

Document A: U.S. Senate

The following document is an excerpt of the Byrd-Hagel Resolution, a simple resolution sponsored by Democratic Senator Robert Byrd and Republican Senator Chuck Hagel. Simple resolutions are used to express positions held by the Senate, but they are not binding like a law. It passed 95-0 in the first session of the 105th Congress.

Whereas greenhouse gas emissions of Developing Country Parties are rapidly increasing and are expected to **surpass** emissions of the United States and other Developed Country Parties as early as 2015; . . .

Whereas the **exemption** for Developing Country Parties is inconsistent with the need for global action on climate change and is environmentally flawed;

Whereas the Senate strongly believes that the proposals under negotiation, because of the **disparity** of treatment between Developed Country Parties and Developing Country Parties and the level of required emission reductions, could result in serious harm to the United States economy, including significant job loss, trade disadvantages, increased energy and consumer costs, or any combination thereof . . .

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the United States should not be a signatory to any protocol to, or other agreement regarding, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992, at negotiations in Kyoto in December 1997, or thereafter, which would—

(A) **mandate** new commitments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the Developed Country Parties, unless the protocol or other agreement also mandates new specific scheduled commitments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions for Developing Country Parties . . . or

(B) would result in serious harm to the economy of the United States.

Source: *Byrd-Hagel Resolution, passed July 25, 1997, U.S. Senate.*

Vocabulary

surpass: exceed; go beyond
exemption: exception
disparity: difference
mandate: require

Document B: *New York Times* Article

If the Clinton Administration is struggling to strike a deal on global warming at talks in Kyoto, Japan, that is partly because warring domestic interest groups have spent many months — and millions of dollars — on highly effective lobbying campaigns designed to limit the White House's options.

Environmental groups, traditionally closely allied with the [Clinton] Administration, have succeeded in convincing the public that the threat of climate change caused by emissions of greenhouse gases is a settled scientific reality that must be confronted head-on. . . .

But powerful business interests have emphasized the economic risks and the need to bring developing countries into any binding new treaty, arguments that have strongly influenced the Senate, where any pact must be ratified. . . .

The [competing sides] include big corporations with **revenues** larger than the economies of little nations, labor unions with more members than some countries' armed forces, industrial trade associations with headquarters grander than embassies. . . .

Eileen Claussen, who was an Administration climate negotiator until she left the State Department recently to work as an environmental consultant, said that the industry campaign in Congress was especially effective.

"By targeting the Congress, the industries responsible for the advertising campaign have widened the **rift** between the [president and Congress]," Ms. Claussen said. "This has had the effect of pulling the United States farther away from most other countries in the negotiations, and hardening its position on what would constitute an acceptable target and on what should be required of developing countries."

Source: John H. Cushman Jr., "Intense Lobbying Against Global Warming Treaty," *New York Times*, December 7, 1997.

Vocabulary

revenue: income; amount of money coming in

rift: divide or gap

Document C: German Climate Negotiator

Jürgen Trittin served as Germany's Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety from 1998 to 2005. In November 2000, he was Germany's chief negotiator at the United Nations Climate Conference in The Hague. This is an excerpt from an interview with Trittin published in the German weekly news magazine Der Spiegel.

TRITTIN: We were willing to pay a very high price for a ratified climate agreement. We gave the U.S. and other countries a reduction in their commitments from the Kyoto conference in 1997. We said we accept a bit of a reduction in your commitment – but you must say how much of a reduction. This is precisely what the “Umbrella Group” – the U.S., Canada, Japan, and Australia – was not ready to do. They did not want to commit to a binding quantity, and so the whole thing was a failure. . . .

We had a great interest in compromise, but we cannot accept unlimited **loopholes**. That will not do. If you do not know how big the loophole is for individual countries, the whole protocol would be worthless because you wouldn't have a baseline from which to measure the commitment. Then the ratification and binding under international law would be nonsense.

DER SPIEGEL: Was the U.S. delegation in a **stranglehold** by the American economy?

TRITTIN: No. Many U.S. companies have reduction targets larger than those of the American government or society. A U.S. citizen consumes twice as much energy as a European, and you do not claim that this leads to twice as high a quality of life. The real challenge for the U.S. is to change consumer habits. With all of the economic **mechanisms** we can live just fine with climate policy. It is a political decision whether or not to tackle the problem.

Source: *Interview with Jürgen Trittin, Der Spiegel, December 4, 2000.*

Vocabulary

loophole: a legal way to avoid emission cuts

stranglehold: complete control

mechanisms: tools

Document D: State Department Memo

The following excerpts are from an internal government memorandum to U.S. Under Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky in preparation for a meeting with the Global Climate Coalition (GCC). Major U.S. industry associations—including agricultural, auto, fossil fuel, and lumber—were members of the GCC. In 1997, the GCC spent \$13 million on an advertising campaign opposing the Kyoto Protocol.

GCC members are completely supportive of the Administration's position on climate change and the rejection of the Kyoto Protocol. In general, GCC favors voluntary actions, **flexible market-based mechanisms** and the development of cost-effective technologies.

Talking Points

Protocol was not appropriate response:

- No signal whatsoever that developing countries would have eventually participated.
- Potentially too costly and would never have been ratified. Better to start over now than continue **charade**.

Future constructs:

- Hold to Principles – response must be global, reasoned and flexible; include market incentives and incentives for technological innovation; sustain economic growth.
- Protect U.S. interests in the international negotiations.
- Guard against **trade sanctions** as means to force Protocol upon the United States.

Solicit views in developing an effective and market-based response:

- **POTUS** rejected Kyoto, in part, based on input from you.
- **POTUS** believes, however, we need to show leadership on this issue to advance U.S. domestic and international policy objectives.

Source: *Briefing Memorandum to Under Secretary Dobriansky, United States Department of State, June 2001.*

Vocabulary

flexible market-based mechanisms: policies that allow governments to meet emissions goals without actually cutting emissions by instead purchasing carbon credits or funding sustainable development projects

trade sanctions: when one country punishes another by limiting trade with that country

POTUS: President of the United States

charade: pretend that something is better than it is

constructs: ideas

Guiding Questions

Document A: U.S. Senate

1. (Close reading) What concerns does the Senate express about the treaty?
2. (Close reading) According to this document, why should developing countries also be forced to limit their emissions?
3. (Contextualization) This resolution was passed before the Clinton administration negotiated the treaty. What might the Senate have thought of the final treaty that the Clinton Administration signed?

Document B: *New York Times* Article

1. (Close reading) According to this document, which groups in the United States pushed for Kyoto to be ratified?

Which groups argued against it?

2. (Sourcing) How credible is this document as a source of evidence for learning why the U.S. did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol? Explain your reasoning.

Document C: German Climate Negotiator

1. (Close reading) According to this document, what role did economic factors play in the U.S. decision not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol?

2. (Sourcing) How credible is this document as a source of evidence for learning why the U.S. did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol? Explain your reasoning.

Document D: State Department Memo

1. (Sourcing) Why was this document created?

2. (Contextualization) How might the reasons for creating this document influence its content?

3. (Sourcing) How credible is this document as a source of evidence to understand why the U.S. did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol? Explain your reasoning.

