

What's the baseline?

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<https://www.e-ir.info/2009/09/04/whats-the-baseline/>

RODGER A PAYNE, SEP 4 2009

The Copenhagen conference starts in three months and this blog will cover key negotiation issues. Let's start with the framework for negotiation, OK?

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change dates to the June 1992 Earth Summit. The overwhelming majority of nations are parties to this agreement — even the United States, which did not ratify the followup Kyoto Protocol. Essentially, for 20 years the world has been negotiating reductions in greenhouse gas emissions based on reductions from a 1990 baseline.

The United States wants to change the baseline date — to 2005!

The climate change legislation in the U.S. Congress, for example, calls for a 17% reduction in emission by 2020...from a 2005 baseline.

Why does the U.S. want to change the game?

The answer can be explained quite simply. As the Environmental Protection Agency reported in 2006, the U.S. has averaged a 1% annual increase in greenhouse gas emissions since 1990. Essentially, the increase in U.S. emissions “dwarf” any reductions attributable to Kyoto worldwide.

The U.S. wants to reset the negotiations because it basically spent 20 years ignoring the last set of requirements.

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