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J. A. Bradley

Global Change file

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1990
10:15 A.M.

Thank you, Dr. Bolin [Bo-leen]. Professor Obasi. Dr. Tolba. Delegates of the World Meteorological Organization, and the United Nations Environment Program. Let me commend all of you, for coming together to examine an issue of such great importance. The recommendations this distinguished organization makes can have a profound effect on the world's environmental and economic policy.

By being here today, I hope to underscore concern -- my country's, and my own -- about environmental stewardship; and to reaffirm our commitment to finding responsible solutions. It is both an honor and a pleasure to be the first American President to speak to this organization, as its work takes shape.

You are called upon to develop recommendations which strike a difficult yet critical international bargain: a convergence between global environmental policy, and global economic policy. A bargain where **both** perspectives benefit -- and **neither** is compromised.

As experts, you understand that economic growth and environmental integrity are **not** contradictory priorities. One reinforces and complements the other. Each, a partner. Both are crucial.

A sound environment is the basis for the continuity and quality of human life and enterprise. Clearly, strong economies allow nations to fulfill the obligations of environmental stewardship. Where there is economic strength, such protection is possible. But where there is poverty, the competition for resources gets tougher. Stewardship suffers.

For all of these reasons, I sincerely believe we must do everything in our power to promote global cooperation: For environmental protection **and** economic growth. For intelligent management of our natural resources **and** efficient use of our industrial capacity. And above all, for **sustainable and environmentally sensitive** development -- around the world.

The United States is strongly committed to the I.P.C.C. process of international cooperation on global climate change. We consider it vital, that the community of nations be drawn together -- in an orderly, disciplined, rational way -- to review the history of our global environment, to assess the potential for future climate change, and to develop effective programs.

The state of the science; the social and economic impacts; and the appropriate strategies -- all are crucial components to a global resolution. **The stakes here are very high; the consequences, very significant.**

The United States remains committed to aggressive and thoughtful action on environmental issues. Last week, in my State of the Union address, I spoke of stewardship: because I

believe it's something we owe ourselves, our children and their children.

So we are renewing the ethic of stewardship in our domestic programs. In our work to forge international agreements. In our assistance to developing and East Bloc nations. And here, by chairing the Response Strategies Working Group.

I have just submitted a budget to our Congress for fiscal 1991. It includes over \$2 billion in new spending to protect the environment. And, underscoring our commitment to your efforts, I am pleased to note that funding for the U.S. Global Change Research Program will increase by nearly 60 percent, to over one billion dollars.

That commitment, by far the largest ever made by any nation, reflects our determination to improve our understanding of the science of climate change.

We are working with our neighbors around the world to enhance global monitoring and data management, improve analysis, reduce the uncertainty of predictive models, and conduct regular reassessments of the state of the science.

Our program allows NASA, her sister agencies, and all our international partners, to move forward with the "Mission to Planet Earth." That will initiate the U.S. Earth Observing System, in cooperation with Europe and Japan, to advance the state of knowledge about the planet we share.

Furthermore, even as we wait for the benefits of this research, the United States has already taken many steps in our country that bring both economic and environmental benefits. Steps that make sense on their own merits in terms of responsibility and efficiency, which help reduce emissions of CFC's, carbon dioxide, and other pollutants now entering the atmosphere. Let me outline them very briefly:

We are pursuing new technology development that will increase the efficiency of our energy use, and thus reduce total emissions.

We're crafting a revised Clean Air Act with incentives for our private sector to find creative, market-driven solutions to enhance air quality.

We've launched a major reforestation initiative to plant a billion trees a year on private land across America.

And we're working out a comprehensive review and revision of our National Energy Strategy, with initiatives to increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable sources. These efforts, already underway, are the heart of a \$336 million Department of Energy program, and are expected to produce energy savings through the year 2000 of over \$30 billion -- while achieving significant pollution reduction. Quite a return on investment.

