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Subseries: Global Climate Change Files - Conferences/Meetings

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Global Change: Strategy Task Force Meeting - 3/12/91

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

GLOBAL CHANGE STRATEGY TASK FORCE

AGENDA

March 12, 1991

1. U.S. Submission of Elements to be Included in a Framework Convention on Climate Change
 - o Review of Comments
2. Status of Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)
3. Global Change Hearings
4. Other Business

IPCC Prepcom.

Position paper - restate current existing policy
3-4 week session.
legal & institutional
Buff Bohlman and Smith will head US delegations
Amb. Josh Ryan. — no environmental background. Career FSO.
multilateral experience
Commerce (NOAA), EPA., OMB, Int, AID, CEQ,
Paper will be used by groups in Geneva.
CEQ is organizing a report on everything in the environmental
area.
3 NGO's on delegation } selected by Buff Bohlman.
3 Congressional staff }

Global Change Working Group Strategy Task Force

3-12-91 Room 180, 3:00pm

TENTATIVE ATTENDANCE LIST

MEMBERS & THEIR STAFF:

✓ BERNTHAL, FREDERICK (NSF)

BOHLEN, B. NO (DOS)
(see Dawson)

CARD, A. (SUNUNU)

DANZANSKY, S. (CA)

✓ DAWSON, C. (DOS)
To Rep all of DOS
& Joan Donaghue (DOS)

DELAND, M. (CEQ)

GORMAN, T. NO (OPD)
on TRAVEL

GRADY, B. *Bo* (OMB)

GRAY, C.B. (OC)

KERRIGAN, Mark (DOE/H. MOORE)

MAGINNIS, Tom (KNAUSS/NOAA)

MELBY, E. (NSC/T. DEAL)

MORAGNSTERN, Dick
(HABICHT/EPA)

SCHMALENSEE (CEA)

PORTER (DPC)

REINSTEIN NO (DOS)
(see Dawson)

TABULATIONS

Expected attendees: 15

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

(George Bush Library)

Document No. and Type	Subject/Title of Document	Date	Restriction	Class.
01. Report	Submission of the United States [for Framework Convention on Climate Change] (8 pp.)	3/11/91	(b)(1)	C

Collection:

Record Group: Bush Presidential Records
Office: Science and Technology Policy, Office of (OSTP)
Series: Bromley, D. Allan, Files
Subseries: Global Climate Change Files - Conferences/Meetings
WHORM Cat.:
File Location: Global Change: Strategy Task Force Meeting - 3/12/91

Date Closed:	4/27/2010	OA/ID Number:	62060-005
FOIA/SYS Case #:	2005-0336-F	Appeal Case #:	
Re-review Case #:		Appeal Disposition:	
P-2/P-5 Review Case #:		Disposition Date:	
AR Case #:		MR Case #:	
AR Disposition:		MR Disposition:	
AR Disposition Date:		MR Disposition Date:	

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P-1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
 P-2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
 P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
 P-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
 P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
 P-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Removed as a personal record misfile.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

(b)(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
 (b)(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
 (b)(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
 (b)(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
 (b)(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
 (b)(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
 (b)(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
 (b)(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information

THE WHITE HOUSE
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GLOBAL CHANGE STRATEGY TASK FORCE

AGENDA

March 12, 1991

1. U.S. Submission of Elements to be Included in a Framework Convention on Climate Change

o As you recall, last week, we distributed a draft (prepared by State) of the U.S. paper describing the elements that the U.S. would like to have included in a Framework Convention on Climate Change.

I would like to thank you and your agencies for providing your comments on the draft. Since there were fairly extensive comments from at least one agency, I think it would be important to go over those proposed changes.

State has been kind enough to incorporate those changes where appropriate and I would like to call on Chris Dawson and Joan Donaghue from State to guide us through those changes.

o discussion of changes and any issues which might arise

2. Status of Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)

o Because the 2nd UNCED Preparatory Committee meeting will begin in Geneva on March 18, it is timely to examine the status of the U.S. preparations for that meeting.

As most of you know, a number of papers on a variety of topics have been circulated in anticipation of that meeting.

I have asked State to provide us with a briefing on our preparations as well as a short discussion of the papers which have been prepared for that meeting

o Call on Chris Dawson

3. Global Change Hearings

o As we discussed at our last meeting, we have been working on compiling a set of facts on global change which those of us who need to testify this spring on global change can use for background information where useful.

