

# Chinese Attitudes toward the U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords

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China's leaders and observers strongly oppose President Donald J. Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Accords. Since Trump's announcement, authoritative Chinese views have avoided criticizing the administration, and have instead continued to stress the importance of both recognizing climate change as a global issue and the need for multilateral cooperation to combat it. Non-authoritative statements, while more critical of the United States' withdrawal, have shared the disappointment and concern of the authoritative statements. In addition, they have not argued that Trump's decision will benefit China or lead to it challenging the United States' global leadership. However, Beijing will likely increase cooperation with other countries, especially those in Europe, to enhance its image as a responsible stakeholder in the fight against climate change.

In this issue of the *Monitor*, we examine Chinese views toward President Donald J. Trump's decision of June 1, 2017, to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Accords, thus undermining a major area of Sino-American cooperation. Many observers have examined the implications of this action for U.S.-China-European relations and Chinese foreign policy in particular, often stressing how it will benefit China by giving Beijing the mantle of global leadership over efforts to address this major area of global governance.<sup>1</sup>

However, few if any observers have taken a detailed look at Chinese thinking on the matter, either before or after Trump's decision occurred. Most Western commentary on Chinese views merely points out growing Chinese support for international efforts to combat climate change and an apparent desire to use Trump's action to build international support for China as a responsible global leader. A less charitable view alleges that China is gleefully seeking to use the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Accords to supplant the U.S. as the dominant global power.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, overall, based on the public record, Chinese views on the Paris Accords and U.S.-China cooperation in combating climate change are by and large extremely positive and in many instances fact-based and non-polemical. An examination of them confirms that Beijing clearly: a) accepts the dangers of climate change; b) recognizes the need to work closely with other nations to address the issue in a pragmatic way; and c) grasps the benefits for China of using the fight against climate change to not only strengthen global governance as a whole, but to also transition the Chinese economy to a more sustained

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level of long-term growth. As a result, Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Accords is generally seen as an extremely disappointing and destructive action, of little benefit to China.

As in past *CLM* pieces, Chinese views are divided into authoritative and non-authoritative statements and actions. This article ends with further thoughts on the possible significance of Chinese views on the U.S. withdrawal.

## Authoritative Sources

Prior to the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Accords, authoritative Chinese sources had expressed a consistent and strong level of support for both the Accords and all other efforts by the international community to combat climate change.<sup>3</sup>

Such sources also frequently extolled the high level of cooperation achieved between Washington and Beijing in both developing and pushing through the Paris Accords, while also reminding the developed countries of their need to fulfill their obligations to provide funding and technology to developing countries and deepen their support. For example, in April 2016 the Chinese government described efforts to combat climate change as “a pillar of the China-U.S. bilateral relationship,”<sup>4</sup> and a “highlight of bilateral relations.”<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, the entire process was frequently touted as a primary example of both China's growing contribution to global governance and the type of “win-win” cooperation and “new type of great power relations” between the U.S. and China that can be achieved in many areas.<sup>6</sup> President Xi Jinping in particular has often cited the effort to combat climate change as a “model” for future global governance.<sup>7</sup>

However, authoritative Chinese sources understandably became less confident and effusive in their praise of Sino-U.S. cooperation on climate change after Donald Trump won the U.S. presidential election. In response to queries about Trump's opposition to the Paris Accords, sources stressed the “common challenge” posed by climate change and Beijing's willingness “to work with the international community including the U.S., to strengthen cooperation in the field of combating climate change and contribute to the global efforts of promoting green, low-carbon, and sustainable development.”<sup>8</sup>

Even before Trump's election, and possibly in response to his criticism of the Paris Accords during the campaign, authoritative sources stated that “no country can stay aloof and intact” from the issue.<sup>9</sup> This phrase was repeated with greater frequency after Trump made the decision to withdraw from the Accords on June 1, 2017.<sup>10</sup>

Chinese sources were somewhat more pointed around the time of Trump's inauguration in January 2017. For example, Xi Jinping stated in a speech given at the United Nations Office in Geneva that:

