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Politics of Climate Change: A Comparative Study of the Chinese and the US Responses

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Abstract:

The climate change has menacingly threatened the environmental system due to emission of greenhouse gasses. On the other hand, the world's economic infrastructure mostly has a carbon economy that could collapse if carbon footprint is suddenly reduced. Due to the inverse relationship between economic interests and climate change, states are not taking climate catastrophe seriously. Countries like China and the US, with significant footprints of carbon in the world, have manipulated and abandoned the climate objectives for economic pursuits. Their responses towards climate change are often driven by their narrowly conceived economic and political objectives, hindering their compliance and cooperation to tackle climate change. The study suggests two points: the US and China will keep relying on fossil fuels for economic objectives, and climate politics between these two countries and unwillingness on their part to share the burden have threatened both states' climate obligations. Hence, climate change can be tackled proficiently if the US and China cooperate by enhancing trust on each other to fight climate change and shift their industries and manufacturing sectors to clean energy instead of fossil fuels.

Keywords: The US, China, climate change, political economy, national interests, climate politics

INTRODUCTION

Whereas the ongoing climate change has hazardously threatened the environmental system, man-made efforts are not enough to combat climate change and its nature of destruction (Geden, 2016; Clémençon, 2016; Frantz and Mayer, 2009). In the IPCC report of 2004, it is unequivocally said that scientific consensus assessed that climate change became a harmful factor for the earth due to human activities (Oreskes, 2004). Moreover, it is mentioned in the fifth IPPC (2013-14) that man-made climate change affected the planet (Vogler, 2008; Rosenzweig, et al., 2008). On the other hand, the world's economic infrastructure, which is mostly dependent on the carbon economy, could collapse if carbon emissions are immediately halted. Due to this paradoxical relationship between economic interests and environment, countries are not giving painstaking attention to climate change and environmental degradation (Newell, & Simms, 2020; Paterson, 2020).

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Though UNFCCC arranges COP summits in various countries encouraging states to meet climate goals (Mitchell, & Deane, 2009), states are not fulfilling commitments of environmental agreements. In 1997, the COP3 summit in Japan gave targets to states reducing carbon emission under Kyoto Protocol. This Protocol came into force in 2005 due toa strategic tussle between the US and Russia. The Kyoto Protocol is considered as the first comprehensive Protocol on account of gritty decisions taken by the representatives of states, but this summit failed due to lack of global cooperation and weak strategy (Kutney, 2014). Furthermore, the US withdrawal from Kyoto Protocol in 2001 directly threatened the spirit ofthis Protocol (Bang, et al., 2012). Before the Paris agreement, all previous climate actions like Kyoto, Bali and Copenhagen could not provide the desired goal.

Yet the Paris agreement signed by all states stopping carbon footprint after the failure of previous accords, UN emissions gap report indicated that Earth's temperature is still rising after Paris commitments (Olhoff, & Christensen 2018). Indeed, the Paris accord was considered a diplomatic success of the UNFCCC to bring all states under the Umbrella of thisagreement (Dimitrov, 2016) and the agreement provided a great approach and strong ground for climate negotiations to stop consumption of fossil fuels (Falkner, 2016). For successful outcomes of this agreement, countries need to reduce overall reliance on fossil fuels (Alfredsson, et al. 2018).

But Countries are not complying with the agreement, even states are key actors in climate negotiations and should have to complete their responsibilities according to Paris Agreement,Paris Agreement constituted provisions to hold the global temperature below the 2 Centigrade degree and climate-related efforts to limit the temperature from increasing to 1.5 C" (Article 2), it was also aimed to stop carbon emission globally "as soon as possible" as mentioned in Accord (4.1) Article. According to the Paris accord, it is stated in article 9 that "Developed country Parties shall provide financial resources to assist developing countries" while "other Parties are encouraged" to provide such support voluntarily (Lesnikowski et al. 2017). Unfortunately, developed states violated the accord provisions by suspending economic aid assistance to poor states. Moreover, they reduced the overall climate funds not only of poor states, even cut off in states' environmental budgets. For instance, Trump deferred all climate funding to the United Nations. Especially Trump's unilateral decision to cancel Paris (Jotzo, et al. 2018).

