

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS: KYOTO AND BEYOND

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Australia has played a somewhat enigmatic role in international climate change negotiations. A story (apparently not merely apocryphal) had Australia's Environment Minister in Rio in 1992 almost signing the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) accidentally on behalf of Afghanistan, and perhaps this was an omen of a rocky road to come. Australia took a tough stance during the negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol, and secured for itself what it saw as a realistic target, but which others (especially NGOs) saw as generous, particularly because of provisions for reduction in land clearing. It subsequently refused to ratify Kyoto until a change of government in November 2007, yet it is one of the few parties that has come close to meeting its target of 108 percent of 1990 emissions.

All this reflects the approach often followed by Australia to international negotiations. There is an account of Australia's overall foreign policy approach that is almost a mantra, and its approach to Kyoto accords with that mantra: as a middle power, it has an overriding interest in a rules-based international system, as it cannot act hegemonically, and wishes hegemony to be bound by rules; in contrast to many other states, it therefore takes seriously and seeks to honour commitments it enters into; this makes it therefore a hard-nosed negotiator that is careful as to what it agrees to. This contrasts with the situation with other nations, where the description of the EU by Joseph Weiler (1988) seems to apply—those least likely to implement are usually the first to agree. It took a whole-of-government position to Kyoto, which included not just a strong commitment to including land-use contributions in targets, but also to ensuring that its economic interests were not affected disproportionately.

The key to understanding Australia's approach to climate change lies in the generous endowment of coal resources that form the basis not just of its domestic electricity generation, but of its exports of both coking and steaming coal and of 'solidified energy' in processed mineral products such as aluminium. Its concern in climate change negotiations has been not just with the relative fairness of targets compared with countries such as those in Europe, that mostly closed down their much more expensive coal mines and could claim windfall reductions in greenhouse gases post-1990, but with the possibility of 'carbon leakage' to other cheap coal producers in the region. Exporting states such as Indonesia and South Africa had similar production costs to Australia (and Canada and the US), and India and China possess significant coal resources, but were allotted no reduction targets under Kyoto; with coal the most carbon-intensive fossil fuel, Australia feared damaging its economic

competitiveness for negligible environmental benefit as energy-intensive industry migrated to states with cheap coal and no emission-reduction targets.

Australia has also played a leading role in the formation of the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, building on earlier bilateral agreements with China and the US, to engage India, China, Japan, South Korea, the US and Australia in a non-binding agreement to invest in technologically driven approaches to greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation, including investment in research into 'clean coal' technology. This Partnership, and the September 2007 Sydney Declaration by the APEC economies, signals the Australian view that Kyoto perhaps involved a premature move to targets and timetables, and that the way to engage the large future emitters in the shape of India and China was in a non-threatening regime which might build slowly over time to yield more significant action on mitigation—as much of the literature on successful regime formation suggests is a more effective way of building regimes.

In this paper I review the Australian approach to international climate change negotiations, especially its refusal to ratify Kyoto. I argue that its position has reflected both its national interest and its location within the Asia-Pacific Region, where the Eurocentric nature of key features of Kyoto has hindered the prospects for a more effective approach that might engage large future emitters such as India and China. I suggest that bottom-up approaches that take advantage of modest beginnings, reciprocal commitment-building, and multiple arenas that reflect regional differences might be more productive. In conclusion, I question whether the new Rudd government's ratification of Kyoto in later 2007, while largely symbolic, might have limited the learning of lessons needed to go beyond the mistakes of Kyoto.

1. PROBLEMS WITH THE KYOTO MODEL

Kyoto is now widely seen as a failure (Boehmer-Christiansen and Kellow, 2002; Victor, 2001; Prins and Rayner, 2007). While it promised reductions in Greenhouse Gases (GHG) by industrialised nations of 5 percent, trading windfall reductions in Russia and other Economies in Transition and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) has weakened the outcomes likely to flow from Kyoto to a fraction of that amount, so that it has had negligible effect. Especially worrying was the fact that these provisions—plus promises of investment in the gas sector and support for Russian WTO accession—were the prices of Russian ratification which, thanks to President Putin's clever positioning, was necessary for Kyoto to enter into force.

