

Hypocrisy emissions on climate go up

FOR THOSE who believe global warming is caused by man-made emissions – carbon dioxide in particular – the Kyoto Protocol is the Holy Grail: by 2012 industrialised countries that ratify it must cut their emissions by 5.2 per cent from 1990 levels. By official estimates this will cost \$100 billion annually and delay a two degree rise in global temperatures from 2094 to ... 2100. By comparison, the UN estimates just \$200 billion would bring clean water and sanitation to everyone on the planet, saving two million lives a year.

But let's shelve petty cavils and scrutinise Kyoto performance. Using publicly available information, I had a look at CO₂ trends covering the eight-year period 1997-2005.

Some 60 countries have failed to ratify, representing 10 per cent of the world's population. Thanks to George Bush, the USA is the most infamous non-ratifier – oh wait, he wasn't the problem. In 1997, the US Senate voted 95-0 against Kyoto, but Bill Clinton signed it anyway knowing it had become unratifiable. Bush's sin was to publicly state this blindingly obvious truth.

The remaining non-ratifiers, other than Turkey and Ukraine, are generally smaller countries. As you'd expect, these naughty anti-Kyoto boys and girls have signally failed to control emissions. From 1997 to 2005 they have pushed CO₂ emissions up by almost 5 per cent. People like these (nearly seven hundred million) deserve opprobrium and sanctions to force them to cut their carbon footprints and stop destroying the planet, causing sea levels to rise, glaciers to melt, polar bears to drown, forests to desertify, children to die.

Let us look at their wiser colleagues who support Kyoto. Take the EU – nearly half a billion well-meaning folk. All 27 countries have ratified Kyoto. And, as you'd expect, we have cut our emissions by ... hang on a minute, there must be some mistake. Our emissions have actually climbed by over 6.5 per cent, even more than those wretched non-ratifiers. Ireland's went up by an astounding 17 per cent. How can that be?

The EU figures must be some statistical quirk, not significant in the global scheme of things. After all, there are six times as many other countries, containing 12 times as many people, which have also ratified Kyoto. Between them CO₂ emissions will surely have gone at least some way towards

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reaching the laudable reductions demanded in Kyoto.

So have they? Er, no. When you add up all 162 Kyoto ratifiers – 6.1 billion people, 90 per cent of the world's population – you find their emissions have increased by almost 30 per cent!

It gets worse. Vilified, non-ratifying America was one of the few countries that actually reduced its emissions. Not by much, about 1 per cent, but no other major country came close.

Of course figures quoted are only overall totals. It is instructive to look at other countries whose CO₂ achievements were outstanding; perhaps we can learn from them how easy it is to make progress in this area.

Astonishingly, a handful managed to more or less halve their emissions: ratifiers Congo Democratic Republic and Eritrea plus non-ratifiers Afghanistan and Guam. Excluding minuscule Guam, a US military base in the Pacific, the common denominator appears to be war, economic destitution, strife and poverty.

And, with Kyoto's price-tag of \$100 billion a year, in exchange for very little benefit a century into the future, something like this could probably be the Kyoto future, if it has one.

Meeting its strictures, and those of its successors, would require drastic curtailment of economic activity leading to mass impoverishment. From this, the prospect of new wars does not seem improbable. War, in addition to the starvation of penury, would kill lots of people. Perhaps this would put a smile on the face of British government environmental guru Jonathan Porritt. He advocates demographic suicide by restricting babies to two per couple (replacement rate is 2.1): he is convinced people themselves are intrinsically bad for the planet and therefore should be eliminated.

But hey, if it means that climate changeologists like him are happy, who am I to complain? Bring it on, I say.

The alternative is to do as the Kyoto ratifiers have been doing all along: ratify and ignore, or at least only do stuff that makes you feel good but does very little to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. What's a little hypocrisy in today's world?