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Donald Trump and the Climate Change Reality

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***Donald Trump**'s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement was by no means a surprise. The US has always been seeking to subvert the multilateral, global initiatives to address vexing global problems. Those who express surprise at the US withdrawal seem to be unaware that the US was not a Party to the Kyoto Protocol, the global accord under the UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) that the Paris Agreement is to succeed when its extended period will be over in 2020. Obama who had raised a lot of hopes during the campaign for his first term could not bring the US to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.*

Kyoto Protocol is not the only global environmental treaty that the US has refused to ratify. US is not a Party to the universal Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), claiming it will harm US economic interests. US is not a Party to the Biosafety Protocol to regulate transboundary movement of genetically modified organisms. Nor is the US a Party to the Nagoya Protocol on access to biodiversity and related benefit sharing. Not to the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes either. The current withdrawal is quite in line with a consistent national policy of the US. A policy of undermining the global community and disregarding the global concerns.

In Doha, Qatar, on 8 December 2012, the "Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol" was adopted. (Source: UNFCCC)

The Paris Agreement itself is a charade of an international solution to address the global warming crisis. It is indeed several steps back from the Kyoto Protocol provisions.

The Paris Agreement has **no binding commitments on developed countries that have historically caused the largest levels of carbon emissions,** and continue to hold high per capita carbon emission records. They only need to submit a national climate plan — intended nationally determined contributions (INDC). The carbon emission reduction targets for developed countries are voluntary.

The binding commitments of Kyoto protocol are undone in the Paris Agreement. It is virtually impossible to keep temperature increase within 2 and much less the aspirational 1.5 degree centigrade above the pre-industrial level with no binding commitments on the industrial economies.

The UNFCCC's fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP) noted in its decision adopting the Paris Agreement that the projected level of carbon dioxide in 2030 would be a lethal 55 gigatonnes and "much greater emission reduction efforts will be required than

those associated with the intended nationally determined contributions in order to hold the increase in the global average temperature to below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels by reducing emissions to 40 gigatonnes". This cannot be achieved unless the developed countries, the US in particular, agree to mandatory emission reductions.

The Agreement does not put a target date for achieving the temperature reduction goal. It leaves the benchmark pre-industrial temperature ambiguous, without mentioning the temperature measurement then nor agreeing the year of the start of the industrial period. The equity factor is down the drain and so is the 'common but differentiated responsibility' that has been central to climate negotiations, glaringly missing in the operative parts of the Paris Agreement. Common but differentiated responsibility was central to the Rio Declaration 1992 of the earth summit, the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. Indian government's claim of introducing 'climate justice' is rather outlandish. It is barely in the preamble as '…and noting the importance for some of the concept of "climate justice", when taking action to address climate change'. India has heavily yielded to western mechanisation in the negotiations and its claim of success in 'climate justice' actually caricatures the concept as being important for only some countries and climate justice or equity missing in the entire operative provisions of the text.

The elected leadership of India remains silent when the constitutional head of a foreign country publicly makes false allegations against India and the same is circulated in the news media around world. India looks like an orphan nation. The new population of sham patriots that are on a tyrannical war against Indians other than themselves remains silent, proving the travesty of their patriotism. Even the opposition remains blissfully silent, not being able to give a fitting response to the US tyrant. India's recent wavering in the climate negotiations has been sealed by the Modi regime. India was ridiculously yielding to the US characterisation of 'major economies' instead of the binary of developed-developing countries. 'Major economies' was a US trick since **George Bush junior** to encompass India and China in binding commitments (though this lingo has not got into the Paris Agreement).

While the nation's leadership keeps studied silence on Trump's insinuations, the fact remains that India's per capita emission is one tenth of the US'. When the US per capita emission was 16.4 metric tonnes India's was only 1.6 metric tonnes, according to a World Bank study of 2013. All developing countries have similar or even less rate of carbon emission as India. This is not considering the disproportionately huge levels of carbon emission by the US in the past. The global climate crisis is primarily the result of the historical carbon emissions by the industrial economies exhausting the resilience of the environment and therefore reparations for the same are due from these players. Reparations to the poor in the developing world who are the primary victims of the climate change — the sinking islands of Munrothuruthu on the southern Kerala coast and Ghoramara island in the Indian Sundarbans are only symbolic of the climate change tyranny on the people.

Was India 'asking for billions and billions of dollars' as Trump has alleged? India has never asked nor received anything like that in the past or present. No other developing country did either. The developed world has a fundamental obligation to compensate for the global climate change crisis. And they have reluctantly agreed to partly fulfill this obligation, hence their commitment in the UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol as well as the Paris Agreement to provide financial assistance to developing countries, especially the least developed countries and small island nations. This was the result of the collective negotiations of the G-77, the

umbrella of developing countries in the UN negotiations, and India was only following the informed, objective position of the G-77 in the negotiations. India has never asked for 'billions and billions of dollars'.

The Paris Agreement does not at all mention any figures, but asks developed countries to provide financial assistance to developing countries in order to meet their carbon reduction targets. The CoP decision adopting the Paris Agreement mentions a yearly need of US$ 100 billion in support of developing countries. This is by no means the sole responsibility of US but of all developed countries as they have agreed and the beneficiary is not India alone but over 130 countries. Compare this figure with the US$ 350 billion one developing country (Saudi Arabia) giving the US alone recently, for purchasing deadly weapons!

The hemorrhage of dollars is actually happening in the reverse way. Would Trump dare look at the figures of the billions and billions of dollars of profit repatriated by US companies from India to the US. If Trump was referring to the oversees development assistance (ODA), he is well advised to read the 1989 Presidential Report to the US Congress which plainly stated that for every dollar US invested in aid it was getting back eight dollars. No country has ever truly benefited by the ODA other than the donor countries.

Mrs Madeleine Albright (Source: Wikipedia)

Leave alone the billions and billions to India, the US is not paying even the mandatory annual contribution to the UN although US is the primary beneficiary of UN expenditure. The UN is not paying up the dues even after the General Assembly conceded to the US demand for consensus decision making (instead of simple or two thirds majority) on financial issues. Indeed a US Permanent Representative to the UN herself had admitted this in a candid moment. **Mrs Madeleine Albright**, who later rose to become the US Secretary of State, admitted to an international audience in Geneva on December 1, 1995:

> "It is tragic and ironic that one of the principal threats to the United Nations comes from political elements in the very country which helped create it…the forces of isolation and reaction, once on the fringe of our political system, are growing more powerful as they reach the mainstream and populate the halls of our Congress".

Trump the deluge is only a culmination of the US position of hegemony.

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