

Sir,

This week DEFRA released its 'Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change' book, and Sir David King, the Government's chief scientific advisor, was asked to comment on the reports contents. Mr. King quickly pointed out that 'No country is going to turn off a power station [...] to tackle this [global warming] problem.' This is clearly an alarming statement and one that has far reaching implications.

The report, over 400 pages long, reads like an obituary for the Kyoto protocol. The level of CO₂ in the atmosphere, which was expected to provide a manageable level of global warming, is now considered too high and the probability of 'irreversible changes' to the Gulf Stream is between 40-50%. The Kyoto targets are not high enough and emissions cuts will have to be achieved within a shrinking timeframe.

If the Kyoto protocol is dead and Mr. King is right about the lack of political will to act and agree even higher binding cuts in CO₂ emissions, we are left with multinational companies and new low-carbon technology as the only real option. The scary thing about this approach, often promoted by the US as the way forward, is the financial motives driving the process and the lack of clear proof that new technologies can be developed and deployed before global warming has caused significant damage to the planet.

It has been estimated that if every household in the UK had just one low-energy light bulb, we would be able to save the energy equivalent to one power station. I would therefore like Sir David King to advice the government to phase out conventional light bulbs for domestic housing and make it possible to only buy low-energy bulbs. A simple and effective measure with a huge impact, and no minister had to make the difficult decision to turn off a single power station.

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