

**Jack Venrick**

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**Energy**

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White House Caves on Climate Change, While China Thumbs Its Nose

Last week, President Bush issued a stunning and disheartening capitulation toward global warming hysterics by pledging to reduce America's "greenhouse gas" emissions. "The United States takes this issue seriously," he said in announcing the disappointing reversal of White House policy.

Sadly, this atrocious surrender eliminates the United States as the final climate change realist among industrialized nations. It also signals once again that the White House can be bullied into capitulation by a steady drumbeat of denunciation and ostracism by Democrats and international elites.

Under his initiative, the world's developed nations and top emitters would gather to set an emissions-reduction mandate by the end of 2008. By imploring the world's developed economies to slash their emissions, the President thus opened the floodgates for even more economically-ruinous but ineffective new regulations to overwhelm American businesses and consumers who are already over-regulated.

Worse, these regulations will be largely devised and dictated by Europe and the United Nations.

Ominously, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is pushing for new climate change mandates, expressed approval of President Bush's announcement. According to Chancellor Merkel, "this is common ground on which one can act." Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D - Nevada) similarly gloated, "we hope today's announcement is the beginning of a reversal of the Administrations untenable and unwise position on global warming, and is not a public-relations stunt to defuse criticism going into the G-8 discussions in Germany."

Even more shockingly, the President signaled submission to United Nations authority by stating that "we expect the new framework to compliment ongoing U.N. activity." For its part, the United Nations continues its campaign to renew the failed Kyoto Protocol, whose requirements haven't even been met by its self-righteous European signatories.

The White House's capitulation on this issue signals that it may simply be giving up in providing steadfast world leadership in the international arena, whether it concerns climate change hysteria or other critical issues such as the war against terrorism, rogue regimes or free-market principles.

China, in contrast, is standing strong against climate change hysteria. Although the Chinese are expected to surpass the United States this year as the world's top producer of greenhouse gas emissions, it flatly rejects demands that it set specific caps on those emissions.

Rather, Chinese leaders scapegoat developed nations for alleged global warming, and demand that China remain unrestrained by emissions limits as it continues its growth into an economic and export juggernaut. Beijing maintains that it doesn't need emissions caps, but might be willing to set its own voluntary targets toward increasing energy efficiency. As if they weren't already attempting to increase their domestic energy efficiency as they blossom toward powerhouse status.

Whether President Bush will stand up to China, however, is open to question. Allowing China to become the world's largest emissions producer while getting a free pass on the regulations imposed upon Americans would only make a terrible decision even worse. In light of China's continuing abuses on the issue of intellectual property violations and other irresponsible behavior, any such capitulation would only encourage more rogue behavior by the Chinese.

India presents a similar difficulty, as that nation grows into another economic giant while steadfastly refusing emissions caps that America would have to observe.

Although America is often scapegoated as the world's largest source of carbon emissions, this ignores the fact that America is also the world's top producer of food, wealth, technology, life-saving drugs and products needed by the world's consumers. In fact, America produces far fewer emissions as a percentage of gross domestic product than such countries as China, Russia and even Canada. Accordingly, such criticisms serve as nothing more than a pretext for more anti-Americanism.

The simple fact is that draconian environmental regulations like the Kyoto Protocol are not only economically destructive, but also ineffective. Europeans and Kyoto signatories sanctimoniously browbeat the United States for abstaining from this silly treaty, but they have themselves failed to meet Kyoto's emissions limits. Indeed, their emissions have actually *increased* since the treaty was signed.

Meanwhile, Kyoto's regulations stifle their economic growth. European unemployment rates are nearly twice as high as America's, and Europe's economic growth has been comparatively anemic.

For this reason, Americans must demand that the White House and Congress refuse to enter into destructive environmental treaties that will only harm American prosperity while doing nothing to reduce natural temperature change. Our economy, jobs and livelihood are at stake.

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