The major objective of the study is to analyze the US and China's role in environment politics and policy at a national and foreign level and how competitive economic and political objectives between Washington and Beijing would intensify the non-cooperative behaviors towards environmental agreements. This study would unfold China and American political and economic objectives in the global climate politics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

China and Climate Change

China's foreign direct investment shockingly enhanced the carbon footprint of China as compared to the US since 2000. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) supported the building of BRI infrastructure across the world (Yu, 2017). Thus, AIIB and BRI investment increased China's reach beyond Asia. China invested in Europe, Africa and the Middle East to enhance its economic partnership globally. China's GDP was 1 trillion USD dollars at the start of the twenty-first century as compared to the US $10 trillion. In 2020, China's GDP crossed 14 trillion USD dollars as

compared to the US GDP grew by 20 trillion USD dollars (Trading economics, 2020). This comparison showed China's GDP increased astonishingly as compared to the US because of China's massive investment in the world. In short, China's GDP improved with every year on account of China's carbon consumption.

Moreover, China adopted a different strategy to tackle climate factors at home and abroad. Beijing developed renewable and solar energy projects in its own country but China's overseas investments mostly rely on fossil fuels. BRI connected China with Africa, Asia, Europe through tracks and maritime; this investment provided Chinese companies opportunity for huge investment in hosting countries. BRI states consumed nearly 41.1% global oil, 47.1% natural gas and 72.7% coal for the construction of infrastructure. This consumption has threatened the environmental system. During 2000 and 2017, "two leadingChinese banks — the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China — have invested about $225bn globally in energy", with approximately three-quarters of this going to oil, coal and gas (Mattia, 2018).

The US and Climate Change

The industrial revolution was a turning point in the ecosystem (Moore, 2017) which provided many opportunities to the US increasing its economic growth and domination. America adopted expansionist policy by controlling other states' resources, for instance, oil and petroleum resources in the Middle East. In the gulfs war, America utilized the opportunity to use the regional oil resources in exchange for the protection of the Gulf States. The American desire to control the oil possessions by handling their natural resources increased the U.S carbon footprint in the world. The US army consumed 100 million gallons of fuel in one year in militarized activities (Kramer, 2020). America's military expansion all over the world demanded more economic growth for the U.S installed military bases to extract the resources of third-world countries. So, The US carbon footprint is directly linked with its economic and military activities.

Likewise, the American-led economic order provided opportunities to other states to heightentheir carbon emissions. A competitive market economy compelled countries to manipulate the environmental agreements. Primarily. The economic demands and political objectives of Washington compelled the Trump administration to withdraw from the renowned Paris agreement. Though the leaders of the world rebuked Trump's withdrawal even his allies in the EU criticized him as well. At its core, the climate factor emerged due to economic expansionist policy. Therefore, the American-led economic order exploited the environmental system blindly without thinking about carbon footprint (Angus, 2016).

Though Capitalism boosted the economic growth in the world, it also became a cause of environmental degradation by ignoring the covet consequences of the capitalist economy (Park, 2015). Capitalist states' models have more carbon footprint as compared to those statesthat are less interested in this model. Additionally, the Economic model has a mutual link with security. Therefore, states have espoused the capitalist economic model to protect their economic interests and to defend the security threats. Likewise, the US's capitalist model hasprovided huge strength to protect the security matters and economic interests of Washington in the world. In nutshell, capitalism has urged states' economies for financial benefits by ignoring the hidden threat of climate change (Wright, & Nyberg 2015).

