
THE UNITED STATES DECIDES TO LEAVE THE PARIS AGREEMENT – CRISIS OR OPPORTUNITY?

Introduction

On June 1, 2017, President Trump announced that the United States (US) would be leaving the Paris agreement¹, a global commitment by 195 countries to combat climate change (the Paris agreement). The President's comment during the announcement, "I represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris" illustrated a nationalistic approach to a global issue affecting humankind. The decision rejected scientific, corporate, religious and international calls to address the threat of climate change. The President adopted both a nationalistic and self-focused position isolating the US from other countries of the world.² His campaign promise of "America First" may have the result of the US losing its place as an economic and global leader.³

In this paper, climate change is treated as a world problem to which human activity has contributed although it is recognized that this position is not accepted by all people. The paper provides information about the background leading to the Paris agreement, objectives adopted to limit CO2 emissions and global warming and responses to President Trump's decision. It also reviews impacts of the decision and avenues for the future including possible conflicts over oil and natural gas resources.

One cannot predict what will happen during the resident's four-year mandate or the future of the Paris agreement. The President's decision may have two consequences, the first being that it has closed the door to the United States fulfilling climate change commitments made in 2015, the second being that it has opened the door for a change in world order, the change not based on the

voice of one person or one empire but on the collective voices of world leaders and global citizens.⁴

COP 21- Climate Change Awareness and Background Leading to the Paris Agreement

The Paris agreement is the result of an international collective process guided by the United Nations (UN). The first world climate conference was held in 1979⁵ in Geneva when specialists from different disciplines met to discuss matters regarding climate variability and the contribution of humans to modification of the climate. The meeting recognized how climate change will affect the lives of people throughout the world and the need for an international forum in which technical information on these issues could be shared and agreements on handling climate change could be fostered. This conference set the stage for international engagement to address climate change.

Additional meetings were held during the 1980s with a second world climate conference in 1990 involving the UN Environmental Protection Committee.⁶ While the parties did not set specific targets to limit CO2 emissions at the 1990 conference, they discussed principles that were subsequently adopted as part of the UN Climate Change Convention.⁷ One example is the decision that climate change is “a common concern of humankind”. Other matters included recognition of the need for equity and that countries should have different responsibilities based on their levels of development and contribution to climate change. Also in 1990, the UN started treaty negotiations on climate change using the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change. Meetings were convened in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro

when the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed by 154 states, including the European Council.⁸

Also of importance in 1990 was that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the body established to review the state of existing knowledge on environmental, economic and social aspects of climate change, issued its first report. Following a thorough review of worldwide scientific and technical material, its findings confirmed the scientific evidence of climate change. The IPCC published its second and third reports in 1995 and 2001, continuing to provide information on humankind's impact on climate change and setting up matters for funding and tools for adaptation to climate change.

The IPCC's 2014 report tied the scientific research together, the report indicating,

[i]n most scenarios without additional mitigation efforts...warming is more likely than not to exceed 4 degrees [7degrees F] above pre-industrial levels by 2100. The risks associated with temperatures at or above 4 degrees include substantial species extinction, global and regional food insecurity, consequential constraints on common human activities, and limited potential for adaptation ...⁹

COP meetings continued to address climate change with notable meetings in Berlin in 1995, Geneva in 1996 and Kyoto, Japan in 1997. At the Kyoto conference, industrialized countries negotiated the Kyoto protocol which set targets for emission reduction and timetables for this reduction. It is interesting to note that the United States, one of the developed countries, did not sign the protocol.¹⁰

COP meetings entered the 21st century with a continued need to address methods for nations to engage in reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. COP meetings sought international

commitment, particularly from the US and emitters in the developing world such as China.¹¹ COP conferences sought to obtain funding, developed technology transfer, reviewed methods for adaptation, and called for action programs.¹² A considerable amount of work was done in a short period of time, laying the groundwork for the Paris COP21 conference in 2015.¹³

The agreement reached at the COP21 conference is simple and clear. The decision made by UN parties was to address climate change by keeping global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. In addition, the agreement recognized the need to deal with ongoing climate change impacts and strengthen methods to deal with these impacts.¹⁴

The COP21 agreement brought world leaders from diverse backgrounds together to face a common global concern. The commitment made by the US in 2015 is illustrated by the comments of President Obama to the American people following the conference. In an address from the White House, President Obama stated:¹⁵

In my first inaugural address, I committed this country to the tireless task of combating climate change and protecting this planet for future generations.

