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U.S. International Environmental Policy

What is U.S. policy?

- U.S. policy addresses international environmental concerns that impact on American values and interests:
 - Global environmental forces transcend borders and impact on the health and prosperity of U.S. citizens;
 - Regionally and locally, environmental degradation can contribute to political and economic instability.
- Secretary Christopher launched a 1996 initiative to integrate environmental diplomacy into American foreign policy.

What is the U.S. doing?

- Globally: The U.S. leads key environmental negotiations (i.e. climate change, forests, toxic chemicals). The Administration created a plan to reduce greenhouse gases by 2000; has signed the Biodiversity Treaty; enhanced international fisheries and oceans policies; and strengthened controls on ozone depleting substances. Environmental issues will be prominent at this year's G-7/P-8 Summit in Denver.
- Regionally: Regional bureaus have strengthened capability for addressing environmental concerns in key regions. "Hubs" to advance regional environmental cooperation are being established in 12 embassies (six in FY97, six in FY'98).
- Bilaterally: We are developing environmental partnerships with key countries (China, Brazil, India, Japan, EU).

What's Next

1997 is the most important environmental year since Rio in 1992.

- Difficult climate change negotiations on emissions targets for post-2000 will conclude in Kyoto next December.
- We will again encourage ratification of the Biodiversity Treaty and the Law of the Sea.
- In June, an UNGA Special Session at Head of State level will assess Rio follow-up at the five-year mark.
- We will pursue legislation implementing our agreement to lift an embargo on tuna imports in exchange for dolphin protection measures by Latin nations.

Potential Pitfalls

- Senator Helms is skeptical of international environmental concerns and opposes most agreements to address them. He adamantly opposed the Biodiversity Treaty and turned down Senator Pell's appeals on behalf of the Law of the Sea.
- The Climate Change issue is highly charged and has significant domestic implications (i.e. for energy policy) and elicits deep concern from industry and certain members of Congress.
- The California delegation (especially Senator Boxer) is adamantly opposed to Tuna-Dolphin implementing legislation. The environmental community is acrimoniously split. Passage of this legislation is a high priority for Mexico.

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