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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON
November 5, 1993

PRESIDENTIAL DECISION DIRECTIVE/NSC-16

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR
THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET
UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE
UNITED NATIONS
CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR ECONOMIC POLICY
CHAIR, COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
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ADMINISTRATOR, AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
ADMINISTRATOR, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE
ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
DIRECTOR, UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

SUBJECT: Environmental Policy on International
Desertification, Forest Conservation and Fresh
Water Security

This Presidential Decision Directive directs the implementation of United States policy on international desertification, forest conservation and fresh water security. This policy demonstrates our awareness of the linkages between environmental quality and national security, reflects our response to the concerns stated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro last summer, and reinforces the basis for a positive leadership role for the United States in promoting international resource conservation.

Degradation of land, forest and fresh water resources can contribute to international instability. Such degradation is closely tied to the challenges of climate change, ocean resource protection and biodiversity: land and vegetation degradation

operate against the preservation of biodiversity; forests contain more than half the planet's species and are major reservoirs for carbon; poor land management (including overgrazing and deforestation) results in erosion, siltation and loss of carbon, usable water and aquatic life; and water resources are affected by climate change as well as land use practices, pollution, and changes in water use and demand.

Our strategy for addressing each of these three issues shall be based on the following approaches: negotiation of broad principles through international conventions or internationally agreed methodologies; focused implementation of the broad principles through partnerships at the regional, national and subnational levels; and demonstration of leadership by example in the United States.

1. DESERTIFICATION

The Department of State, in consultation with other appropriate U.S. agencies, shall continue to seek an umbrella desertification convention containing general obligations directed toward: improving international and regional cooperation in scientific research and in providing financial and technical assistance; increasing capacity based on national responsibility and empowerment of local peoples; promoting a greater role for non-governmental organizations; and improving education. To implement such obligations, the United States will support negotiation of sub-agreements focusing on specific geographic regions, beginning with Africa where the problems are most severe.

To highlight United States leadership, the Departments of Interior, Commerce (NOAA) and Agriculture, in coordination with other appropriate U.S. agencies, shall explore a domestic demonstration program aimed at optimum management of drylands for sustained use within existing funding sources. This effort should engage Federal, state and local agencies and interest groups to understand and combat dryland degradation, and to predict and mitigate the effects of drought. This program should pursue domestic land and fresh water use reforms, including changes to policies that lead to greater desertification pressures such as water, grazing and mining subsidies.

2. FOREST CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE

At the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, countries agreed to non-binding principles on forest conservation and sustainable use. Our key long-term goal is to see that all forests worldwide are sustained according to sound forest management principles. Our strategy includes bilateral programs to conserve forests and biodiversity and maintain existing carbon reservoirs, and support for appropriate activities in the proposed World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization and other fora to foster international agreement on forest management.

Our policy is to foster long-term cooperative partnerships with key forest countries and organizations, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The Departments of State and Agriculture (USFS), the Agency for International Development and the Environmental Protection Agency, in cooperation with and other appropriate U.S. agencies, shall develop recommendations to further strengthen the "Forests for the Future" program and other U.S. bilateral and multilateral assistance for forest conservation by establishing concrete objectives and priorities, expanding interagency collaboration, identifying ways to mobilize private sector funding and implementing model programs.

Finally, we must take the lead internationally by observing these principles ourselves. The United States is committed to a national goal of achieving sustainable management of U.S. forests by the year 2000. Our national objectives are that: our nation's forest should be healthy and productive; the growth of our timber should exceed harvest; and our forests should be reservoirs of biological diversity and carbon. This U.S. commitment to the goal of sustainable forest management should support our efforts to address the concerns of producing countries regarding market discrimination and a double standard in the context of the International Tropical Timber Agreement and its Target 2000. The Department of State shall consult with other governments concerning a regional conservation agreement to implement the UNCED Forest Principles for temperate and boreal forests in the North American region and/or for all Arctic nations.

3. FRESH WATER SECURITY

Water scarcity and declining water quality are concerns of developing countries and are among the first issues that will be addressed by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). The United States shall lead the UNCSD on this issue by supporting the development of operational guidelines for the implementation of internationally agreed principles of freshwater management outlined at UNCED. The Department of State and AID, working closely with other U.S. agencies, shall support the following actions: assist developing countries to improve water management, policy analysis and planning procedures; encourage decentralized and democratized water use planning and implementation; and promote technology cooperation and transfer a variety of technologies for water management, supply pollution prevention and sanitation.

In response to the threat posed by international competition over water, the State Department's International Water Resources Coordinator shall establish an interagency task force to identify opportunities where the U.S. can demonstrate leadership by introducing analytical techniques and promoting resolution of transboundary and regional conflicts over water resources.

Recognizing the continuing and rapid destruction of critical wetlands and U.S. obligations under the International Treaty on

Wetlands Conservation (Ramsar Convention), the Departments of State and Interior (USFWS) and AID, in coordination with other U.S. agencies, shall pursue bilateral and multilateral avenues to provide technical assistance to developing countries and countries whose economics are in transition to promote the wise use of wetlands, including support for management, monitoring, research training and education, and public awareness programs. U.S. agencies should coordinate their support within the framework of the Ramsar Convention, including the Wetlands Conservation Fund, to promote international efforts for wetlands conservation.

Finally, to provide further leadership, the United States shall identify and apply pollution prevention, water and wetlands conservation, and ecosystem management principles and technologies to our own water resources.

William J Clinton