Over the past week, we have collected all of the testimony sent in by each agency, and have distilled out a list of pertinent information for your use.
(Vicky prepared these)

Pass out the information lists.

We are still working on getting an unclassified version of the agency document which was prepared prior to the Framework Convention negotiations. We will get that to you as soon as it is ready.

4. Other Business

DRAFT TALKING POINTS ON GLOBAL CLIMATE

I. FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE THE FIRST NEGOTIATING SESSION

[Source: Reinstein testimony 3-5-91]

- o** The United States hosted the first session of the negotiations for a framework convention on February 4-11, with one hundred and one countries from every region of the world and representatives from over 20 international organizations participating. 68 NGOs also participated.
- o** This session was the first of four or five sessions of the negotiations established under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly by Resolution 45/212.
- o** We agreed to organize two working groups, one which will consider all sources and sinks of all greenhouse gases, and one which will consider mechanisms of implementation of the convention.
- o** We adopted on Rules of Procedure which emphasize decision making by consensus and which will allow for NGO participation.
- o** We also discussed ways to increase the participation of developing countries. The U.S. was the first country to contribute to a voluntary trust fund established to support the participation of developing countries.
- o** The U.S. helped to produce an informal paper outlining the scientific, technical and economic research needs which the convention should address.
- o** We also reached agreement on the important role the IPCC will play in responding to the technical needs of the negotiations.

II. FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE FUTURE SESSIONS

[Source: Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

- o** The next session is tentatively scheduled for the first two weeks of June in Nairobi.
- o** The following sessions will meet in September, December, and in 1992, as necessary.
- o** The goal, as articulated in 45/212 is to complete the negotiations so that the framework convention will be opened for signature during the UN Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992 in Brazil.

III. FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATION PRINCIPLES

[Source: Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

- o First, we believe we must take a comprehensive approach to climate change, one which considers all greenhouse gases and their sources and sinks.**
- o Second, we must not wait for all uncertainties to be resolved, but must pursue economically efficient and cost effective actions - already justified on other grounds - which will limit net greenhouse gas emissions.**
- o Third, we must continue to pursue aggressively scientific and economic research; systematic observation; collection, archiving and distribution of information; and technology development in order to resolve uncertainties and build a solid foundation for innovative responses.**
- o Fourth, we must recognize the special needs of the developing countries and design mechanisms for assisting them in securing the scientific and technical tools necessary for their fullest participation in a truly global effort.**
- o Fifth, any response must be global. An effective response will require that all nations participate and meet obligations that are appropriate to their circumstances.**

IV. ELEMENTS OF A FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

[Source: Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

- o A framework convention could commit all nations to develop national strategies, similar to our Climate Change Strategy and National Energy Strategy, recognizing that the appropriate measures available to different countries will vary depending on their social, environmental, and economic circumstances.**
- o A framework convention should include a general commitment to promote financial assistance to developing countries to study and address climate change. Existing bilateral and multilateral financial-assistance mechanisms and, in particular, the newly established Global Environmental Facility in the world Bank are the appropriate mechanisms for providing such assistance.**
- o A framework convention could include technology transfer, which is essential to any effective global response. Implementation of technology transfer will need to be considered, in the context of specific commitments to action. Special efforts will need to be made to match appropriate technologies to needs.**
- o A framework convention should seek to remove barriers to effective commercial development and transfer of technology and should ensure that intellectual property rights are fully protected so as to provide the incentives necessary for continual development of new technology.**

V. COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

o Why is a CO2 target alone inappropriate?

[Source: Reinstein Qs & As, House 3-5-91, Senate 2-21-91]

(1) We believe a comprehensive approach, addressing the sources and sinks of all greenhouse actions. concentrating on just one greenhouse gas ignores the possibility of other, more cost-effective responses aimed at other greenhouse gases. The focus of environmental concern should be the net effect on radiative forcing, not emissions of any one gas. In fact, CO2 is the weakest greenhouse gas per kilogram.

(2) Focussing narrowly on CO2 could unintentionally increase emissions of other greenhouse gases. For example, an early response to a CO2 target would be fuel-switching from coal to natural gas. This would reduce CO2 emissions but increase methane emissions from distribution leaks of natural gas. Methane is a much more potent greenhouse gas than CO2 and even small methane leaks can offset large CO2 reductions. This problem could be important in many nations.