Two weeks ago, in Paris, I said before the world that we needed a strong global agreement to accomplish this goal – an enduring agreement that reduces global carbon pollution and sets the world on a course to a low-carbon future.

A few hours ago, we succeeded. We came together around the strong agreement the world needed. We met the moment.

These statements charted what was planned as the role of the US on the road to fight climate change. Less than two years later that role changed dramatically.

US President Trump and the Paris agreement

On November 8, 2016, it was announced that Donald Trump had won the US Presidential election.¹⁶ The President outlined his vision for the US in his inaugural address, a vision different from that of President Obama. Selected parts of the inaugural address of President Trump are set out below showing this vision:

(...) From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this moment on, it's going to be America First. Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families.

We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength. I will fight for you with every breath in my body – and I will never, ever let you down. America will start winning again, winning like never before. (...)

So, to all Americans, in every city near and far, small and large, from mountain to mountain, and from ocean to ocean, hear these words: You will never be ignored again. Your voice, your hopes, and your dreams, will define our American destiny. And your courage and goodness and love will forever guide us along the way. Together, We Will Make America Strong Again.

We Will Make America Wealthy Again. We Will Make America Proud Again. We Will Make America Safe Again. And, Yes, Together, We Will Make America Great Again. (...)¹⁷

Despite calls for President Trump to maintain the commitment of the US that President Obama made in Paris in 2015, President Trump followed a different route.¹⁸ His announcement as to how he would deal with the Paris agreement as made on June 1, 2017 and was bold and direct, “We’re Getting Out.”¹⁹ There was no diplomacy or cushioning to indicate what, if any, elements of the COP21 treaty would be respected or re-negotiated by the US. World citizens

were left with the message that the US, one of the world's highest CO2 emitters, was leaving the Paris agreement.²⁰

The President's reasons for leaving the agreement were not complex and reflected a business style, "it is not a good deal for America". The statement of "America First" was reiterated and it was indicated by President Trump that he would attempt to renegotiate the "deal". For the President, the Paris agreement is a business transaction.

The COP22 conference, held in Marrakech, Morocco in 2016, shows uncertainty by UN party delegates as to the position the US would take regarding the Paris agreement. Actions taken by US representatives illustrated this uncertainty with attempts made to consolidate the results of the Paris agreement.²¹

The next COP conference, COP23, is scheduled to be held in Bonn, in 2017. Now knowing the US position, it will be interesting to see how UN parties and US representatives continue to address climate change. In this regard, it is useful to point out that the UN proceeded with climate change initiatives despite the US not ratifying the Kyoto protocol.²² The collective efforts of a group such as the UN can have significant impact on global issues such as climate change where countries cooperate to share information, ideas and resources. Countries which isolate themselves risk losing those opportunities and benefits. As well, while President Trump and the federal government have taken the position that the US will withdraw from the Paris agreement, US states and cities have not adopted this position. Information shows that several American states will be attending the COP23 conference to express commitment to the Paris agreement and to show actions taken by their states to comply with the agreement.²³ Similar information has been obtained regarding US cities.²⁴

Responses to the President's Decision

Responses from world leaders show that the President's decision was not well received.²⁵ Countries such as Canada, France, Spain and Germany voiced their dissatisfaction with the President's decision. The scope of negative responses to the decision is wide and includes cultural, educational, ethnic and community groups. As well, religious leaders and indigenous groups in the US are shown to have reacted negatively to the decision.²⁶ It is important to remember that the US President and federal government do not reflect all voices in the US. States, cities, municipalities, corporations, and citizens can express their own positions.²⁷