Even if Kyoto targets were met, there would be a barely noticeable effect on GHG emissions and ultimately upon climate forcing. But targets are not being met: Canada, Japan and New Zealand are well over and the European Union comes close only because of windfall reductions associated with German reunification (and economic collapse in the East) and the closure of coal mines and the 'dash to gas' in the United Kingdom. Thanks to the European Burden Sharing Agreement, the EU will come close and can meet its target with some purchased credits, but European policy continues to be somewhat confused, with substantial commitments to renewables sitting alongside continuing high levels of subsidy for inefficient coal mining (Anderson, 1995).

It is not unfair to say that Kyoto was ratified by those that are unlikely to meet their targets, by those without targets, by those who will meet their targets inadvertently, or by buying credits from those who have inadvertently exceeded them. It has led to some investment in sinks and renewables in Developing Countries under the Clean Development Mechanism, but Kyoto failed to engage the United States, Australia (until the 2007 change of government) and the future heavy emitters, such as China and India, and provides little prospect of serving as a framework for a more productive approach to global climate policy. While Kyoto's failings are frequently excused on the basis that it is a 'first step', it would be more accurate to describe it as a first stumble in an unproductive direction, rather than as a first step in a any promising direction.

Kyoto was effectively pronounced dead with the communiqué on climate change issued from the 2005 G-8 summit at Gleneagles, that identified the Framework Convention on Climate Change, not Kyoto, as providing the basis for future approaches to the problem. If that is so, Kyoto has been a wasteful diversion; it has, by moving too early to 'targets and timetables', set back the development of a more effective global approach to climate policy by a decade. This suggests that there are lessons to be learned from the failure of Kyoto if the negotiation of a post-Kyoto policy instrument is to avoid the pitfalls encountered thus far.

2. PROCESS PROBLEMS

The essential weakness of the process by which multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) are adopted is that it relies upon consensus as the basis of decision. Consensus decision processes are the norm even when regimes contain some specification of voting rules, often involving some kind of qualified majority, because multilateral agreements usually require (as near as possible) universal coverage, and the default of any party weakens the merits of the agreement substantially. While votes are often possible in MEAs, they are usually avoided for fear of losing a party and undermining coverage; indeed, the threat of calling a vote is used as a tactic by parties wishing to ensure that they are heard. As a result, as Sand (1990) noted, negotiating processes are like convoys that can only move at the speed of the slowest ship, least any be left behind. A 'co-product' of this process is a tendency to 'lowest common denominator' measures.

Brenton (1994: 252–259) suggested four factors that can help overcome the difficulty in achieving consensus in international environmental politics: the use of 'toe in the door' negotiating processes (iterative functionalism); reliance upon science and epistemic communities; the influence of environment non-governmental organisations (NGOs); and what he terms 'environmental altruism', or responding to rhetorical justifications which are difficult to resist. In the interests of economy, I will focus here on the first two, especially because the latter two are largely supportive of the process rather than constitutive of it.

'Toe in the door' negotiating processes are not unique to international environmental politics, and are indeed an example of a fundamental political strategy of the 'thin end of the wedge'—of achieving acceptance of a small, innocuous measure and then expanding it. It has been referred to as 'iterative functionalism'

(Feldman, 1995), and has been formalised in the model of the development of 'framework' conventions, such as the FCCC, that have little binding content but establish an institutional setting which facilitates the development of shared norms and understandings which later make possible the development of more explicit binding commitments under a protocol to the framework convention. The search for consensus is aided by vagueness of language, in what is known as 'creative ambiguity.' This has been the case with regimes dealing with problems such as acid rain or ozone depletion. The nature of the negotiating process is thus the adoption of initial agreements whose substantive content is low, but which gave rise to a subsequent series of meetings which are used 'as an opportunity by those countries with environmentally more advanced positions to place pressure on others, both directly and via environmental NGOs, to shift in their direction' (Brenton, 1994: 252).

On the issue of epistemic consensus, Brenton (1994: 255) notes that the use of science—sometimes distorted for effect—is important, that and 'the power of a united scientific view to push even unwilling governments into action is now one of the key mechanisms of international environmental cooperation.' Peter Haas (1990) emphasised the importance in the development of a broader political consensus of an epistemic consensus developing among communities of scientists. The emergence of a scientific consensus is seen by Peter Haas more as a necessary rather than a sufficient condition for international agreement, and it was seen as playing an important role in driving the political consensus that resulted in the Montreal Protocol. UNEP Director General Mustafa Tolba modeled the climate change negotiations on Montreal (Benedick, 1991: 7), but significantly, however, Haas warned that epistemic consensus was unlikely to lead to a successful agreement on climate change because the science was so inherently uncertain. This has proven to be the case: it could be argued that, rather than the science driving politics, the reverse has been the case (see Kellow, 2007).

