

**Senator John Kerry's Speech at the Bella Center in Copenhagen
Wednesday, December 16, 2009**

Thank you also for the privilege of allowing me to share some thoughts at this historic meeting.

For seventeen years now we've been coming together. Through enormous transitions in our politics -- new Presidents, new Prime Ministers, new friends who quickly became old friends; we've taken a long journey together.

From Rio to Copenhagen, with 14 COPs in between, through all the hurdles and the challenges, two constants have remained: First, the urgency of the science that tells us we must act. Second, we have never wavered from our determination to get the job done. And that's why we're on the brink of making history now.

Back in 1992 an American President personally traveled to climate talks in Rio to help plant the seeds of possibility, the promise of a beginning; But that promise was allowed to wither on the vine. In the years that followed the United States joined with other major polluters to delay, divide and deny. We simply failed to lead in the manner this challenge demands.

But this is a new day. Just as in Rio, an American President is now coming to these talks in good faith—this time, to promise a new beginning and to re-commit the United States to being part of a global solution.

Seventeen years is a long time to pursue an urgent goal. But history reminds us that sometimes even urgent struggles take time. Consider the hundred years of conflict in Northern Ireland. At the moment when peace was finally achieved after tireless efforts, Senator George Mitchell, said simply: "We had seven hundred days of failure and one day of success."

And that's why we're gathered here again: Because we know that, in one day, with one agreement, we can put the world on a safer path. And in the coming hours and days, the world expects us to get the job done.

Even back in 1992, we all came together for a simple reason: we accepted the science. I've often said that global climate change is an issue where no one has the luxury of being "half-pregnant." You either are or you aren't. And so it is with climate change. You either understand and accept the science – or you don't. Folks this isn't a cafeteria where you can pick and choose and accept the science that tells us what *is* happening, but then reject the science that warns us what *will* happen.

If Dick Cheney can argue that even a 1% chance of a terrorist attack is 100% justification for preemptive action—then surely, when scientists tell us that climate change is nearly a 100% certainty, we ought to be able to stand together, all of us, and join in an all out effort to combat a mortal threat to the life of this planet.

In recent days it has been interesting to watch people who have never even accepted the basic science now suddenly transform themselves into climate change investigators, wannabe

Inspector Clouseaus looking for some sort of smoking gun to erase decades of constant and unequivocal research.

There isn't a nation on the planet where the evidence of the impacts of climate change isn't mounting. Frankly, those who look for any excuse to continue challenging the science have a fundamental responsibility which they have never fulfilled: Prove us wrong or stand down. Prove that the pollution we put in the atmosphere is *not* having the harmful effect we know it is. Tell us where the gases go and what they do. Pony up one single, cogent, legitimate, scholarly analysis. Prove that the ocean isn't actually rising; prove that the ice caps aren't melting, that deserts aren't expanding. And prove that human beings have nothing to do with any of it. And by the way -- good luck!

Ladies and Gentlemen: Here in Copenhagen, now and forever, amateur hour is over. It's time for science fact to trump science fiction.

Experts from the world's leading universities and think tanks—including The Fletcher School and the Heinz Center—have created a new “climate scorecard” called C-ROADS that more accurately predicts where we're headed. It shows that if you take the best, latest offers of every country, and assume they will be perfectly, completely implemented—guess what? None of it is nearly enough to get the job done.

Right now our best efforts may limit us to a rise of 3.9 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels, even though the world's major economies agreed this year in Italy that anything beyond 2 degrees would be catastrophic. That's why Copenhagen is not about one country or one faction simply making a demand of another. It's the science itself, demanding action from all of us.

As fingers point in one direction or another, as frustration grows with the politics of one country or another, let's not lose sight of the reality that no country individually, and none of us collectively, are doing enough.

So why then are these next three days so important? *Because it is crucial that we get started.* By setting a price on carbon and committing ourselves to reduce emissions, we send a signal to the marketplace that will revolutionize global supply and use of energy. It will forever alter the patterns of capital investment and consumer behavior. I believe in the power of the free market. And when the free market is unleashed to solve a problem, our innovators and entrepreneurs can eclipse all the predictions and render all the models obsolete. If you don't believe me let me remind you that in 1992 when we met in Rio there were about 26 sites on the internet. Type Copenhagen into Google today and you get 43 million hits.

The 12 months since we gathered in Poznan have seen a series of successes that add up to a changed and changing world. And I'm proud to say that nowhere has that change been more pronounced than in the United States, where we are at last moving in the right direction.

In January, we swore in a President who promised to “mark a new chapter in America's leadership on climate change.” And he has.

Since January, we have made the single largest investment in clean energy in our nation's history: eighty billion dollars which will result directly in emissions reductions. At the Major Economies Forum we led the world in agreeing to cut global emissions in half by 2050. We have set bold, binding targets to raise the fuel economy of America's cars and trucks for the first time in three decades—and now accelerated those targets by four years. This Monday, our Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced a \$350 million dollar clean energy fund for advanced economies to help pay for wind, solar, and efficiency projects in the developing world.

