

Article published Apr 16, 2008

Bush raises temp on global warming

April 16, 2008 By Tony Blankley

The last months of a presidential administration are often dangerous. Presidents — looking to their legacy — go to desperate lengths to try to enhance their reputation for posterity. A pungent example of such practices by the Bush administration was reported above the fold on the front page of The Washington Times Monday: "Bush prepares global warming initiative."

Oh dear. Just as an increasing number of scientists are finding their courage to speak out against the global warming alarmists, and just as a building body of evidence and theories challenge the key elements of the human-centric carbon-based global warming theories — President Bush takes this moment to say in effect: "We are all global alarmists now."

It reminds me of the moment back in 1971, when Richard Nixon proclaimed, "We are all Keynesians now" — eight years after Milton Friedman had published his book "A Monetary History of the United States 1867-1960," and about an hour-and-half before a consensus built that Mr. Friedman's work consigned Keynes to the dustbin of economic history.

Now it is Mr. Bush's turn to be the last man to join a losing proposition. How many ways is this proposal unuseful? First of all, as Chris Horner, the author of "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming," has shrewdly pointed out: The Democrats desperately want Mr. Bush and the Republicans "to take ownership" of the global alarmists' issues before he goes.

This is important. Whatever restraint likely to be exercised by the Democratic Party majority next year will be induced by the political fear that the Republicans would be able to say I told you so, if their policies contract the economy and put yet more people out of work.

That will give them political cover for the entire program, which, whatever it may try to do regarding "global warming," will certainly give governments and international organizations vastly more regulatory and tax control of the U.S. economy.

Of course, the proposed carbon taxes will subtract hundreds of billions (or trillions) of dollars from productive private-sector economic activity and transfer it to "our friend the government" to spend "beneficially" for us all. Beyond even confiscatory taxation, reduced economic output and higher unemployment we have hints of other things to come with the talk of connecting private homes into the central electricity grid.

In its benign form, it is described in an Op-Ed in the Washington paper The Hill: "As demand for energy services grows, the nation's outdated grid is showing signs of strain due to congestion, sometimes resulting in large-scale outages, such as the blackouts and brownouts experienced in New York, California, and my home state of Texas during summertime heat waves in recent years. One solution to this problem would be to build scores of new power plants and thousands of miles of new transmission lines to increase overall grid capacity. A better way is to change how we manage electric power, by deploying smart-grid technologies.

"A smart grid uses information technology to transform a simple 'pipe' into an interactive energy-management system. Streams of real-time information are exchanged between users, producers, and the grid itself to allow dynamic power management that increases both efficiency and stability."

But one can well imagine what the global-warming fanatics might wish government to do with "interactive dynamic power management." Energy pigs (for example people like me who want to run air conditioning on hot days) will not be permitted to destroy the planet. Our energy use can easily be "capped" by the dynamic system. One bureaucrat will be empowered to turn our electricity on or off — according to the dictates of the current politically correct judgment.

Equally frightening is the emerging strategy of using global warming policy to crush the economies of the West, but not of the "developing" nations. Also reported Monday on the front page of The Washington Times was the story of Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the U.N. climate-treaty secretariat. This dangerous U.N official stated that he wants to exempt China and India from carbon emission regulation and taxation. In an example of suicidal liberal guilt, this blithering nitwit argued that the United States and Europe have "a historic responsibility" for emitting carbons — and thus should pay the price now.

Albeit, Mr. Bush doesn't intend all the catastrophic consequences of his simple decision to offer legislation to regulate carbon emission. But then, by this point he should be quite familiar with the concept of unintended consequences. And he needs to recognize that he cannot pass "sensible" legislation. (I have serious doubts that any legislation on this topic could be sensible.)

All he can do is set the stage for next year's legislation, by giving away the rhetorical store and weakening the already modest backbone of Republican legislators.

The liberal world order will not let go of their global-warming assault on free economies until hell freezes over — by which point, obviously, the global-warming theory will be visibly disproven.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20080416/EDITORIAL01/192044535/1013> Robert Ferguson President, Science and Public Policy Institute 209 Pennsylvania Ave., SE # 299 Washington, D.C.