

THE WHITE HOUSE
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President Bush Discusses Global Climate Change
The Rose Garden

11:10 A.M. EDT

Good morning. I've just met with senior members of my administration who are working to develop an effective and science-based approach to addressing the important issues of global climate change.

This is an issue that I know is very important to the nations of Europe, which I will be visiting for the first time as President. The earth's well-being is also an issue important to America. And it's an issue that should be important to every nation in every part of our world.

The issue of climate change respects no border. Its effects cannot be reined in by an army nor advanced by any ideology. Climate change, with its potential to impact every corner of the world, is an issue that must be addressed by the world.

The Kyoto Protocol was fatally flawed in fundamental ways. But the process used to bring nations together to discuss our joint response to climate change is an important one. That is why I am today committing the United States of America to work within the United Nations framework and elsewhere to develop with our friends and allies and nations throughout the world an effective and science-based response to the issue of global warming.

My Cabinet-level working group has met regularly for the last 10 weeks to review the most recent, most accurate, and most comprehensive science. They have heard from scientists offering a wide spectrum of views. They have reviewed the facts, and they have listened to many theories and suppositions. The working group asked the highly-respected National Academy of Sciences to provide us the most up-to-date information about what is known and about what is not known on the science of climate change.

First, we know the surface temperature of the earth is warming. It has risen by .6 degrees Celsius over the past 100 years. There was a warming trend from the 1890s to the 1940s. Cooling from the 1940s to the 1970s. And then sharply rising temperatures from the 1970s to today.

There is a natural greenhouse effect that contributes to warming. Greenhouse gases trap heat, and thus warm the earth because they prevent a significant proportion of infrared radiation from escaping into space. Concentration of greenhouse gases, especially CO₂, have increased substantially since the beginning of the industrial revolution. And the

National Academy of Sciences indicate that the increase is due in large part to human activity.

Yet, the Academy's report tells us that we do not know how much effect natural fluctuations in climate may have had on warming. We do not know how much our climate could, or will change in the future. We do not know how fast change will occur, or even how some of our actions could impact it.

For example, our useful efforts to reduce sulfur emissions may have actually increased warming, because sulfate particles reflect sunlight, bouncing it back into space. And, finally, no one can say with any certainty what constitutes a dangerous level of warming, and therefore what level must be avoided.

The policy challenge is to act in a serious and sensible way, given the limits of our knowledge. While scientific uncertainties remain, we can begin now to address the factors that contribute to climate change.

There are only two ways to stabilize concentration of greenhouse gases. One is to avoid emitting them in the first place; the other is to try to capture them after they're created. And there are problems with both approaches. We're making great progress through technology, but have not yet developed cost-effective ways to capture carbon emissions at their source; although there is some promising work that is being done.

And a growing population requires more energy to heat and cool our homes, more gas to drive our cars. Even though we're making progress on conservation and energy efficiency and have significantly reduced the amount of carbon emissions per unit of GDP.

Our country, the United States is the world's largest emitter of manmade greenhouse gases. We account for almost 20 percent of the world's man-made greenhouse emissions. We also account for about one-quarter of the world's economic output. We recognize the responsibility to reduce our emissions. We also recognize the other part of the story -- that the rest of the world emits 80 percent of all greenhouse gases. And many of those emissions come from developing countries.

This is a challenge that requires a 100 percent effort; ours, and the rest of the world's. The world's second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases is China. Yet, China was entirely exempted from the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol.

India and Germany are among the top emitters. Yet, India was also exempt from Kyoto. These and other developing countries that are experiencing rapid growth face challenges in reducing their emissions without harming their economies. We want to work cooperatively with these countries in their efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions and maintain economic growth.

Kyoto also failed to address two major pollutants that have an impact on warming: black soot and tropospheric ozone. Both are proven health hazards. Reducing both would not only address climate change, but also dramatically improve people's health.

Kyoto is, in many ways, unrealistic. Many countries cannot meet their Kyoto targets. The targets themselves were arbitrary and not based upon science. For America, complying with those mandates would have a negative economic impact, with layoffs of workers and price increases for consumers. And when you evaluate all these flaws, most reasonable people will understand that it's not sound public policy.

