



THE WOODS HOLE RESEARCH CENTER

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Response to The Wall Street Journal's *The Theology of Global Warming* (August 8, 2005)

Kilaparti Ramakrishna

Original Draft (published version appears below)

Mr. Schlesinger is entitled to his views on climatic disruption but not to distort the facts. Let me just point out some of the more obvious misrepresentations.

He claims that 13 of the 15 members of the European Union "have failed to achieve their quotas under the Kyoto accord" as if the time to meet those quotas has come and gone. In reality, the reductions are to be met by the first commitment period ending in 2012. He does not have a single word to say about the EU law on emissions trading with the sole aim of meeting those quotas and the intense activity underway in the carbon markets in Europe.

He approvingly quotes the House of Lords report suggesting that the Kyoto accord to limit carbon emissions "will make little difference". Proponents of the Kyoto accord have always maintained that the modest reductions, even if they are met by all, could only be a small first step in meeting the ultimate objective of stabilizing the greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Anyone even with rudimentary knowledge of the issue will agree that Kyoto by itself is not the answer.

Despite Schlesinger's assertion otherwise, the success of Gleneagles is that it kept the unity of other members of the G-8 intact despite all the reported shenanigans of the US to water it down. Furthermore, the Summit succeeded in bringing President Bush back to a position that he himself articulated in fighting Al Gore for the US presidency and soon after.

Mr. Schlesinger does himself a lot of disservice by referencing, again approvingly, Michael Crichton, who is an author, albeit an acclaimed one, of fiction and not a scientist. None should have any hesitation in relying on Crichton to while away their time at the beach during these sultry summer days, but to rely on him for assurances on climatic disruption? He calls the "Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate" a setback. He probably means to those that want to work within the framework of the Kyoto accord. In reality, though, this initiative was explicit in stating that what is to be accomplished under this initiative is to complement actions initiated under the Kyoto accord. That said, the initiative does hold the potential of engaging a group of very significant developing countries in reducing the growth of their greenhouse gas emissions. Key of course in ensuring that the Partnership is followed with specific and tangible measures.

Mr. Schlesinger and his ilk believe that the best way not to do anything on an environmental catastrophe waiting to happen is by following the well-worn three-step formula. First deny that there is any problem, then question the magnitude, and finally when squarely hit by the ecological disruption, say it is too late to do anything about it. Is it too much to expect something a little more responsible from our very first secretary of energy?



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Published version (w/unapproved editing)

James Schlesinger claims 13 of the 15 members of the European Union "have failed to achieve their quotas under the Kyoto accord," as if the time to meet those quotas has come and gone. In reality, the reductions are to be met by the first commitment period ending in 2012. He does not say anything about EU emissions trading and the intense activity underway in the carbon markets to meet those quotas.

He approvingly quotes the House of Lords report suggesting that the Kyoto accord to limit carbon emissions "will make little difference." Proponents of the Kyoto accord have always maintained that modest reductions are only a small first step in meeting the ultimate objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.

He calls the "Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate" a setback. This initiative, though, is meant to complement actions initiated under the Kyoto accord. It engages a group of significant developing countries in reducing the growth of their emissions with specific and tangible measures.

Ultimately, Mr. Schlesinger follows a well-worn three-step formula employed by global warming skeptics. First deny that there is any problem, then question the magnitude, and finally, when hit by ecological disruption, say it is too late to do anything about it.

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Director

Woods Hole Research Center

Woods Hole, Mass.

Response from Dr. Ramakrishna

I was pleased to see my response to James Schlesinger's commentary in this morning's Journal. I was surprised, however, to see that several of my points had been softened so as to effectively change my meaning and that those changes were not verified with me prior to publication.

Additionally, my comment on the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate was edited to convey that I misunderstood Schlesinger's original assertion; he means it as a setback from his interpretation of the environmental perspective, a point that my original submission made clearly.

Finally, and although I do appreciate the editorial board's generosity in promoting me, I wish it noted that I am the deputy director at the Center, not the director.

Reply from Wall Street Journal (to Dir. of Communications, Elizabeth Braun, rec'd Aug. 18, 2005)

Dear Ms. Braun:

I've looked at the back and forth over the Ramakrishna letter, and we certainly should have sent the edited version of the letter back for his approval. I disagree that our editing "softened" the letter, however. What we did was shorten it for space. In one instance, our editing arguably conveyed a somewhat different nuance than Mr. Ramakrishna seems to have intended. To accommodate your objection I propose to run the following as a correction:



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A portion of an Aug. 15 Letter from Kilaparti Ramakrishna of Woods Hole, Mass., in response to James Schlesinger's Aug. 8 feature on global warming, was edited in a way that did not accurately present the writer's meaning. The complete paragraph should have read: Mr. Schlesinger "calls the 'Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate' a setback. He probably means to those that want to work within the framework of the Kyoto accord. In reality, though, this initiative was explicit in stating that what is to be accomplished under this initiative is to complement actions initiated under the Kyoto accord. That said, the initiative does hold the potential of engaging a group of very significant developing countries in reducing the growth of their greenhouse gas emissions. Key of course in ensuring that the Partnership is followed with specific and tangible measures."

Mr. Ramakrishna was also wrongly described as the director of the Woods Hole Research Center. He is the deputy director.

The correction box will run in its normal position underneath the Letters section.

I trust this will clear matters up, and I'm sorry that in this case we didn't follow our normal practice of returning letters that are substantially edited for approval by the writer.

Sincerely,

Paul Gigot

Editorial Page Editor