

Hot Planet, Cold Wars: Climate Change and Ideological Conflict

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By Dr. Thomas M. Kane¹

Shared challenges can bring out the best in people, but they can also do the opposite. Global climate change is an archetypal shared challenge for humanity, and although the threat has inspired a substantial amount of international co-operation, efforts to moderate it have already proven divisive. These divisions go beyond economically-driven haggling over who must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by what amount. Attempts to mitigate human civilisation's effects on the climate raise questions of political principle. Moreover, these questions have the specific potential to mobilise certain states and quasi-states against certain other ones.

Thus, climate change threatens to revive ideological dispute among armed, organised economically-developed societies. Although the idea of a world war over carbon remains far-fetched, the parallels with the international politics of the mid-20th century are disturbing. Policymakers would be wise to take the political questions of climate change more seriously than they appear to have done in the past. Scholars may note that disputes over global warming challenge influential models of contemporary global politics.

This paper explores the reasons why controversies over climate policy are likely to prove particularly divisive in international politics. The first section discusses the

¹ The author thanks Dr. Sonja Boehmer-Christiansen for advice, inspiration and access to her personal library.

relative ideological consensus that has prevailed among developed societies since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Even pessimistic theorists initially took this consensus for granted. As of 2005, however, this consensus is stretched thin on numerous issues.

One of these issues is climate policy. A second section of this paper discusses the stakes in the climate debate, suggesting that this dispute is likely to be a particularly important one. The third section notes that attempts to limit global carbon use raise questions about citizens' relationships to each other and to the state. Historically, such questions have raised issues of principle. These issues have had moral and emotional implications that run far beyond the material issues involved.

Many nations, notably the US, have resolved these issues by adopting the political system known as republicanism. A fourth section discusses the concept of a republic and the problems it presents for those who wish to develop an international policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The fifth section notes that a broad, if informal, movement in early 21st century politics directly challenges republicanism. Debates over climate policy have already served to deepen this division. A conclusion sums up the paper's findings and reflects on their implications for the future.

The Current International Consensus

The collapse of the Soviet Union appeared to pave the way for an era of ideological consensus in international politics. Certainly, prominent analysts suggested that this was the case. Francis Fukuyama, for instance, held that liberal democracy had proved

superior to all alternatives. (Fukuyama, 1992: passim) As people accepted that truth, he argued, political conflict would become obsolete. Other scholars predicted a more strife-torn future, but even they tended not to see this strife as political.

Samuel Huntington predicted a clash of civilisations, but assumed that this clash would concern prejudices and cultural incompatibilities, not questions of principle. During the early 1990s, Huntington noted, wars had typically taken place along 'fault lines' between major civilizations, ethnic identity had played an important role in state politics, religion has gained in political importance and people had come to identify themselves in cultural-geographical terms, such as 'the West' rather than ideological terms such as 'the free world.' (Huntington, 1996:19-20)

Other scholars suggested that, throughout substantial parts of the world at least, civilisation itself would break down. (Kaplan, 1994: passim; Van Creveld, 1991: passim) Again, however, these scholars placed little emphasis on politics as such. Rather, they predicted an apolitical 'coming anarchy.' (Kaplan, 1994: passim) Although these writers contrasted order with chaos, they devoted little attention to conflicts among those who hold differing visions about what sort of order should prevail.

As of 2005, all these predictions remain plausible, but their omissions are becoming increasingly troublesome. Neither the September 11 attack nor the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq prove Fukuyama wrong. Fukuyama predicted a backlash from those unable to reconcile themselves to the liberal democratic world. (Fukuyama, 1992: 216-217) Nevertheless, Fukuyama did not predict that different

liberal democrats would take diametrically opposing positions about the appropriate response to this backlash. Right-leaning Americans and left-leaning Europeans agree that different visions of the political good life are emerging on different sides of the Atlantic – a phenomenon which suggests that history may not be over yet. (Kagan, 2003: passim; Habermas and Derrida, 2003: passim)

Barbarism and cultural clashes remain tragically prominent. In parts of the world, they dominate. Terrorist attacks have affected domestic and international politics even in the relative safety of the developed world. Nevertheless, where Huntington and the anarchy theorists emphasised apolitical struggles among civilisations, the pivotal questions in recent world events have tended to concern political struggles within nations.

