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Sally K. Ride Papers - Climate Change Committees /Speeches [including a few by Ride]

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EarthQuest
Winter 1988

Capitol Updates

Quote from the joint statement given by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev following their summit meeting in Washington, D.C., December 1987

"Global Climate and Environmental Change Initiative. With reference to their November 1985 agreement in Geneva to cooperate in the preservation of the environment, the two leaders approved a bilateral initiative to pursue joint studies in global climate and environmental change through cooperation in areas of mutual concern, such as protection and conservation of stratospheric ozone, and through increased data exchanges pursuant to the U.S.-Soviet Environmental Protection Agreement and the Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Concerning Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes. In this context, there will be a detailed study on the climate of the future. The two sides will continue to promote broad international and bilateral cooperation in the increasingly important area of global climate and environmental change."

Letter to the Editor
The New York Times
Tuesday, January 12, 1988

The best-kept secret of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit - and potentially the most portentous of global well-being during the 21st century - was the agreement "to promote broad international and bilateral cooperation in the increasingly important area of global climate and environmental change."

The world community of scientists, through the International Council of Scientific Unions, is developing an international cooperative effort to study global change in its broadest context. Scientists from all quarters of the earth, under chairmanship of Prof. James McCarthy of Harvard University, have been appointed to lead the effort. More than a dozen national academies of science (including those of the United States, the Soviet Union, and China) have convened committees to provide the scientific and technological infrastructure.

The program, conceived before the discovery of the Antarctic "ozone hole", will address that issue and other threats to the global environment. At stake is the continued robustness of the thing film of air, water, plants, and soil through which biogeochemical cycling provides the life-support system to sustain an expanding world population.

This inherently international and intrinsically interdisciplinary program will bring to bear on questions of the structure and metabolism of planet earth the talents of thousands of natural and social scientists in industrialized and developing countries. The program will unleash wizardry of computers, communications and modern technology, the power of global observations from space satellites and the reservoir of knowledge about the earth that is the heritage of the international geophysical years and successor programs.



An exciting adventure of the human mind and spirit is in prospect. It has powerful implications for society - including the capacity to replace the specter of fear for the planet's future with a vision of hope in an increasingly interdependent world. This part of the summit statement is an encouraging sign that a political will to go ahead is emerging. It is a good omen in an otherwise troubled, endangered and uncertain world.

Thomas F. Malone
President Elect, Sigma Xi
The Scientific Research Society
New Haven, Connecticut
January 1, 1988

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