Research shows that the President will follow the withdrawal approach set out in section 28 of the COP21 agreement. This means that the withdrawal date will be November 4, 2020, one day after the next US presidential election.²⁸ This allows the President time to take steps to follow his vision prior to final withdrawal from the Paris agreement. While research shows that other options to withdraw were available, material obtained indicates that the President will follow the section 28 process.²⁹

During the period of withdrawal from the Paris agreement, the US is required to report its CO2 emissions. This situation is complicated by the contradictory approaches being taken in the US. From information gathered, it is shown that some parts of the US government continue a commitment to lower CO2 emissions as do several major US corporations. In contrast, the President and federal government agencies have taken steps to advance the use of fossil fuel products by approval of coal extraction operations and oil and gas pipeline projects.³⁰ As a result, one must wait to see how the situation in the US unfolds over the next four years.³¹

Given that the US is a democratic country, it is of interest how dissatisfaction with President Trump's decision will be reflected in the next election. As well, it will be important to follow steps taken during the President's mandate in response to his decision. For example, it has been suggested that sanctions may be imposed on trade with the US and more protests of President Trump's decision and actions will take place.³²

Impacts: America First or America Isolated?

This paper looks at the impacts of the decision to leave the Paris agreement from two perspectives, the first being how environmental and climate change issues are being handled on a national scale and the second, how this impacts the Paris agreement.

Within the first six months of his mandate, the President, working with the head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), instructed changes be made to the EPA that weaken the agency's ability to respond to environmental concerns and to follow its environmental protection mandate.³³ In a National Geographic article, authors of the article provide information that the head of the EPA has taken a position challenging whether carbon dioxide emissions from human activity are a cause of climate change and the article indicates that he has asked Congress to review whether CO2 should be regulated.³⁴ Thus, the President and his administration are approaching climate change and environmental issues from a different perspective than that of the IPCC and parties to the Paris agreement.³⁵

This perspective is explained by information showing the significant contributions made by oil, natural gas and coal industries to support the President's Inaugural address. Records show he received \$107 million in donations, largely from fossil fuel companies, for the inaugural ceremony.³⁶

Material shows that the President's approach involves cancelling regulations considered to be an impediment to business interests. His signing of an Executive Order and attendance at the Environmental Protection Agency in March 2017, is reported to put this policy in place and start the deregulation process. It is said that this was a reward to fossil fuel industry representatives for their support.³⁷

The authors of the National Geographic article, previously referred to, set out activities that impact both US domestic policy and the Paris agreement. They write that:

[t]he proposed budget, titled "A New Foundation for American Greatness," slashes the Environmental Protection Agency's budget by 31 percent – a steeper cut than any other agency. Those cuts could translate into a \$2.7 billion spending reduction and the loss of 3,200 jobs, according to an analysis by the World Resources Institute. The proposed budget eliminates major programs to restore the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, and Puget Sound. It ends the EPA's lead-risk reduction and radon detection programs and cuts funding for the Superfund clean-up program.

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News reports also indicate that the EPA has been asked to re-write its regulations to dismantle much of what President Obama created to support lowering carbon dioxide emissions.³⁹ This will have direct impact on the objectives of the Paris agreement. In addition, information sets out that the EPA has been instructed to rewrite its website to change information provided to young people relating to climate change.⁴⁰ One cannot comment on these instructions without further detail being provided as to the original site and instructed changes. While it is not unusual for new political administrations to promote their views, concerns have been raised as to the nature of the changes made by the President and his administration. In a report for Politico, news reporters Restuccia and Cook, expressed these concerns.⁴¹

Much of Trump's rollback is an aggressive repudiation of one of Obama's proudest legacies, his crusade to enlist the U.S. in the fight against climate change. Trump signed off on congressional actions that used a seldom-invoked 1996 law to block four energy-related rules, including an anti-corruption regulation that required oil and gas companies to disclose their payments to foreign governments. He has also ordered the EPA to review — and most likely rescind — two sweeping Obama-era rules, one restricting power plants' greenhouse gas pollution and one spelling out Clean Water Act protections for wetlands and waterways.

