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Green
politics[Special report: green politics](#)**UK initiative on climate change****Patrick Wintour, chief political correspondent****Friday December 10, 2004**[The Guardian](#)**Ask Aristotle**

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Tony Blair is to host a major scientific conference on climate change in February as part of an attempt to create an international consensus on the science involved and so lock the US and the G8 group of industrial nations into action beyond the Kyoto protocol.

He has long accepted that there is no medium-term prospect of the US administration signing up to Kyoto, but wants to keep momentum going on the issue.

The conference, a precursor to the G8 summit in June, will be held at the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research in Exeter.

Britain is hoping that a prestigious international taskforce on climate change chaired by Stephen Byers, the former cabinet minister, will also shift the arguments with its report in January.

- The US National Academy of Sciences has agreed that there is a link between human activity, carbon emissions and atmospheric warming. But senior figures in the Bush administration are sceptical.

Mr Blair is pursuing climate change and Africa as his two priorities for his presidency of the G8 next year.

He is doing so out of conviction, and partly because senior former cabinet figures such as Chris Smith have warned him strenuously that he needs to find a foreign policy that reconnects with the progressive middle class alienated by the war on Iraq.

No 10 denied that Mr Blair was involved in any secret diplomacy to persuade the Bush administration to shift on climate change, pointing out that the British stance was in the public domain.

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In a speech in September, Mr Blair said he wanted the G8 to create an international consensus on the science, as well as advance work on promoting the development and uptake of cleaner energy technologies begun under the French presidency in 2003.

He believes the G8 can reach agreement on improving energy efficiency and speeding up the uptake of existing low carbon technologies such as photovoltaic technology, fuel cells and carbon sequestration.

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Aware of US objections to the Kyoto protocol, he said he wanted to find ways to encourage India and China to develop environmentally. The US has rejected Kyoto partly because it objects to some developing countries being excluded.

Implementation of the Kyoto protocol is currently being discussed at a UN conference in Argentina, at which the US has been accused of trying to water down commitments.

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