Environmental Politics

Due to the dubious nature of climate governance, states have many narratives about climate mitigation to manipulate environmental agendas because climate objectives threaten the states' economic plans that are dependent on fossil fuels consumption. For instance, Obama took a strong initiative to meet climate-related challenges, but Trump disengaged with climate objectives and took steps back from the Paris Accord. Trump's rhetoric during the campaign to 'end the war on coal' and 'cancel' the Paris climate agreement led most observers to worry about Trump's impact on environmental protection in the world. Trump castigated the Paris agreement without measuring the impacts of environmental degradation, which is becoming a worldwide hazard (MacNeil, & Paterson, 2020). Trump decided to remain in the usage of coal to boost the US economy and criticized climate change as a myth. The Trump Administration had mutual interests with the fossil fuel industry. Also, this industrial sector supported republican politicians in their political field.

Notably, Trump, Mike Pence and EPA official Pruitt were strongly linked with the petrochemical Koch industries (Mayer, 2017). Trump took discouraging steps for climate goals by reducing the budget of climate-related projects and expelling employees who were working for climate change. Similarly, Trump once rebuked China by tweeting "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive." Trump recently commented on the climate change report: 'I don't believe it'. Trump reprimanded the scientists by saying "have a very big political agenda". He expressed his monetary concerns related to climate change in this way "I don't know that it's manmade" and I do not want to put my nation at a disadvantage due to fabricated climate challenges. Furthermore, Trump said we need a "Fair Deal" that will be beneficial for the American people. He said other countries are also polluting the environment like China, but only the US is being criticized by environmentalists. Significantly, Trump preferred national interests over climate change. He stated that "I was elected by the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris." In negation of Paris agreement (Liptak & Acosta, 2017).

Moreover, Trump's criticism seemed like a realistic agenda. Trump said in his interview that "I don't want to give trillions and trillions of dollars and "I don't want to lose millions and millions of jobs" (Holden, 2018). According to Trump statements in the Whitehouse "A strong America is in the vital interests of not only the American people, but also those around the world who want to partner with the United States in pursuit of shared interests, values, and aspirations". Also, he stated, "A nation that does not protect prosperity at home cannot protect its interests abroad," (Whitehouse, 2017). According to Washington post newspaper headline "Trump sets out national security strategy of 'principled realism' and global competition" (Gearan, & Mufson, 2017)

Comparatively, Xi Jinping expressed his perspective about climate change in a very effective way as compared to Trump. Although China is also the biggest polluter in the world, China's leadership used dichotomy in its statements by satisfying the international community on one side and other hands, polluting the world by commencing colossal infrastructure of the economy as BRI (Hughes, 2019, 3). President Xi said that "Only by observing the laws of nature can mankind avoid costly blunders in its exploitation" and he responded in a very logical way that "Any harm we inflict on nature will eventually return to haunt us". In 2017, President Xi Jinping voiced his unequivocal commitment to the Paris Agreement and vowed to work with others (Ostka, & Zhang, 2018).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Game theory is an important theory of social sciences to understand the strategic behavior of states towards conflicts and cooperation. The two-level game theory is used to understand the decision-making process in domestic and international politics. In this study, game theory is used to analyze the state's behavior in international environmental politics (Wood, 2010).

Moreover, game theory is used to investigate the decision-making of states for environmental politics. (Wood, 2011). For instance, Kroll and Shogren used two-level games to explore the domestic constraints for international cooperation on common good goals. Similarly, Lisowski used two-level game theory to analyze president Bush's decision to Repudiate the Kyoto Protocol (Lisowski, 2002). In another case study, Fjellvang in his research "Why did Canada withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol?" used two-level game theory to analyze the Canadian government's conduct towards Kyoto Protocol (Fjellvang, 2014). By using this game theory, it is tried to investigate the decision-making process of states ratifying the international climate Agreements.