The Paris Agreement is a milestone in the history of climate governance. We must ensure this endeavor *is not derailed*. All parties should work together to implement the Paris Agreement. China will continue to take

steps to tackle climate change and fully honor its obligations.<sup>11</sup>

After the White House website removed any reference to climate change on the day of the inauguration, the PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated that:

The Chinese side will carry on with its domestic policies on climate change, contribute to the multilateral processes and encourage related international cooperation. The Chinese side is ready for dialogue and cooperation with all parties including the new US administration on the issue of climate change.<sup>12</sup>

Following a March 2017 presidential ordering rolling back many climate change policies, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated:

No matter how the climate policies of other countries may evolve, China, as a responsible major developing country, will not change its determination, targets or policy measures in tackling climate change. We also stand ready to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with members of the international community to promote global climate governance.<sup>13</sup>

Just prior to Trump's June 1 decision to withdraw from the Paris Accords, authoritative sources stressed the need for countries "to safeguard the outcomes of global governance including the Paris Agreement on climate change and increase communication and cooperation within the G20 framework. Climate change is a challenge for all."<sup>14</sup>

At that time, Premier Li Keqiang also "pointed out" that China "*holds a responsible attitude* to participate in the international community's efforts in jointly coping with climate change and actively implementing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change."<sup>15</sup>

Following Trump's decision to withdraw, authoritative sources repeated variations of the following statements:<sup>16</sup>

- Climate change is a challenge for the whole world and no country can stand aloof. The Paris Agreement is a hard-won result that represents the broadest consensus of the international community and sets the target for the global campaign against climate change.
- However the other countries may change, China will continue to pursue innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development, bear in mind its domestic requirements for sustainable growth, step up concrete efforts to deal with climate change, and faithfully implement the Paris Agreement.
- China will stay committed to upholding and promoting the global governance on climate change, and take an active part in the multilateral process on climate change.

- We will work with all relevant parties to press ahead with the negotiation and implementation of the enforcement rules of the Paris Agreement, and promote green, low-carbon, and sustainable growth around the world.

## Non-Authoritative Sources

As is often the case with other issues, many non-authoritative sources echoed the above authoritative statements on the leadership shown and positive example set for the global community by China's efforts to combat climate change. For example, Zhong Sheng boasted that:

As the first developing country to commit to voluntary emission-reduction targets, China's unremitting efforts to cope with climate change have been widely recognized in the international community. China has improved its adaptability to climate change, actively participated in global climate change governance, and contributed to combating global climate change. Some western analysts view China as an important leader in responding to climate change.<sup>17</sup>

Another source in the *Global Times* sought to use China's efforts as a prod to other major powers, stating:

China's endeavor to cut carbon emissions at home, encourage change around the world and secure the historic Paris climate agreement should send a message to a world in which every major power has to take the strain in the fight against climate change.<sup>18</sup>

However, non-authoritative sources, including Zhong Sheng, have also extolled the positive example for future Sino-U.S. cooperation set by the accomplishments gained in the common fight against global warming, as well as their cooperation in dealing with other threats such as the Iranian nuclear program. For Zhong Sheng, these gains "have fully demonstrated that, faced with the hotspot and global issues that are cropping up in an endless stream, China-US cooperation can lead to major accomplishments."<sup>19</sup>

Before and during the U.S. presidential campaign, some non-authoritative sources showed alarm over both the political division within U.S. leadership circles concerning climate change and especially Trump's ridiculous claim that global warming was "created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive."<sup>20</sup>

While noting the "breakthroughs achieved between the U.S. and China in climate change cooperation over the past few years," one Chinese scholar asserted that a U.S. reversal in this area would be "catastrophic."<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, in contrast to the views of some authoritative and non-authoritative sources, quite a few non-authoritative sources downplayed the prospect that America's withdrawal from the Paris Accords would allow Beijing to move toward a global leadership role. An editorial in the *Global Times*, for example, stated that:

China still cannot match the US in terms of comprehensive strength. It has no ability to lead the world in an overall way, plus, neither the world nor China is psychologically ready for it. It's beyond imagination to think that China could replace the US to lead the world. . . . If Washington withdraws from the Paris climate deal, China can stick to its commitment, yet it won't be able to make up for the loss caused by the US. Or if the US takes on an anti-free trade path, the messy consequences will be beyond China's ability to repair. . . . For a long time to come, the leadership of the US will be irreplaceable.<sup>22</sup>

