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**A roadmap on climate change;  
Bali I**  
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After years of denial, delay, distraction and distortion, climate change is  
changing the political climate.  
  
  
Australia's John Howard recently became the first national leader voted out of  
office in large measure because of his failure to respond to citizens' concerns  
about global warming. Newly elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has said he'll  
make global warming his first priority in office.  
  
  
Australia's awakening is not an isolated example. Eighty-three percent of  
Chinese support action on climate change. Between 2006 and 2010 China plans to  
improve energy efficiency by 20 percent, increase use of renewable energy  
sources by 15 percent and continue their very large scale reforestation program.  
  
  
The dialogue in the United States is also shifting, albeit too slowly. While all  
of the Democrats running for president endorse strong action to reduce  
emissions, among the Republicans, Senator John McCain is the lone sponsor of  
national legislation to combat warming, and while Fred Thompson acknowledges  
global warming on his Web site, he won't concede it's human-caused.  
  
  
In the many presidential debates the moderators have asked about global warming  
only once. The pundits and the politicians still need to catch up with what is  
happening out in the grassroots and across the country.  
  
  
A few weeks ago five Midwestern states, including Illinois, Kansas and Michigan,  
announced their intent to cap their greenhouse gas emissions and launch a  
regional emissions trading program. They are following the lead of 10  
Northeastern states and six Western states led by California.  
  
  
Together these states include more than half of the U.S. economy. Twenty-seven  
companies - including General Electric, General Motors, DuPont, Caterpillar,  
oil, mining, and utilities - have joined with leading environmental groups to  
ask Congress to act swiftly to impose economy-wide limits to reduce emissions.  
  
  
The problem is, time is running out. This fall, British scientists published  
findings that emissions of carbon dioxide are rising 30 percent faster than  
previously thought. The surge in emissions suggests that the dangerous impacts  
of climate change will come at us even faster in the coming decades.  
  
  
That is why the international climate meeting in Bali, Indonesia, is a crucial  
test. Representatives of more than 180 nations are meeting to chart a course  
toward a new global agreement to control climate change. The world knows no  
agreement can succeed without the United States. While the president has  
acknowledged global warming as a problem, he has refused to commit the United  
States to emissions reductions, or to embrace a global target for halting the  
buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere before they double from  
pre-industrial levels.  
  
  
President George W. Bush must acknowledge that the evidence now shows that  
action on warming is urgent. He must commit the United States to firm emission  
reductions and support bipartisan efforts in Congress to pass legislation to  
combat climate change. If he does, he would be in a strong position to ask other  
nations to respond.  
  
  
Every nation present at Bali also knows they cannot succeed without China. Bush  
could lead here too. He should Instruct Deputy Secretary of State John  
Negroponte to join Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson on his coming trip to China  
to find common ground with China on global warming. Negroponte was the top  
environmental official in the State Department under President Ronald Reagan,  
and played a major role in the negotiation of the Montreal Protocol to protect  
the ozone layer, one of the greatest successes in international environmental  
diplomacy.  
  
  
After Beijing, the president should send Negroponte to Bali, where, as of now,  
the United States is be the only major nation not represented by a ministerial  
level official. Negroponte should lay out a roadmap to achieve a fair and  
inclusive global agreement to reduce emissions and stop warming at two degrees  
Celsius.  
  
  
The roadmap should set the stage for expanding the existing emissions trading  
market, promote an efficient and effective technology development and  
implementation program and launch an aggressive effort to protect the world's  
remaining forests.  
  
  
This will require innovative financing and investment - and, if properly  
implemented, will create major new opportunities for American industry. The  
roadmap must also begin to work out how the globe will adapt to the changes our  
inaction has wrought.  
  
  
A few weeks ago Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue led a prayer for rain in drought  
parched Atlanta. Some of his fellow citizens brought umbrellas. It even rained a  
bit. We should all not just pray for success in Bali, but work to make it a  
reality.  
  
  
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president in 2004, is a leader of the Senate delegation to the climate change  
meetings in Bali. Jonathan Lash is president of the World Resources Institute, a  
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