Two level games

Domestic politics play a vigorous role in the decision-making process about international issues. At a domestic level, local pressure groups demonstrate their interests to the central executive so that they can get maximum favors from the government. Similarly, the legislative body of the state affects the central decision-making process by confronting those international laws that are not in favor of the state (Wilson, 2010). The central body of state faces many constraints during decision-making for foreign issues, it could not be successful until both domestic and foreign interests are merged for national benefits. Putnam in his article "Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two level games" unfolded these interlinkages between domestic and foreign levels in central decision making to reach a stageof international resolutions (Putnam, 1988; Bang, et. al., 2005).

By applying two-level games to the current study, the US and China's strategic behaviors are examined. Both states indulged in currency war after the backlash of Donald Trump (Li, & Lin, 2018). They imposed severe restrictions on each other and frequently boycotted trade matters in the tenure of Trump. Moreover, such confrontation led both states to enhance their economic pursuits at the regional and international levels. Whereas Bush's anti-Kyoto action had influenced Canada's climate policy, China's climate motivations were affected by Trump's actions against the Paris agreement. As China posed a challenge for the world order, both states waged an economic cold war (Yongnian, & Xin, 2017). In this case, the two levelgames approach would disclose the clear picture of environmental politics between two powers by comparing their interests, policies and perspectives.

METHOD

Goodrick explained the comparative case study in his article "Comparative case studies: Methodologies Briefs-Impact Evaluation No.9" that it is a process of organized study of more than one case by fixing common goal to produce knowledge, and by simplifying causal relations on account of how and why specific policies work or fail to work (Goodrick, 2014). It is conferred that comparative design provides deep analysis about social phenomena when more than one case

study is compared (Bryman, 2016). The comparative case study is often used to measure the standards or efficiency of something by comparing two or more things.

By using a comparative research design, it examines the core points of accomplishments andfailures of China and the US towards climate policies. To examine China and the US responses, the study has included all domestic and international reports or documents that have been published by environmental forums and governments. Moreover, this study has utilized online internet sources and universities published doctoral thesis on websites.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Two-Level Games and US-China Climate Policies

According to the emission gap report 2019, America emitted 13% and China 26% of global emissions. Although China took extensive steps to decrease carbon emissions from 2014 to 2016, carbon emissions could not be halted inside the country and carbon emissions increased2.5% in the last decade and 1.6% in 2018 by surprisingly touching at 13.7 GtCO2. (Kuramochi et al., 2019, 31). Both China and the United States of America are included in the top four biggest polluters (China, EU, India and US) of the world. Therefore, the US and China's climate policies are examined at both national and international levels by using two-level games.

The US Administrative Policies and National Level Analysis

At the domestic level, American states have taken independent steps to protect the environment through a cap and trade program that has proved the most effective process to slow down pollution through emissions trading (Stokes, and Breetz, 2020). After the failureof the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (ACES), the Regional GreenhouseGas Initiative (RGGI) has reduced many emissions. RGGI is a collective struggle of US states in which Maine, New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Vermont to cut off CO2 emissions from the energy sector. Recently, Pennsylvania has joined RGGI due to its effectiveness. This initiative is very efficient to meet the Paris Agreement (Cleary, & Palmer, 2019; McDaniel, 2019).

Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) are adopted by 29 states and the District of Columbia to control pollution. RPS has become an effective climate policy inside the United States ofAmerica to produce renewable energy at a wide level. In short, it is observed that Americanstates have taken very successful initiatives to protect the environment.

On the other hand, federal governments were less efficient to protect the environment as compared to the independent collective actions of states in the US. Scott Pruitt chided this agency vociferously even though he was administrator of the United States environmental protection agency from 2017 to 2018. Rex Tillerson was former CEO of ExxonMobil and secretary of state in Trump's administration was also irritated with climate deals. In the Trump administration, Rick Perry served as US secretary of energy, Ryan Zinke served as USsecretary of the interior, Steve Bannon served as chief strategist all these administrators castigated the climate initiatives taken by the Obama administration. Mick Mulvaney served as director of the office of management and budget and called the climate budget a "waste of money". Recently, secretary of state Mike Pompeo gave a very risky and shocking statement in Finland. He said that "The Arctic is at the forefront of

opportunity and abundance" and "Arctic sea lanes could become the 21st century Suez and Panama Canals" and melting ice in the arctic region will unfold the new economic opportunities (Hansler, 2019).

