

Until last week, Carol M. Browner, President-elect Barack Obama's pick as global warming czar, was listed as one of 14 leaders of a socialist group's Commission for a Sustainable World Society, which calls for "global governance" and says rich countries must shrink their economies to address climate change.

By Thursday, Mrs. Browner's name and biography had been removed from Socialist International's Web page, though a photo of her speaking June 30 to the group's congress in Greece was still available.

Socialist International, an umbrella group for many of the world's social democratic political parties such as Britain's Labor Party, says it supports socialism and is harshly critical of U.S. policies.

The group's Commission for a Sustainable World Society, the organization's action arm on climate change, says the developed world must reduce consumption and commit to binding and punitive limits on greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Obama, who has said action on climate change would be a priority in his administration, tapped Mrs. Browner last month to fill a new position as White House coordinator of climate and energy policies. The appointment does not need Senate confirmation.

Mr. Obama's transition team said Mrs. Browner's membership in the organization is not a problem and that it brings experience in U.S. policymaking to her new role.

"The Commission for a Sustainable World Society includes world leaders from a variety of political parties, including British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who succeeded Tony Blair, in serving as vice president of the convening organization," Obama transition spokesman Nick Shapiro said.

"Carol Browner was chosen to help the president-elect coordinate energy and climate policy because she understands that our efforts to create jobs, achieve energy security and combat climate change demand integration among different agencies; cooperation between federal, state and local governments; and partnership with the private sector," Mr. Shapiro said in an e-mail.

Mrs. Browner ran the Environmental Protection Agency under President Clinton. Until she was tapped for the Obama administration, she was on the board of directors for the National Audubon Society, the League of Conservation Voters, the Center for American Progress and former Vice President Al Gore's Alliance for Climate Protection.

Her name has been removed from the Gore organization's Web site list of directors, and the Audubon Society issued a press release about her departure from that organization.

Republicans said Mrs. Browner's work with Socialist International raises questions.

"Does she agree with the group's positions on global governance - that the United States should abdicate its international leadership to international organizations? Does she support its position that the international community should be the ultimate arbiter of climate change policy?" said Antonia Ferrier, a spokeswoman for House Minority Leader John A. Boehner, Ohio Republican.

"These are questions that merit answers - especially when you consider this group's deep skepticism about America's ability to be a force for positive change in the world," she said.

An aide on the Obama team said its information shows that Mrs. Browner resigned from the organization in June 2008. The aide, who asked not to be named because he was discussing internal matters, said the transition team was aware she had been a member of the group when she was vetted.

The Socialist International Web site didn't have a copy of her June 30 speech, but the agenda for the meeting had her scheduled to speak as part of a panel on "How do we strengthen the multilateral architecture for a sustainable future?"

Other panel participants were Sergey Mironov, speaker of the Russian legislature's upper chamber and a close ally of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin; Zhang Zhijun, vice minister of the International Department of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee; and Jesus Caldera, a former Minister of Employment and Social Affairs of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party.

A woman answering the phone at Socialist International's headquarters in London said all officers were traveling.

Nobody from the organization returned a message left Friday.

Socialist International bills itself as the world body of democratic socialist movements. It includes members ranging from Israel's Labor Party and France's Socialist Party to Angola's MPLA, which won the 1970s Angolan civil war with the aid of Soviet arms and Cuban troops.

The organization distinguishes itself from violent or revolutionary communist parties. However, some such groups, including the Chinese Communist Party, have been invited to its events as guest organizations.

The Democratic Socialists of America, not the Democratic Party, is listed as the group's U.S. representative. But Mrs. Browner was listed as an individual member of Socialist International, but not a member of the DSA.

While agreeing with Mr. Obama on the need for action to address climate change, the organization wants more draconian policies than the president-elect's preferred solution.

During the presidential campaign, Mr. Obama called for a cap-and-trade system to control carbon emissions. He argued that such a system is efficient and lets the free market determine where it's easiest to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Socialist International says such "flexible mechanisms" do not clamp down hard enough on polluters.

The organization often takes a decidedly critical view of the U.S.

At this summer's meeting, the group issued a statement on economics that blasted the "neo-liberal market ideology and the unilateralist, U.S.-dominated approach in the global economic system," and attacked the U.S. for dominating international financial institutions.

At its meeting earlier in 2008 in Santiago, Chile, Socialist International endorsed "global governance" as the solution to the world's problems of peace and climate change.

At a July meeting in St. Petersburg, the commission said developed countries "should think of decreasing current consumption levels" - which would mean shrinking their economies - in order to help the environment.

Socialist International regularly blasts the construction of fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border. The fence was approved by both houses of Congress, including with Mr. Obama's vote in the Senate.

Socialist International was congratulatory when Mr. Obama won the election, issuing a statement noting that "the sky may seem a bit brighter today" but warning still that "there are enormous global challenges that must be addressed effectively and without delay."