

## Obama Will Bypass Congress And Join UN Climate Treaty, Sources Say

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The U.S. and China will formally join the United Nations global warming agreement while President Barack Obama makes his final trip to Asia for the G20 meeting in September, sources tell the South China Morning Post.

U.S. and Chinese officials said an announcement will likely be made Sept. 2, about two days before Obama meets with President Xi Jinping at the G20 summit in Hangzhou, sources told the Post.

If true, Obama will have ratified a major international agreement without Senate approval. Obama clearly hopes U.S. and Chinese ratification of the deal will help it come into force earlier than anticipated, making it politically harder for a future president to undo.

“There are still some uncertainties from the US side due to the complicated US system in ratifying such a treaty, but the announcement is still quite likely to be ready by Sept 2,” a source with knowledge of the announcement told the Post.

The White House, however, has refused to call the UN deal a “treaty” in order to bypass a hostile Congress. Other countries that have ratified the agreement have had to get legislative approval to join.

“Lo and behold, the President of the United States can ratify a treaty in the same way as China’s Maximum Leader,” Myron Ebell, director of global warming and international environmental policy at the free market Competitive Enterprise Institute, wrote in a recent blog post on the Post’s report.

“He merely has to say the magic words, ‘So be it.,’” Ebell wrote. “And it is so. Who knew that President Barack Obama has become our Maximum Leader, or perhaps I should say our dear Maximum Leader?”

Republicans have also challenged Obama’s ability to join the UN deal without Senate approval. Republican leadership has vowed to block Senate efforts to ratify the deal — which is why Obama wanted to avoid Congress in the first place.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has come out against the deal, and said he would renegotiate it.

“I will be looking at that very, very seriously, and at a minimum I will be renegotiating those agreements, at a minimum. And at a maximum I may do something else,” Trump told Reuters in May.

“But those agreements are one-sided agreements and they are bad for the United States,” Trump said. “Not a big fan because other countries don’t adhere to it, and China doesn’t adhere to it, and China’s spewing into the atmosphere.”

Article 2 of the U. S. Constitution says the president “shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur.”

Obama’s pledged to cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions 26 to 28 percent by 2025. He made the pledge to get China to sign onto the agreement, and to show the U.S. was serious about tackling global warming.

China, however, made a more ambivalent promise of peaking emissions by 2030, and has already said it would use more coal in the coming years to meet projected energy demand

Nearly 200 countries signed onto the UN treaty in April, but so far, not enough member states with high emissions have ratified the agreement for it to go into force this year.

But even with Senate approval, it’s not even clear the U.S. can meet Obama’s climate goals. Chip Knappenberger, a climate scientist at the free market Cato Institute, noted in April “it appears highly unlikely that U.S. energy policies will actually come close to meeting his emissions targets under the timeframe that he has promised.”