Moreover, domestic and national climate politics framed the interests of political parties. In the case of the Republican Party, vice president Mike Pence and EPA Administrator Pruitt were also closely associated with Koch industries. Koch industries worked for refineries of oil and petrochemicals. The Koch industry gave a huge amount of money for the political campaign to Mike Pence throughout his politics from the governor of Indiana to Vice President of the US. Koch industries were scared due to the cap and trade bill because it "releases some twenty-four million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere a year" and it covers millions of acres of untapped oil assets in Canada including coal power plants and oilrefineries **(**Nilsen, 2017).

Similarly, Christopher Leonard argued that Koch brothers extensively funded the think-tanks to shape climate change narrative according to their own benefits by associating politics in climate change as held seminar under Koch brothers "Global Environmental Crises: Science or Politics?" (Leonard, 2019). Hence, this corporate sector framed Trump's climate politics. To protect corporate interests, Trump used executive orders to roll up the climate protection projects. The clean power plan (CPP) was especially stopped by Trump's uncaring action against the green energy program (Aldy, 2017).

Although Republicans showed antagonistic incentives for climate change, the Trump administration faced different challenges in the case of repudiation of the Paris agreement. Notably, Trump was not compelled by corporate sectors and pressure groups to cancel the Paris agreement comparatively as much as Bush was coerced to repudiate Kyoto Protocol. The CEO of ExxonMobil sent a letter to Trump to preserve the climate agreements (Crooks, 2017; Clement and Dennis 2017). Moreover, Chevron oil-based Corporation attorney Theodore Boutrous responded candidly that the company supports scientific conclusions that climate change is anthropogenic at a hearing in San Francisco federal court. It was also argued by the lawsuit in response that five major oil companies (Chevron Corp, Exxon MobilCorp, Royal Dutch Shell PLC, ConocoPhillips and BP PLC) are manipulating American people about their actual performance that is polluting the environment (Levine, 2018).

In a nutshell, Trump could have not enjoyed such support by legislative bodies to cancel the Paris agreement as compared to Bush's administration in cancellation of the Kyoto Protocol. Some scholars interpreted that Trump administration announcements related to climate change were invariable for coal growth because Obama set patterns that could not be changed easily through executive orders (Larsen et al., 2017). Besides these all explanations, Trump could not decode the importance of the Paris agreement. Thus, this myopic approach towards the green world made Trump antagonistic about Obama's climate initiatives (Liptak, & Jones, 2017).

Likewise, Trump blamed hypothetically this agreement that it would enhance unemploymentdue to the loss of the carbon economic sector and it would ruin the competitive environment. Trump's skepticism became a primary reason to take stern steps against the Paris agreement at the individual level. Secondly, the Trump administration and Republican Party members were mutually

linked with owners of carbon corporate sectors at the domestic or national level, such socioeconomic motivated relationships put the green deals at risk.

Trump's Foreign Agenda and Climate Change

At foreign level analysis, Trump misperceived the Paris agreement due to its nature of binding and declared it against American interests. According to this agreement, the major contribution from states is that they should have to take responsibility voluntarily according to their own carbon emissions and capacities in the context of nationally determined contributions (Lawrence & Wong, 2017). In this way, there are no legal punishments for states if they fail to meet with given targets. So, this leniency from the UN climate organization made many states irresponsible on account of tough economic competition between states like a trade war between the US and China**.** Such lacunas in climate obligations in the sense of voluntary responsibility enticed Trump to cancel the Paris Treaty (Betsill, 2017).