Thirty-three of our fifty states have voluntarily entered into compacts to reduce emissions. As a result, over half the American economy is already preparing to implement mandatory emissions reduction policies, and three regions are currently setting up emissions trading systems. More than 1,000 mayors are taking strict measures to aim towards Kyoto targets--and a number of cities are actually getting close on their own. Across America, grassroots initiatives are sprouting up as citizens lead their leaders.

It was against that backdrop that the House of Representatives finally passed comprehensive climate change legislation with billions of dollars for international adaptation, technology transfer, deforestation and, for the first time in American history, a national mandatory emissions target.

And just last week, the Environmental Protection Agency sent a wakeup call to Capitol Hill: If Congress won't legislate, the EPA will regulate.

In the last ten months, we've accomplished more than we did in the previous ten years. Two years ago in Bali, in a room much like this one, a delegate from Papua New Guinea chastised the United States saying "If...you are not willing to lead, then please, leave it to the rest of us, please get out of the way." Well, we're here today. The United States is back and President Barack Obama is coming to Copenhagen to put America on the right side of history.

But, as energized as I am about all we've done this year, we still need to complete the task in the United States Senate. Frankly, meeting that challenge early next spring can be significantly assisted by what is achieved here. In the Senate and in America, the concerns that kept us out of Kyoto back in 1997 are still with us today, and we need to preempt them here in Copenhagen.

Make no mistake: I don't offer these insights to defend inaction. I simply want to describe for you the reality of what it will take to get this done.

Some of my colleagues in Washington— like some leaders elsewhere— remain reluctant to grapple with a climate crisis mostly measured in future dangers, when they're confronted every day with the present pain of hardworking people in a tough economic time. To pass a bill, we must be able to assure a Senator from Ohio that steel workers in his state won't lose their jobs to India and China because those countries are not participating in a way that is measureable, reportable and verifiable. Every American – indeed, I think all citizens—need to know that no country will claim an unfair advantage.

Shared responsibility must include an obligation to share information about each country's good faith efforts to keep its commitments. After all – that's what an agreement means. People need to trust the process, and that trust is built through transparency.

There is nothing new or threatening about such transparency. We have it in nuclear arms agreements and in trade agreements. Countries have accepted the international rules and enforcement mechanisms of the WTO and flourished, and today we must share with each other, in good faith, our efforts to meet the new standards that come with our international climate commitments.

Without an agreement here in Copenhagen that addresses this core issue of transparency, it will be exceedingly difficult to persuade already doubtful elected officials that they are safe in asking their citizens to go along. Senators and Congressmen alike are determined that there must be consequences for any country that thinks they can duck altogether or fake their participation in a solution. Once a treaty is in force, countries that fail to make a good faith effort toward reducing emissions will find that they cannot dump high carbon intensity products into our markets. That is a fair response to non-compliance with a binding international agreement.

One of the last barriers to bold American leadership is the knowledge that even if we take tough steps forward, our efforts can be totally eclipsed by rising emissions from others. You may not know it, but when the US Senate talks about climate policy, fundamentally, all of you are in the room—because our debate always comes back to the need for a global effort.

Let me be clear: America will continue to honor the bedrock principle of common but differentiated responsibility. “Differentiated” means less developed countries can adopt different reduction targets at different rates reflecting their economic and energy realities. But let's be honest here: our common responsibility demands that if we're serious about solving climate change, then every country that contributes significantly to the problem today or will contribute in the future, must be a part of the solution in a way that is transparent and accountable.

I recognize that there is an inconsistency in asking other countries to grow differently than we did. Industrial pollution did not begin in the developing world. For a century and a half the United States and the countries of Europe became modern economies with scant knowledge of the damage we were doing to our climate. But for the last twenty years, at least, we *have* known—and that only adds to our responsibility.

I am sympathetic to developing countries' concerns: because of our emissions it's their crops that will disappear; because of our inaction, it's their fields that turn to desert; and their people, who will be worst affected, are least equipped to meet this challenge. Those are legitimate issues. But for developing countries, winning the right to repeat our mistakes will be cold comfort if it leads us all to climate catastrophe—especially when there are alternative technologies and energy sources available to allow them to develop sustainably. To help developing nations take responsibility, climate finance must be resolved in negotiations this week to become a core element of a Copenhagen agreement.

Today, there is no excuse for America not to act when we account for just five percent of the world's population, but 20 percent of its emissions. By the very same token, when 97 percent of new emissions over the next two decades will come from the developing world, that is more than "an inconvenient truth" in our larger struggle. It is a core issue. By 2020 China's emissions will be 40% larger than America's. It is inescapable that ultimately, the only workable way forward will be a global solution where *all* major emitters take on binding commitments.