(3) Any response to climate change must be global if it is to be effective. Most proposal regarding a CO2 target would impose that target on industrialized countries immediately but delay its application to developing countries. Yet emissions are growing much faster in the developing world. Imposing restrictions only on industrialized nations is likely to be undercut by the relocation of emissions intensive activities to other countries.

(4) Imposition of restrictions on a few nations could cause significant distortions in the international competitiveness of those nations.

(5) The economic consequences of such targets are extremely uncertain. Projections of emissions are heavily dependent on expected growth rates. Should economic growth prove to be faster than expect, emissions will probably also grow faster than expected and meeting a target could prove to be prohibitively expensive, with potentially serious consequences for the world economy, including the development aspirations of developing countries.

(6) Climate change will occur over the long term. Any response must be sustainable over the long term and encourage all nations to develop plans of action that will carry us beyond the turn of the century. Most targets and timetable, however, focus only on the next ten to fifteen years.

(7) The environmental benefits of such targets are unknown because of scientific uncertainties about the strength, rate, and timing of climate change from a given change in GHG emissions. Given such uncertainties, we believe a flexible approach which focuses initially actions justified for other reasons is prudent.

(8) Rigidly imposing identical obligations does not adequately recognize the diversity of national circumstances. We must instead seek ways to build on the unique strengths of individual nations in devising the international response to climate change.

o Why the comprehensive approach?

Policy formulations need to match the underlying ecological systems they address. The optimal design for the climate change convention, and for any policy responses, would be a "comprehensive" approach that addresses all relevant trace gases, their sources and sinks. This approach has been discussed by United States officials in several papers. [Source: A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Potential Climate

Change, A Report of the Interagency Task Force on Comprehensive and Incentives Approaches to Climate Change, January 1991, p. 12]

o In keeping with its commitment to a comprehensive approach, the United States has undertaken a set of policy measures that together constitute a comprehensive approach, addressing several radiatively active trace gases (RATGs), sources and sinks, and will keep U.S. contributions to radiative forcing at 1987 levels through the year 2000. [Source: A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Potential Climate Change, A Report of the Interagency Task Force on Comprehensive and Incentives Approaches to Climate Change, January 1991, p. 12-13]

o The international reality: integration of physical and social science is making clear that a comprehensive approach to the complex global system is essential, addressing all the relevant trace gases, their sources and sinks. [Source: A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Potential Climate Change, A Report of the Interagency Task Force on Comprehensive and Incentives Approaches to Climate Change, January 1991, p. 12]

o In August the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated in its Overview: "A comprehensive strategy addressing all aspects of the problem and reflecting environmental, economic and social costs and benefits is necessary." [Source: IPCC Overview, August 1990, p. 14 and A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Potential Climate Change, A Report of the Interagency Task Force on Comprehensive and Incentives Approaches to Climate Change, January 1991, p. 12]

o In November, the government ministers at the Second World Climate Conference (SWCC) declared: "We recommend that in the elaboration of response strategies, over time, all greenhouse gases, sources and sinks be considered in the most comprehensive manner possible." [Source: Ministerial Declaration of the SWCC, paragraph 14, and A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Potential Climate Change, A Report of the Interagency Task Force on Comprehensive and Incentives Approaches to Climate Change, January 1991, p. 12]

o What is the comprehensive approach?

[Source: A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Potential Climate Change, A Report of the Interagency Task Force on Comprehensive and Incentives Approaches to Climate Change, January 1991, p. 2]

o It is an approach to structure consideration of climate change issues --- scientific, economic, and policy -- on a comprehensive basis, addressing all the human interactions with the climate system.

o It stands in contrast to the "piecemeal" approach currently dominating discussion, which focuses narrowly on emissions of one gas, carbon dioxide (CO₂), primarily from the energy sector, and omits other critical factors.

o It considers all of the significant human-influenced "radiatively active trace gases" (RATGs) that affect climate:

Carbon dioxide (CO₂)

Methane (CH₄)

Nitrous Oxide (N₂O)

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), and related substances

Tropospheric Ozone (O₃) and its precursors:

Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)

Carbon monoxide (CO)

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs or NMHCs)

o It focuses on "net emissions" (sources less sinks), the important variable for determining atmospheric concentrations.

