



KYOTO PROTOCOL, R.I.P.

 Email

 Archives

 Print

 Reprint

December 28, 2003 -- The Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse-gas emissions has apparently been rejected by Russia, a major blow to the treaty's hypocritical European proponents.

President Vladimir Putin's chief economic adviser, Andrei Illarionov, said in Moscow this month: "Of course, in its present form, this protocol cannot be ratified. It is impossible to undertake responsibilities that place serious limits on the country's growth."

A Russian junior minister responsible for Kyoto later qualified this statement, saying that "There are no decisions about ratification other than that we are moving towards [it]."

But the truth is that Kyoto is dead, and has been for some time.

If the Russians officially reject the 1997 accord, it will simply put it utterly beyond any form of resuscitation - fortunately for the world economy and the prosperity of billions of people.

Without Russian ratification, the treaty can't enter force among its signatories, because by its own provisions it can't take effect until ratified by countries whose combined greenhouse-gas production accounts for at least 55 percent of emissions from industrialized nations.

Russia accounts for 17 percent of greenhouse emissions; the United States for 36 percent. (Australia, like the United States, has already withdrawn its provisional signature of the treaty.)

And the plain fact is that without the participation of the United States, the treaty is a dead letter.

President Bush is constantly pilloried by his opponents here and abroad for rejecting his predecessor's signing of the Kyoto treaty, even though the protocol was essentially rendered moot when the U.S. Senate voted against it 95-0 even before the Clinton administration had signed it.

Fifty of the 120 countries that signed the treaty have yet to ratify it, and many of those that have done so may have little intention of following its dictates.

(France, for instance, has a long history of choosing to ignore economically inconvenient European Union environmental regulations.)

The Russians were smart to say no to a treaty that, if followed, would have crippled Putin's efforts to rebuild the country's ailing economy.

Remember: It isn't even proven beyond a reasonable doubt that global warming is actually a product of human economic activity.

Then, too, the Kyoto Protocol was always rigged to give its European authors an economic edge over the United States.

More important is that the protocol exempts India, China and other key developing nations from its strictures

even though they are among the world's biggest polluters. (Indeed, Kyoto exempts nine of the top 20 emitters of carbon dioxide.)

The further development of these two countries, with their billion-plus populations all craving the refrigeration and air conditioning that's taken for granted in the West, will make them huge producers of so-called greenhouse gasses.

And there is no doubt if the United States had accepted Kyoto's rules it would have had a huge negative impact on American jobs.

Kyoto was a bad idea in 1997, and it's a bad idea today.

If President Putin's government scotches all remaining hope for its coming into effect, Russia will have done the whole world a favor.

[Home](#)

NEW YORK POST is a registered trademark of NYP Holdings, Inc. NYPOST.COM, NYPOSTONLINE.COM, and NEWYORKPOST.COM

are trademarks of NYP Holdings, Inc.
Copyright 2003 NYP Holdings, Inc. All rights reserved.