



Written by on December 12, 2008

## Kerry Speaks From Global-warming Conference in Poland

Kerry told reporters that President-elect Obama "recognizes the need for the United States to take the lead, and he will push that lead. The United States is determined to lead not just rhetorically, but by example and policies.

UPI quoted the senator as saying that the world was "dangerously, potentially catastrophically outside permissible levels" when it comes to carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. All scheduled climate-protection proposals together would not keep the temperature increase below 2 degrees Celsius, he asserted, "so the urgency of coming together over the next year cannot possibly be overstated."



Speaking from the conference, Kerry told Reuters news service that he believed support in the United States for climate action was strong enough to let Obama sign an agreement to cut emissions in accord with a very ambitious United Nations treaty to be agreed on in Copenhagen in December 2009 — even if the Senate had not by then agreed to legislation conforming U.S. climate laws to the UN pact. Kerry asserted that "we can have commenced the [domestic] legislative process, we don't have to have completed it," before formally agreeing to meeting the terms of a UN treaty. Kerry predicted that by the time the Copenhagen meeting is held, U.S. legislation might have passed "a couple of committees" but might not have been voted on by the full Senate "because of the economic situation and the budget issues and other things."

Kerry stated: "What's important is that we go to Copenhagen understanding that no treaty is going to pass the U.S. Senate unless it is a global solution. China, India, Russia — all countries have to be part of the solution."

"It should be a treaty," said Kerry in an AP interview. "I think Copenhagen should produce a treaty fundamentally geared to reductions of emissions."

The last major UN climate agreement, the Kyoto Protocol, which mandates cuts in so-called greenhouse gases until 2012, was agreed to by President Clinton in 1997. But Clinton, knowing it would fail, refused to send the treaty to the Senate for ratification; the Bush administration did likewise.

In an interview reported by Agence France Presse back on November 26, as Kerry prepared to head to the Poznan conference, he accused the Bush administration of snubbing the other nations that had agreed to the Kyoto Protocol. Kerry said: "Now is the time to confront this challenge once and for all. Delay is no longer an option. Denial is no longer an acceptable response. The stakes are too high. The consequences, too serious."

AFP reported that the Senate is expected to consider two sweeping global-warming bills in January and that Barbara Boxer, chairwoman of the Senate Environment and Public Works committee, said one bill



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would provide \$15 billion dollars a year to spur "clean energy innovation" and the development of advanced biofuels. The second piece of legislation would direct the Environmental Protection Agency to set up a cap-and-trade system to stem greenhouse gas emissions.

*For more information about this topic, see "[Obama Cap-and-trade Plan Uncaps Federal Power.](#)"*



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