That's why 95 members of the United States Senate expressed a reluctance to endorse such an approach. Yet, America's unwillingness to embrace a flawed treaty should not be read by our friends and allies as any abdication of responsibility. To the contrary, my administration is committed to a leadership role on the issue of climate change.

We recognize our responsibility and will meet it -- at home, in our hemisphere, and in the world. My Cabinet-level working group on climate change is recommending a number of initial steps, and will continue to work on additional ideas. The working group proposes the United States help lead the way by advancing the science on climate change, advancing the technology to monitor and reduce greenhouse gases, and creating partnerships within our hemisphere and beyond to monitor and measure and mitigate emissions.

I also call on Congress to work with my administration to achieve the significant emission reductions made possible by implementing the clean energy technologies proposed in our energy plan. Our working group study has made it clear that we need to know a lot more.

The U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change commences to stabilizing concentrations at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate; but no one knows what that level is. The United States has spent \$18 billion on climate research since 1990 -- three times as much as any other country, and more than Japan and all 15 nations of the EU combined.

Today, I make our investment in science even greater. My administration will establish the U.S. Climate Change Research Initiative to study areas of uncertainty and identify priority areas where investments can make a difference.

I'm directing my Secretary of Commerce, working with other agencies, to set priorities for additional investments in climate change research, review such investments, and to improve coordination amongst federal agencies. We will fully fund high-priority areas for climate change science over the next five years. We'll also provide resources to build climate observation systems in developing countries and encourage other developed nations to match our American commitment.

And we propose a joint venture with the EU, Japan and others to develop state-of-the-art climate modeling that will help us better understand the causes and impacts of climate change. America's the leader in technology and innovation. We all believe technology offers great promise to significantly reduce emissions -- especially carbon capture, storage and sequestration technologies.

So we're creating the National Climate Change Technology Initiative to strengthen research at universities and national labs, to enhance partnerships in applied research, to develop improved technology for measuring and monitoring gross and net greenhouse gas emissions, and to fund demonstration projects for cutting-edge technologies, such as bioreactors and fuel cells.

Even with the best science, even with the best technology, we all know the United States cannot solve this global problem alone. We're building partnerships within the Western Hemisphere and with other like-minded countries. Last week, Secretary Powell signed a new CONCAUSA Declaration with the countries of Central America, calling for cooperative efforts on science research, monitoring and measuring of emissions, technology development, and investment in forest conservation.

We will work with the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research and other institutions to better understand regional impacts of climate change. We will establish a partnership to monitor and mitigate emissions. And at home, I call on Congress to work with my administration on the initiatives to enhance conservation and energy efficiency outlined in my energy plan, to implement the increased use of renewables, natural gas and hydropower that are outlined in the plan, and to increase the generation of safe and clean nuclear power.

By increasing conservation and energy efficiency and aggressively using these clean energy technologies, we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by significant amounts in the coming years. We can make great progress in reducing emissions, and we will. Yet, even that isn't enough.

I've asked my advisors to consider approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including those that tap the power of markets, help realize the promise of technology and ensure the widest-possible global participation. As we analyze the possibilities, we will be guided by several basic principles. Our approach must be consistent with the long-term goal of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Our actions should be measured as we learn more from science and build on it.

Our approach must be flexible to adjust to new information and take advantage of new technology. We must always act to ensure continued economic growth and prosperity for our citizens and for citizens throughout the world. We should pursue market-based incentives and spur technological innovation.

And, finally, our approach must be based on global participation, including that of

developing countries whose net greenhouse gas emissions now exceed those in the developed countries.

I've asked Secretary Powell and Administrator Whitman to ensure they actively work with friends and allies to explore common approaches to climate change consistent with these principles. Each step we take will increase our knowledge. We will act, learn, and act again, adjusting our approaches as science advances and technology evolves.

Our administration will be creative. We're committed to protecting our environment and improving our economy, to acting at home and working in concert with the world. This is an administration that will make commitments we can keep, and keep the commitments that we make.

I look forward to continued discussions with our friends and allies about this important issue.

Thank you for coming.

11:20 A.M. EDT