address where I believe halon options activities stand today in terms of governmental policy, political forces, and international activities. Seven weeks ago I retired from the Federal Govt. after 32 years of being a practicing environmental professional with the US military. When I retired I was the senior career official in the DoD for environmental, safety, occupational health, fire and emergency services, and explosive safety. From 1983-93, as the Deputy Assistant Secretary, I had similar responsibilities for USAF.

- During the 1980s, I began to learn about and appreciate the policy, political and international aspects of stratospheric ozone layer protection and global climate change. After being rebuffed by the Office of the Secy. of Defense, Dr. Steve Andersen, EPA, proposed that we cooperate on addressing the military's role in ozone layer protection. We began a very successful collaboration that extended over the years, touched many people, and produced significant results. Not everyone in DoD thought this was good nor were they always willing to invest their money to address the issue. One early initiative was to create the Halon Alternatives Research Consortium, which Sieve and I co-chaired. It was an exciting, rewarding experience because we developed an integrated multiyear plan, funded from many sources. The Consortium became HARC when EPA and DoD lawyers concluded it was illegal for us to co-chair the effort. The HARC has had a very productive and useful lifespan.
- Through this and other initiatives we were able to get DoD and the military departments heavily engaged in eliminating use of ozone layer depleting substances. I believe the US DoD has received more awards than any organization in the world for its positive work in implementing the Montreal Protocol. The national policies, political commitment, international consensus, practical aspects of decreasing availability of substances, and the ability to get funding led to a heavy and aggressive commitment by the US military. Some time ago we passed out of the environment I just characterized. Today it appears that the DoD is on "hold" on matters such as Montreal Protocol and global climate change, due in part to the absence of a new leadership team and, until a new team is in place, I suspect environmental matters will maintain status quo or perhaps backslide. It is possible, given the recent announcements and positions of the new administration, that backsliding could accelerate when the new team finally gets in place. Clearly the national policies in these areas are being changed to reduce environmental activities and even more obvious is the lack of political commitment even in the face of substantial adverse international reaction. These factors, coupled with the desire of military leadership to spend its money on other things, create a very negative outlook.
- In the specific case of halon, it must be recognized that through "banking" availability for the military is very good. With the exception of releases from F-16s on every "combat" mission, military conservation of halon is probably about as good as it could be. The huge cost to change out systems is not now, nor will it be, an acceptable cost. What will happen with new weapons systems is questionable; the outcome will depend on timing, funding, incentives, national policies, and political will. I do not see a positive outlook at all for the next several years. Despite all of the great work done in the past and the very positive outcome of the recent international meeting in Brussels, I do not believe we will see much change in attitude or appropriate Federal funding for halon work until something dramatic occurs. In my view, that dramatic event or series of events may well take place within the European Union. If the EU takes a strong regulatory position on halon use, an incentive (if not an imperative) to act will be created. If the US military finds it cannot operate in some countries, things will change. If the US aerospace industry finds it cannot market its products in some countries, things will change.
- So the question becomes: "What should people do who are committed to the environment?" It is important to keep the faith for this state of affairs will inevitably pass. We must (1) keep the infrastructure to address environment in place even if at a lower level; (2) learn to do our environmental work under different banners, ones that are meaningful to those who control decision-making and funding; (3) employ well-thought out strategies that fit into others' agendas; (4) find allies; and (5) continually explain the need in terms of threat to capability and risk and liability reduction. Don't give up, keep the tech base alive and well, and recognize that the future will be determined by who drives the policy process, the political philosophies of those in power, and the forces at work in the international community. In my view, this community will ultimately prevail in matters of stratospheric ozone layer protection and global climate change regardless of the policy and political processes in the US.