

Climate Conference Shakedown

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WASHINGTON--President Obama left the Copenhagen climate conference this week with only a nonbinding accord and a pledge to continue discussions, a defeat by most accounts. But despite the hollowness of the resolutions, one aspect of the agreement developed from one of the conference's prominent themes: Providing undeveloped countries with funds to adapt to climate change.

"The fact that poor countries are much more vulnerable to severe climate events than industrialized nations is widely recognized, and it is used to argue that developed nations have a duty to dole out massive amounts of foreign aid to help undeveloped countries adapt," writes Keith Lockitch, fellow at the Ayn Rand Center.

Thus, "delegates from Tuvalu to Sudan spent the whole conference staging a foreign aid shakedown, trying to cash in on Western guilt. In the end--to mollify these delegates--industrialized nations agreed to pay for a climate adaptation fund that will reach 100 billion dollars a year by 2020.

"What's not widely acknowledged is the fact that preindustrial countries have always been vulnerable to drought and hurricanes and heat waves and so on--and they always will be so long as they remain preindustrial.

"The proper solution would be for them to embrace capitalism and then rapidly industrialize, not for the West to dole out billions in climate welfare."

Dr. Keith Lockitch has a PhD in physics from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee and is a fellow at the Ayn Rand Center for Individual Rights. His writings have appeared in publications such as the Washington Times, Orange County Register and the San Francisco Chronicle.