Also of significance is information regarding the dismissal of environmental scientists at the EPA who had played a supervising role and provided counsel on research done by EPA research scientists. This move has been criticised as reducing the credibility of work done by the agency. Some people argue, however, that this change will open the EPA to applicants from diverse backgrounds. Research shows that the head of the EPA has taken the position that the objective is to open employment opportunities at the EPA and to allow people from the industries being regulated apply for these positions.⁴² Given conflict of interest, this is a questionable objective.

Information also shows that the Interior Secretary, Ryan Zilke, has been instructed to review the mandate of federal advisory boards, committees and other entities both inside and outside his department with a view considering their "charter and charge".⁴³ It is submitted that this instruction is nebulous unless the purpose has been privately provided to Zilke by the President or others in his administration. It is necessary to review how Zilke interprets the order to determine how it impacts activities to monitor CO2 emissions in accordance with the Paris agreement.

The following list has been compiled from material in the National Geographic article to show matters that impact the Paris agreement:⁴⁴

1. *President's Announcement of Withdrawal from Paris Agreement (June 1, 2017).*
2. *Order to expand offshore drilling (April 28, 2017).*

3. Order (EPA and Interior) that climate actions be undone.
4. Rewrite Climate Change Material on Websites.
5. Dakota Access Pipeline Prepared for Use (March 27, 2017).
6. Keystone Pipeline Approved (March 27, 2017).
7. Science and Environmental Budget material.
8. EPA Withdraws Obama EPA request for more detailed information from oil and gas facilities to track industry's methane and volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions.

From this and other information, one can say that six months of the President's mandate show that steps have been taken to promote activities contrary to the objectives of the Paris agreement. This includes perks provided to fossil fuel industries and concerted efforts to dismantle protections provided by the EPA and its agencies. Material reviewed shows that the President and his administration cannot be said to have adopted a neutral approach on the matter of climate change.

The President's activities cause one to pose the question; where will these activities lead? It is submitted that matters of accountability, recognition of citizen's rights and freedom of the press assist in answering this question. As shown by material accessed for preparation of this essay, journalism and news reports in the US and around the world have shown that world leaders and global citizens as well as a considerable number of US citizens have voiced negative responses to the President Trump's decision. That being the case, steps are being taken to follow the President's decision. The matter now to be addressed is what impacts the decision will have on the objectives of the Paris agreement, a matter that will need to be followed during the next four years.

Current Resource War Disputes

Based on material presented in this paper, the US President appears to be following the economic and political model of pursuing wealth and power based on the extraction and use of fossil fuel resources. Michael Klare, in his book, *Resource Wars*, indicates that this approach has been used by the US in several locations around the world including the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea Basin. As part of this model, security is required to protect the resources and methods used for their transport.⁴⁵

Current events show the situation now involves the South China Sea region which Klare comments to be one of the most dangerous areas of the world.⁴⁶ It is interesting that the US is involved in events in this region. While the presence of the US in this area is related to providing security for oil and gas trade routes, it is submitted that, along with its allies, it may also have an interest in profiting from oil and natural gas resources in the area.

When reviewing energy geopolitics in Asia, Klare indicates that much of current energy use relies on imported energy from the Persian Gulf and other regions making development of oil from the South China sea important. Nations are protecting their offshore territories by making claims to locations in the South China Sea.⁴⁷ Klare indicates that the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ's), cover coastal waters two hundred miles from the country's shoreline and that these zones overlap with one another resulting in conflicts between resource claims in the region.⁴⁸ Nations, including China and Indonesia are seeking access to undersea reserves to diminish their need to rely on importing oil and natural gas.⁴⁹ There are also competing claims for control of the Spratly archipelago by mainland China, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines. This region is an area with abundant oil and natural gas resources. Klare also shows that nations

such as Japan and South Korea, dependent on supplies of fossil fuels produced elsewhere, are interested in preventing threats to the constant flow of resources to their nations.

