

**From:** White House News Update  
**To:** Hannegan, Bryan J.;  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** Reuters - U.S. to announce "Beyond Kyoto" greenhouse pact  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 27, 2005 9:25:45 AM  
**Attachments:**

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## **U.S. to announce 'Beyond Kyoto' greenhouse pact**

By Michelle Nichols

CANBERRA (Reuters) - The world's top polluter, the United States, is set to unveil a pact to combat global warming by developing energy technology aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions, officials and diplomats said on Wednesday.

China and India, whose burgeoning economies comprise a third of humanity, as well as Australia and South Korea are also part of the agreement to tackle climate change beyond the Kyoto protocol.

Kyoto requires a cut in greenhouse emissions by 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2008-12 but the United States and Australia have never ratified the protocol because it excluded major developing nations such as China and India.

Diplomats in the Laotian capital Vientiane said the pact would be formally announced on Thursday when U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick holds a press conference attended by representatives of the other signatories.

Zoellick is attending a regional forum in Laos.

Details of the pact remain unclear but it appears to echo recent comments by President Bush who advocated the use of technology in curbing growth in greenhouse gas emissions rather than setting targets he believes threaten the U.S. economy.

Australian Environment Minister Ian Campbell said on Wednesday that the five

countries had been quietly working on the pact for months.

"It's quite clear the Kyoto protocol won't get the world to where it wants to go ... We have got to find something that works better -- Australia is working on that with partners around the world," Campbell told reporters on Wednesday.

#### LIMITED USE

The Kyoto protocol, first agreed in 1997, came into force in February after Russia ratified the pact but analysts say the protocol is of limited use because many signatories are already above their emission targets.

"We need to expand the energy the world consumes and reduce the emissions. That's going to need new technologies, it's going to need the development of new technologies and the deployment of them within developing countries," Campbell said.

As economies expand, the world is consuming more energy and is producing more greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels such as coal in power plants and petrol in cars.

Many scientists say emissions need to be cut by 50 percent to try to limit the impact of global warming.

"I think it is a good idea because the development of these technologies is important and I've always said there has to be a partnership between North and South in these technologies. This is one way of working together," said Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

"It does not interfere with the Kyoto protocol," he said.

Japan, the world's number two economy, appeared to welcome the pact but others were critical.

"This is all about taxpayers' money being diverted from developing clean renewable technologies to try and make burning coal less dirty," Bob Brown,

leader of the minority Australian Greens party, said in a statement.

Australia and China are the world's largest coal exporters, while the United States is also a top exporter.

"If it's an agreement about appropriate technology transfer. It could be a useful tool, but not at the expense of the only international agreement to deal with climate change," said Greenpeace Energy Campaigner Catherine Fitzpatrick.

A panel of scientists that advises the United Nations has said world temperatures are likely to rise between 1.4 and 5.8 degrees Celsius by 2100, triggering more frequent floods, droughts, melting of icecaps and glaciers and driving thousands of species to extinction.

Scientists say the planet's average surface temperature has increased by about 0.6 degrees Celsius over the past century.

Researchers say further warming is inevitable because of the huge amount of extra carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere by man's activities but the degree of future warming hinges on how nations control their greenhouse gas emissions now. (Additional reporting by Jon Herskovitz in VIENTIANE, Himangshu Watts in NEW DELHI and Masayuki Kitano in TOKYO)

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