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U.N. data show U.S. greener than EU; Business leads emissions cuts

By Jennifer Harper

Finger-pointing critics often vilify Americans as the sole cause of global warming. But the typical image of SUV-driving, energy-hogging Yankees may be bogus a new analysis of U.N. data reveals that U.S. efforts to reduce greenhouse gases actually beat European policies.

"Despite constant criticism from environmental activists at home and across Europe claiming the U.S. government is doing nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, new evidence suggests America's efforts are more effective than those of Europe's," according to a study by H. Sterling Burnett of the Dallas-based National Center for Policy Analysis, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research institute.

The United States has spent more than any other country on research and technologies to reduce emissions, Mr. Burnett wrote, and the business-led efforts are paying off.

"The U.S. is doing a far better job reining in its emissions than Europe, even though it has a faster-growing economy and population," Mr. Burnett said. "Rather than signing treaties that look good on paper but do nothing to really bring about reductions, U.S. industry has

taken the lead as a business matter, reducing emissions as a matter of efficiency saving costs and improving the bottom line."

Mr. Burnett's scrutiny of data from the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report released Feb. 2 revealed that the U.S. rate of growth in carbon dioxide emissions from 2000 to 2004 was eight percentage points lower than from 1995 to 2000. The original 15 nations of the European Union increased emissions by 2.3 percentage points.

From 2000 to 2004, greenhouse gas emissions from the EU countries grew at nearly double the U.S. rate. During the same time period, the U.S. economy grew by almost \$1.9 trillion, "the equivalent of adding Italy to the U.S. economy," Mr. Burnett wrote in the analysis, released Wednesday.

The U.S. population increased by 11.3 million people, more than the population of Greece, he found.

"U.S. businesses are succeeding where European bureaucracy is failing," Mr. Burnett said. "Further, efforts like the Asian-Pacific partnership will do far

more than [the] Kyoto [Protocol] to have a lasting effect on greenhouse gas emissions."

The Asian-Pacific partnership is a nonbinding plan to cooperate on development and transfer technologies that would enable greenhouse gas reductions.

Meanwhile, Americans may not be quick to buy into the assertions of "An Inconvenient Truth," former Vice President Al Gore's documentary that is in contention for an Oscar award Sunday.

Global warming is not a "top-tier" issue, according to a Pew Research survey of 1,708 adults. Respondents ranked the issue fourth from last in a 23-item list of policy priorities for the White House and Congress. Only 19 percent expressed "deep concern" about global warming. A minority 47 percent blamed it on human activity. Among conservative Republicans, the figure was 20 percent; among liberal Democrats, 71 percent.

"The issue is of relatively low priority for members of both parties," the survey said. It was conducted Jan. 10 to 15, with a margin of error of three percentage points.