If, for instance, the governments of Britain and America had accepted that they could not invade Iraq without unequivocal UN authorisation, history would have been different. Once these western governments had resolved these political questions to their own satisfaction, middle eastern civilisation had little power to stop them. Since the self-styled coalition of the willing has conquered Iraq, however, the critical questions have increasingly come to concern politics within the occupied country. For the occupiers are to withdraw their troops and claim any sort of gain, they need the Iraqis to form something approximating a stable new government. Although the occupiers can attempt to influence this process, their ultimate success requires at least passive political support from Iraqis.

Intra-civilisational relations overlap with inter-civilisational relations. Pure anarchy and pre-rational cultural difference may play a role, but so do attempts to persuade others to accept controversial political principles. Meanwhile, parallel political debates are taking shape around issues ranging from trade policy to controlling the proliferation of small arms. The global debate about controlling greenhouse gas emissions is among them. To the extent that this controversy affects life on earth – or even the health of the global economy – it has the potential to be one of the most significant.

Climate Politics: The Stakes

The politics of climate change remain impossible to predict in detail, partially because the science and economics of climate change also remain impossible to predict in detail. Although most climate scientists agree that human production of greenhouse gasses is contributing to global warming, they can only conjecture about the precise relationship between the two. (Pearce, 'Act now before it's too late,' 2005: 8)

Therefore, they cannot forecast the precise consequences of climate change, nor can they guarantee that any particular policy for reducing greenhouse gasses will achieve its desired effects. (Pearce, 'Act now before it's too late,' 2005: 8) Economic predictions about the cost of reducing greenhouse emissions also remain in the realm of speculation. (Brenton, 1994: 168)

The political impact of climate policy controversy will probably be proportionate to the environmental and economic stakes. Although the same questions of principle arise in any case, political actors are likely to contest them more fiercely when they

have more to lose. International climate agreements have historically proved more controversial when they have demanded greater levels of sacrifice. The United Nations' 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), for instance, did not commit signatories to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in any measurable way. (Imber, 1994: 100) Few will be surprised to learn that the FCCC attracted support from many of the states that went on to resist the more demanding provisions of Kyoto.

Despite the difficulties of predicting either the weather or the economy, neither climatologists nor economists offer grounds for much optimism. In 1988, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) predicted floods, forest loss, crop failures – all within as little as two decades. (Brenton, 1994: 167) In 2005, climatologist Stephen Schneider of Stanford University suggested that global warming had already triggered heat waves killing tens of thousands of people. (Pearce, 'Act now before it's too late,' 2005: 8) Environmental scholar Vaclav Smil also warns that tropical diseases may soon spread into what once were the temperate zones. (Smil, 1993: 99) Over the longer term, Greenpeace activist Jeremy Leggett warns, the full consequences of global warming would be second only to nuclear war. (Leggett, 1993: 44)²

These warnings add impetus to political arguments calling for restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions. Even moderate researchers suggest that, to be effective, these restrictions will have to be drastic. In 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that, for humanity to stabilise long-lived greenhouse

² Leggett himself is quoting an unnamed source.

gasses such as carbon dioxide at their current levels, human beings would have to reduce their emissions of those gasses by an immediate 60%. (Houghton, 2002: 4) The longer people delayed these reductions, the IPC warned, the greater the cuts would ultimately have to be. (Leggett, 1993: 42) Not only did the Kyoto Protocol take almost fifteen more years to come into effect, it does not even aspire to reduce greenhouse emissions by more than 5.2%. (Boehmer-Christiansen, 2002: 5)

Climate change may prove even more threatening than scientists previously believed. At a February 2005 conference sponsored by the British government, climate researchers proposed hypotheses suggesting that continued climate change may trigger a variety of so-called positive feedbacks which would dramatically accelerate the pace of global warming. (Anonymous, 'Sleeping giants, 2005: passim) Such acceleration would trigger floods, droughts, forest fires, agricultural failures and other disasters correspondingly sooner than expected. The only way to avert catastrophe, these scientists imply, may be to reduce greenhouse emissions faster and by even greater amounts than previously thought necessary. (Anonymous, 'The doubters have one thing right, 2005: 5)

Other climatologists might demur. A number of sceptics argue that the threat of human-induced climate change has been exaggerated. (Kondratev, 2004: passim; Pearce, 'Menace or myth,' 2005: passim) This position is, however, at odds with mainstream opinion in the field. The fact that their conclusions are politically useful to the oil industry and others who oppose mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions makes their work particularly controversial. (Pearce, 'Menace or myth,

2005: passim; Leake, 2005: 7) For these reasons, climate scepticism seems likely to make climate politics yet more divisive.

