

HEAT

A GLOBAL INVESTIGATION

1 X 120 HD



International

HEAT

A GLOBAL INVESTIGATION

1 X 120 HD

CONTACT

Tom Koch, Director
WGBH International
One Guest Street
Boston, Ma 02135 USA

TEL 617-300-3893
FAX 617-779-7900

tom_koch@wgbh.org
wgbhinternational.org

For years, big business—from oil and coal companies to electric utilities to car manufacturers—have resisted change to environmental policy and stifled the debate over climate change in America and around the globe. Now, facing rising pressure from governments, green groups and investors alike, big business is reshaping its approach to the environment. FRONTLINE investigates how businesses are repositioning themselves to prosper in a radically changed world and looks at how the world's largest corporations and governments are responding to Earth's looming environmental disaster.

The world needs to dramatically cut the carbon emissions responsible for wreaking havoc on the planet's climate, according to Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, whose organization, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), shared last year's Nobel Peace Prize. With that sense of urgency in mind, correspondent Martin Smith traveled to 12 countries on four continents to investigate whether major corporations and governments are up to the challenge. *HEAT* features in-depth interviews with top policy-makers and with leading executives from many of the largest carbon emitters from around the world, including Chinese coal companies, Indian SUV makers and American oil giants. The report paints an ominous portrait. Despite increasing talk about "going green," across the planet, environmental concerns are still taking a back seat to shorter-term economic interests.

Smith's journey begins in China, where, despite unprecedented growth, the Chinese are clearly moving in the wrong direction. He finds a similar situation in India, where rapidly rising income levels have prompted an explosion in the demand for new cars. Automakers are pushing out new models, including the Nano, a small car aimed at helping even the poorest citizens get behind the wheel—no small thing, as India stands to overtake China as the world's most populous country by mid-century. With several hundred million new drivers taking to the streets, India's carbon emissions will soar.

There is also the problem that while hybrid cars may emit less CO₂ than their gas-guzzling cousins, they still require electricity to run. And with new cars, of course, come new roads, linking crowded cities and fueling a construction boom across the developing world that drives emissions ever higher. The manufacture of cement is the third-largest industrial contributor of greenhouse gases in the world. Supplying more cement for buildings, roads and bridges makes big emission reductions impossible. This presents a core dilemma for all large emerging nations, from China to India, Indonesia, Russia, Mexico and Brazil: how to grow without inflicting more damage on the environment.

On the campaign trail, both Sen. John McCain and Sen. Barack Obama have announced their plans for a new energy policy that will cut carbon emissions. Optimistically, they suggest that the "greening" of American business heralds a new era of sleek technologies and opportunities for innovation. What they tend not to emphasize is cost and, on the part of every consumer, sacrifice.

0801092



CREDITS

FRONTLINE Executive Producer: David Fanning
Producer, Writer, Reporter: Martin Smith

A FRONTLINE co-production with RAINMedia, Inc. for WGBH/Boston

Photo Credit: Corbis



International