However, after Trump's inauguration, some sources sought to downplay the significance of a U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Accords by combining expressions of concern with various guardedly optimistic views. On the positive side, many observers again echoed the authoritative sources in insisting that China would remain a strong supporter of the international climate change effort, regardless of U.S. actions. For example, a leading Tsinghua scholar, Qi Ye, stated:

the decision of the US is not expected to affect the policy or actions of China on climate change. This is not only because climate action is consistent with China's domestic environmental protection, but also because China is now more proactive than ever in contributing to global governance in general, and global climate governance in particular.<sup>23</sup>

Equally important, other commentators stressed the larger structural shift taking place within the global economy toward low-carbon patterns of development. As one scholar opined:

Views of a low-carbon transition being nothing but a burden are out of date. The global and national low-carbon transition is no longer just about climate change; it is about using changes in infrastructure investment and technological innovation to reinvigorate the global economy and promote sustainable development. This is particularly important for the huge developing nations facing another round of industrialisation and urbanisation. It's really a question of innovation in how we grow; of reallocating key resources. . . . Anyone who gets left behind by the tide will miss out on future markets and competitiveness, and will lose influence in international society. The global trend towards a low-carbon transition is irreversible.<sup>24</sup>

Another significant expert, Liu Qiang, head of the energy division at the Chinese Academy of Social Science's Institute of Quantitative and Technical Economics, asserted that:

A US withdrawal will have more of a symbolic effect, rather than a real impact on specific sectors. The US has never been deeply involved in

climate change talks and, moreover, US\$2 billion [the amount owed by the US to the United Nation's Green Climate Fund] is, on a global scale, not that large an amount. US trade policy rather than political commitment will be the key factor affecting the Paris Agreement.<sup>25</sup>

Still other Chinese expert observers stressed the likely continued positive role to be played between China and U.S. state and local governments, businesses, and NGOs in combating climate change. Some even see this as driving a synergistic process that will eventually accelerate movement in the U.S. toward a low-carbon economy, regardless of policies taken at the national level.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, some of these same sources also pointed to the likely adverse impact of the U.S. withdrawal on efforts to build a global strong carbon trading market. For example, Liu Qiang stated:

The carbon pricing mechanism of the Paris Agreement would make clean energy even more competitive. If the US pulls out that mechanism is at risk and China's motivation to implement a carbon trading market will be reduced.<sup>27</sup>

Others pointed to likely negative effects of the U.S. shift on China's economy. Chai Qimin, director of the National Centre for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation's (NCSC) International Cooperation Department states:

The negative attitude of the US has already affected industry, with clean energy investment sliding last year and low-carbon innovation affected worldwide. Many Chinese new energy firms have seen valuations and borrowing ability fall, and these negative impacts are still emerging. If the remaining US\$2 billion promised by the US is not forthcoming the outlook for the Green Climate Fund is bleak.<sup>28</sup>

After Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Accords, non-authoritative commentators echoed authoritative sources in expressing disappointment and dismay while at the same time reaffirming yet again China's unwavering commitment to the global effort to combat climate change.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, several sources again sought to rebut the notion that China will replace the United States as the global leader in grappling with many transnational issues. Indeed, most Chinese public opinion apparently agrees that China either could not or should not play such a role, variously citing incapacity, a commitment to multilateralism, or a primary need to focus on domestic problems.<sup>30</sup>

And one prominent commentator, Chen Weihua, the deputy editor of *China Daily USA*, stated that no one should desire—or fear—the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Accords because of the alleged opportunity it provides for Beijing to assert global leadership. Chen asserts that:

It would indeed serve China's interest if the US remains a party to the Paris Accord. Unlike the US, China has never claimed to be a global leader even though it is playing such a role in some areas, especially climate change.<sup>31</sup>

Many sources again conveyed a mixed message highlighting both the damage produced by Trump's action and the continued positive forces and features that will nonetheless likely sustain the global climate change effort. For example, one source asserted a fairly common view that while the U.S. withdrawal is a problem for everyone (and certainly not a "gift" or "good news" for China, as some allege), an array of U.S. state and local governments, commercial entities, NGOs, and ordinary citizens will continue to support the goals of the Paris Accords.<sup>32</sup>

