

Global Warming Treaty is All Pain, No Gain

By Malcolm Wallop

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Do you look forward to paying much more for electricity and gasoline? Do you want government to tell you that you can't buy certain cars because they don't get enough miles to the gallon?

If your answer is no, then you're not ready for what's coming out of international negotiations in Kyoto, Japan. The Clinton Administration and other supporters of a treaty to reduce greenhouse gases have done a good job of convincing the American people that global warming is a real threat. But they have done everything they can to hide the fact that controlling greenhouse gases will have a high price tag.

Yet the direct relation between energy use and standard of living is well established, while global warming remains a speculative theory. Life on earth is possible because "greenhouse gases" trap some of the heat from the sun's rays in the atmosphere. Water vapor is the main greenhouse gas, but trace gases such as carbon dioxide and methane also play a part.

Carbon dioxide is good plants can't grow without it. But burning fossil fuels coal, oil, and natural gas releases more carbon dioxide into the air. The theory is that this added carbon dioxide (currently 360 parts per million but rising) will increase the greenhouse effect and lead to higher temperatures.

That's theory, not fact. The most accurate temperature measurements from NASA satellites show a slight cooling trend. Should we believe unproved computer models or actual measurements?

Treaty supporters, such as President Clinton, claim that a scientific consensus has been reached that global warming is certain and that its effects on humanity will be catastrophic. They point to a letter signed by 2600 scientists.

Thanks to Citizens for a Sound Economy, we now know that fewer than ten percent of these 2600 "scientists" know anything about climate science. Among the signers, CSE discovered a plastic surgeon, two landscape architects, a hotel administrator, a gynecologist, seven sociologists, a linguist, and a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine.

Undersecretary of State Timothy Wirth, who has just resigned, once explained what is really behind the global warming scare: "Even if the theory of global warming is wrong, we will be doing the right thing in terms of both economic and environmental policy."

~~The Administration astonished the country last summer when it made this point even more clearly in testimony before Congress. Carbon dioxide emissions had been going up rapidly, an Administration witness said, because energy costs were too low and economic growth was too high.~~

That is indeed the connection. Controlling greenhouse gases means higher gasoline and electricity costs and lower economic growth. One economic study by the respected WEFA Group forecasts additional costs of \$30,000 over the next twenty years for an average family of four. Environmentalists have tried to discredit this and other economic studies forecasting job losses and lower industrial output. But a Department of Energy study (which the Clinton Administration tried to suppress) predicted similar major losses in jobs and output for six energy-intensive industries.

~~And the goal of those pushing a Kyoto treaty is indeed to make us poorer by cutting our energy use. President Clinton, of course, denies there is a price to be paid for cutting greenhouse gas~~

emissions. When the president announced his proposals to take to Kyoto, he said: "If we do it right, protecting the climate will yield not cost, but profits; not burdens, but benefits; not sacrifice, but a higher standard of living."

Countries such as China, India, and Mexico know better. They are refusing to commit to any limits on their own economic growth. If we sign a treaty to reduce our own greenhouse emissions while exempting all developing countries, there will be a massive transfer of American industrial jobs to those countries and no global reductions in greenhouse gases.

The environmentalists have known better all along. In 1992, a leading environmentalist published a book that foresaw just the kind of snake oil President Clinton is trying to sell. Of the sacrifices people were going to have to make in order to save the planet, this environmental prophet warned: "Minor shifts in policy, marginal adjustments in ongoing programs, moderate improvements in laws and regulations, rhetoric offered in lieu of genuine change—these are all forms of appeasement, designed to satisfy the public's desire to believe that sacrifice, struggle, and a wrenching transformation of society will not be necessary." This oracular passage appeared in a book called *Earth in the Balance*. Its author is now our vice president, Albert Gore, Jr.