A response to the problem of climate change requires action by the large future emitters, especially India and China, and a decade and a-half of iterative functionalism and epistemic consensus delivered courtesy of the IPCC has produced little prospect that such countries will commit to any agreement to limit future emissions. The problem with Kyoto, however, is not just one of agreement and ratification, but of a failure to deliver on commitments entered into to. There has been a 'vertical disintegration of policy.'

Robert Putnam (1988) once described international diplomacy as requiring political executives to play 'two-level games', at an international level and a domestic level, each with its own political logic and dynamics. Putnam's focus on 'high' politics, however, fails to cover adequately the features of 'low' politics in MEAs (Hoffman, 1966), where international commitments involve complex science and must be given domestic effect as a contribution to global outcomes. The process of agreement at the international can also be seen to involve several stages and epistemic consensus and the work NGOs and norms are really only likely to be of much value at the early stages (see Boehmer-Christiansen and Kellow, 2002). The Kyoto process amply illustrates the problems with global governance that Hanf and Underdal identify. They distinguish four stages of policy-making at the international level.

- (1) Consensual problem 'diagnosis' takes place. A common understanding that 'something must be done' may develop. 'Cures' are described in general terms and the domestic impact of emerging alternatives is hard to determine. Environmental agencies predominate and problem definition is often linked to the research agendas of science institutions.
- (2) Negotiations get under way. A broader range of agencies is brought in to develop and consider options and the foreign affairs agency is likely to conduct the negotiations. The providers of potential 'solutions' may have a major effect on directing policy, and this may add to the direction already suggested by research.
- (3) The negotiations move beyond the framework convention stage, and attention shifts to specific policy measures and instruments, each with a societal impact that is more determinate and differential. Specialised domestic agencies and interest organisations will see their interests as substantially affected and are likely to be mobilised and claim a more substantial role in policy-making. Consideration of implementation intrudes into policy-making.
- (4) As the process moves to implementation, domestic agencies are likely to take over much of the action and the problem might be redefined. What started out as a 'grand design' to control GHGs is likely to become a matter of energy pricing or industrial restructuring, new energy taxes, and new or shifting subsidies.

Science and normative discourses thus give way to concerns more related to interests and technical questions. Hanf and Underdal (1998: 159) suggest that implementation is a level with its own political logic and dynamics, which might cause *involuntary* defection by states on their international obligations through lack of state capacity (both political and administrative), and that such defections might be as frequent and as interesting as deliberate 'cheating'. They describe *three* stages of policy-making at the domestic level: ratification, translation into national legislation, and then implementation (1998: 161). Implementation concerns directly and immediately shape ratification—and, indeed, impact upon the negotiation process itself, with likelihood of ratification increasing the degree of scrutiny given to negotiating proposals. Hanf and Underdal argue that each of these sets of decisions will be the focus of political interest and pressure from those sectors in society for which the agreement entails costs and benefits. Each phase can involve a different pattern of interaction among governmental and societal actors (1998: 162).

These three domestic stages can be added to the three they identify in the international 'policy adoption' process, so that they are in effect suggesting that the making of policy on the regulatory issues of 'low politics' such as climate change involves the playing out of 'games' at *multiple* levels. The dynamics of the arena within which international environmental policies are initiated (reliance on scientific simplification and moral suasion) produce asymmetry with the development of detailed policy responses because they marginalise the very interest-based players on whose participation (and instrumental discourse) the crafting of a detailed, workable and politically acceptable policy instrument depends.