Several non-authoritative sources also stress the need for China to compensate to some extent for the U.S. withdrawal from the Accords by working more closely with the European Union (in particular) as well as India and Japan, to combat climate change. Although views differ on how effective such cooperation might be in advancing climate change without the U.S., no sources reject the idea.<sup>33</sup>

Some non-authoritative Chinese sources sharply criticized Trump's decision to withdraw as a major threat to "global climate governance," to "the political willingness of large world powers to address common challenges," and to the entire process of globalism and multilateral cooperation. It is also seen as undermining the ability of the U.S. and China to work together to achieve common goals.<sup>34</sup>

An editorial in the *Global Times* asserts that Beijing should recognize its limited ability to persuade Trump:

Trump's withdrawal from the Paris agreement shows that he doesn't care about things that would not affect his domestic support base. Therefore China should not expect to sway Trump with words or persuasion.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, one Europe specialist asserts, rather polemically, that Trump's withdrawal has dealt a major blow to Western efforts at maintaining global economic dominance.<sup>36</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

As indicated in the introduction, to an overwhelming extent, Chinese views on Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accords are negative but not condemnatory. Authoritative sources uniformly avoid criticizing Trump's decision directly, merely noting China's continued commitment to the Accords and the fight against climate change in general, while expressing a willingness to work with any party to advance that effort. At the most, one statement merely implied that Washington was being irresponsible in withdrawing from the Accord.

Unsurprisingly, non-authoritative sources were more pointed in their criticism of the U.S. withdrawal, but nonetheless by and large expressed more disappointment and concern

than anger or resentment. Sources differed on the extent of damage that would result from the U.S. withdrawal, with some stressing that China would continue to work with U.S. entities outside the national government. But no sources asserted that Trump's action would benefit Beijing, and particularly not that Beijing would or should use the U.S. action as an opportunity to seize global leadership. To the contrary, several sources insisted that China is not in a position to make such a move over any foreseeable time frame, for a variety of reasons.

None of this, of course, confirms that China will shirk from taking an active and high-profile role in the climate change effort. Indeed, all indications are that it will exert every effort to work with other nations, especially the Europeans, as well as an array of U.S. entities outside the Trump administration, to push the program forward. Moreover, there is little doubt that many Chinese will view this undertaking as an opportunity to show that China, unlike the United States, is acting like a responsible stakeholder.

Overall, most Chinese will likely remain cautious in explicitly criticizing the U.S. decision, as long as the Xi Jinping government continues to cultivate positive relations with Trump. This of course could change if Trump decides to demonize Beijing further for allegedly failing to compel North Korea to discard its nuclear weapons. That said, the stakes for all nations in successfully combating climate change are sufficiently high for China to avoid entirely alienating Washington on this vital issue, in the hope that Trump, or his successor, will reverse course.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Javier C. Hernandez, "Turning Against Trump: How the Chinese Covered the Climate Pact Exit," *New York Times*, June 4, 2017, [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/04/world/asia/china-media-climate-trump.html?utm\\_source=SupChina&utm\\_campaign=6d6e6455f7-20170605-306ChinaContemptOrUSIrresponsible&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_caef3ab334-6d6e6455f7-164719601&\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/04/world/asia/china-media-climate-trump.html?utm_source=SupChina&utm_campaign=6d6e6455f7-20170605-306ChinaContemptOrUSIrresponsible&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_caef3ab334-6d6e6455f7-164719601&_r=0).

<sup>2</sup> David E. Sanger and Jane Perlez, "Trump Hands the Chinese a Gift: The Chance for Global Leadership," *New York Times*, June 1, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/us/politics/climate-accord-trump-china-global-leadership.html?mcubz=2>.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see "Foreign Ministry Holds Briefing for Chinese and Foreign Media on Xi Jinping's Visit to France for UN Climate Change Conference in Paris and Other Trips," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs), November 25, 2015, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1319023.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1319023.shtml); "Zhang Gaoli Attends High-level Signing Ceremony of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 23, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1358486.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1358486.shtml).