Although the threat of global warming is frightening, the cost of reducing greenhouse gas emissions is significant as well. Mainstream estimates suggest that the full cost of stabilising the climate may range from nothing whatsoever to an annual 1.5% of global gross national product. (Brenton, 1994: 168) Noted environmental sceptic Bjorn Lomborg suggests a slightly higher figure of two percent per year. (Lomborg, 1998: 323)

When viewed in aggregate terms, even the higher estimates need not seem impossibly daunting. As Lomborg acknowledges, economists also expect the global economy to grow at an average pace of 2-3% per year throughout the 21st century. (Lomborg, 1998: 323) Therefore, even if one accepts his pessimistic estimate that controlling greenhouse emissions will cost two percent of global GNP, one may take comfort from the fact that the world will still be getting richer. Indeed, if one extends projected growth and the projected costs of reducing emissions ad infinitum, one finds that controlling global warming would only retard humanity's economic progress by a single year. (Lomborg, 1998: 323)

The costs of controlling greenhouse gas emissions will not, however, be spread evenly over an infinite period of time, nor will they fall equally upon all inhabitants of the globe. Economic growth is not evenly distributed in time or space either. Indeed, just as positive feedbacks in the climate system may trigger runaway global warming, relatively minor economic shocks may trigger periods of inflation, depression or both,

regionally as well as worldwide. This suggests that the expense of controlling climate change may undermine the very economic growth that was supposed to cover it. If humanity is to reduce greenhouse emissions, some will have to pay more than others, and there is no reason to assume that those who bear the costs will be in any position to do so.

Representatives of underdeveloped countries have repeatedly made this point. International treaties that focus simply on addressing environmental problems without regard for other issues risk placing the heaviest burdens on the poorest countries. As the prime ministers of India and Zimbabwe reminded the United Nations General Assembly in 1987, developing countries have to exploit the environment in order to survive. (Brenton, 1994: 128) Furthermore, the more prosperous countries achieved their wealth by expanding their energy-consuming, greenhouse-gas emitting industries. (Harris, 2001: 48) To prevent developing nations from doing the same without offering them some form of compensation would be to trap them in both relative and absolute forever.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) acknowledged these arguments in the policy statement known as Agenda 21. This document demanded ‘a substantial flow of new and additional financial resources to developing countries in order to cover the incremental costs for the actions they have to undertake to deal with global environmental problems and to accelerate sustainable development.’ (United Nations, Agenda 21, 1992: Paragraph 1.4) The Kyoto Protocol did not even attempt to limit the underdeveloped world’s greenhouse gas emissions. (United Nations, *The Kyoto Protocol*, 1997: 28)

Many will argue that, since the developed countries are largely responsible for past and present greenhouse gas emission, it is just for them to take a proportionally large share of the responsibility for reducing global emissions in the future. (Harris, 2001: 48-49) Whatever the ethical merits of this argument, attempts to shift the costs of reducing emissions to those who are capable of paying them complicates the technical problem of moderating climate change. Not only will developing countries produce progressively more greenhouse gasses as they industrialise, existing producers in the developed world are likely to relocate to the unregulated countries. As the problem of moderating climate change becomes more difficult, the total cost rises. (Lomborg, 1998: 323-324) The idea that the developed countries can meet these kinds of expenses while suffering nothing worse than a year's delay in economic growth appears increasingly fanciful.

When one speaks of economic costs in the abstract, one should remember that one is actually talking about lost jobs, mortgage foreclosures, ruined hopes and grim lives. Moreover, nations cannot control climate change simply by paying the requisite sums of money. Carbon-neutral technology may replace some dirtier forms of energy production, but if governments are to reduce global greenhouse output by over 60%, those countries will almost certainly have to curb their citizens' inclination to build, travel, consume imported products, light their streets, heat their homes in the winter, cool their homes in the summer and engage in a wide variety of other basic activities. No matter how governments choose to achieve such outcomes, the process is likely to be intrusive.