Moreover, environmentalists are also arguing for the legal status of this agreement as it struggled for the legal status of the Kyoto Protocol. Thus, the Paris agreement is still under legal discussion in scholars' interpretations. The basic intellectual debate on **"**Is the Paris Agreement a treaty?" has unfolded many hidden aspects of this accord (Busby, 2016). It is also considered that this agreement represents "voluntarily international law" that is not binding on states as compared to other treaties. Moreover, the Paris agreement language doesnot represent the language of the treaty because it seems more voluntary than binding.

Particularly, Daniel Bodansky argued that the Vienna Convention on the law of treaties (1969) provides the binding nature of a treaty in the context of *pacta sunt servanda* which forces states to be a bind for good faiths (Bodansky, 2016). Consequently, the language and binding nature of the agreement is also a factor in Trump's termination of this agreement.

Summing up, the Trump administration restructured Obama's administrative deals with China and America's climate policy. By opposing the bilateral agreement of US-China, President Trump moved in the opposite direction by rebuking China's role in climate change and reversing the clean energy deal adopted by Obama-Xi in the context of climate change (Lewis, 2017). The Obama administration financed US$9.6 billion during the year 2011-2012 and pledged US$ 3 billion to spend on climate-related activities in the year 2014. Also, Obama promised US$15 billion in the Copenhagen summit to support renewable energy projects and climate adaptability. As compared to Obama's environmental role, Trump did not give importance to the environmental agreements. Thus, national interests made Trump vulnerable to grab the international prestige that was understood by the Obama administration(Zhang, et al., 2017).

China's Climate Policies and National Level Analysis

China is an authoritative country and the State Council is the governing body that enacts all laws for the country and the legislative assembly is fully controlled by heads of state that arepart of the state council. It has been seen that China's all major decisions for the internationalworld are made by the head of state (Li, et al., 2014). There is no back door channel for pressure groups, corporate sectors to pressurize the governing body for personal favors or national benefits. Particularly, the main central body in China is ultra-nationalist for decision-making of climate change. In the case of

climate change, China has taken substantial steps both at the national and local levels. China's central government passed laws for major policies and local governments have implemented those climate policies.

To combat domestic pollution, China is tackling unprecedented environmental problems due to the sudden rise in the consumption of fossil fuels for rapid economic growth. China's carbon emission has statistically increased since 2000 in the amount of 3300 MtCO2 in 2000 to 8500 MtCO2 in 2013-2014 (Grubb, 2015). In the case of the economic boom in domestic industry, China has become the second-largest economy in the world. In response to this carbon emission, China has taken very efficient steps to stop carbon at home. China has developed a major national policy to combat climate change. At the domestic level, 'China's National Strategies to Address Climate Change' (2007) is a comprehensive policy to measure the impacts of climate change. Moreover, "National Strategies for Climate Change Adaptation" (2013) has focused on national capacity to adopt climate protection policies and "National Plan (2014-2020)" introduced by the Chinese government to combat contemporary climate change that is working remarkably in the country (Wang, et al. 2020).

Similarly, China enacted several laws related to climate protection respectively as "Renewable Energy law" (2006) and "Energy Conservative Law" (2007). These laws developed a different national plan for the production of clean energy by abstaining from coalpollution (Schuman, 2012). China efficiently battled with environmental pollution by legislating different climate plans and politics. In the case of environmental investment, China spent almost $35 billion on clean energy that was nearly double that of the US $19 billion in 2009. In solar energy investment, China became the prominent producer of solar panels in the world in 2008 by exporting its solar panel to the world worth $15 billion.

Additionally, China introduced many environmental policies at the national level. Importantly, market-based policy for the environment provided fruitful results to clean air in economic sectors activities. On the basis of this policy, China's emission trading system (ETS) was a key approach to reduce carbon emissions (Han, et al., 2012).