Klare indicates the claims to land areas in the South China Sea and interest in protecting sea routes are likely to be a source of conflict. He shows that military clashes have already taken place in the region including an incident between China and the Philippines as to control of Mischief Reef. As shown in a recent BBC News report,⁵⁰ that conflict involves the US which is said to be challenging the Chinese claim to the area. This conflict impacts the Paris agreement as it relates to the quest for exploration, extraction and use of fossil fuel resources, one of the main reasons behind the conflict.⁵¹ Neil Conner, in an article for the Telegraph, writes of an event that took place at the beginning of President Trump's mandate showing the tensions in the area. A US warship, said to be exercising its freedom of navigation patrol, was warned by the Chinese to leave waters near a disputed region in the Spratly archipelago.

The USS Dewey sailed close to Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands, one of a string of islets, shoals and reefs that China claims in the resource rich and strategically important waters, US officials said. The patrol provoked an angry response from China, which observers say is developing its military capabilities on the tiny land formations.

This article supports the position Klare has taken in his review of the South China Sea region and concern about conflicts that may arise from the use of military force for resolution of the conflicts.

Research for this paper shows that although China has been denied its claim to the region by the Permanent Court of Arbitration of The Hague, it has refused to accept the ruling.⁵² Thus, the concern that Klare raised is ongoing as to how these conflicts will be dealt with.⁵³ The suggestion that the Permanent Court of Arbitration may be asked to impose stricter measures

against China.⁵⁴ The question arises as to whether the US will become involved and what relationship it will take regarding the Philippines. An article written in 1996 provides useful information as to the interaction of China, the Philippines and the United States regarding Mischief Reef, however, the situation needs to be updated to deal with the current situation.⁵⁵

The impact on the Paris Agreement is that pursuit of fossil fuel resources by China and other nations, including the US through its allies, may have a negative impact of the Paris agreement with increase in CO2 emissions should fossil fuel resources be extracted and used. President Trump's decision that the US leave the Paris agreement may impact how allies, such as the Philippines, approach the agreement. China, who currently has installations in the region, remains part of the Paris agreement but again it is necessary to review how China will deal with any use of natural resources from the region.

Also, important in reviewing the situation in the South China Sea is the US policy dealing with trade routes for shipping of fossil fuel resources. It is shown, by Klare, that in 1995, the representative for the US Secretary of State of Defense stated that a threat to the sea lanes in the South China Sea was a threat to American interests and he warned against any unilateral use of force by claimants to the Spratly archipelago. Klare indicates this message was restated in 1999 with the intention of showing China its importance. While this relates to shipping oil from the Persian Gulf and other areas, US involvement and support for any of the claimants to the Spratly archipelago raises the risk of conflict.

Klare also provides information to show how Japan is working with the US to achieve free flow of shipping in the area, noting an agreement made in 1997, *Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation*. This agreement is said by Klare to lay the foundation for joint military

action in the South China Sea region should conflict arise over the Spratly archipelago or other locations.⁵⁶

Klare's review of the policy of the US in dealing with resource rich areas shows that the objective of the US has been to enter these areas seeking to manage their geological and political landscapes.⁵⁷ His review of Operation CENRAZBAT in 1997 and a follow up of the same operation in 1998 shows that the objective of the US is to travel to whatever location holds vast reserves of oil and gas and ensure these resources are extracted and transported to locations the US has chosen, in order to supply and provide profit to the US and other Western European countries. It is recognized that the US has no claim to the resources in the South China Sea area, but its potential allies do. President Trump cannot be said to be the first president who focused on the importance of the interests of the United States. During his tenure, US President Bill Clinton stated, "[p]rosperity at home depends on stability in key regions with which we trade and from which we import critical commodities, such as oil and natural gas."⁵⁸

During the time of the Obama Presidency, given the President's commitment to combatting climate change, the question could have been asked whether the US policy had changed? From material reviewed for this essay, it appears that the present US administration, given its decision to leave the Paris agreement and its activities to promote the fossil fuel industry, is following past policies to engage in trade with areas possessing critical commodities of oil and gas. Should this be the case there will be significant impact on the objectives of the Paris agreement.

