Clinton May Get Toasted by Global Warming

November 26, 1997

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The confrontation with Iraq is tending to conceal an impending policy defeat for President Clinton that may dwarf his embarrassments over losing Fast Track and the appropriations for back UN dues. Clinton is planning on going to Kyoto, Japan in early December to sign a UN treaty called the Climate Change Protocol.

Administration fears of impending embarrassment are reflected in the gag order that Clinton's lead negotiator in the global-warming talks, Under Secretary of State Timothy Wirth, is trying to impose on the delegates to Kyoto. He told the 16 GOP and Democratic delegates to keep their mouths shut and not criticize the Administration's position.

When then Colorado Senator Tim Wirth was an observer at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, he had no reluctance about blasting the then President. He accused George Bush of "adolescent politics" and of looking "silly" for not signing the Biodiversity Treaty that the Rio Summit produced. It's going to be payback time in Kyoto.

Another attempt to intimidate those opposed to global-warming dogma was uttered by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, who now has his own credibility problems. Babbitt labeled anyone who opposes the treaty "un-American."

The Climate Change Treaty would legally bind us to reduce our energy emissions to 20 percent below our 1990 levels, and would set 2005 as the year when this goal is to be reached. This would reduce our gross domestic product by $200 billion annually, cost us more than a million jobs, and cause massive disruption in the American economy.

These drastic cutbacks would be enforced by the typical liberal "solutions": taxes and regulations. The Federal Government would impose a massive energy tax that would drive up the cost of home heating and electricity by 30 to 40 percent and put an additional tax of at least 60 cents on every gallon of

gasoline.

Every product produced with the use of energy including food would increase in price, and major industries (such as paper, steel, petroleum refining, chemicals, aluminum, and cement) would be crippled. The average family would pay $1600 to $4000 per year in increased energy costs.

The rationale behind this treaty is the claim that America's high standard of living, based on our large consumption of energy produced by burning oil, gas and coal, causes carbon dioxide emissions, which in turn produce a worrisome warming of the global atmosphere called the greenhouse effect. The evidence to support this theory is so unclear, inconclusive and contradictory that it cannot be dignified by the term science.

Clinton's predictions of global warming rely on a 1996 United Nations report. But before releasing it, the UN bureaucrats deleted two key paragraphs written by the scientists who made the analysis.

The omitted passages state: (1) "None of the studies cited above has shown clear evidence that we can attribute the observed climate changes to increases in greenhouse gases," and (2) "No study to date has positively attributed all or part of the climate change to man-made causes."

The only thing that we know for sure is that temperature fluctuations occur. Many observers think that global warming, if indeed it is taking place, would be a good thing and would generate net benefits and savings to the United States.

Science Times suggests that, if our planet is heating up, the cause may be the sun, over which we have no control. Almost all the demonstrable global warming occurred before 1940, and so it can't be blamed on the widespread use of the automobile.

The Illinois State Climatologist Office released a report on October 22 stating that projections from several new international climate models indicate that parts of the United States will "cool by several degrees Fahrenheit through the year 2050." This report states that current climate models are now "more realistic" and predict "cooler, wetter weather for the central United States rather than the warmer and drier predictions of earlier models."

The Kyoto treaty is manifestly unfair to the United States because Third World nations, including Mexico, China, Indonesia, India and Brazil, would not be subject to the emission restrictions imposed on us. That would accelerate the flight of U.S. industries and jobs to those countries.

In the face of the horrendous costs of this proposed treaty, Clinton will try to wiggle out of the box that he is in. But all his fall-back positions are bad, too.

One option being discussed is "emissions trading," i.e., to allow industries that find the emissions limits prohibitively expensive to buy emission permits from the Third World. That's just a devious type of foreign giveaway and would redistribute U.S. wealth to other countries (which is probably the real purpose of the treaty anyway).

Another option is to force the taxpayers to finance exotic alternative energy sources such as solar and wind energy, and automobiles that run 70 miles to the gallon. Those are just more expensive government boondoggles.

Clinton can't control global climate any more than King Canute could hold back the tides. But the Kyoto treaty can change the temperature in your home if you can't afford the high energy taxes to keep it warm in the winter and cool in the summer.