



## Correction, Please!

### The World Will Not End Over Trump's "Climate" Decision

A sampling of news articles:

**Item:** The Washington Post's "Fact Checker" for June 1 blasts President Trump's "speech announcing his decision to withdraw from the Paris Accord on climate change," saying the president "frequently relied on dubious facts and unbalanced claims to make his case that the agreement would hurt the U.S. economy."



The writers of the column, Glenn Kessler and Michelle Ye Hee Lee, write that "each of the nations signing the agreement agreed to help lower emissions, based on plans they submitted." And, say the fact checkers for the left-wing paper, the Chinese committed that they would cut their greenhouse gas (GHG) carbon emissions "by 2030," when they would peak.

**Item:** On June 6, the three major national television networks happily reported that a U.S. diplomat named David Rank resigned his position as the acting U.S. ambassador to China to protest President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris climate accord. The report on ABC's Good Morning America said that the "number two official at the U.S. embassy in Beijing, a 27-year veteran of the foreign service, has resigned. He said in good faith he could not deliver the message to the Chinese that the U.S. had decided to drop out of the Paris climate agreement. So he has resigned."

**Item:** Jeffrey Sachs' June 5 column for Project Syndicate, an international media outlet, is entitled "Trump's Climate-Change Sociopathy." Sachs is a professor of sustainable development and professor of health policy and management at Columbia University, and is director of Columbia's Center for Sustainable Development and of the U.N. Sustainable Development Solutions Network. His arguments, such as they are, lean more on name-calling than reasoned discourse.

The professor starts off by asserting that President Trump's "withdrawal of the United States from the Paris climate agreement is not just dangerous for the world; it is also sociopathic. Without remorse, Trump is willfully inflicting harm on others." He goes on to say that the president's "ravings are utterly delusional, deeply cynical, or profoundly ignorant. Probably all three. And they should be recognized as such."

Sachs dismisses the president's point that the agreement "handicaps the United States economy." This, says the professor — eschewing subtlety — "is nuts." Rather, maintains Sachs, the accord is a "universal agreement among 193 UN member states in decarbonizing the world's energy system and thereby head off the dangers of climate disaster."

**Correction:** The president's decision on the Paris Climate Change accord has certainly triggered the



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bile of many sneer-sighted people. But while the president's detractors may become overheated and choke on their own rage, leaving the accord will not imperil them a whit.

Those quoted above are just a small sampling of zealots, ranging from the vulgar to the hysterical. Here's an example of the former: The editors of a Berlin tabloid thought deeply and came up with this for its front page, "Earth to Trump: F\*\*k you!" (albeit with the first line in German and the expletive spelled out in English). The action was also termed a "slaughter," a "slap in the face," and a "punitive ... assault on science, the environment, and indeed the planet."

Tom Steyer — a Democrat billionaire who is now considered a hero among eco-activists but whose fortune was largely built on coal — said leaving the agreement was a "traitorous act of war." Then there is California Governor Jerry "Moonbeam" Brown, who called this an "insane move made by a deviant."

No insults or calumny seem to be out of bounds for these so-called progressives who are lovers of all creatures great and small — as long as they bow and scrape obsequiously in homage in the Temple of Green. Woe to heretics. Cal Thomas highlighted some more intemperate reactions in his column:

For sheer hilarity and hyperbole it's hard to beat a recent headline on a *Washington Post* editorial opposing President Trump's decision to remove the U.S. from the nonbinding and unenforceable Paris climate agreement.

"Trump turns his back on the world," it screamed.

A close second goes to the headline on a *New York Times* piece by columnist David Brooks: "Donald Trump Poisons the World." [Brooks is the "conservative" that the Times employs to demonstrate how unbiased and broad-minded it is.]

Dishonorable mention goes to former presidential adviser David Gergen, who said on CNN that Trump had committed "one of the most shameful acts in U.S. history."

The massive and manic media overreaction over Trump's climate actions was astonishing to see, though hardly unexpected. Moreover, the eco-acolytes are more than willing to twist the facts or worse in the service of their cause. Consider the multiple network reports, cited above, about the diplomat's supposedly principled resignation about the decision. Here's the more complete, and honest, account, from "NewsBusters" of the Media Research Center. In this instance, the media watchdog is discussing NBC's *Today* co-host Matt Lauer.

*Photo: AP Images*

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First, Lauer made his big reveal. Only later, and briefly, noted the "NewsBusters" account, "did Lauer admit that reality was far less dramatic than the sensational headline, namely that Rank was about to be replaced anyway: 'Former Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, President Trump's pick as U.S. ambassador to Beijing, expected to take up the post a little later this month.' Of the three networks, only NBC made that point in its reporting."

Meanwhile, the political Left makes allowances for massive CO2 emitter China, even as Beijing scolds the United States as a despoiler. Apparently all China has to do is make an empty promise, and all is good. Still, as one energy and environmental expert with the Heritage Foundation reminds us: China vowed to peak emissions "in 2030, but already falsified its CO2 emissions and lied about how many



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coal-fired power plants it is building.”

Richard Epstein, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a law professor at New York University Law School, has exposed the critics who have gone into conniptions over the president’s decision. As he writes in a piece for Hoover, the Paris accords did give a

free pass to China until 2030 even though its recent carbon emissions have increased by 1.1 billion tons, while the United States’ total has dropped by 270 million tons, and will continue to do so.