Many academic environmentalists (to say nothing of less scholarly protesters) not only acknowledge the need for curbs on individual behaviour but welcome it. The authors of Beyond the Limits, a 1992 sequel to the Club of Rome's influential Limits to Growth, sum up a common sentiment when they state 'people don't need enormous cars.' (Meadows, Meadows and Randers, 1992: 216)³ Nor, the authors tell us, do people need 'closetsful of clothes' or 'electronic entertainment.' (Meadows, Meadows and Randers, 1992: 216) Social critic Christopher Lasch is more explicitly puritanical, portraying environmental problems as a salutary brake on humanity's riotous lifestyle. (Lasch, 1992: 23-24)

State-Imposed Hardship

These calls for state-mandated austerity need not be shocking. Governments always impose hardships upon their people. None of the measures necessary to control climate change are likely to be any more onerous than taxation. The fact, however, that one can compare rigorous environmental regulation with taxes suggests reasons why divisions over climate change policy are potentially deep. Throughout history, taxation has provoked fundamental debate about the scope and constitution of the state.

When Jewish nationalists wanted to draw Jesus Christ into a political controversy, they asked whether they should pay taxes to Caesar. (*NIV Study Bible*, 1985: 1444) This episode highlights the fact that taxation has a political significance that goes far beyond its monetary costs. The Jewish nationalists who questioned Christ did not ask

³ Climate change is only one of these authors' concerns.

about the amount they should be willing to pay Caesar – they asked about the rightness of paying Caesar anything at all. By doing so, they challenged the Roman Empire’s claim on their country and the Roman Emperor’s claim on his subjects’ consciences. Paying taxes is an expression of submission, with all that entails.

In this spirit, Chinese emperors traditionally insisted on the principle of collecting tribute from barbarian peoples, even when the barbarians were in a position to demand gifts of equal or greater value in return. (Frank and Twitchett, 1994: 328) Sixteenth-century Europeans marvelled at the despotism of the king of Spain, whose ‘Turk-like’ power to impose a national tax crushed ‘all the natural and fundamental laws, privileges and ancient rights’ of his subjects. (Thompson., 1994: 141) Several centuries after that, colonial resentment of British taxes helped provoke the American Revolution. The signers of America’s Declaration of Independence presented their dispute with the British crown as a matter that concerned, not only their fortunes, but their sacred honour. (Becker, C., 1922: 184.

The Republican Response

Eighteenth-century Americans responded to the indignity of British-imposed hardship by founding a republic. For those interested in the politics of climate change, this event is doubly significant. The 21st century US government professes the creed declared in 1776 and operates according to the constitution established in 1787. Presumably, the political principles that guided America’s founders influence American leaders today. Moreover, most 21st century governments have embraced

republicanism to one degree or another. An analysis of republican government will highlight some of the pressures that their leaders will encounter.

When people found a republic, they do so in order to assume control of their own destiny. People take this step, political theorist J.G.A. Pocock tells us, when they lose their faith in Providence. (Pocock, 1975: viii) Those who believe that history unfolds according to a divine plan can afford to leave their affairs in the hands of God. Republicans, on the other hand, conclude that members of their community must take responsibility for maintaining their own moral and political stability in, to use Pocock's expression, a 'stream of irrational events.' (Pocock, 1975: viii)

The irrationality that troubles republicans need not be the existential irrationality of meaningless existence in a meaningless cosmos. America's Declaration of Independence, for example, implies that its authors perceived considerable order in the universe. (Becker, 1922: 224-279) Rather, republicans are concerned with offences against their own rationality. Republicans resist being under the control of outsiders because, even if the outsiders are rational in some objective sense, there is no guarantee that the reasons that motivate them will also be reasons will similarly motivate you.

America's founders justified their decision to found a republic with a lengthy list of specific grievances against the crown. Among the best-remembered is that of taxation without representation – 'imposing taxes on us without our consent.' (Becker, 1922: 179). There may be circumstances in which a colonial power might rationally wish to tax subjects without seeking their consent. Those paying the taxes, however, might

equally rationally wish to refuse. Their rationality, in this case, will not count, and this is why republicans view rule by even the most benign and intelligent outsiders as irrational.