VI. ACTIONS THAT ARE JUSTIFIED IN THEIR OWN RIGHT

[Source: Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

- o Phasing out chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone depleting compounds that are also greenhouse gases faster than required by the Montreal Protocol.**
- o Encouraging energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by capping sulfur dioxide emissions at substantially reduced levels while allowing utilities the flexibility to meet this cap in the most economically efficient manner possible.**
- o Reducing air pollutants which are greenhouse gases or greenhouse gas precursors, such as volatile organic compounds and methane.**
- o Initiating a program to plant a billion trees a year.**
- o Speeding the adoption of energy efficient technologies and practices in homes and businesses.**
- o Promoting the use of, and research into, non-fossil fuel energy sources.**

VII. ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY IN THE GLOBAL CLIMATE

o The National Energy Strategy (NES) includes a number of actions that, although taken principally for other energy related reasons, will have significant environmental benefits, including curbing the buildup of future U.S. emissions of greenhouse gases. [Source: Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

o Greenhouse gas emission reductions would be produced by the National Energy Strategy. These reductions are achieved by: (1) greater use of renewable energy and nuclear power and improved energy efficiency in both the electricity and the transportation sectors; and (2) other actions already taken by the United States (for example, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990). With all of these initiatives, the United States' contribution to potential global warming would, in the National Energy Strategy scenario, remain at or below present levels for the foreseeable future. While the accuracy of any future projections diminishes as the time horizon under consideration lengthens, the National Energy Strategy will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions relative to any current policy baseline. [Source: Executive Summary, National Energy Strategy, p. 19]

o If no actions were taken, emissions in the U.S. from one important greenhouse gas, CO₂, are projected to grow by 80% by the year 2030, according to one part of the NES scenario. Likewise, emissions of other greenhouse gases, such as methane, nitrous oxides and carbon monoxide, are projected to grow as well. [Source: Department of Energy Qs & As to Waxman 2-26-91 and Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

o Without the NES, greenhouse gas emissions, as measured in terms of global warming potential, are likely to increase by over 2.82 billion tons of CO₂ equivalents. This would be a 38.4 percent increase over the 1990 levels by 2030. [Source: Department of Energy Qs & As to Waxman, Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

o Carbon monoxide and Carbon dioxide. After 2015, increased use of alternative fuels, energy efficiency, renewable and nuclear energy will result in these emissions leveling off and remaining stable through 2030. [Source: Department of Energy Qs & As to Waxman, Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

o Methane. NES actions as well as EPA's regulations controlling methane from landfills, will reduce methane emissions below current levels through 2015. Further after 2015 annual methane emission from energy sources will continue to decline. [Source: Department of Energy Qs & As to Waxman, Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

o Nitrogen oxide and volatile organic compounds, precursors to tropospheric ozone that could lead to potential warming are held to levels that are about the same or below the 1990 levels and decline from 2015 to 2030. [Source: Department of Energy Qs & As to Waxman, Reinstein testimony, 3-5-91]

VIII. COMMITMENTS AND POLICES THAT OTHER NATIONS HAVE ADOPTED OR ARE PLANNING TO ADOPT TO REDUCE EMISSIONS OF GHGS

o Many other industrialized nations have announced their intention to stabilize CO2 emissions by the turn of the century. A few of these, like Austria, Australia, Denmark, Germany and new Zealand, have stated further that they hope to reduce CO2 emissions by the Year 205. The baseline year used varies somewhat between countries. Baseline year used varies somewhat between countries. some of these nations, such as France and Japan, have adopted per capita targets that allow for continued growth in their overall emission. All major CFC producers have also committed under the Montreal Protocol to phase-out their production of ozone depleting substances, which also contribute to climate change. [Source: Reinstein Qs & As 2-21-91 House of Representatives, 3-5-91 Senate]

o Canada proposes actions on several RATGs in several sectors, and terms the strategy a "comprehensive response" [Source: Canada's Green Plan (1990), p.97-108]. Other nations have announced proposals that address not only CO2 but also other RATGs. "Climate Change Policy in the Netherlands and Supporting Measures," Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Physical Planning and the Environment, D.G. for Environment, November 1990 (addressing CO2 sources and sinks, CFCs , and CH4); Cabinet Study Commission, Bonn, German, November 7, 1990 (addressing CO2 and CH4); "Action Program to Arrest Global Warming," Decision made by the Council of Ministers for Global Environmental Conservation, Government of Japan, October 23, 1990 (addressing CO2 sources and sinks, CH4, N2O). [Source: "A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Potential Climate Change," A Report of the Interagency Task Force on Comprehensive and Incentive Approaches to Climate Change, footnote 6, p. 13.]