Policy measures to reduce GHG emissions in future which will tend to involve concentrated costs and distributed benefits—the variant of Lowi's regulatory policy

which can be referred to as regulation in the public interest, and which frequently produces pattern of implementation labeled 'symbolic policy'. The marginalization of affected business interests in international politics and the ability of these same interests to thwart the domestic delivery of international commitments is what Underdal (1979) had earlier called a *vertical disintegration of policy*—'a state of affairs where the aggregate thrust of "micro-decisions" deviates more or less substantially from what higher-order policy goals and "doctrines" would seem to require.' (Hanf and Underdal, 1998, p. 157)

The vertical disintegration of climate policy has not been confined to ratification, nor to GHG mitigation, but extends to a lack of delivery on promises of funding for Developing Country adaptation—even by Kyoto vanguard states like the United Kingdom. Kyoto has thus failed in both a vertical sense (in terms of domestic delivery on international commitments) and horizontally (in terms of securing commitments from countries capable of undermining any effectiveness by future emissions). In addition to reliance upon an overly simplistic negotiating model, as noted above, one reason for the failure of the Kyoto process has been the existence of differing regional perspectives. This can be demonstrated by reference to the perspective the Asia-Pacific region has of issues of climate policy and energy security.

3. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY SECURITY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

One significant example of regional differences between Europe and the Asia-Pacific was the announcement in July 2005 of the formation of an Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (APP) which promises to be a distinctive future approach to climate change in the region, and which has the potential to serve as a foundation for a more successful global agreement.

The Asia-Pacific Partnership builds upon both the earlier Australian/US Climate Action Partnership, concluded in February 2002, and strong bilateral relationships between parties, such as Australia and China. It is therefore based upon bilateral understandings, limited in scope, which have been expanded to include six parties: Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea and the US.

In terms of present and potential GHG emissions, Australia is the least significant member, but it played a significant role in the formation of the Partnership, driven at least in part by its sceptical approach to Kyoto. The six founding members of APP account for 49 per cent of global GDP, 48 per cent of global energy consumption, 48 per cent of global GHG emissions and 45 per cent of global population. Perhaps more importantly, by including China and India, the Partnership addresses the most significant sources of *future* GHG emissions. This is mostly where its potential lies: it is an agreement for the future, whereas Kyoto was more backward looking (although, by ignoring the historical contributions of the UK and Germany, it would be more accurate to say that it was anchored firmly in 1990).

The advantage in the Kyoto structure for the European region—and particularly the European Union—is well enough known. Not only did a 1990 base year advantage the United Kingdom and Germany, both of which had serendipitous post-1990 reductions in GHG emissions that they could share through the BSA or 'European Bubble', and Russia and the other EITs that had experience post-Communist collapse. But it also cast the issue as one of annual flows, whereas (thanks to the estimated 100-year

residence time of atmospheric carbon dioxide) it is one of stocks, accumulated over the past century. As highlighted by a Brazilian proposal during the negotiation of Kyoto (Brazil, 1997), this meant that the UK and Germany had the greatest responsibility for the problem, not the United States, which had the highest 1990 flows, but had industrialised later.

The definition of the problem Kyoto was to solve was therefore constructed upon an incorrect scientific base, and this weakened the persuasive force of the epistemic consensus discourse constructed by the NGOs. Kyoto required least of those with the greatest historical responsibility for the problem, weakening the normative discourse purveyed by NGOs. It was a highly Eurocentric agreement that had different meaning in the Asia-Pacific, even ignoring energy security considerations. It should be added that another aspect of the incorrect scientific framing of the problem has also limited a possible basis for bringing India, China, and other late developing countries into a productive agreement. This is the logarithmic warming effect of carbon dioxide, which means that emissions now cause less of the problem than emissions in the past (Kellow, 2007a). Acknowledgment of this characteristic might allow an allocation of burdens that varies temporally, and might permit higher early emissions by India and China, but reducing with time as (and if) those responsible for historical emissions deliver cuts.

Europe and the Asia-Pacific thus have widely divergent regional views of the problem and those differences extend to resource endowments (especially coal, the most significant source of GHGs) and energy security. There is little coal industry left in countries like the United Kingdom and France and it costs more than coal in the Asia-Pacific by a factor of about four. According to World Energy Council figures, Germany's output of both hard coal and lignite fell by half over the 1990s, despite continuing high subsidies. Its hard coal lies in deep seams (over 900m deep) and it is thus expensive to mine. It has reserves totalling over 300 years of production, but it is too expensive to be internationally competitive, and is heavily subsidised. This is also the case with the UK, which has only 8 years of production remaining (current proved recoverable reserves at current production rates). But (relatively speaking) there is abundant cheap coal in the Asia-Pacific region: Australia has 202 years of production; the US 250 years; China 52 years; Canada 98 years; India 132; Indonesia 28.5; Pakistan 430; Russia 525; and Thailand 63 (WEC, 2007).

