

# The Washington Times

## Theology, not science

November 7, 2017

As America goes, so goes the world. With the 2017 United Nations climate change conference getting underway in Germany, the world's most influential nation is split over whether it's a good idea to hamstring the economy just to lower the temperature a fraction of a degree (maybe). The smart money says the Trump administration's free market approach to climate policy is a better way than putting it into the hands of environmental theologians who are usually wrong.

Delegates from 195 nations have gathered in Bonn for an 11-day talkathon on how to solidify their commitments to greenhouse gas reduction goals made two years ago in Paris. The signatory nations agreed to keep global temperatures from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels before 2100. The pact, which is not binding, demands wealthy nations pass the collection plate for billions for a Green Climate Fund to pay for climate projects in developing nations.

Despite the apparent unanimity of nations, looming large over the proceedings is the one that got away. President Trump announced in June his intention to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement by 2020, observing that the pact signed by Barack Obama was a raw deal for America. Forcing the country to undergo a drastic switch from affordable conventional fuels to expensive renewable energy could cost the U.S. economy \$33 billion. Without American gravitas — and money — the pact leaves a sickly sweet aftertaste of pie in the sky.

The U.N.'s annual Emissions Gap Report released last week finds that pledges by the nations would reduce their greenhouse gases by only a third of the levels required to reach the Paris agreement's goals by 2030. "Should the United States follow through with its stated intention to leave the Paris Agreement in 2020, the picture could become even bleaker," the report finds.

Consequently, American environmental activists are taking matters into their own hands, adopting the motto "We are still in," and pledging to stay the course regardless of the Trump administration's pullout: "In the absence of leadership from Washington, states, cities, counties, tribes, colleges and universities, businesses and investors, representing a sizable percentage of the U.S. economy will pursue ambitious climate goals, working together to take forceful action and to ensure that the U.S. remains a global leader in reducing emissions." Whether America "stays in" — particularly if the weather doesn't behave the way the bureaucrats tell it to, and higher energy costs raise prices on nearly every consumer good — is another matter.

A National Climate Assessment released Friday, claiming a clear connection between human activity and rising temperatures, needs more than a government seal of approval to prove its conclusions. With both global air and sea temperatures dropping, according to the influential Meteorological Office in Britain, the planet's climate pattern is more closely mirroring the periodic warming and cooling of the past than the steady heating that computer models predict resulting from the current increase in greenhouse gases. Of course the weather changes; it always has and always will.

Patrick Michaels, a climatologist at the Cato Institute, observes that U.S. carbon-dioxide emissions from electric energy generation in 2016 were the lowest since 1988, and emissions from all U.S. sources fell to levels not seen since 1992. This encouraging development wasn't prompted by global warming fearmongers, but by entrepreneurs employing new mining technology to bring to market inexpensive, clean-burning natural gas.

The United States has been leading the way to a cleaner planet for decades without any prompting by the United Nations. Despite the wrath of the radically green, President Trump is right to grant American technology a role in the nation's climate policy rather than simply rely on environmentalist theology.