



Written by [James Heiser](#) on November 11, 2009

Senate Not Settled on Cap and Trade

Apparently, the Senate will not be voting on "cap and trade" any time soon, and all UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon can do about it is tap his foot impatiently and complain to the media.

Despite the decision last week of Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) to [disregard the rules](#) of the Senate to move the Kerry-Boxer bill out of committee, it seems that the prospect of pummeling voters with [thousands of dollars](#) a year in new taxes to fund a massive transfer of wealth from the First World to the Third World is proving [untenable](#) on the floor of the Senate even for Democrats such as Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.).



Originally, Ban Ki-moon had been pressing for \$100 billion a year in financial transfers to the Third World, ostensibly to cover the cost of converting to a "green" economy. Recently, the UN Secretary-General had been implying that such transfers would have to be substantially larger — [\\$300 billion a year](#), according to some sources.

However, after visiting with members of the U.S. Senate, Ban may be changing his tune — slightly. According to an Associated Press article ("[U.N. Chief Urges Senate to Take On Climate Change](#)"):

The U.N. chief met with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee late Tuesday afternoon to discuss the status of negotiations on a new international pact to slow global warming before 192 nations meet in Copenhagen next month. The meeting came a day after President Barack Obama said he was willing to go to Copenhagen if his presence would help clinch a deal.

Ban told the senators it was critical for the U.S. to take the lead, but he also said he understood that the Senate may not be in a position to take concrete action before the talks.

"From what I heard today, there is great support in the Senate for action on climate change," Ban said. "I would sincerely hope that the Senate would take necessary action as soon as possible."

But just how soon the U.S. Senate will act on climate change is uncertain. Leading senators made it clear Tuesday that a bill was unlikely to reach the Senate floor by the end of the year. The House narrowly passed its version of a global warming bill in June.

At the same time, Ban and Janos Pasztor, the director of his Climate Change Support Team, have scaled back their expectations for a new international treaty in Copenhagen. In the past month, they have focused instead on getting a political deal on the basic elements that can be turned into a treaty, hopefully next year.

Ban apparently backed away from recent [comments](#) by Rajendra Pachauri of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in which he castigated the Obama administration for failing to deliver on cap



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and trade. Now, rather than a race to adopt a treaty at the December conference in Copenhagen, Ban appears to be conceding that it will be necessary for the internationalists to pursue their goals more slowly.

But they are not giving up — thus the emphasis on pressing for a treaty in 2010.

According to the AP article, the prevailing attitude among those who are working on the legislation is that it is a matter of when — not if — such legislation will be adopted. However, a regular element of the legislative process is for advocates of legislation to present an air of inevitability. It remains to be seen whether a massive tax increase linked to dubious models for anthropogenic climate change can survive a trip to the Senate floor when an electorate that is already infuriated over schemes to collectivize the nation's healthcare system may unleash the full fury of its wrath at the ballot box next fall.

However, the possibility of a new treaty related to climate change may prove to be a "Trojan horse" for cap-and-trade legislation. If ratified, a treaty equipped with the enforcement mechanisms that Ban is seeking would essentially force the nations that have signed the treaty to comply with its stipulations. If Ban's redistributionist schemes are part of the treaty, the United States would be legally bound to such payments (considering that the U.S. government no longer adheres to the U.S. Constitution), if the Senate ratifies such a treaty.

In the meantime, cap-and-trade advocates are by no means giving up on their efforts to force their legislation through the Senate. According to the AP,

On Tuesday, Kerry said that the bill would come to the floor "as soon as practical" and he was confident that when it did, the U.S. Senate would do its part.

Lieberman said he expects debate before the full Senate to begin early next year.

"But we will go to Copenhagen with a House-passed climate change bill, some momentum in the Senate ... and the Obama administration clearly supportive of climate change legislation," Lieberman said.

Ban acknowledged that some senators had lingering concerns about the costs associated with limiting the gases blamed for global warming and whether other countries will do their share to control emissions.

He responded to those criticisms by saying that the cost of inaction was far greater, and that other countries are already moving down a pathway to cleaner sources of energy.

"I also told the Senate that the world is not standing still," Ban said.

Without the United States agreeing to the plans that will be formally proposed in Copenhagen, any treaty would be "dead on arrival." Regulations that would cripple industry and drain hundreds of billions of dollars from industrialized nations that are already suffering because of the grave economic troubles wracking the world economy cannot be implemented unless the Americans concede to carrying a substantial portion of the bill.



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