

Contemporary US-China Relations and Climate Change: Impacts on National Security and International Relations

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Abstract

Global climate change presents a complex and multi-dimensional challenge, ranking among the most significant global public concerns. Climate change has wide-ranging consequences that affect international security, politics, and economic trade relations. The unequal distribution of greenhouse gas emissions generated by humans across borders means that all nations share responsibility to address this issue. As a result, the impact of climate change and its securitization has significant implications for international relations. Climate change encounters the traditional view of human societies, usually interconnected with the global political system. The impact of climate change, like resource scarcity, rising sea levels, displacement of populations, and extreme weather, can lead to conflict over limited resources, which affects security dynamics and diplomatic relations. Notably, China and the United States, having different perspectives on the challenges of climate change, are the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters and play a pivotal role in this landscape. While historical cooperation on climate change between these two nations exists, its depth and substance remain limited. Given climate change's irreversible and worldwide implications, the political sway of climate-related matters is continually escalating. An in-depth analysis is required to address the situation. For the said purpose, a qualitative descriptive method is adopted. This paper offers an in-depth investigation and reflective exploration of the influence of climate change on international relations, mainly focusing on China and the United States. This study addresses the economic, political, and global security perspectives and presents a forward-looking assessment of potential future scenarios.

Keywords: *Climate Change, International Relations, National Security, Cooperation and Conflict.*

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Introduction

In today's global landscape, climate change has ascended to paramount importance. Among other security challenges, like water, food, health, and trade; climate change has become modernised in the centre of international politics from the margin. Security challenges may vary from region to region, and one population size to another as in comparison to developed countries people from developing world are more vulnerable to the impact of climate change. In the same form, it challenges national security for the global community. Gradually, it affects states' foreign policy and bilateral relations for economic and security interests. The issue of global climate change has metamorphosed into a worldwide political anxiety, transcending ecological and environmental realms to encompass internal and external security domains. The securitization of climate change by China and the United States is becoming a national security concern that distresses foreign relations between these states. The climate change impacts are undoubtedly aggravating the problems for national security and multiple international conflicts.

Climate change is an interconnected and complex challenge that makes it difficult beyond environmental concerns for states to control population displacement, rebuild infrastructure, deal with spreading disease, and access water and food, which has reflective implications for global governance and security. Despite many international efforts to address climate change, their consequence appears limited to control its effects. These energies are hindered by limitations and disparities among nations and international entities, leading to cooperation and conflicts, making it imperative for countries to initiate comprehensive strategies to deal with the security risks related to social, economic and environmental dimensions.¹

The world's two largest greenhouse gas emitters, China, 12.7 billion metric tons, and

¹ Li Qiang, "The Impact Of Global Climate Change On International Relations And The Necessary Response," *Journal of Jinan Municipal Party School* 02 (2011). ISSN: 1672-6359, 115-117.

the United States, 5.9 billion tons annually,² meet significant international pressure regarding emission reduction. Their international standing amplifies the influence of their cooperation on climate change, holding the potential to catalyse global collaborative action. Chinese perspective is opposite to the American securitization of climate change and prefers to resolve it through political process instead of taking it as a matter of urgency controlled by security establishments. The pronounced climate strategic disparities between the United States and China slow down the process of shared responsibilities, which also distresses the bilateral relations in the long run.

Professor Mike Hulme (University of East Anglia) introduced six theoretical frameworks concerning climate change: market economy failure, technology-driven risk, global inequality, excessive consumption, natural phenomenon, and planetary tipping point. Remarkably, these six frameworks intersect the domain of international relations, constituting the root causes behind the influence of climate change on international relations. The overarching framework, encompassing international climate consensus agreements such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, holds an essential role in guiding and projecting the influence of climate change on international relations.³

In 1992, Maurice F. Strong, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, underscored, “The Cold War has ended, and environmental issues have risen to the forefront of global concerns.”⁴ The rise of anxiety about the international environment is partly a by-product of the Cold War related to scientific endeavours and military efforts to control and dominate atmospheric space. The

² Lisa Friedman, "U.S. and China on Climate: How the World's Two Largest Polluters Stack Up," 19 July 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/19/climate/us-china-climate-issues.html>.

³ Mike Hulme, *Wind and Rain Erosion: The Cultural Implications of Climate* (Jiangsu Phoenix Education Press, September 2021). ISBN: 9787549995325, 1-16.

⁴ Sun Yiming, "On The Institutionalized Interaction Between China And The United States In The Global Environmental Field After The Cold War—Taking Climate Change As An Example," https://xueshu.baidu.com/usercenter/paper/show?paperid=43f129557edb51c8f76192f05adcbf6f&site=xueshu_se.

scientific revolution in weather satellites, forecasting, meteorology and geophysics developed global attention and considerations towards the interrelation of human activities. The scientific studies of pollution, ecological impacts and resource depletion established the need for international cooperation. For example, ozone depletion set the global stage 'the Montreal Protocol' to negotiate and eliminate the ozone-depleting substance. Such environmental movements have influenced politics and international relations to pass environmental legislation and the advent of organisations like Greenpeace.