Since inhabitants of a republic perceive the outer world as capricious, they must look to one another for support. If they wish for that support to be reliable, they must adopt the ethical principle that citizens owe their primary responsibilities to their fellow citizens. For the same reason, a republican government owes its primary responsibility to the people of that republic. A republic may define its membership however it chooses, but it maintains an ethical distinction between insiders and outsiders.

America's founding documents do not fully conform to Pocock's account. The American Declaration of Independence refers to universal ideals, and to God. Nevertheless, the authors of that document present Americans as a specific people whose dissatisfaction with specific historical developments has driven them to form a government suited to their particular needs. Thus, Pocock's suggestions concerning state and citizen responsibilities apply.

Nothing in Pocock's account prevents republics from demanding sacrifice from their citizens. A republican government might conclude that the threat of environmental disaster justifies drastic measures. If, however, such a government is to fulfill its function as a republican government, it must determine what those measures are to be itself. This is difficult to reconcile with the problems of organizing a program to reduce worldwide emissions of greenhouse gasses and even more difficult

to reconcile with the problems of ensuring that the richest countries bear the greatest share of the costs.

One prominent work on global environmental politics defines international equity as ‘a fair and just distribution among countries of benefits, burdens and decision making authority.’ (Harris, 2001: 7) The first two will normally be unpalatable to republican governments. The last, in principle, will be impossible. A republican government that cedes decision making authority to outsiders undermines its rationale for existence, along with its citizens’ rationale for submitting to it.

This is doubly true when republican governments contemplate ceding authority to those who explicitly oppose the interests of those republics’ citizens. Even if it is right for Americans to take an extraordinary level of responsibility for reducing greenhouse emissions, it would be self-contradictory for any government of an American republic to permit outsiders to dictate this responsibility to them. The fact that the American political tradition acknowledges an inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness compounds the problems of principle an American government would face in delivering its citizens into the hands of an international environmental regime. America’s eighteenth-century political thinkers treated the right to pursue happiness as related to the right to keep and use private property. (Maier, 1997: 126-127) Contemporary Americans are likely to maintain that it encompasses their right to keep and use the previously-mentioned automobiles, closets full of clothes and electronic entertainment.

In practice, republican governments routinely compromise their decision-making authority.⁴ This seldom attracts either attention or controversy. State leaders cannot, however, rely on their constituents to accept international regulation of greenhouse gas emissions complacently. People commonly object when they perceive that an international agreement threatens national industries, and it is reasonable to assume that they would object just as strongly if an international body imposed hardship upon them in the name of preventing climate change.

One may assume that these objections will be particularly forceful when the regulations in question require some countries to make greater sacrifices than others. If one accepts republican principles, the objections will be justified. This creates, at least, a public relations problem for leaders of a country where people take pride in self-government. Furthermore, it may not be overly naïve to suggest that some republican leaders actually believe in republican principles, whether or not they would articulate those principles in quite the same manner as Pocock. This begins to explain why the US Senate not only rejected the Kyoto Protocol, but did so unanimously. (Lomborg, 1998: 304)

Moreover, leaders of an economically-developed republic must consider the possibility that submitting to international restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions will permanently reduce their country's national power. A treaty such as Kyoto, which restricts greenhouse gas emissions for some countries but not others, seems almost certain to do so. One need not delve into academic debates about the nature of power and its precise role in international politics to make these observations. If some

⁴ Many of the most dramatic examples involve membership in international economic organisations. (Steinberg, 2002: 340)

nations voluntarily limit their industrial activity while others do not, it is practically self-evident that the latter will grow wealthier and, if they choose, militarily more powerful, relative to the former.

One may also safely observe that money and military capability improve a government's bargaining position in international disputes. This does not mean that the countries that enjoy relative freedom to emit greenhouse gasses will emerge as conquering superpowers. Their gains may be modest, and no one can predict how they will take advantage of them in practice. Nevertheless, at a more general level, a government that compromises regarding its greenhouse gas emissions will find it increasingly difficult to resist compromises of all varieties in the future. In principle, this compounds the damage to its republican self-determination, and in practice, it is a prospect which no national leader can relish.