The developing world is already making enormous progress. China has committed to a 40-45 percent carbon intensity reduction; Brazil has pledged a remarkable 80 percent cut in its all-important emissions from deforestation; and India too has broken new ground with an offer to cut its emissions intensity by 20-25 percent. Yes, many would like to see more, and yes these commitments must be made part of an international agreement, but these countries' decision to join in announcing targeted reductions is an historic breakthrough and they deserve our applause for getting this far.

And in America, we too are making progress. Every day we are building support in the Senate, across the political spectrum. Lindsey Graham, a conservative Republican Senator from South Carolina, has become a trusted partner. Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, who wrote the amendment that effectively ended U.S. participation in Kyoto, who has championed American coal for fifty years, said just this month, and I quote: "To deny the mounting science of climate change is to stick our heads in the sand and say 'deal me out.' West Virginia would be much smarter to stay at the table." Twelve years after the Byrd-Hagel Amendment, we finally have Robert Byrd at the table. The two key Senate Committees have already advanced major proposals and the Leader of the Senate, Harry Reid, has stated publicly that we will take this on early next spring.

Let me say to all of you wondering about whether we will pass something: the naysayers predicting defeat are wrong. With a successful deal here in Copenhagen, next year, the United States Congress—House and Senate—will pass comprehensive energy/climate legislation that will reduce America's emissions. And though we have yet to reach full agreement on a method, more and more businesses and lawmakers are convinced that the only way to meet an emissions reduction target is to price carbon.

Today in Copenhagen, we are close to making history. This can be a watershed moment if we go home with a comprehensive political agreement at the highest level that includes a global emissions reduction target and commitments by all countries to take actions to achieve that target. We also need to support developing nations in improving the frequency and transparency of their reporting, and establish a structure to assess our progress toward our stated goals. In addition, we should build on the Bali Action Plan to ensure that REDD plays an important role in the agreement here.

A final but critical component of any agreement here in Copenhagen is finance. Earlier this week, the U.S. Congress injected over \$1.2 billion into a variety of international climate change priorities, including efforts to advance clean energy technologies and reduce deforestation. This is a beginning to support a global fast-start financing contribution on the order of \$10 billion. I believe the United States should be prepared to do more as other countries clarify their own

efforts for transparency and mitigation. Clearly, funding must ramp up significantly in future years as part of a global deal which includes a structure to direct financing in an effective and accountable way. We need to consider innovative ideas to meet this financing challenge, including focusing and expanding the efforts of our development banks, dedicating revenues from putting a price on carbon, and exploring other internationally-agreed sectoral mechanisms.

And vitally, we must agree on a process to come back together next year to transform the Copenhagen political agreement into a binding international treaty. That process should not delay and I believe an early summer date of June or July 2010 is realistic and necessary.

The truth is we are reaching the limits of how far each of us can go if we go it alone. People in every country are asking, “If we go forward will others follow?” We need to build trust—in the process and in each other. Brazil and Indonesia must be confident that the international community will provide sufficient financial support. Europe and Japan need to be convinced that the rest of the world will join in taking sufficient steps forward.

It is easy to get lost in the ups and downs of a week like this one. Emotions run high. While we may sometimes want to walk away from each other, none of us can truly afford to walk away from this problem.

An old American patriot described today’s situation very well. As America fought for its independence, Benjamin Franklin said, “we must all hang together, or assuredly, we shall all hang separately.”

When the desert is creeping into East Africa, and ever more scarce resources push farmers and herders into deadly conflict, then that is a matter of shared security for all of us. When the people of the Maldives are forced to abandon a place they’ve called home for hundreds of years—it’s a stain on our collective conscience, and a moral challenge to each of us. When our own grandchildren risk growing up a world we can’t recognize and don’t want to, in the long shadow of a global failure to cooperate, then—clearly, urgently, profoundly—we all need to do better.

There are issues of war and peace. And then, there are issues of life and death like this one that are no less morally compelling than war itself. We have an obligation to save the lives of millions of people who risk famine, dislocation, disease and death, simply because they are forced – not called on—but forced to suffer the indifference of wealthy nations and their addiction to the status quo.

We can stop the climate-driven wars of the future. We can keep would-be climate refugees in their homes. We can keep islands on the map and stop climate-fueled droughts and storms before they ever start.

Here in Copenhagen we have an opportunity to realign the way nations have dealt with each other. By reaching agreement on finance, emission targets, and a transparent system for global action, we will be recognizing globally that the stewardship of the planet and our appetite for resources will be managed in a new way in a new era.

None of this will be easy-- we know that -- but we can find the answers if we find the will to demand them. This is not a moment when the world can afford to settle for less. This is a moment to demand what is necessary and deliver what is right—not to weigh what is the least that our country can offer up in Copenhagen—but to act boldly and find out what is the most we can accomplish here together.

I have seen this process through more highs and lows than I care to remember. Today we are closer than ever to getting the job done.

People fail for seven hundred days and succeed for one. People strive for 17 years and succeed for one. We need to trust the science. We need to trust each other, put aside our grievances, focus on the bottom line and have the courage to take risks together and make Friday our day of success.