

Media Highlights of “Climate Change Negotiations Project”



...When negotiators of the Kyoto Protocol sought to create loopholes for military emissions back in 1997, they cited national security concerns to make their case. Internal U.S. documents of that era, made public by **[The National Security Archive at] George Washington University**, show that the Pentagon first raised those concerns. Its leadership argued that U.S. military fuel-reduction requirements could handicap military training and operations, eventually sending representatives to diplomatic talks in Kyoto who advocated the position to allies. Diplomatic cables dating from that time warn that the European Union was “becoming rather ‘fatigued’” amid confusion about “why this issue is so important to the U.S.”

[There’s a Battle Over Carbon Emerging from the War in Ukraine](#), *Politico*, September 3, 2023



Developing countries began calling for reparations during the 1970s as environmental concerns entered international forum discussions, according to the National Security Archive’s analysis of the declassified documents. That prompted the State Department and other government officials to ready a strategy in anticipation of further calls for compensation... “These documents are particularly interesting because they show snapshots of the U.S. hard-line right before the Paris climate summit,” **[National Security] Archive research analyst Rachel Santarsiero** said.

[Declassified docs: U.S. resisted calls for climate aid since Nixon](#), *E&E News by Politico*, July 6, 2023



Most documents, however, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for submission to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). This is problematic for a number of reasons. First, the public can gain access to documents only through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Second, transferring documents to NARA can take years. Gatekeeping access through time-consuming, costly, and often-confusing FOIA requests will be a disservice to public accessibility and transparency.

[Delaying the Inevitable? The Uncertain Future of the EPA’s Online Archive](#), **Rachel Santarsiero of the National Security Archive** for *New Security Beat*, July 21, 2022



The attention that NATO nations are now giving to climate change marks a sharp turnaround from 25 years ago, when the United States lobbied hard to ensure that the Kyoto protocol would contain a national security exemption that would free nations from any obligation to limit the greenhouse gas emissions of military operations. “We are concerned that emissions limitations...could prevent rapid decisions about training and employing multilateral peacekeeping and peace enforcing forces,” said a 1997 State Department memorandum on the U.S. position, **recently released in response to an open records request by the nonprofit National Security Archive**.

[NATO Moves to Tackle Military Greenhouse Gas Emissions Even While Girding Against Russia](#), *Inside Climate News*, June 28, 2022



In a remarkable example of transforming the mundane into high art, poet Mai Der Vang, daughter of Hmong refugees and **finalist for the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry**, pored through thousands of pages of **declassified documents from the collections of the National Security Archive** and other sources to find material for her poems, whose purpose is to record and vivify the trauma experienced by the Hmong people during the Secret War in Laos of the 1960s and 1970s.

[From History to Poetry: Mai Der Vang Explores the Archival Record in Her Celebrated Volume “Yellow Rain”](#), Malcolm Byrne of the National Security Archive, June 27, 2022



Climate change has been an issue long enough that historians are giving it an increasingly serious look. **The National Security Archive recently released a cache of declassified documents** from the Clinton era that outline how the U.S. prepared for the Kyoto Climate Change Conference, in 1997. In a summary accompanying the released documents, the archive’s senior analyst, Robert Wampler, notes, “As a January 1998 memorandum to Vice President Gore stresses, the administration’s domestic campaign must prevent a ‘fatal PR blitz’ from undermining public and Senate support, which could kill the treaty ‘in the cradle’ ”—which, indeed, is what happened.

[The Shift to Renewable Energy Can Give More Power to the People](#), *The New Yorker*, March 3, 2021



Early in his presidency, his cabinet officials penned memos on their fears about climate change. “Global climate change is the most far reaching environmental issue of our time,” acting assistant secretary of state Richard J. Smith wrote in a 1989 memo. “If the climate change within the range of current predictions actually occurs, the consequences for every nation and every aspect of human activity will be profound.” These notes, **released in 2015 by the National Security Archive**, also demonstrate the Bush Administration’s deep worries about the depletion of the ozone layer.

[George H. W. Bush: The Last Green Republican](#), *HuffPost*, December 4, 2018



The memos were among several formerly classified documents from the Bush and Reagan administrations **obtained under the Freedom of Information Act and released on Wednesday by the National Security Archive**. The documents portray senior officials in the two Republican administrations pressing for an aggressive response to international environmental issues of the day — including, during Bush’s term, climate change.

[Reagan, Bush 41 Memos Reveal Sharp Contrast with Today’s GOP on Climate and the Environment](#), *The Washington Post*, December 3, 2015



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