Republicanism vs. Internationalism

For these reasons, governments based on republican ideas would be likely to resist international regulation of greenhouse gas emissions in any political context. As it happens, the problem of climate change has arisen at a point in history when republicanism itself has become controversial. Not only have international bodies become increasingly active in affairs that used to be the purview of national governments, numerous opinion-makers have come to view the international bodies as more legitimate. (Fonte, 2002) Certain states – notably America -- have become associated with republican nationalism, while other political entities – notably the European Union (EU) -- have become associated with the internationalist alternative.

Although internationalists do not subscribe to a formal body of doctrine, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams articulated their sensibilities in a 2003 lecture to Britain's Royal Institute for International Affairs at Chatham House, where he admonished, '[i]f a state or administration acts without due and visible attention to agreed international process . . . it purports to be judge of its own interest.' (Williams, 2003) Williams takes it for granted that such behavior is immoral. The archbishop also seems to assume that his audience will agree with him. A republican, on the other hand, would respond not only that international processes are untrustworthy, but that the very purpose of founding a republic is to put oneself in a position to dispense with them and act as a judge of one's own interest.

The Ottawa Convention banning landmines further illustrates both the trend toward internationalism and the opposition it provokes from committed republicans. Ottawa originated, not with any national government, but with a loose coalition of over 1,000 activist groups. (Troxell, 2000: 88) These groups persuaded 122 state governments to sign an anti-mine treaty in 1997. Lloyd Axworthy, Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs presented this process as a model for future initiatives in international relations. Such coalitions of non-governmental organizations, he stated, 'can no longer be relegated to simple advisory or advocacy roles. They are now part of the way decisions have to be made.' (Troxell, 2000: 88)

A 1998 majority opinion from the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee was more critical:

The [Ottawa] Convention served unique political purposes, rather than humanitarian needs. It was negotiated in a forum with large numbers of NGOs protesting aspects of the US negotiating position and otherwise criticising the US as being part of the land mine problem. Additionally, a number of small countries such as the Seychelles, funded and emboldened by the various activist organizations, repeatedly sought to embarrass the United States. It was, in short, an environment where serious consideration of national security issues could not occur. (Troxell, 2000: 89)

Not only did the senators reject the process that led to Ottawa, they presented the NGO movement as specifically anti-American. Other American policymakers concur. In 2000, John R. Bolton, since nominated as America's ambassador to the United Nations, explained his opposition to international human rights accords.

The globalists' approach . . . is specifically targeted against the United States, in an effort to bend our system into something more compatible with human rights and other standards more generally accepted elsewhere. This conscious effort at limiting "American exceptionalism" is consistent with larger efforts to constrain national autonomy. (Gunn, 2002: 137)

T. Jeremy Gunn, reviewing work by fellow writers in the *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, regretfully conceded that Bolton had a point. Gunn noted a trend among experts on international law in which 'one ceases to evaluate the merits of particular actions, but criticises them *because of who the actor is.*' (Emphasis in original.) (Gunn, 2002: 140)

With these and other disputes as a backdrop, the international controversy over climate change becomes even more provocative. Washington's refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol has become a rallying point for America's critics. Climate politics have also reinforced the European Union's position as an opponent of American-style republicanism. Not only does Europe directly criticize America's policies, the manner in which the EU ratified Kyoto emphasised its internationalism.

EU procedure requires member states to agree unanimously on laws concerning energy policy. (Anonymous, 'EU green light,' 2002) Italy, the United Kingdom, and others argued that Kyoto fell into this category. (Anonymous, 'EU green light,' 2002) More fervent advocates of the treaty, however, succeeded at having Kyoto classified as an environmental law. (Anonymous, 'EU green light,' 2002) The EU can pass environmental laws on the basis of a simple majority vote.

EU member states retained the option of individually rejecting Kyoto in their own parliaments. (Anonymous, 'EU green light,' 2002) Brussels does not override national governments to the extent that its harsher critics allege. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the EU decided this momentous issue using a procedure that maximizes the influence of the supranational collective. The EU has also invested its Executive Commission with the authority to determine emissions levels for member states, although, again, national governments retain the right to reject this commission's mandates.