These reserve-production statistics reflect economics as well as geology: China is thought to have a massive 1,000 billion tonnes *in situ*, but these have not been proven as recoverable. Given this resource distribution, it is clear that coal will lie near the centre of the economic development of the Asia-Pacific, in a way that is markedly different from that of Europe. Much to the chagrin of environmental NGOs, clean coal features prominently in the approach adopted by the AP6.

Emissions of CO₂ are higher from coal than from either natural gas or distillate oil fired combined cycle units, and the competitive price of natural gas therefore makes it attractive in a greenhouse environment as the easiest way of achieving substantial decarbonisation at relatively low cost. As gas and oil are frequently co-products, this means that both will be significant in the energy future of the region. The future is likely to see overlapping phases of development: a 'dash to gas' similar to that which after 1990 made Kyoto so advantageous for Europe, followed by increasing penetration of clean coal technology.

Gas is already becoming an important regional energy source. In the Asia-Pacific region, consumption of natural gas is increasing rapidly, and trade in LNG in the region dominates global trade and is a growing part of total natural gas trade, and 41 percent of the world's liquefaction capacity is located in the Pacific Basin. It is anticipated that a fairly significant portion of future energy demand in the region will be met by natural gas. The export trade in natural gas (especially as LNG) is important: of the 886 billion cubic metres of gas traded internationally in 2006, about 24 percent or 211 billion cubic metres was transported in the form of LNG, 64 percent of which was shipped to the Asia-Pacific, although this proportion is projected to decline as demand in the Atlantic Basin continues to grow.

Clean coal and natural gas, especially LNG, thus lie at the heart of the energy future of the Asia-Pacific region, and the reluctance of many states to fall into line with Europe and to pursue initiatives like the APP must be seen in this light.

The inaugural APP ministerial meeting was held in Sydney on 11–12 January 2006, and involved ministers and business representatives from the six founding members: Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea and the United States. who agreed on a Charter, a Communique and a Work Plan that outlined a new approach to international collaboration on climate change and energy. International government and business taskforces were established: on Cleaner Fossil Energy; Aluminium; Coal Mining; Steel; Cement; Buildings and Appliances; Power Generation and Transmission; and Renewable Energy and Distributed Generation.

The Australian Government committed funding of \$100 million over five years, \$95 million to support activities within the Partnership and \$5 million to support Australia's involvement in taskforces. Twenty-five per cent of the funds were specifically earmarked for renewable energy, with an overall focus on cleaner fossil and renewable sources. Industry partnerships must involve at least two APP partner countries, and are aimed at projects are intended to provide the maximum clean development outcomes for Partners from their investments. They therefore represent an attempt to build technological approaches to the problem in countries such as China and India, slowing future emissions growth by these significant present and future emitters. With growing scepticism over Kyoto in Canada, that country joined in October 2007.

While criticized by NGOs as involving no commitments, it is precisely this feature of APP that provides an opportunity for shared understandings and commitments to develop through reciprocal gestures. Given the lead role played by Australia in the formation of APP (Kellow, 2006), a question worth considering is whether Australia's role, widely seen as obstructionist, might rather have been functional for the development of more effective international action on climate change.

4. AUSTRALIA: CREATIVE OR OBSTRUCTIVE?

Australia is often seen as playing a spoiling role in international climate change negotiations, largely because for a decade it refused to ratify Kyoto. These criticisms therefore depend upon a positive view of Kyoto, as at least a 'first step' towards some better global policy instrument: few would suggest that Kyoto itself is an effective instrument.

Another, less sanguine view of the Kyoto Protocol is tenable, however, and I have provided some reasons for this here. Most significantly, Kyoto has failed to elicit commitments from Developing Countries to limit future growth in emissions of GHGs and is unlikely to provide a basis for doing so. It has failed in terms of securing the spread of horizontal commitments and in terms of vertical commitments being delivered by member states. The Bali Mandate, significantly, lies essentially outside Kyoto, but even it is unlikely to deliver progress, and international progress on climate change is likely to be as disappointing in another decade as it was in 2007. We face a second decade of failed global policy development.