Likewise, the National Development and reform commission (NDRC) managed macroeconomic management policies. NDRC launched seven pilot carbon trading schemes to control emissions in 2011 in five major cities (Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Shenzhen, Beijing) and two provinces (Guangdong and Hubei). The seven carbon pilot regions made exclusive efforts by amending the present compliance system to improve provisions so that better outcomes could be achieved by mitigation. Every carbon pilot city and province adopted its targets. By covering major cities, the pilot carbon scheme intensively controlled carbon emissions. Companies and enterprises caped their emission by setting plans with ETS (Huang, et al., 2015; Munnings, et al., 2014; Zhang, 2015).

Though the ETS plan is very effective to reduce the given target emission, China is still an emerging economy and loopholes in monetary management are creating challenges to meet the ETS goal. China has announced to cancel 103 coal-fired plants due to the dirtiest way ofelectricity generation inside the country (Forsythe, 2017). In short, it could be said that China's environmental system is improving by employing multiple techniques but the domestic government needs to work hard to

mitigate the climate factor because of many problems at fairness level, regulation level, and complying level.

China's Paris Commitments and International Level Analysis

China is a key player in climate negotiations due to its huge carbon footprint. China's GDP is increasing at an average of 10.5 percent annually that has become a wide-ranging reason for the largest carbon footprint. In the past, the financial crisis of 2008 hastened the economic development by making double GDP growth at the end of 2010. Hence, China hasbecome the largest carbon emitter in the world due to this economic development by multiplying the GDP growth every year. China is considered the major climate negotiator in the world on account of the huge carbon foot in the developing states (Hilton, & Kerr, 2017).

Although China has accepted Paris agreement provisions and promised to fulfill commitments under Article 13 which emphasizes transparency (Bodansky, 2016), these commitments are not fulfilled by China on account of violations due to coal-based investment in energy projects. For instance, China's Belt and Road (BRI) initiative is a huge economic project which has included low GDP countries. Low GDP countries are largely dependent on China's coal-based energy production to compete with national energy demands. This BRI economic initiative is widely reliant on coal-based investment. Thus, investment has not altered conventional methods of energy production with renewable energy because these techniques for power production are less costly for Chinese investors.

Similarly, Chines are constructing energy projects across the Eurasian under the BRI initiative that are highly reliant on fossil fuel and coal consumption. And, this multilateral investment initiative has included 65 countries across the world. BRI is mutually connectedwith Asia, Europe and Africa through the Silk Road economic belt and new maritime Silk Road by investing in economic projects like railroad, Gas pipelines lines, Oil pipelines, and Ports. The BRI projects are funded by the banks of China in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the new development bank of BRICS and private institutions. For example, the Sahiwal coal project in Pakistan and Kostolac B3 in Serbia are constructed under China's BRI initiative (Shukman, 2018). However, China is fulfilling the commitments at home, but China's overseas investment is violating the provisions of the Paris agreement. Therefore, China is not transparent in its commitments made in the Paris Agreement.

Moreover, China has developed vast rail tracks in the world and the rail track is less environmentally friendly. The rail track passes through several states from central Asia to reach German city Duisburg and ahead it spreads into many European states like France, Spain and Italy. In 2015, China exported goods to the world worth $ 2.28 trillion. Thus, China's exports are sent across the world by rail track routes. Hence, it is estimated that China's exports transportation could also be harmful to the environment if exports do not bring under the green economic framework because it is modestly increasing at the initiallevel (Maliszewska, 2019**;** Josephs, 2017).

At the annual National People's congress ceremony in 2017, China asserted that "taking a driving seat in international cooperation to respond to climate change, China has become an important participant, contributor, and torchbearer in the global endeavor for ecological civilization" (Swaine, 2018). On the other side, it is predicted that BRI can affect the state's policy about climate mitigation because China is expanding its economic infrastructure that is securing political and

economic encroachment in the region. Coal-fired energy projects under BRI are launched mostly in developing countries that are already vulnerable to tackle climate issues. Moreover, the Belt and Road Initiative is not fulfilling international climate standards that can be a great threat to climate initiatives in the region.

