

Week 3 Assignment: Roles of Developed and Developing Countries

due in section: Monday, April 12 OR Tuesday, April 13, 2010

Name: _____ ID: _____

The Kyoto Protocol was originally negotiated in 1997 as a first international effort to control greenhouse gas emissions. The Protocol set standards for developed countries (so-called Annex B countries, such as the US, the European Union member states, and Japan) to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by about 6 to 8% relative to 1990 levels, depending on the country. However, the treaty set no greenhouse emissions requirements for developing countries (such as China and India, termed non-Annex B countries). In response, the US Senate passed the “Byrd-Hagel Resolution”, which effectively drew a line in the sand, stating that the US would not adopt any climate treaty that exempted developing nations. As a result, the US became the only major country not to ratify the treaty.

When it came time to develop an updated climate treaty in December, 2009, in Copenhagen, the relative responsibilities of developing and developed countries again proved to be a major sticking point. Ultimately a compromise of sorts was reached. The Copenhagen Accord, asserts that China and other major developing countries are part of the treaty, but falls short of articulating exactly what role they should ultimately play.

These issues are not just idle curiosities. In a recent opinion piece (dated April 7, 2010), *New York Times* Dot Earth blogger Andrew Revkin wrote,

If countries like China and India follow the American pattern in transportation, ballooning demand for oil is bound to be a disruptive influence on world affairs with or without the climate impact of all those additional emissions of greenhouse gases. Think of it this way; the United States, with 307 million (heading toward 400 million) people, now consumes nearly 20 million barrels a day; India, with more than 1.1 billion people, is barely in first gear, currently using 2.67 million barrels of oil but poised for vastly increased demand. Add in projections of car use in China and you see why status-quo fuel choices don't hold up.

Write a careful discussion explaining how the Copenhagen Accord attempts to address the needs of both developed and developing countries. What are its potential shortcomings? What strategies should be considered in future climate negotiations in order to best meet the needs of all parties to the negotiation? (We ask for no more than 250 words for this assignment.) Please also come prepared to discuss this topic.

Before doing this assignment you will want to be sure to complete the assigned reading by Elliot Diringer of the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, and you may find it helpful to look at some of the other articles we have posted on the website for this assignment.