Global Warning about Global Warming

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Finally, the U.S. Senate is starting to assert itself. By passing the Byrd-Hagel Resolution 95 to 0 on July 25, it served notice on President Clinton that the Senate is not going to be a party to reducing the standard of living of Americans in order to accommodate international agreements, third-world envy, or wacko environmentalists.

The Senate resolution, of course, wasn't that flamboyant, but it was firm and stern. The Byrd-Hagel resolution warned Clinton not to sign, because the Senate won't ratify, the treaty he is planning to sign in Kyoto, Japan in December to require the United States, but not most of the rest of the world, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The road to Kyoto began at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 when our government signed the Framework Convention on Global Climate Change, which was then ratified by the Senate in 1993. It called for the economically developed countries to take "voluntary actions" to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrogen oxides) to their 1990 levels by the year 2000.

This is one more example of how government programs called "voluntary" soon morph into mandates. The Clinton Administration's plan is to turn the voluntary goals into "legally binding commitments" to be achieved by 2010.

The only realistic way to reduce emissions to a 1990 level is to raise energy costs through taxes, i.e., add 60 cents a gallon to gasoline, double home heating oil costs, and raise electric rates 30 percent. Of course, the liberals always want higher taxes.

The enormity of this goal is exceeded only by its inequity. The treaty would bind the United States to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 10 to 20 percent below our 1990 levels, while Western Europe would be able to evade reductions by averaging among the EU countries and because most of their energy is produced by nuclear plants (not affected by the treaty). The 130 developing nations, including China and Mexico, would have no limitations at all!

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that U.S. fossil-fuel-burning plants would move out of the United States to countries where there are no such restrictions. Whole industries and a million to a million and a half U.S. jobs would move overseas, making us a non-industrialized nation.

The Byrd-Hagel resolution provides, as a separate test, that any new treaty should be opposed if it "results in serious harm to the United States economy." The Clinton Administration is trying to finesse the treaty's harm by floating a plan for the "international trading of emissions credits."

This is a scheme to allow rich nations that can't stay within their limits to "buy" pollution permits from poor countries. That is international hocus-pocus for forcing U.S. companies to finance their foreign competitors, and of course would require another world regulatory bureaucracy.

The reason why we are involved in these self-destructive negotiations in the first place is widespread propaganda that greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels (oil, coal, gas) are making a hole in the ozone and causing "global warming." But there isn't any scientific consensus that there is global warming other than natural temperature fluctuations.

Furthermore, there isn't any scientific consensus that global warming, if it does exist, is a big problem, or that humans caused it, or that government should act now to remedy it. Most of the alleged global warming occurred before 1940, before the widespread use of automobiles which are the chief cause of carbon dioxide emissions.

Greenhouse gas emissions in the developing countries exempted by the Kyoto treaty, such as China, Mexico, India, Brazil, South Korea, and Singapore, are increasing rapidly. They are expected to surpass U.S. emissions by 2015.

Let's be clear about what this Kyoto treaty is designed to do. It would require us to deliberately reduce our energy consumption by one-fourth, causing a devastating effect on our standard of living and the ability of a million plus U.S. wage-earners to support their families, all on the basis of climate predictions that are at best controversial and at worst no more reliable that the weatherman's guess of how much snow will fall next winter.

There must be an agenda behind this irrational plan. Let's try a multiple-choice question.

Is the hidden agenda of the Kyoto treaty

to promote the presidential candidacy of Al Gore, who has staked his political future on a platform of prioritizing the planet above people, or

to redistribute U.S. wealth and jobs to foreign countries because the Clintonian liberals support income redistribution, or

to con the American people into accepting increased federal taxes, regulations and even rationing?

Or, is the answer

to reduce our standard of living because other countries are envious of our automobiles and our single-family dwellings that are heated in the winter and cooled in the summer, or

to save face for the social scientists who have been predicting climate catastrophe, or

to provide politically correct "cover" for the multinationals that want to move their plants to low-labor-cost Asian countries, or

all of the above?

Economic growth requires energy, and fossil fuels provide 85 percent of our energy. Tell your Senators that Kyoto is a no-no.