China's Foreign Investment and Second Level Game

At the foreign level, China's role is very inquisitive for climate activists because China's economic growth is linked with its foreign investments. Particularly, China's foreign investment in the world created job opportunities for the Chinese. China's big tech and construction companies are accomplishing government projects (Smart, et al., 2004).

Importantly, China has cheap labor due to its huge population size and companies mostly hire cheap labor from inside China. Moreover, Chinese companies are owned by the state at various levels. Hence, this mutual link between government and companies increased the national investment and GDP growth (Davies, 2013).

According to a World Bank report (2019), China's GDP was US$2.1 trillion in 2000 as compared to the US held US$10.2 trillion in the same year. In 2019, China's GDP reached US$14.3 trillion more efficiently than the US that has US$21.3 trillion in the same year (World Bank, 2019). In short, the present economic boom in China's economy is linked with its economic projects under Belt and Road initiative (Doku, et al., 2017). China's economic and national development is interlinked with the foreign investment of Chinese authorities (Wang, & Chen, 2014).

The economic development of China is mostly based on investment in coal projects (Weber, et al., 2008; Whalley and Xin, 2010). China's overseas investment is generally managed by a Chinese bank in which China Development Bank and Export-Import bank have played an important role to manage monetary policies (Kong and Gallagher 2017). Beijing has invested extensively in coal-based energy infrastructure in recipient countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, African and East Asian Nations (Meng, et al., 2018). For instance, China has invested approximately 7800 MW coal projects in Pakistan under the CPEC agreement. Hence, China's investment has polluted the environment of those states where coal power projects were constructed. In the case of foreign investment, China is ruthlessly polluting the environment of China's investment hosting states (Kong, et al., 2020).

Similarly, China has invested in energy production that relies on coal (24.5GW), gas (20.5GW) and hydropower (18.1 GW), while wind and solar-based energy production are relatively small. Thus, Chinese firms contain approximately $115 billion in foreign assets, (Li, et al., 2020). Moreover, a majority of these coal power plants are working without technological advancement to stop carbon emission into the environment (Monasterolo, et al., 2018). Particularly, China has financially supported more than fifty coal-fired power plants in hosting countries between 2001 and 2016 (Gallagher, 2016). These coal-fired power plants have become a source of 600 million metric tons of carbon emissions annually. This emission was equal to 11% of US total emissions in 2015 and 6% of Chinese total emission in 2014.

Moreover, if these power plants would continuously work for 30 years then the total emission of the plant would be 17,828 MMT of carbon dioxide, which would be more than the US total emission in

2015 and China's total carbon emissions in 2014. Hence, these fifty coal-fired power plants enhanced unexpected amounts of carbon emissions that are comparatively larger than the annual carbon emissions of America (Gallagher, & Qi, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The US climate policies are continuously challenged by national politics between Republicans and Democrats, particularly in Trump and the Bush regime. And, the US politics of climate change is mostly inspired by domestic factors and also motivated by a lack of international cooperation and the voluntary nature of climate treaties. On the other hand, China's climate policies are consistent at the domestic level but more disconcerting at the international level due to its economic pursuits. Moreover, the politics of climate change between the US and China faced many challenges under the Trump administration because both states were engaged in the economic cold war. Though both states promised to combat climate change in the Paris Agreement, China and the US violated the provisions and spirit ofthe agreement for economic and political interests without considering the consequences of climate threats. After Trump, the president Biden expressed his intentions to revive good relations with China. In Particular, Biden vowed to resume climate talks that were held in Obama's era. The tussle between the Biden and the Xi administrations on the growing assertiveness of China towards Taiwan and altering the world order could also take away from climate cooperation. The study has observed that the US and China both have inconsistent policies towards climate change due to economic and political objectives.

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