**The Paris agreement vs. the world future**

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December 23, 2020

The climate change is here, and we, humans, are well aware of it; but the national interests and fear of losing the momentum of economic growth are not letting us to see the harsh facts. The only way to lessen the speed of global warming was structured in an agreement that was pledged to be followed in beginning but shattered afterwards.

We are alluding to the “Paris Agreement of 2015”. It was pledged by world leaders to keep the world temperature below 2C, as suggested in the agreement, by adopting some measures, like shifting to renewable energy. Later on, almost 5 years of adopting the agreement, the world leaders have either failed to hit the benchmark or backed off from the agreement.

The signs of global warming are everywhere. Be it, the intense drought conditions in Africa or the Colder Europe than Artic region, be it, frequent floods in South Asia or extreme bush fire blazing the forests across the whole of Australia, and most of all, the rising sea level that is threatening island nations such as Maldives and small nations in Oceania region. Keeping these catastrophic incidents in minds, The United Nations drafted the binding treaty to make the world leaders agree on some climate friendly policies which may help to bring things back to normal.

China’s commitment to the Agreement is more important than any other nation, as it emits more greenhouse house gases than the U.S and European Union combined.

The Paris Peace Agreement was adopted at COP21 in Paris, in December 2015. It is legally binding treaty under International law, with a goal to limit the global warming under 2C\*, if possible to 1.5C\* by adopting some socio-economic measures. We can readily quote two instances including shifting to Renewable source of energy from non-renewable sources and reducing the emission of greenhouse gases. This Agreement works on 5-year cycle of firm climate actions carried out by states – and the first report was set to be submitted this year, 2020.

This was, indeed, a landmark treaty, the first of its kind. Because, there have been many meetings of the UNO on climate issue but no binding accord was drafted before.

The Paris Peace Agreement is the first binding contract that brought all the nations to a common cause to adopt policies to mitigate the climate catastrophe. But, as said by International Relations scholar Hans J. Morgenthau “International Politics is a struggle of power.” In this environment of struggle, no nation would agree to surrender its national interests for the future of the whole world.

Just after a year and a half of the Agreement, the world’s biggest economy and second biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, The United States, announced its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. The US president, Donald Trump, announced in June 2017, the US withdrawal crudely remarking that “because of the unfair economic burden imposed on American workers, businesses, and taxpayers by U.S. pledges made under the Agreement”. By November 2020, the U.S became the first nation to officially leave the Agreement. The U.S. withdrawal has made other 200 signatories of the contract suspicious about climate cooperation and has created a leadership deficit in addressing the issue.

Donald Trump’s presidency has been catastrophic for the U.S’ role as the leader of the world. By withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, the U.S. has given China the upper hand to play leadership role in global efforts against climate change.

China, the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2060. Chinese President Xi Jinping, in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly, asserted that China would enhance its efforts to adopt vigorous policies and measures to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. Such avowal show the China’s commitment to the Agreement as well as to safe, secure and better future.

But, a thing to consider here is that, would China, by any means, try to attain the carbon neutrality by 2060? Owing to trade war with the U.S., there is already a sign of economic slowdown in China. Most probably, China would go for renewable energy
infrastructure due to some reasons.

Firstly, keeping in view the declaration of Chinese leader in mind, China is standing firm on its commitment to fight the climate change; secondly, due to China’s vulnerability to climate change. An assessment carried out on China’s vulnerability to climate change by the World Bank in 2019 shows some drastic facts. According to the report, China is ranked 67 th out of 191 in disaster risk levels – 13 th in terms of exposure to floods, and 6 th in terms of exposure to tropical cyclones. Another study published by National Academy of Science Journal showed that the annual loss of China owing to drought was about $7 billion between 1984 to 2017 but this could reach to $47 billion annually if the planet’s temperature is raised to 1.5C, and it would touch $80 billion if World fails to keep the temperature below 2C.

Lastly, acquiring good image on the world stage is another factor that is pushing China towards achieving its climate goals. For now, China is, mostly, known to the world for its authoritarian form of government, as debt trapper and the disputes that it is having with many of its neighbor. But standing firm on its obligations to fight climate change is enhancing the image of China as a credible leader which can be relied on in Post-US world order.

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By and large, the Paris Peace Agreement is the only way to secure the world’s future. Going against the Mother Nature to attain some national interests and economic prosperity will be catastrophic, not only for big polluters like the U.S and China but for whole world together, because global warming knows no borders. We, humans, have to change our world for a better future; otherwise, the global warming would change it for us, but in a good way.