<sup>4</sup> "China-U.S. Joint Presidential Statement on Climate Change," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 1, 2016,

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[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/2649\\_665393/t1353094.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t1353094.shtml). The joint statement also added: “The joint efforts by China and the United States on climate change will serve as an enduring legacy of the partnership between our two countries.”

<sup>5</sup> “Zhang Gaoli Meets with Foreign Leaders Attending High-level Signing Ceremony of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.”

<sup>6</sup> “Remarks at Foreign Ministry’s 2016 New Year Reception,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 6, 2016,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjzb\\_663304/wjzbz\\_663308/2461\\_663310/P020160107590414767766.pdf](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjzb_663304/wjzbz_663308/2461_663310/P020160107590414767766.pdf); “Foreign Ministry Holds Briefing for Chinese and Foreign Media on Xi Jinping’s Visit to France for UN Climate Change Conference in Paris and Other Trips”; “Making Unremitting Efforts for a New Model of Major-Country Relationship Between China and the United States,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 7, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zyjh\\_665391/t1370191.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1370191.shtml).

<sup>7</sup> “Work Together to Meet Challenges and Join Hands to Promote Development,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 6, 2015,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/topics\\_665678/xjpfqgexqhbhldhdjbbwnfjxgsfwbfnfyhnsbzczfhlzltfh/t1322223.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpfqgexqhbhldhdjbbwnfjxgsfwbfnfyhnsbzczfhlzltfh/t1322223.shtml); “Xi Jinping Attends Opening Ceremony of Climate Change Conference in Paris and Delivers Important Speech, Stressing to Enhance Confidence, Pool Efforts and Join Hands to Build Cooperative, Win-win, Fair and Reasonable Climate Change Governing System,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 1, 2015, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1320445.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1320445.shtml).

<sup>8</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang’s Regular Press Conference,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 14, 2016,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1415345.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1415345.shtml); “Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin Gives Joint Interview to Chinese and Foreign Media During Marrakech Climate Change Conference,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 17, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjbxw/t1416991.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/t1416991.shtml).

<sup>9</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang’s Regular Press Conference,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 26, 2016,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1400731.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1400731.shtml).

<sup>10</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 1, 2017,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1467100.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1467100.shtml).

<sup>11</sup> “Full Text of Xi Jinping keynote speech at the United Nations Office in Geneva,” *CGTN America*, January 18, 2017, <https://america.cgtv.com/2017/01/18/full-text-of-xi-jinping-keynote-speech-at-the-united-nations-office-in-geneva>; emphasis added.

<sup>12</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 23, 2017,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1433035.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1433035.shtml).

<sup>13</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang’s Regular Press Conference,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 29, 2017,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1449905.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1449905.shtml).

<sup>14</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang’s Regular Press Conference,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 10, 2017,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1460439.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1460439.shtml). Geng

added that “the Paris Agreement is a reflection of international consensus. China is firmly committed and determined to join hands with the international community and deal with climate change through cooperation.”

<sup>15</sup> “Li Keqiang Meets with Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama of Fiji,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 16, 2017,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1463479.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1463479.shtml); emphasis added.

<sup>16</sup> “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on June 1, 2017”; “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2, 2017,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1467465.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1467465.shtml); also see “Li Keqiang, President Donald Tusk of the European Council and President Jean-Claude Juncker of the European Commission Jointly Meet the Press,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 3, 2017,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1468146.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1468146.shtml); “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference,” PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 9, 2017,

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/t1469154.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1469154.shtml).

<sup>17</sup> Zhong Sheng, “China has the determination and the sincerity to independently reduce emissions” (自主减排, 中国有决心和诚意), *People’s Daily*, April 13, 2016,

[http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-04/13/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20160413\\_2-03.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-04/13/nw.D110000renmrb_20160413_2-03.htm);

Zhong Sheng also asserts that China’s signing of the Paris Accords has led global public opinion on this issue and caused other developing countries to sign the accords as well. See Zhong Sheng, “Firmly lead progress in global climate change governance” (坚定引领全球气候治理进程), *People’s Daily*, April 24, 2016,

[http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-04/24/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20160424\\_3-02.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-04/24/nw.D110000renmrb_20160424_3-02.htm);

Zhong Sheng, “Global climate change governance takes the step toward a new milestone of implementation” (全球气候治理踏上‘落实’新征程), *People’s Daily*,

November 4, 2016, [http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-11/04/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20161104\\_3-09.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-11/04/nw.D110000renmrb_20161104_3-09.htm).