Sand's slowest boat/lowest common denominator analogy was meant to imply that agreements took too long to develop and were not sufficiently stringent, given the perceived urgency of the global environmental crisis. This perceived urgency is part of the problem, because it diverts attention away from bottom-up approaches to the development of environmental regulatory regimes. The greatest concern now is not that strong measures cannot be developed but that those that are will in Wynne's words (1987: 5) 'simply flutter in mid-air as symbolic gestures'. The prospect for effective global environmental governance is thus not very promising.

Martti Koskenniemi (1996: 236) has summarised the situation in the following terms: 'the gap between law in books and how states act may now appear wider than at any other time in history—the more rules there are, the more occasion there is to break them. After years of active standard-setting, global and regional organisations stand somewhat baffled in front of a reality that has sometimes little in common with the objectives expressed in the inflated language of their major conventions and declarations'.

Yet we know both from the study of the development of successful environmental regimes (Young, 1994) and more general international regulatory regimes (Braithwaite and Drahos, 2000) that successful regimes start with modest, often non-binding agreements that provide a basis for a reciprocal upward spiralling of commitments until all are comfortable with binding obligations. Experience also shows that obligations are effective only when they are accepted rather than imposed, especially with prohibition regimes which yield greater compliance when they reflect rather than impose norms (Nadelman, 1990). With climate change, NGOs in particular have been keen to create an atmosphere where it is widely accepted that radical moves towards mitigation are so urgent that there is no time to permit the slow evolution of a regime. (They also blocked a concern with adaptation for many years, setting back the development of adaptation approaches that will be needed if IPCC projections are accurate). As a consequence negotiators have now wasted 15 years with very little result, 15 years that could have seen considerable progress in a 'bottom-up' evolution of regimes, either globally or at the regional level.

Regional approaches have similarly been eschewed, yet Vogel (1997) has noted that the most effective MEAs have been those that are limited in scope, both in terms of geography and subject coverage. Most of those that are more broad in their coverage (Basel, Stockholm, Rotterdam, to name but three) have also seen considerable development of their architecture in other arenas, more limited and

homogeneous in membership (the OECD with Basel) or non-threatening in nature (International Forum for Chemical Safety with Stockholm and Rotterdam). When we add the failure of Kyoto to capture key parts of the science and normative case and the error of Tolba in following the Montreal model for an issue that, as Haas warned, was not comparable and involved substantially more significant interests, it would not be unfair to suggest that the Kyoto process could not have been better designed to fail.

Alternative proposals have been made that might lead to better policy approaches (Victor et al., 2005; Kellow, 2006; Prins and Rayner, 2007), but the failing trajectory has strong support in the form of the alliance between the EU (which it advantages) and G-77 (to which it promises exemptions, investment and technology transfer), supported by the NGOs. All three can be seen to be inhibiting the lessons to be learned from the failure of Kyoto thus far to provide a constructive basis for action on climate change. Environment NGOs have a somewhat privileged existence compared with their counterparts in other areas such as aid and development, where Elsenhans (2005: 21) has referred to NGOs as selling 'certificates of good conscience' to ignorant buyers and claiming 'Potemkin-like successes.' That would not be an inaccurate description of the climate NGOs, except that they share heavy responsibility for constructing and maintaining the Potemkin village.

5. CONCLUSION

Where does the recent Australian ratification of Kyoto fit here? It has been acknowledged that the action was largely symbolic, since Australia is close to meeting its target anyway, and accession will allow Australian companies the benefit from participation in the CDM. But it might be that, by isolating further the United States, it has hindered the development of regional and alternative approaches in fora such as APP, APEC and the G8+5 dialogue. It seems to have encouraged India to have attempted brinkmanship in Bali to get the US to make a commitment to technology transfer that might unwind and which (if the Montreal experience is any guide) might regardless produce disappointing outcomes. Such acrimony did little to assist the more fruitful dialogue between India and the US in the APP, and both China and the US appear to have stepped back from their embrace of any kind of targets which emerged, albeit in limited form, at the APEC meeting in September.

Australia's position at the end of Bali remained firmly in the Umbrella Group, and new Prime Minister Kevin Rudd resisted entreaties from the NGOs to commit to a substantial reduction target as they, the EU and G-77 wished, so it appears that he was prepared to go with the symbolism of Kyoto ratification, but not necessarily any further. It remains to be seen if this symbolism has limited further the lessons from Kyoto that are proving difficult to learn.

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