

# THE DAILY CALLER

## The Paris Climate Deal: Is That All You Get For Your Money?

Patrick Michaels

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It began with ministerial pomp and circumstance and ended with a great celebration of victory. But, after all has been said and done, absolutely nothing has changed.

That's the sum and substance of the Paris climate agreement reached on Saturday.

How long will it be before leaders of the environmental community who thronged the Paris climate summit realize that they have been taken for a ride by a legacy-consumed President? He talked a good line about Paris, all the while knowing that anything binding the U.S. to concrete emissions targets and timetables turns an "executive agreement" into a treaty, requiring a two-thirds vote of the Senate for adoption, something that will never happen. As a result, the Paris agreement was always destined to be sheer pap, an "aspirational" document with precious little substance.

Yet, *New York Magazine* says "the Paris climate deal is President Obama's biggest accomplishment."

The Paris agreement — with no enforcement mechanism whatsoever — asks the nations of the world to state their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to greenhouse-gas emissions reductions every five years. These are purely voluntary. This go-round, for example, India, one of the top three emitters, volunteered to do less than they have done in recent years. Last year, China said it "intends" to hold its emissions constant somewhere "around" 2030. It's been long known that this would happen, with or without Paris, as their manufacturing economy matures.

Environmentalists are taking to heart that the actual agreement section of the Paris document requires that each new INDC "will represent a progression beyond" the previous one. This could simply mean extending existing environmental policies another five years. And if some countries don't "progress," what's the UN going to do?

Not much. Secretary of State John Kerry had an idea on *Meet the Press*, proposing "shaming" those who don't go along, which he said is "the most powerful weapon" we have. I'm sure Vladimir Putin will really be hurt when it is discovered that Russia cares not a whit about

atmospheric carbon dioxide. And shame on you, Danny Ortega from Nicaragua, your country didn't even turn in an INDC. Take *that!*

“Shaming” is all the Environmental Defense Fund (2014 budget: \$120,500,000), Natural Resources Defense Council (\$106,000,000), and the Sierra Club (\$100,000,000) got for their contributors. They devoted considerable portions of those budgets to Paris, and spent tremendous resources in praise of the president's plans.

Presumably they assured their supporters that all their representatives in Paris were going to be a bit more influential. Paris was supposed to be a deal that would seriously slow down the planet's (torpid) warming. Instead, they got nothing. My Cato Institute colleague Paul Knappenberger testified to a House hearing on the Paris summit last month, explaining that if all nations lived up to their INDCs (they won't), and continued to do so through 2100 (they won't), the global warming result would be barely different than simply business-as-usual with no INDCs.

But there were the delegates, on Saturday evening in Paris, popping champagne as if the latest five year plans (the INDCs) will bring about the final victory.

The environmental groups that spent so much and got so little are the ones that should be crying “shame.”

*Patrick J. Michaels is the director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute.*