<sup>18</sup> “China committed to green reform, but expectations should be reasonable,” *Global Times*, April 24, 2016, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/979871.shtml>. The author also criticizes the industrialized countries for not having done more to limit their carbon emissions in the past and reminds readers that combating climate change “can not come at the expense of urgent development.”

<sup>19</sup> Zhong Sheng, “A look at the China-US relations beyond Washington’s electoral politics” (超越华盛顿选举政治看中美关系), *People’s Daily*, August 19, 2016,

<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0819/c1002-28647814.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Zhao Minghao, “Presidential debate exposes decaying US democracy,” *Global Times*, September 28, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1008918.shtml>. Zhao Minghao

is a research fellow with the Charhar Institute in Beijing and an adjunct fellow at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China. Zhao pointed out that Trump was being dishonest in claiming that he never made such a remark.

<sup>21</sup> Zhao, “Presidential debate exposes decaying US democracy.” Also see Wen Jiajun, “Paris commitments are good signal but economic progress needed,” *Global Times*, September 8, 2016, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1005411.shtml>. Wen Jiajun is a

visiting research fellow at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China.

<sup>22</sup> “Editorial: Can China overtake US to lead the world?” *Global Times*, November 21, 2016, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1019172.shtml>. Also see a second editorial, “Editorial: Trump must be urged to save climate deal,” *Global Times*, March 30, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1040255.shtml>. The author states: “no matter how hard Beijing tries, it won’t be able to take on all the responsibilities that Washington refuses to take.” He also urges Western opinion “to continue to pressure the Trump administration on climate change. Washington’s political selfishness must be discouraged.” For yet another similar view, see Wang Yiwei, “Beijing not ready to fill vacuum left by Washington,” *Global Times*, December 29, 2016, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1026372.shtml>. Wang is director of the Center for International Studies at Renmin University of China.

<sup>23</sup> Qi Ye, in Yao Zhe, “Roundtable: How will countries respond if the US withdraws from Paris?” *China Dialogue*, February 14, 2017, <https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/9608-Roundtable-How-will-countries-respond-if-the-US-withdraws-from-Paris>. Qi is a professor at Tsinghua University and director at the Brookings-Tsinghua Center for Public Policy. Also see the remarks of Liu Qiang, head of the energy division at the Chinese Academy of Social Science’s Institute of Quantitative and Technical Economics, in “Roundtable: What would a US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement mean for China?” *China Dialogue*, March, 29, 2017, <https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/9694-Roundtable-What-would-a-US-withdrawal-from-the-Paris-Agreement-mean-for-China>.

<sup>24</sup> Zou Ji in Yao, “Roundtable: How will countries respond if the US withdraws from Paris?” Zou is a professor at Renmin University of China’s School of Environment.

<sup>25</sup> Liu Chang in “Roundtable: What would a US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement mean for China?”

<sup>26</sup> Chai Qimin in “Roundtable: What would a US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement mean for China?” Chai is the director of the National Centre for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation’s (NCSC) International Cooperation Department. For a similar view, see the remarks of Dr. Wang Ke, a research fellow at the National Academy of Development and Strategy at Renmin University, in the same source. Also see Tang Wei, “US-China climate co-operation in the Trump era,” *China Dialogue*, May 7, 2017, <https://www.chinadialogue.net/blog/9900-US-China-climate-co-operation-in-the-Trump-era/en>.

<sup>27</sup> In “What would a US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement mean for China?” All in all, however, Liu adds that U.S. trade policy, rather than level of political commitment, “will be the key factor affecting the Paris Agreement.”

<sup>28</sup> In “What would a US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement mean for China?” Chai added that a U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Accords would mark yet another abrogation of America’s international responsibility (similar to the previous U.S. withdrawal from the Kyoto Climate Protocol) as U.S. “internal disputes [play] out overseas.”