The majority voting procedure helped Brussels ratify Kyoto with minimal delay. Rui Goncalves, Portugal's Secretary of State for the Environment, applauded Europe's decision. (Bancroft-Hinchey, 2002) EU action, he noted, would help Brussels place greater pressure on the United States to follow suit. (Bancroft-Hinchey, 2002) Michel Raquet of Greenpeace echoed this point, urging Europe to lobby America aggressively and describing the US government's climate policy as 'a very bad joke.' (Anonymous, 'EU Agrees to Ratify Kyoto Treaty,' 2002) EU officials undoubtedly had many other reasons for handling Kyoto as they did, but the fact

remains that Brussels used internationalist methods within Europe to improve its ability to contest the outcomes of more traditionally republican political processes abroad. Intellectual advocates of a stronger European Union frequently make the more general point that a more powerful EU central organization will be in a better position to challenge America and America's approach to world politics. (Habermas and Derrida, 2003)

Europe's disputes with America frequently draw in other international actors. Russia, for instance, has repeatedly found itself arbitrating between the two. Again, the issue of the Kyoto Protocol stands out as a case in point. According to the provisions of Kyoto, the agreement would not become law until 55 parties to the convention accounting for at least 55% of global carbon dioxide emissions ratified it. (United Nations, *The Kyoto Protocol*, 1997: 24) The US produces over 36% of the world's carbon dioxide, while Russia produces over 17%. (United Nations, *The Kyoto Protocol*, 1997: 24) Therefore, when the United States withdrew from the agreement, Russia's support became indispensable.

Influential Russian figures, notably President Vladimir Putin's economic advisor Andrei Illarionov opposed ratifying Kyoto. (Wagstyl and Ostrovsky, 2004: 11) Illarionov argued that Russia was in the process of expanding its economy, and could not accept an agreement that limited its greenhouse gas emissions to a quota based on what it had emitted during a period of national weakness. (Wagstyl and Ostrovsky, 2004: 11; Anonymous, 'Russia forced to ratify Kyoto Protocol to become WTO member,' 2004) In October 2004, however, the Russian government ratified Kyoto. Pravda linked this development to western European suggestions that the EU might

reciprocate a Russian decision to ratify Kyoto by backing Moscow's bid for membership in the World Trade Organization. (Anonymous, 'Russia forced to ratify Kyoto Protocol to become WTO member,' 2004) Whether one interprets this as an example of Moscow manipulating Brussels or vice versa depends on one's point of view.

Conclusion

Trans-Atlantic disputes notwithstanding, Europe, the United States, and perhaps even Russia co-operate more than they clash. The fact that they frequently differ over questions of state and citizen responsibilities affects world politics, and the fact that these differences manifest themselves so starkly on such an important issue as climate policy heightens its importance. Nevertheless, there are probably limits to how far such disputes will go. The EU and America may often be rivals, but there is little to suggest that they will become enemies.

As climate change progresses, however, similar rifts are likely to appear in less tranquil parts of the world. The Peoples' Republic of China (PRC), for instance, is also a republic. Chinese military and political thinkers appear as committed to the principles of self-government as their American counterparts. (Li, 1997: 4) PRC officials speak strongly in favour of the Kyoto Protocol. (Anonymous, 'China Strongly Opposes Junking of Kyoto Protocol,' 2001)

Kyoto, however, imposes no restrictions on the PRC. One can only speculate about how Beijing would respond to a treaty that seemed to threaten its economic

development. Likewise, one can only speculate how disputes over such a treaty might overlap with disputes over islands and petroleum deposits in the South China Sea, the *de facto* autonomy of the Republic of China in Taiwan and other volatile issues. Similar concerns may apply when India and Pakistan become more directly involved in climate politics.

This conference's call for papers notes that 'the causal change from climate change to significant impacts on human security is likely to be long, complex and full of uncertainties.' Even as this statement suggests, the idea that disputes over greenhouse emissions might lead directly to war may be far-fetched. The idea that climate politics could exacerbate other tensions that may ultimately provoke wars, however, is not. Humanity may have no choice but to moderate carbon emissions in one way or another. Nevertheless, the process is likely to pit governments that adhere to republican principles against governments that seek to revise them, and diplomats, political thinkers and environmental policymakers would be well-advised to take the ideological problems of addressing climate change into account.

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