Avenues for a new world vision

Adopting an approach that focuses on "America First" is misguided if the IPCC information and the parties to the Paris agreement are correct in their assessment of the world climate change

situation. Should that be the case, given material set out in this paper, the chance of survival for future generations will require a concerted effort be made by all nations to limit the use of fossil fuel. As well, a vision of “America First” does not meet the reality of the twenty-first century given globalization, internet technology, and human migration taking place in the twenty-first century. Further, promotion of the concept of the “American dream”, has been said not to be sound policy for the wellbeing of most American people.⁵⁹

Should the IPCC and parties to the Paris agreement be correct, seeking to exploit natural resources and controlling their transport routes, is neither in the best interests of the US or global society.⁶⁰ Research from Klare’s *Resource Wars*, supports the position that economic and political policies for use of the world’s natural resources need to be revised to recognize the need for co-operation by countries in managing these resources.⁶¹

An alternative vision, one of economic growth and strength for the United States can be understood if the IPCC and the parties to the Paris agreement are wrong. This would then require a reassessment of the role the US would play in dealing fairly with the world’s natural resources.

Research for this paper on fossil fuel extraction and climate change found what can be said to be the worst-case scenario humankind may face should people continue extraction and use of fossil fuel. In an article written in 2007 in the journal *Grist*, global warming was compared to the holocaust. The author, David Frost, used material from the testimony of a man who appeared before the Iowa Public Utilities Board. In his testimony to the Board, the man stated:

[i]f we cannot stop the building of more coal-fired power plants, those coal trains will be death trains — no less gruesome than if they were boxcars headed to crematoria, loaded with uncountable irreplaceable species.⁶²

One recognizes the strength of this metaphor. Little more needs to be said apart from reviewing another threat people have created, that of nuclear weapons. Given that countries now have the capability of waging nuclear war, the need for calm and reserve is required by states and their leaders as the threat of nuclear war seems a high a price to pay to claiming rights to fossil fuel reserves for people coveting economic benefits that will flow from their extraction and use.

Adopting a positive perspective on these issues, it may be possible to reshape world order to combat climate change and overpopulation. In support of this perspective one sees that China and Russia, both of whom have interests in the extraction of fossil fuels, remain in the Paris agreement. Both have accepted the need to address climate change, agreeing to have their activities reviewed by other world nations. Similarly, it has been recognized that the problem of overpopulation needs to be addressed as part of the Climate Change problem. China is looking for ways to address the problem as is Africa,⁶³ India⁶⁴ and other countries.⁶⁵

Unlike China, Russia and countries in the Paris agreement, the position of the US has summarized by the authors of the National Geographic article:⁶⁶

As part of the accord, the U.S. had agreed to cut its emissions between 26 and 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025. In abandoning that promise, the U.S. effectively cedes leadership on the issue to other countries, including the world's top emitter, China. Chinese President Xi Jinping has stood by the agreement in the face of a wavering U.S., calling it a "hard-won achievement" that should be honored. Still, plummeting prices for wind and solar energy and corporations' support of clean energy are among the reasons why climate progress will likely continue.

A book recently published, author Naomi Klein, indicates that saying 'no' is not enough in response to President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement. She opines that

people need to unite in their opposition to his decision and the policies that he is adopting. She writes,

Trump's disaster capitalists control a very powerful part of the US government – but they do not control everything. They do not control what cities and states do. (...) They do not control what universities and faith institutions and unions do. (...) They do not control what other sovereign nations do...⁶⁷

As previously set out in this paper, her comment is supported by the fact that representatives of US States and cities will be attending the COP23 conference to express commitment to the Paris agreement.⁶⁸ Information has also been obtained to show that the COP23 conference will be convening a special session to discuss the involvement of regions and cities following the objectives of the Paris agreement.⁶⁹

A concern for the Paris agreement is the conflict that is taking place to protect claims to the resource rich areas in the South China Sea. This gives rise to the search for an international dispute resolution forum that will be respected by all parties. As shown, military options are no longer the way to resolve disputes given the danger of nuclear war. While this paper will not advance the type of dispute resolution method or methods that should be adopted, it is pointed out that dispute resolution is required not only to avoid military conflict but to fairly distribute territorial and resource claims in a manner that will be in accordance with the objectives of the Paris agreement. Whether this will be international or regional forums remains to be seen, noting that China has recently taken steps to deal with conflict resolution using a regional model for Asia as opposed to using the UN's international models.⁷⁰

