

Aide: Bush Warming Plan Likely

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White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card Jr. said yesterday the administration would likely present fresh proposals for revising a global warming treaty when the United States meets again with other environmental ministers in Morocco this fall, in the wake of growing congressional criticism of President Bush's handling of the issue.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 19 to 0 last week to urge Bush to return to the bargaining table with specific proposals for a new binding international global warming treaty. The United States refused to join 178 other countries on July 23 in adopting rules for implementing the Kyoto climate change treaty, which sets mandatory targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Card said yesterday on NBC's "Meet the Press," "I'm optimistic that we'll have initiatives that we can go to Marrakesh and talk about with the world leaders that will show that we're serious about solving the problem, that the Kyoto solution is really not a solution at all."

Card said that a Cabinet-level task force on global warming is making progress, and that members conferred late last week with House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman W.J. "Billy" Tauzin (R-La.) and Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.).

The administration opposes the Kyoto treaty, saying it would harm the U.S. economy while exempting developing countries, including India and China, from mandatory emission targets. Instead, the White House has advocated spending for more scientific research, incentives for developing new technology to reduce emissions and other voluntary or market-based initiatives.

Card's statement is the latest in a series of conflicting signals from the administration on how Bush intends to proceed.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said last month the United States would have a new global warming proposal ready for an international meeting in November. But national security adviser Condoleezza Rice and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman subsequently said the administration had no such plan.

Whitman said recently the administration would focus largely on hemispheric and domestic proposals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which scientists say trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to the earth's rising temperature.

The administration is preparing a plan that would limit emissions other than carbon dioxide from the nation's power plants to begin addressing the global warming problem. On Friday, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.) called for a plan to require U.S. power plants and industries to reduce all greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide.

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