When European and Chinese leaders took Trump and by extension the United States to task for “surrendering its world leadership,” that doesn’t sit well for those in the know. That is a point also addressed by Stephen Moore in the *Investor’s Business Daily*. The United States is, he writes correctly,

the world leader in environmental stewardship, and our energy use, as a share of the economy, continues to shrink.

An even more preposterous claim is that China — the largest polluter by far — and India are moving away from fossil fuels and transitioning to wind and solar power.

No, they are not. Here is what the *Wall Street Journal* reported in a November story about China and India “doubling down” on fossil fuel use: “China’s government said it would raise coal power capacity by as much as 20% by 2020, ensuring a continuing strong role for the commodity in the country’s energy sector despite a pledge to bring down pollution levels. In a new five-year plan for electricity ... the National Energy Administration said it would raise coal-fired power capacity from around 900 gigawatts last year to as high as 1,100 gigawatts by 2020.”

The name-callers abusing Trump did their best to insinuate that one ignorant man had somehow thwarted the national will by disrespecting the sacrosanct work of our best and brightest, led by President Obama. In fact, of course, the “United States” did not agree to the accord.

President Obama evaded constitutional requirements and pretended that future chief executives and the nation at large somehow had to follow his lead. Well, no. The Paris deal, as Jeffrey Tucker noted at FEE.org, “is a ‘voluntary’ agreement because its architects knew it would never pass the U.S. Senate as a treaty.”

The idea of the agreement, as Tucker put it for the Foundation for Economic Education online publication, is to have the regulatory agencies of the U.S. government

impose extreme mandates on its energy sector: how it should work, what kinds of emissions it should produce, the best ways to power our lives (read: not fossil fuels), and hand over to developing world regimes billions and even trillions of dollars in aid, a direct and ongoing forcible transfer of wealth from American taxpayers to regimes all over the world, at the expense of American freedom and prosperity.

And you wonder why many people have doubts about it.

The anti-Trump folks didn’t let facts preclude their rantings about how the planet would be devastated because Obama’s successor opted to escape from the accord. Indeed, the “Fact Checkers” of the *Washington Post*, cited above, stubbed their toes on the several supposed facts — as was pointed out by the American Enterprise Institute counter-checker of their claims. Benjamin Zycher explains that all the signatories really did not even agree to lower emissions. The plans, he notes, are incorporated into



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something dubbed “Intended Nationally Determined Contributions” (INDCs). It is a cute ploy, after a fashion. Writes Zycher:

Most of the INDCs promise cuts in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions relative to a “business as usual” baseline, that is, relative to a future emissions path, unconstrained by any policies at all. Because emissions are closely correlated with economic growth, a nation can “achieve” its promise by overestimating future economic growth slightly; when future growth proves lower than projected, the same will be true for GHG emissions. Thus, the “commitments” will be met without any actual change in underlying emissions behavior at all. INDCs fulfilled!

The Chinese commitment is particularly amusing. They promise that their GHG emissions will peak “around 2030.” How high will that peak be? No one knows. What will their emissions be after the peak? No one knows. The Kessler-Lee argument that the signatories have agreed to “lower emissions” is false.

Was this accord going to save the world, only to be foiled by Donald Trump, the hit man who slayed Mother Gaia? Of course not.

Even the *New York Times*, between fits, had to admit that. The editors acknowledged this amid the Two Minutes Hate disguised as an editorial, entitled “Our Disgraceful Exit From the Paris Accord.” “In truth,” said the editors on June 2, “the agreement does not require any country to do anything; after the failure of the 1997 Kyoto Accord, the United Nations, which oversees climate change negotiations, decided that it simply did not have the authority to force a legally binding agreement.”

Here’s another thing to keep in mind: The political Left is losing its mind over leaving a climate accord that was considered by these very same people to be — to use an *au courant* word — a horrible “fake.” It was a bit more than a year ago, as noted in an apposite piece in the June 2 *Investor’s Business Daily*, that

climate scientists and environmentalists were viciously attacking the Paris agreement itself. The goals were too low to make a difference. There was nothing binding any of the signatories to live up to their promises, and no enforcement mechanism if they didn’t. It just kicked the can down the road.

James Hansen, the undisputed hero of the climate-change movement, called the Paris deal “a fraud really, a fake.... It’s just worthless words. There is no action, just promises.”

A joint letter signed by nearly a dozen top climate scientists said the agreement suffered “deadly flaws lying just beneath its veneer of success.” These scientists complained that the agreement could actually be counterproductive, since it gave the impression that global warming was being dealt with when in fact it wasn’t.

Then there was the study in the peer-reviewed journal *Global Policy*. The journal pointed out that even if all signatories of the accord were to keep their CO<sub>2</sub> emission-reduction promises through 2030 — as far-fetched as that might be — the deal would “likely reduce global temperature rise about 0.17°C in 2100.” That study concluded: “Current climate policy promises will do little to stabilize the climate and their impact will be undetectable for many decades.”

Perhaps the eco-activists should be thanking Trump for saving them from their ineptitude. Right. That will happen the day after penguins fly.



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