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# The U.S. Must Take the Lead on Climate Change

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To the Editor:

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Op-Ed Contributor: [The Climate for Change](#) (November 9, 2008)

In "The Climate for Change" (Op-Ed, Nov. 9), Al Gore calls for the United States to pursue carbon cap and trade policies. What he does not call for is unilateral American action to legislate mandated

reductions in carbon dioxide to 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below by 2050. That is a crucial omission.

I came away from conversations with Indian and Chinese government advisers on climate this summer with the sense that any and all international negotiations will bog down unless the United States establishes its bona fides.

We need to engage in what a Chinese adviser called "a game changer."

Mr. Gore's other prescriptions are all sensible, but they will take many years to put into effect. His 10-year timetable doesn't factor in the fact that assuming normal continued economic growth, American peak energy demand is going to double within the next 15 years.

We need action now that publicly binds us to a course of development over time, come what may. The danger is that this objective may get trumped by the political pressure to chase the chimera of an energy independence policy.

Martin Bunzl

New Brunswick, N.J., Nov. 9, 2008

*The writer is director of the Initiative on Climate and Social Policy at the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.*

To the Editor:

In "The Climate for Change," Al Gore mars his case for investing in clean energy infrastructure with his swipe at clean coal technology.

Far from discouraging investment in carbon capture and storage technology capable of neutralizing greenhouse gas emissions from coal-based power plants, the United States should assert global leadership in accelerating this vital antidote to climate concerns.

Mr. Gore complains that no demonstration plants exist, but he does not mention that carbon capture and storage technology is being tested in three plants abroad.

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