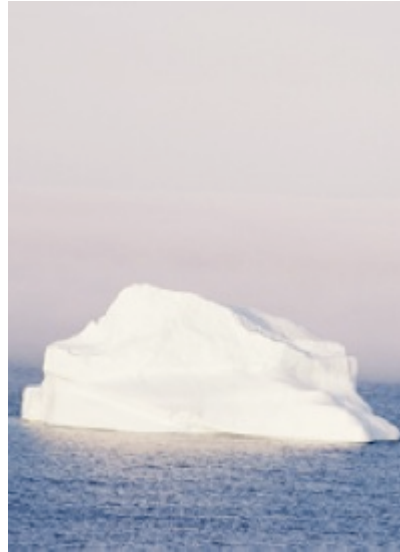




Written by [Denise Behreandt](#) on May 11, 2008

Has Bush Gone Green?

German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel was harsh in a written statement issued from Berlin headlined: "Gabriel criticises Bush's Neanderthal speech. Losership, not Leadership." In Washington, Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.) echoed the sentiments of many Democrats — and some Republicans too — when he called the president's proposal "too little, too late."



"Too little, too late"? What should the president have done sooner? And how much more should he have done? Well, Gabriel noted in his statement that there are "other voices in the United States" that take combating global warming seriously. Indeed there are. Consider this warning uttered by a U.S. president some years ago:

The issue of climate change respects no border. Its effects cannot be reined in by an army nor advanced by any ideology. Climate change, with its potential to impact every corner of the world, is an issue that must be addressed by the world....

The process used to bring nations together to discuss our joint response to climate change is an important one. That is why I am today committing the United States of America to work within the United Nations framework and elsewhere to develop with our friends and allies and nations throughout the world an effective and science-based response to the issue of global warming....

My administration is committed to a leadership role on the issue of climate change. We recognize our responsibility and will meet it — at home, in our hemisphere, and in the world....

I've asked my advisors to consider approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.... Our approach must be consistent with the long-term goal of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.

Should George W. Bush have made a commitment such as this after becoming president? Well, he did. The president who made these remarks was not Bill Clinton following a script prepared by Vice President Al Gore. The president was George W. Bush sounding very much like Al Gore. The date: June 11, 2001.

But wait, didn't Bush oppose the Kyoto Treaty? He did, but not because he disagreed with the treaty's underlying assumption that man-made greenhouse gases threaten the environment and must therefore be reduced. He simply disagreed with particulars, such as the fact that developing countries that pump greenhouse gases into the atmosphere are exempt from the requirements of the Kyoto treaty. China, the president pointed out in his 2001 global-warming address, is "the world's second largest emitter of greenhouse gases" and yet exempt from the treaty's requirements.

In 2001, President Bush opined that global warming is "a challenge that requires a 100-percent effort;



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ours, and the rest of the world's." He hasn't changed his mind. In his April 16, 2008 address, he noted that Kyoto expires in 2012 and called for "a binding international agreement" including all "major economies." At the upcoming "major economies leaders meeting" in July, he said, "we will seek agreement on a long-term global goal for emissions reductions, as well as an agreement on how national plans will be part of the post-2012 approach."

In his speech, Bush also announced a new national goal: "to stop the growth of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 2025." And he pointed to his administration's accomplishments combating global warming, such as working with Congress to pass energy legislation specifying "a new fuel economy standard of 35 miles per gallon by 2020" and requiring "fuel producers to supply at least 36 billion gallons of renewable fuel by 2022."

That being the case, why would German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel view this as a "Neanderthal" speech? The answer, of course, is that it does not go nearly far enough to satisfy those who argue that greenhouse gases must be cut *now* and must be cut *drastically* through caps on greenhouse emissions in order to save the Earth from environmental havoc. Even Bush's fellow Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger said that though he commends the president "for acknowledging that we have a climate change problem and a responsibility to address it ... the time for real action is now."

The irony, as this magazine has repeatedly pointed out, is that we are not confronted with a global-warming problem, and the real "Neanderthal" position is that taken by global-warming Chicken Littles. And that very much includes George W. Bush when he sounds like Al Gore.



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