o None of these countries has set quantified emission targets for any of the other greenhouse gases, such as methane, or for total global warming potential, except Australia, Iceland, and Canada. Meeting their CO2 targets could still allow an increase in emissions of methane e and other greenhouse gases more potent than CO2. Moreover, no developing or Eastern European nation, other than Poland, has set any emission targets. This is particularly significant in that these countries will probably account for over half of the greenhouse gas emissions by early in the next century. [Source: Reinstein Qs & As 2-21-91 House of Representatives, 3-5-91 Senate]

o A review by EPA found that over twenty government have issued statements of intent to stabilize or reduce CO2 emissions by various target dates, most often the year 2000. Six countries intend to reduce CO2 emissions by 20 percent or more by 2005 or later years. The most aggressive targets have been set by Germany, which plans to achieve a 25 percent reduction by 2005 and an 80 percent by 2050 for both CO2 and methane. A few countries have made their intentions contingent on international agreement or on economic conditions. [Source: EPA Qs & As 2-19-91]

IX. INVENTORY OF CO₂ AND OTHER GREENHOUSE GASES, BOTH WORLDWIDE AND FOR THE US

o The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee recognized a global emissions inventory as high priority need for the IPCC to pursue during the next year. The IPCC Bureau met on February 15, 1990 to discuss the issue and requested that the U.K. develop a plan for review by the full IPCC in March. EPA has provide over \$150 thousand to support the development of a manual and workshop through the OECD. The Department of Energy h as also provided support. We expect that the report of February 18-21 workshop will enable the IPCC to move forward quickly during the coming months.

[Source: EPA Qs & As 2-19-91]

o The most important anthropogenic greenhouse gases worldwide, weighted according to their climate forcing potential are CO₂ (approximately 55%), followed by methane (15%), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) (24%), and nitrous oxide (6%). Warming is also caused by the direct and indirect effects of other greenhouse gases such as carbon monoxide, and the interactive effects of other trace gases such as tropospheric ozone (produced by the chemical interactions of emissions of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds) although the worldwide inventory is not yet accurate enough to compare their forcing potential to the gases above. [Source: IPCC, Climate Change: The IPCC Scientific Assessment, p.xx]

X. US GLOBAL CLIMATE RESEARCH PROGRAM (USGCRP) FY 1992

o The highest priority scientific and policy-related issue for the USGCRP in FY 1992 is whether, and to what extent, human activities are changing or will change the global climate system.

[Source: Our Changing Planet: The FY 1992 U.S. Global Change Research Program, A Supplement to the US President's Fiscal Year 1992 Budget, p.9]

o The President's FY 1992 Budget requests \$1186 million for the USGCRP. This represents an increase of \$232 million, or 24.2 percent, over the FY 1991 level. [Source: Our Changing Planet: The FY 1992 U.S. Global Change Research Program, A Supplement to the US President's Fiscal Year 1992 Budget, p.3]

o The Committee on Earth and Environmental Sciences (CEES) relied on the results of the Scientific and Impacts Assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in developing the FY 1992 Program. [Source: Our Changing Planet: The FY 1992 U.S. Global Change Research Program, A Supplement to the US President's Fiscal Year 1992 Budget, p.9]

o The USGCRP identified four high priority Integrating Themes for FY 1992:

- (1) Climate Modeling and Prediction
- (2) Global Water and Energy Cycles
- (3) Global Carbon Cycle
- (4) Ecological Systems and Population Dynamics

[Source: Our Changing Planet: The FY 1992 U.S. Global Change Research Program, A Supplement to the US President's Fiscal Year 1992 Budget, p.2]

o Using the integrating themes, the collective efforts of government and academic scientists focus on:

(1) Developing an improved predictive capability of the Earth as a coupled system with enhanced regional resolution.

(2) Improve the understanding of the water and energy cycles by focusing on the role of clouds, oceans, terrestrial ecosystems, and changes in sea level.

(3) Improve the understanding of the carbon cycle by quantifying sources and sinks, the processes that control them, and how the processes may influence and be influenced by global change.

(4) Improve the capacity to assess the effects of global change at regional scales on intensively managed and natural terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems.

[Source: Our Changing Planet: The FY 1992 U.S. Global Change Research Program, A Supplement to the US President's Fiscal Year 1992 Budget, p.2]