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President Should Fire Disloyal Employees Who Promoted It
Bush Must Withdraw Global Warming Report

By Myron Ebell

The left's latest attack on President Bush's opposition to the Kyoto global warming treaty was launched with not even a whisper of warning on June 3 on the front page of the New York Times. "In a stark shift for the Bush Administration," wrote Andrew Revkin, "the United States has sent a climate report to the United Nations detailing specific and far-reaching effects that it says global warming will inflict on the global environment."

In an editorial the same day, the Times concluded that although the administration had now admitted that climate catastrophe was on the way, the President still "has no serious strategies" for dealing with it. This point was picked up by the evening news shows on CBS, NBC, and ABC. How this bull's eye was painted on the President's back is a dismaying story because it reveals the White House's continuing political incompetence in dealing with environmental issues and its continuing toleration of opponents of the President's policies inside his administration.

As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which President George H. W. Bush signed at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and the Senate ratified unanimously later that year, the U. S. government must provide periodic progress reports. Thus the administration transmitted Climate Action Report 2002 on May 28 with no public notice. But some helpful public servant at the Environmental Protection Agency, who was in on the plot, posted the report on EPA's web site Friday afternoon, thereby setting the stage for the sneak attack on Monday morning, June 3.

Climate Action Report 2002 is a disastrous concession to global warming alarmism. All the worst parts are based on junk science concocted by the

Clinton-Gore Administration and now recycled by the Bush Administration with qualifying statements added here and there. Reading it is rather like opening up a copy of the Republican Party platform to find the text of the Democratic Party platform printed inside, with a statement buried in the middle that these are not really our positions.

The report concedes that mankind is causing global warming, that future warming will be in line with United Nations predictions, and that warming will lead to ecosystem collapse, heat waves, droughts, floods, and higher agricultural production. Actually, this last result is the only one for which there is demonstrable scientific evidence. Hundreds of studies conducted over many decades by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and many land grant universities have found that plants grow more with higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is no surprise since carbon dioxide is necessary for photosynthesis.

The predictions of doom rely on the National Assessment of the impact of climate change, which the Clinton team concocted to help Al Gore. The National Assessment was subject to devastating criticism by a wide range of scientists.

Perhaps the best comment during the peer review process came from Dr. Patrick Michaels of the University of Virginia and the Cato Institute, who demonstrated that the two computer models used did a poorer job of predicting temperature record for the past 100 years than "a table of random numbers." One of the computer models used to predict regional climate impacts was provided by the Hadley Centre in England, which admitted in a published paper that, "scenarios based on global models will fail to capture the regional detail needed for vulnerability assessments at a national level."

The assessment failed to achieve its initial, purely political purpose because my organization (the Competitive Enterprise Institute), several other non-profits, Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), and Representatives Joe Knollenberg (R.-Mich.) and Jo Ann Emerson (R.-Mo.) brought suit in federal court in October 2000 to have the assessment declared unlawfully produced. The Bush Administration settled the suit in September 2001 by agreeing that the assessment's two documents were "not policy positions or official statements of the U. S. government." So it's most unfortunate that they have now resurrected what they agree is a discredited product.

It would be nice to report that the White House counter-attacked effectively, but the news only gets worse. On June 4, President Bush responded to a reporter's question, "I have read the report put out by a-put out by the bureaucracy. I do not support the Kyoto treaty." Apparently, this was meant to put a little distance between the President and the report, but he did not in any way question its findings, which underscores the point: The President now accepts that global warming is real and dangerous, but refuses to do anything about it.

White House Spokesman Ari Fleischer dug the hole even deeper the next day by insisting that the President had already agreed with Climate Action Report 2002's major findings in his speech of June 11, 2001. Faced with persistent questioning, Fleischer repeated several times that the President's 2001 statement that human activity is largely responsible for increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is equivalent to the report's conclusion that human activity is responsible for global warming. This confusion gives away the whole scientific debate.

Republican Senate and House staffers I have talked to, who are working to eliminate the worst, anti-energy provisions in the Senate's energy bill now ready to go to conference with the House and to defeat legislation to regulate carbon dioxide emissions sponsored by Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman Jim Jeffords (I.-Vt.), are in despair over Climate Action Report 2002 because it provides a huge amount of ammunition to the advocates of energy rationing.

Jeffords, Daschle, Kerry, and Lieberman can quote many devastating

passages back at the President's allies at every hearing, mark-up, and floor debate, and say, "You see, even President Bush agrees with us, but like you he is unwilling to do anything about the problem." The administration has waded into some deep and sticky quicksand. To get out of it, they must first realize that they are sinking and that holding onto the 263 pages of Climate Action Report 2002 is only causing them to sink faster. President Bush must withdraw the report and direct that it be re-written on the basis of sound science and without relying on discredited material left over from Clinton and Gore. But the President must do more than that if he is to save his agenda. He must also dismiss or re-assign every administration employee-and there are several in key positions-who does not support his energy and global warming policies. And finally, just as Undersecretary of State John Bolton recently removed the signature of the United States from the Rome treaty creating the International Criminal Court, President Bush must direct that the Kyoto Protocol be unsigned. Only then will this administration be out of the political quicksand.