

Castro criticizes Bush on climate

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HAVANA --

An essay signed by Fidel Castro criticized President Bush on Friday for asking Asia-Pacific leaders to cooperate in a new framework on climate change that could compete with other international efforts.

Castro wrote that the U.S. and Australia, the host of this week's annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, never signed the Kyoto Protocol on energy security and climate change and their new proposal could undermine efforts to create a successor to the U.N.-backed agreement.

He went on to blast the U.S. and Australia for continuing their "adventure in Iraq," while other countries are pulling out troops.

"It is known that in Iraq about 1 million people have died and 2 million have been forced to emigrate from their country occupied by troops from the United States and their allies, among them Australia," Castro added.

The U.S., which with China leads the world in emitting carbon dioxide and other gases that scientists say are warming the planet, has called for a Sept. 27-28 conference in Washington of the 15 biggest polluters. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for a broader conference in New York on Sept. 24.

A U.N. conference in December in Bali, Indonesia, will start charting a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. That agreement requires 35 nations to cut emissions 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

The 81-year-old Castro ceded provisional power to his younger brother Raul after undergoing intestinal surgery 13 months ago and has not appeared in public since. He has been writing occasional essays about mostly international themes since late March.