Targeting American Prosperity

U.S. national security experts have long predicted that future wars will likely be economic, not military. The world may be moving towards just such a conflict, as envious foreign competitors and international bureaucrats, allied with antibusiness activists, are attempting to handicap the U.S. economy under the guise of preventing "global warming." Their weapon of choice – a deeply flawed international treaty imposing radical limits on energy use and production – will turn American consumers and businesses into casualties of economic warfare.

Nations in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere have taken the lead on global warming politics, chiding the U.S. for not embracing extreme cuts in carbon dioxide emissions like those in the Kyoto Protocol. Professional activists in America and abroad have joined the chorus, demonizing non-believers and unleashing anti-capitalist thugs to conduct protests reminiscent of the Vietnam era. Collectively, these actions create impressive public relations pageantry for a compliant media, but how much of it actually benefits the environment?

Global warming plans like Kyoto are a convenient vehicle for shackling the U.S. economy with the same kind of socialist tax and environmental policies that have chilled scientific innovation and growth in Europe and elsewhere. What better way for lagging economic competitors to catch up than disable our vibrant free enterprise system?

If America is forced to implement this scheme, the required restrictions on energy use would impact nearly every aspect of modern life. Studies estimate that household income would plummet by $2,700 and at least 2.4 million jobs would be lost. If you think gas prices are high now and California blackouts are troubling, just wait. Conceivably, we would have to shut down power plants in order to comply. And the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that electricity prices would rise by 86%, gas prices by 53%. Things like using the Internet and even a short commute would quickly become luxuries solely for the rich.

Despite the lack of scientific consensus on such basic issues as the existence or rate of warming, and who or what is responsible, Americans will be forced to radically alter their lives. One thing, however, is certain – if a problem exists, Kyoto provides no solution. How could it, when 130 countries, including some of the world's worst polluters such as China, Mexico, and India, are explicitly exempted? Even the Europeans know they can't meet its fantasy emissions reduction targets. Perhaps this explains why, despite all their venting of hot air, none of those nations have ratified Kyoto.

If our foreign economic competitors win this battle, bureaucrats wielding international law would dictate how much energy use and thus how much prosperity America is permitted. Asking consumers and businesses to sacrifice choice, absorb higher costs, and accept dramatic changes to the American way of life are a high price to pay simply to satisfy an ideological agenda.