<sup>29</sup> See Zhong Sheng “Commitment to green development will not change” (绿色发展 初心不变), *People’s Daily*, June 7, 2017, <http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0607/c1002-29322258.html>; “China steps up clean energy generation efforts,” *Global Times*, June 4,

2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1049880.shtml>; Qi, “China’s perspective on the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement,” Brookings, June 29, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/unpacked/2017/06/29/chinas-perspective-on-the-us-withdrawal-from-the-paris-agreement/>.

<sup>30</sup> Xie Wenting, “As US turns inward, Chinese public have divergent views on taking global leader role,” *Global Times*, July 5, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1055047.shtml>. Also see Chen Qingqing, “China cannot lead climate change battle alone: experts,” *Global Times*, June 5, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1049963.shtml>.

<sup>31</sup> Chen Weihua, “It’s the planet, stupid, not China’s global leadership,” *China Daily*, June 9, 2017, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-06/09/content\\_29679252.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-06/09/content_29679252.htm).

<sup>32</sup> Ye, “China’s perspective on the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement.” Also see “Editorial: Trump gives the world more reasons to save our planet,” *China Daily*, June 2, 2017, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-06/02/content\\_29589497.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-06/02/content_29589497.htm); Yu Xiang, “Businesses and Local Governments Step Up after Paris Accord Exit,” *China US Focus*, June 7, 2017, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/energy-environment/what-does-trumps-paris-agreement-exit-mean-for-china-us-economic-relations>. Yu is a research fellow at China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations. Also see Wang Xuedong, “US exit from Paris pact can help energy shift,” *China Daily*, June 8, 2017, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-06/08/content\\_29662430.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2017-06/08/content_29662430.htm). Wang is a senior researcher in U.S. studies at Sun Yat-sen University, and a senior guest researcher at the Center for China and Globalization. And see Tao Wenzhao, “Paris Agreement, Trump and Tide of History,” *China US Focus*, June 13, 2017, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/energy-environment/paris-agreement-trump-and-tide-of-history>. Tao, a retired scholar on U.S.-China relations at CASS, states, “the US withdrawal will have a negative impact on the global effort to cope with climate change but will not reverse the overall trend.” And Yang Chuchu, “Chaos in Washington not good news for China,” *Global Times*, June 14, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1051719.shtml>. Yang, a columnist for the *Global Times*, states that “in the long-term, the current chaos in US politics will bring more uncertainties to the world. For China, the US will be a harder nut to crack.”

<sup>33</sup> For example, see the many expert views cited in “Can an EU-China alliance carry forward the Paris Agreement?” *China Dialogue*, June 9, 2017, <https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/9856-Can-an-EU-China-alliance-carry-forward-the-Paris-Agreement>. Also see Wang Yiwei, “The threefold significance of China and Europe joining hands to harness the climate,” *People’s Daily*, June 3, 2017, [http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrhwb/html/2017-06/03/content\\_1779421.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrhwb/html/2017-06/03/content_1779421.htm); Shen Dingli, “Trump Exits, Asia Moves In,” *China US Focus*, June 13, 2017, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/energy-environment/trump-exits-asia-moves-in>.

<sup>34</sup> Zhao Minghao, “Trump underrates cost of quitting Paris deal,” *Global Times*, June 5, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1050121.shtml>. Also see “Editorial: Paris deal tests responsibility of Washington,” *Global Times*, June 1, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1049507.shtml>. The author states: “A reckless withdrawal from the climate deal will waste increasingly finite US diplomatic resources, and the US selfishness and irresponsibility will be made clear to the world, crippling the

country's world leadership." And see Jiajun Dale Wen, "Trump has it all wrong on climate change and China," *Global Times*, June 12, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1051313.shtml>. Wen is a visiting fellow with the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China.

<sup>35</sup> "Trump redefining 'US interests,'" *Global Times*, June 2, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1049774.shtml>.

<sup>36</sup> Cui Hongjian, "Europe giving up on 'reforming' Trump," *Global Times*, June 11, 2017, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1051097.shtml>. Cui is director of the Department for European Studies of the China Institute of International Studies.