

International Policy Overview

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Increased interactions among nations, especially in the areas of trade and commerce, have led to a tightly knit global community. At the same time, players on the world stage have mistakenly confused increased globalization as necessitating a call for increased international governance through treaties and international bodies. Nowhere is that more prevalent than in the call for international environmental policy. Both at home under U.S. foreign policy and abroad in international treaties, misguided environmental policies are leading the diplomatic corps astray from its traditional charges of promoting peace through reduced violent conflict and prosperity through free trade. The biggest victims of this “greening” of foreign policy, ironically, are the poor people living in developing na-

tions and the planet’s long-term environmental health.¹

Consider, for example, the Kyoto Protocol. Already, tension over the protocol is evident as the United States demands that developing nations like China and India bear the same emissions reduction burdens as the developed world. Developing nations counter that they are just now entering their industrial revolution and deserve the same unhindered chance at prosperity that the developed world enjoyed. Developing nations have a point. The Kyoto Protocol will keep them impoverished not only

1. For information on how green politics have contributed seriously to human suffering, see Lorraine Mooney and Roger Bate, eds., *Environmental Health: Third World Problems—First World Preoccupations* (Boston: Butterworth Heinemann, 1999).

by barring them from using resources necessary to develop, but also by undermining the development of market economies.

Instead of international regulation, we should promote free trade, which improves environmental quality by increasing wealth:

- A 1992 study by economist Don Coursey of the University of Chicago found that a 10 percent increase in income results in a 25 percent increase in the demand for environmental amenities.²
- Economists Gene Grossman and Alan Krueger found similar evidence of a relationship between environmental quality and economic health. Their research discovered that countries increased sulfur dioxide emissions until reaching a per capita income of about \$9,000 (in 1998 dollars).³ After that threshold was met, countries' sulfur dioxide emissions declined.
- The greening of foreign policy threatens the benefits of free trade by slowing, ending, and even reversing the trend toward free trade that developed over the course of the past century.

2. Don Coursey, "Demand for Environmental Quality," Business, Law, and Economics Center, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, 1992. See also Don Coursey and Christopher Hartwell, "Environmental and Public Health Outcomes: An International and Historical Comparison," Working Paper 00.10, Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Chicago, Chicago, http://harrisschool.uchicago.edu/about/publications/working-papers/pdf/wp_00_10.pdf.

3. Gene M. Grossman and Alan B. Krueger, "Economic Growth and the Environment," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 110, no. 2 (May 1995): 353–77.

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Recommended Readings

Anderson, Terry L., and J. Bishop Grewell. 1999. "Property Rights Solutions for the Global Commons: Bottom-Up or Top-Down?" *Duke Environmental Law and Policy Forum* 10, no. 1.: 73–101.

Anderson, Terry L., and J. Bishop Grewell. 2000. "The Greening of Foreign Policy." PERC Policy Series PS20, Property and Environment Research Center, Bozeman, MT. <http://www.perc.org/pdf/ps20.pdf>.

Anderson, Terry L., and Henry I. Miller, eds. 2000. *The Greening of U.S. Foreign Policy*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.

Mooney, Lorraine and Roger Bate, eds. 1999. *Environmental Health: Third World Problems—First World Preoccupations*. Boston: Butterworth Heinemann.

Sheehan, James. 1998. *Global Greens: Inside the International Environmental Establishment*. Washington, DC: Capital Research Center.

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