

U.S. lagging behind in world resolution

If the Bush administration is so interested in saving the world, it should reconsider its refusal to participate in a global effort to deal with atmospheric warming.

The United States was the only industrialized nation to reject cuts in the production of greenhouse gases during a recent international negotiation meeting.

The session was the third of five leading up to next June's "Earth Summit" convention, where world leaders will meet to sign a treaty designed to limit carbon dioxide emissions, the main gas believed to cause global warming.

Of course, U.S. reasoning was ever-solid: Not yet convinced global warming is an actual phenomena, we'd better not act at this early stage.

Why is it that Bush and the gang don't see that waiting to make sure the Earth is on an irreversible collision course before taking necessary actions won't work?

It is indeed hard to see when one's head is buried in the sand.

Administration officials reasoned the costs of greenhouse gas reduction to U.S. industry would be too great to incur without absolute substantiation.

Bush always was a careful guy. After all, he made sure we would probably be attacked or the world probably wanted our protection before continuing to spend millions of deficit dollars on the world's largest military defense force.

Too bad the sense of urgency dissipates when it comes to diverting an increasingly evident planetary emergency — most of which is due to U.S. consumption and the subsequent waste produced.

Average global levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere rose 26 percent between 1860 and 1986. Should it continue to rise at present rates, atmospheric temperatures will increase by about 4 degrees Fahrenheit over the next 50 years.

The rise is enough to change world precipitation and temperature patterns, to trigger floods through the melting of mountain glaciers and polar ice sheets, and to cause massive droughts, just to mention a few of the consequences we'd have to look forward to.

But that's all in 50 years. Why worry now?

And besides, the administration explained, because the United States depends the most on individualized transportation and coal-produced electricity, it would unfairly bear the largest share of the burden.

Well, the administration was right. Just because we're the biggest offenders, why should we have to clean up our mess?

This logic makes perfect sense to those wearing an increasingly fashionable American accessory: blinders. And to make sure they fit tight, a predictable global-warming-isn't-really-happening, and-even-if-it-is-, it's-no-big-deal report was recently released by a National Academy of Sciences panel.

The panel's findings acknowledge a possible slow warming of the Earth, but the panel believes it's nothing to hinder our economic activity. In fact, the report stated, through our continued industrialization we may find the answer to global warming.

Here again is the myopic reasoning that got us here in the first place: By continuing our bad habits, we'll find a way to stop our bad habits.

Of course, this makes absolutely no sense. Everyone knows the only way to change things is to change things, don't they? Maybe somebody should tell Bush.

But he's undoubtedly banking on Americans' willingness to swallow what they are fed — and the scary part is many will. It's easier to stay in a rut and hope for the best rather than rally for change.

Harsh reality has a way of slapping us in the face though, ready or not. The American mind, for so long centered in industrialization and economic growth, must now risk expansion. Our blinders will protect us for only so long.

The time for change has come, and America must not shirk its international responsibility.

The United States loves to sit itself on a pedestal, never shy to play the role of savior. Our refusal to participate in the resolution of a global problem we helped cause shows how shallow our words can be.

It's time we got off our pedestal and joined the world in an effort to save itself.



LETTERS

Nice try

In reading Russell McGlothlin's response (*ODE*, Sept. 27) to the Sept. 25 edition of *Oscar the Freshman*.

I can only laugh and say, "Nice try."

Every time the greeks come under fire, the same examples of community service and the same whines of stereotyping spew forth.

The "complete hypocrisy" McGlothlin speaks about is actually in the fact that even after they participate in "seminars regarding issues such as rape, alcohol/drug abuse and discrimination," the greeks continue to call independents "GDIs" and throw "social functions" to drink and "score."

True, sometimes a bad apple ruins the greek reputation, but they are responsible for their social image when they put their letters on (the ID) that they paid for.

So greeks, don't justify your existence with flailing George Bush-esque speech of self right-

eousness. Actions speak louder than words, especially when you are wearing your letters.

Christopher Fassett
Student

Lonely

I am a lonely man serving a 10-year prison sentence for burglary, and I have no friends. I desperately need some new friends to help me incorporate a new lifestyle.

I have many interests and there is nothing I would enjoy more than to hear from someone who can relate to what it is like to be lonely.

Some of you might think this is just another letter where some criminal type is trying to con somebody. I have no desire to con anyone. All I want is your friendship and letters, so please give me a chance to prove myself by writing.

Bill Santa #1018501A
Iowa Men's Reformatory
P.O. Box B
Anamosa, Iowa 52205-0010

No respect

This is in response to the letters of Russell McGlothlin and Jamie Bakum (*ODE*, Sept. 27). First off, if you don't like *Oscar the Freshman*, then do not read it. Your life will be a lot less stressful.

Second off, what greek system do you belong to? While stereotypes are never 100 percent true, I do believe that there is a direct link between greek activities and greek stereotypes. I will admit that I was surprised to hear of the efforts being made to improve the greek system. Maybe that was because I have neither seen nor heard any difference in behavior. I am sorry, but I do not recognize the system you describe.

While there are greek individuals and even a few fraternities and sororities that I respect, I still see the system that spawned it's own stereotype.

Scott Shea
Student