We're also working through diplomatic channels with our colleagues in other countries, and through innovative measures like debt-for-nature swaps, to do more than simply reduce global

deforestation. We hope to reverse it -- not unilaterally, but by working with our international neighbors.

The economics of our response strategies to climate change are getting intensive study in America. We are developing real data on the costs of various strategies, assessing new measures, and encouraging other nations to follow suit. And we look forward to sharing this knowledge and technical support with our international colleagues.

As we work to create policy and agreements on action, we want to encourage the most creative, effective approaches. Wherever possible, we believe that market mechanisms should be applied -- and that our policies must be consistent with economic growth and free market principles in all countries. Our development efforts and our dialogue can help us reach effective and acceptable solutions.

Last December at Malta, in my meeting with President Gorbachev, I proposed that the United States offer a venue for the first negotiating session for a framework convention, once the I.P.C.C. completes its work. I reiterate that invitation here, and look forward to your cooperation in that agenda.

We all know that human activities are changing the atmosphere in unexpected and unprecedented ways. Much remains to be done. Many questions remain to be answered. Together, we have a responsibility to ourselves and the generations to come, to fulfill our stewardship obligations. But that responsibility demands that we do it right.

We acknowledge a broad spectrum of views on these issues, but our respect for a diversity of perspective does not diminish our recognition of our obligation -- or soften our will to produce policies that **work**. Some may be tempted to exploit legitimate concerns for political positioning. Our responsibility is to maintain the quality of our approach, our commitment to sound science, and an open mind to policy options.

So the United States will continue its efforts to improve our understanding of climate change -- to seek hard data, accurate models, and new ways to improve the science -- and determine how best to meet these challenges. Where politics and opinion have outpaced the science, we are accelerating our support of the technology to bridge that gap. And we are committed to coming together periodically, for international assessments of where we stand.

Therefore, this spring, the United States will host a White House conference on science and economic research on the environment -- convening top officials from a representative group of nations, to bring together the three essential disciplines: science, economics, and ecology. They will share their knowledge, assumptions, and state-of-the-art research models, to outline our understanding and help focus our efforts. I look forward to participating in this seminar, and to learning from its deliberations.

Our goal continues to be matching policy commitments to emerging scientific knowledge -- and a reconciling of

environmental protection to the continued benefits of economic development. And as Secretary Baker observed a year ago, **whatever** global solutions to climate change are considered, they should be as specific and as cost-effective as they can possibly be.

If we hope to promote environmental protection **and** economic growth around the world, it will be important not to work in conflict, but with our industrial sectors. That will mean moving beyond the practice of command, control, and compliance -- toward a new kind of environmental cooperation -- and toward an emphasis on pollution **prevention**, rather than mere mitigation and litigation. Many of our industries, in fact, are already providing crucial research and solutions.

One corporation, for example, started an in-house program called Pollution Prevention Pays, that has saved the company well over half a **billion** dollars since 1975 -- and prevented 112,000 tons of air pollutants, 15,000 tons of water pollutants, and almost 400,000 tons of sludge and solid waste from being released into the environment. They've done it by rewarding employees for coming up with the ideas. And they have clearly demonstrated the benefits of doing it right.

Where developing nations are concerned, some argue we'll have to abandon the free-market principles of prosperous economies. In fact, we think it's all the more crucial in the developing countries, to harness incentives of the free enterprise system, in the **service** of the environment. \\

I believe we should make use of what we know. We know that the future of the earth must not be compromised. We bear a sacred trust in our tenancy here -- and a covenant with those most precious to us: our children, and theirs. We also understand the efficiency of incentives -- and that well-informed free markets yield the most creative solutions. We must now apply the wisdom of that system, the power of those forces, in **defense** of the environment we cherish.

Working together, with good faith and earnest dialogue, I believe we can reconcile vitality with environmental protection. Let me commend you on your outstanding work -- and wish you all deliberate speed in your efforts to address a very difficult, but very important, human concern.

Thank you -- and God bless you.

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