



Written by [James Heiser](#) on October 16, 2009

## Environmental Agreement May Cost \$1 Trillion

Americans are already suffering from the economic "shell shock" associated with the AIG bailout, the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), schemes in Washington to collectivize the nation's healthcare system, "cap-and-trade" proposals that practically tax the air we breathe, and a seemingly endless roster of costly government programs. Now, with the federal government facing a projected \$1.4 trillion deficit for 2009, yet another "bill" is going to be dropped in the lap of the taxpayers: the costs of cleaning up the environment.



An article in the *New York Times* (["Biggest Obstacle to Global Climate Deal May Be How to Pay for It"](#)) provides some of the global political machinations at work in the buildup to the December United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. The details provide clear indications of the degree to which America's political elites already imagine themselves to be unaccountable to the electorate.

The price tag for a new climate agreement will be a staggering \$100 billion a year by 2020, many economists estimate; some put the cost at closer to \$1 trillion. That money is needed to help fast-developing countries like India and Brazil convert to costly but cleaner technologies as they industrialize, as well as to assist the poorest countries in coping with the consequences of climate change, like droughts and rising seas.

This financing is an essential part of any international climate agreement, negotiators and scientists say, because developing nations must curb the growth of their emissions if the world is to limit rising temperatures. Based on calculations by the International Energy Agency for 2005 to 2030, 75 percent of the growth in energy demand will come from the developing world.

Many developing countries have made it clear that they will not sign a treaty unless they get money to help them adapt to a warmer planet. Acknowledging that a new treaty needs unanimity for success, industrialized nations like the United States and those in Europe have agreed in principle to make such payments; they have already been written into the agreed-upon structure of the treaty, to be signed in Copenhagen in December.

What this means is that the United States and the European Union have "agreed in principle" to pay much of the cost of the economic development of the Third World through 2030 — essentially bribing them to support drastic changes to the global economy for the sake of alleviating an environmental "crisis" that remains, at present, hypothetical, at most. The past year of financial "shock and awe" notwithstanding, the mind-blowing figure of yet *another* \$1 trillion being loaded on the backs of what was once called the "Free World" is almost incomprehensible. That such a burden on future generations of Americans and Europeans has already been agreed to "in principle" demonstrates that the will, and needs, of the people are no longer of anything but hypothetical interest in the hallowed halls of the ruling class.

In a hopeless muddle of "journalism" and "editorial," the *New York Times* article continues:



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The United States and other industrialized nations will certainly have to contribute heavily to any financing program. But the global recession has tightened purse strings, and nations are having trouble backing their good intentions and previous pledges with cash.

The money woes of the United Nations fund, set up as an exemplar of international cooperation in addressing climate change, are symptomatic. The fund was supposed to benefit from two income streams: the first is a 2 percent tax on carbon credits sold in the United Nations carbon trading system, in which rich nations invest in green projects in the developing world to offset emissions at home; the second is voluntary donations by richer countries.

The 2 percent tax is expected to generate at least \$1.6 billion by 2012. But the donations have not materialized, Mr. de Boer said.

That's right; local, state, and federal taxes are not enough: it is time to pay your UN tax — and then listen to the Internationalists whine about the lack of "voluntary donations." By the standards of modern government, \$1.6 billion hardly seems like very much to get excited about — except, of course, for the fact that the important point that is being established is the principle of yet another level of taxing authority. The power to tax is the power to control the currency and the economic fate of all those who are under the boot of the taxman.

A number of proposals are on the table to generate money to help developing countries rein in future emissions as well as to adapt to the effects of climate change. But most remain far from producing money.

In September, the European Union offered a plan in which "industrialized nations and economically more advanced developing countries" would provide \$33 billion to \$74 billion a year to help poor countries adapt, with the European Union's share placed at \$3 billion to \$22 billion. The climate bill passed by the House in the United States in June would auction emissions permits, and donate a portion of revenues to help poor countries. The climate legislation is now before the Senate.

Connie Hedegaard, the Danish minister of climate and energy, who will be chairwoman of the Copenhagen meeting, recently suggested imposing a new tax on shipping fuel or on airline flights — which both cause substantial emissions — to finance adaptation in poor countries.

Most Americans would be surprised to discover that taxes gouged from Americans will not even be used for domestic programs, but will fund another round of international charity.

How long does this have to go on before people realize that it is not about the environment; it is about power: power to *control* wealth and power to *redistribute* wealth?



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