

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DATE: 1021-90

FROM THE PRESIDENT

TO: Roger Porter

How do we stand for
World Climate Conference in Geneva?

Will we be isolated??

Issues??

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October 23, 1990

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROGER B. PORTER *RBP*

SUBJECT: The Second World Climate Conference

This responds to your request for an assessment of prospects for the Second World Climate Conference, which will be held in Geneva from October 29 to November 7.

The Conference will address the climate change agenda for the 1990s.

The First World Climate Conference, held in 1979, defined the world climate program that has been the basis for joint action over the past decade. The broad objective of the Second Conference is to set the international agenda for climate change activities for the next decade.

The Conference will review three reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) -- on scientific evidence, potential effects, and response strategies. It will then attempt to identify principles for negotiations on a framework convention on climate change. These negotiations will begin next February (in Washington) and run at least through March 1992.

The U.S. will be a leader in discussions on research.

The Conference is divided into two parts. During the first week, scientists will discuss changes needed in the world climate research program for the next ten years. While no official delegations have been invited, U.S. scientists will be led by Dr. Joe Friday, head of Commerce's National Weather Service. Because the U.S. is the world leader in global climate change research (spending nearly \$1 billion in 1991), we will urge greater research commitments from others, including developing countries.

We may be isolated in negotiations on the declaration.

During the second week, ministers will attempt to remove the extensive brackets in a draft declaration. The U.S. is likely to be isolated on three familiar issues.

- There will be wide support for endorsing the precautionary principle, which would obligate

governments to attack climate change problems regardless of the uncertainty over causes and solutions.

- The northern Europeans and the Nordics want to establish targets and timetables. We have refused, citing the probable negative effects on growth.
- Developing countries want a commitment to receive new and additional resources to address climate change problems. We have challenged the view that resources for the environment should be isolated from resources for other activities.

We also may be criticized for our refusal to endorse the report of the IPCC's science panel. We question the report's analysis of the threat posed by the greenhouse effect and its call for prompt action. Because the U.S. position is well known, however, other countries are likely to criticize us less stridently than in the past.

The U.S. will attempt to focus attention on practical next steps.

The head of our delegation, NOAA Administrator John Knauss, will take a pragmatic approach. He will refuse to get drawn into extensive debates over rhetoric in the draft declaration. If necessary, we will table a no-frills draft that we could sign. Instead, he will focus on our willingness to begin negotiations on a framework convention on climate change. He will also emphasize the strong U.S. record of action on climate change -- notably the recent Clean Air Act.

Our strategy appears sound. Any lingering criticism will probably dissipate by February, when attention will turn to the framework convention.

The U.S. is being unfairly criticized for its level of representation.

The press has criticized the U.S. for sending John Knauss, when Prime Minister Thatcher and Chancellor Kohl may attend. In fact, if Thatcher and Kohl attend, they will address the Conference at the beginning of its second week. For the rest of the week, all countries will be represented by environment ministers. Knauss is accepted in this group, having been the U.S. delegate at the Bergen and Noordwijk Conferences.