

The Future of U.S. Climate Policy under the Trump Presidency

—— トランプ政権下の気候変動政策 ——



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本号より米国戦略国際問題研究所（CSIS）エネルギー・国家安全保障部シニアフェロー Jane Nakano 氏に、米国・アジアを中心とする世界のエネルギー情勢や安全保障について、その時々最新のトピックをテーマにご寄稿いただく。第1回は「トランプ政権下の気候変動政策」。選挙キャンペーン中のトランプ氏の宣言通り米国はパリ協定から離脱するのか、気候変動対策のプライオリティが下がる場合、具体的にどのような政策変更がなされるのか、パリ協定から離脱した場合、アジア大洋州や欧州との関係にどのような影響をもたらすのかなど、ワシントンから最前線のレポートをお送りする。

Much remains uncertain about the priorities and policies of Donald Trump, who will take the office of the presidency of the United States on January 20. It is largely anyone's guess as to exactly which of the campaign promises made may be kept. Energy and climate change are no exception. The fate of his energy-related campaign promises, including revitalizing the coal industry, furthering oil and gas production, and “cancelling” the U.S. participation in the Paris climate agreement remains uncertain and will remain so for some months to come.

Nothing appears more closely watched internationally than what the United States will do about its membership in the Paris Agreement, which entered into force several days before his election victory in November. Thus far, the president-elect has repeatedly stated that he is “open-minded” about this issue. Will President Trump pull the United States out of the Paris Agreement? If so, what are the key implications?

Technically, the formal procedures for withdrawal require that a country provide written notice any time after three years from the date that the agreement entered into force. In other words, whether President Trump likes it or not, the United States will likely remain party to the Paris Agreement for much of his presidency.

Whether or when the United States withdraws from the Paris Agreement, however, climate change will decline as a priority in the new administration. Such shift will likely be most pronounced

through the availability of funding for global climate adaptation and mitigation activities, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Whether President Trump would deposit the remainder of the U.S. commitment to the GCF—US\$2.5 billion—is highly doubtful not only because he repeatedly called for scrapping such funding during the campaign, but also because the call for an “immediate” halt to U.S. funding for the UNFCCC was adopted by the Republican Party Platform.

Furthermore, the fate of the U.S. Nationally Determined Commitment (NDC) to reduce the greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions by 26% to 28% below their 2005 levels by 2025 has become highly doubtful as major uncertainty looms over the Clean Power Plan (CPP). Recognized as a critical measure for achieving the U.S. commitment under the Paris Agreement, the CPP has set GHG emissions reduction targets for each state in order for the U.S. electric power sector to reduce GHG emissions by 32% below their 2005 levels by 2030. Since the CPP for existing power plants became effective in August 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been facing fierce legal challenges, prominently from about two dozen states with high dependence on coal mining industry or coal power generation. Viewing the carbon regulations as an unnecessary impediment to economic growth, the Trump Administration is expected not to defend the rule. Yet, revising or repealing the regulation could invoke equally fierce legal challenges from the states and environmental organizations that have intervened on the side of the Obama EPA in support of the CPP.

Several other important building blocks for the U.S. emissions reduction pledge are also in a precarious situation. Regulations of methane, which is accountable for 11% of U.S. emissions of GHG today, is another area likely up for reversal. Following its 2015 pledge to reduce oil and gas methane emissions by 40% to 45% below their 2012 levels by 2025, the Obama EPA enacted new regulations in May 2016 to reduce methane emissions from new and modified oil and gas equipment while also initiating efforts to control the emissions from existing oil and gas rigs and wells. These methane regulations face a threat of serious pushback from the new administration, with strong support from the likeminded Republican Congress.

Furthermore, the fuel economy and GHG emission standards in the transportation sector may also take a backseat under the Trump Administration. The GHG emission standards for passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks for Model Years 2021-2025 will likely come under scrutiny, if not revision. Additionally, the U.S. Security and Exchange Commission effort to enforce reporting of climate change risks for publicly traded companies may come to a halt during Trump's presidency even if it gains momentum globally.

The U.S. rejection of climate change efforts can have repercussions beyond the global efforts to containing the warming to below 2 degrees Celsius. A stark U.S. departure from the leadership role would undoubtedly upset the current balance in the climate diplomacy and U.S. standing with other key climate players, such as China and the European Union. If China delivers on its Paris commitment both quantitatively and qualitatively despite the U.S. inaction, China will gain credibility as a responsible global player even if the Chinese pledge was initially driven by the need to tackle their air pollution problem through carbon emissions control as well as the need to respond to the mounting pressure from the United States to address their impact on the global climate. Moreover, the U.S. position may weaken in the regional affairs in Asia-Pacific if the U.S. inaction on climate is perceived by other countries as a symptom of a broader U.S. decline vis-à-vis China.

The U.S. decision will affect its Trans-Atlan-

tic relations, too. For example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has cast climate change a “cornerstone” in her country's relationship with the United States, and called for collaboration with the president-elect to address the issue of climate change. As Germany will host the Group of 20 summit in summer 2017, a Trump Administration attitude towards the Paris Agreement could affect the U.S. ability to advance non-climate related foreign policy objectives vis-à-vis key European governments.

Much remains to be seen whether the United States will leave the Paris as climate change gains traction among the broader U.S. public. For example, the opinion poll by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, taken in June 2016, show that seven in 10 Americans support the U.S. participation in the Paris Agreement. Moreover, following the election of Donald Trump, over 350 companies and investors issued an open letter to the president-elect, along with President Barack Obama and the U.S. Congress, that the “failure to build a low-carbon economy puts American prosperity at risk,” and expressed their deep commitment to addressing climate change.

Energy and climate policies of the Trump Administration will likely be characterized by efforts to undo what President Obama did, such as the emissions regulations in the power and transportation sectors. Insofar as he is unpredictable, however, the world could possibly be in for a pleasant surprise if the new president realizes that climate adaptation and mitigation, and underlying clean energy deployment, can be an engine of U.S. economic growth, and thus the Paris Agreement no obstacle to achieving his vision of “making the United States great again.”

(January 4, 2017)

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