An additional point in moving forward with the climate change agenda has been made by English academic, Julie Doyle, when explaining the need to ensure that media coverage about

climate change and the Paris agreement is meaningful and accessible to the public. She points out that information must reach people and have impact on their concerns. Her book, *Mediating Climate Change*, written prior to US President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris agreement, sets out information about how images, positive and negative, can make climate change real to people.⁷¹

Conclusion

One cannot predict what will happen on the US political landscape during the next four years or the future of the Paris agreement. On one hand, failure of UN parties to meet commitments made in the Paris agreement is likely to have dire consequences for bio-diversity of the planet if the IPCC is correct in its analysis. The shock of the US decision to leave the Paris agreement may, however, inspire people throughout the world to recognize the importance of addressing climate change and international efforts of the UN, world nations, regions and cities to combat climate change will continue. In this case, US President Trump can be commended for providing the impetus necessary to jolt people out of a state of complacency and fairy-tale belief that a benevolent ruler or scientific fix can solve the climate change problem.

Should the US President and climate change deniers be correct, people will have time to reshape their world to build a method for the limited supply of fossil fuel natural resources. If they are not correct, people will need to continue to combat climate change and its impacts. As shown by material in the essay, the decision of the US President to leave the Paris agreement has been responded to negatively by people in the US, leaders of other countries and world citizens. If the collective voices of these people are followed, it may be that the US President's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement will become a footnote in the history of combatting

climate change in the twenty-first century.⁷² Should that not be the case, the situation appears dire and people will live for as much time as the climate permits.

Notes

¹ In this paper, the United Nations Conference of the Parties, dealing with climate change, is referred to as COP. COP21, took place in Paris in 2015, becoming effective that year.

² Naomi, Klein, *No is Not Enough. Resisting Trump's Shock Politics and Wining the World We Need* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017), 35-45.

³ Noam Chomsky, *Requiem for the American Dream: The 10 Principles of Concentration of Wealth & Power*, Ed. Hutchison, Peter, Nyks, Kelly & Scott Jared P (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2017), 143-150.

⁴ Julie Doyle, *Mediating Climate Change* (Routledge: Oxfordshire, 2016), Epilogue, 157-158.

⁵ World Metrological Organization, accessed on August 2017,
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0003/000376/037648eb.pdf>.

⁶ Climate Change Information Sheet 17, accessed on August 2, 2017,
<http://unfccc.int/cop3/fccc/climate/fact17.htm>.

⁷ United Nations Framework on Climate Change, (UNFCCC), accessed in August 5, 2017,
http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/items/6036.php.

⁸ Joseph Romm, *Climate Change What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 149-151.

⁹ Ibid. 137.

¹⁰ Ibid. 150.

¹¹ Ibid.150-51.

¹² Climate Change Information Sheet 17, accessed on August 2, 2017,
<http://unfccc.int/cop3/fccc/climate/fact17.htm>.

¹³ United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC), accessed on August 2, 2017, http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/6031.php, Jonathan Ellis, “The Paris Climate Deal: What You Need to Know”, June 1, 2017, accessed on July 29, 2017,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/climate/paris-climate-change-guide.html?mcubz=0>

¹⁴ United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC), accessed on August 2, 2017,

http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/6031.php.

¹⁵ President Barack Obama, Press Office, Dec. 12, 2015, The White House, accessed on August 3, 2017,

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/12/statement-president-paris-climate-agreement>.

¹⁶ Anthony Zucker, “US Election 2016 Results: Five Reasons Donald Trump Won”, accessed on August 4, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-37918303>.

¹⁷ President Donald J. Trump, inaugural address, Friday, January, 20, 2017, Washington D.C., accessed on August 8, 2017.

¹⁸ Mark Landler and Jason Horowitz, “With Gift and in Conversation, Vatican Presses Trump on Climate Change”, New York Times, May, 24, 2017, accessed on August 4, 2017,

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