Climate change intensifies a global threat to human beings, escalating the demand for international cooperation between developed and developing states. Comparatively, higher-income countries produce ten times greater gas emissions than low-income countries. The United Nations reported that the Group of 20 (G20) Economies account for 78% of global greenhouse gas emission.⁵ Regrettably, despite frequent international climate conferences, substantive progress remains elusive. If climate challenges are left unchecked, the potential exists for drastic shifts in international relations as nations contend for living space and resources. Encouragingly, global attention is directed towards this predicament. Policymakers, scholars, scientists, think tanks and even spiritual leaders acknowledge the gravity of the situation and have commenced corresponding actions. Within the context of globalisation, a promising future emerges with collaborative efforts.

This paper comprehensively explores the multifaceted impact of climate change on states, scrutinising its specific implications for international relations and the corresponding response strategies that governments and international organisations embrace. What are the logical reasons for the perspectives of the primary states, especially the United States and China, to deal with the challenges of climate change? The far-reaching influence of global environmental matters permeates diverse domains, including international politics, economics, military affairs, science, technology, trade, and socio-cultural aspects. This

⁵ United Nations Environment Programme, "Emissions Gap Report 2019," <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30797/EGR2019.pdf>.

research holds profound significance, serving as a compass to guide international exchange and cooperation and to direct the resolution of international disputes and conflicts.

Climate Change and Sino-US Common Challenges

Climate change has noteworthy social and economic impacts on states, directly distressing global development equity targets of national security. Due to such threats to national security, the collective response among states becomes frail to address global challenges like climate change, disaster risk management, renewable energy development and trade routes. Individually and collectively, natural factors like solar radiation, variations in Earth's climate, volcanic eruption and human activities are responsible for changing climate patterns. Since the mid-20th century, human activities have been dominantly warming the globe. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded that the United States and China are critical global emitters of greenhouse gases, so their role, individually and reciprocally, in mitigating climate change is crucial at the international level.⁶ The Paris Agreement has provided the United States and China an international stand to negotiate and engage themselves to deal with the climate challenges to achieve common goals. However, addressing the global climate challenges is greatly affected by trade and geopolitical rivalries among states. This diversity momentarily affects cooperation and diplomacy and hinders the development of effective strategies, frameworks, and the implementation of policies globally. These factors are multi-fold in resolving climate challenge without cooperation and mutual understanding, especially in the relationships between the United States and China.

National Security

The state remained a core subject for security as realists consider the state a unitary actor. Every measure will be taken to protect state security. During the Cold War, the realist

⁶ Yan Bo, "Securitization and Chinese Climate Change Policy," *Chinese Political Science Review* 1, no. 1 (February 24, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41111-016-0003-5>.

and neorealist approaches dominated security studies and remained attentive to the state-centric military procedures for security. The end of the Cold War modified state security perspectives. Post-structuralism emerged and brought the attention of states towards the “People-Centred” security approach. Environmental, regional, sociological and economic securities became the broader agenda of security studies beyond traditional military concerns.⁷ These developments heavily influence internal intellectual arguments, technological advancement and great power politics. The post-Cold War era witnessed the disintegration of the bipolar system, fostering the emergence of a new international security framework characterised by a trend towards multi-polarity. The global security system functions as an institutional framework that aims to mitigate security threats, promote trust, and cultivate avenues for dialogue and collaboration between nations.⁸

Today’s notion of international security embraces military, political, economic, and environmental facets encapsulated within the concept of ‘comprehensive security.’ Environmental security forms its foundation; financial security is its core; military security provides the safeguard, and political security is the linchpin. It is irrefutable that international security’s influence on international relations is unparalleled. A nation’s survival and growth depend upon ensuring its national interests, which intrinsically connect with national security. The ascent of terrorism and the propagation of infectious diseases stemming from climate change embody significant threats to international security. The underlying predicament lies within climate change’s impact, precipitating environmental and ecological concerns. Such degradation often diminishes human life quality, coercing nations to react promptly. These reactions, in turn, could potentially incite international conflicts or foster anti-government factions and terrorism. Environmental issues, manifested through resource

⁷ Ali Muhammad and Sugeng Riyanto, "International Security Studies: Origins, Development And Contending Approaches," *Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations* 10, no. 20 (December 15, 2021), file:///C:/Users/Redmi/Downloads/cepik,+FINAL-EN-230-249-1.pdf.

⁸ "Encyclopedia of China Military Editorial committee," *Encyclopedia of China Military* (China Encyclopedia Publishing House, July 2007), <https://book.douban.com/subject/2184848/>.

shifts such as water, oil, and food or alterations in living spaces due to pollution, ozone depletion, and desertification, can kindle international conflicts.⁹ Moreover, climate change has amplified global refugee crisis. Escalating poverty, unemployment, and crime precipitate social challenges, thereby unsettling formerly stable nations and regions reminiscent of the conditions leading to the surge of fascism in the 1930s, borne out of economic turmoil.

- **The Sino-US Common Interest and Security Challenges**

For common interests, characterising and identifying the issues mentioned above created by the states together requires development of significant policies at the global level. Controversial approach in planning and policies brings nothing to fruition. The United States recognised and securitised climate change actively. China also acknowledges the climate change issue but is concerned about resolving it over political ramifications. China's concentration on climate change is on its social system, development, natural ecosystem, food security and economic security. This assessment provides a ground to China that the climate change issues should be dealt with political consensus instead of securitisation efforts primarily through the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which may affect the sovereignty and internal affairs of China and other states.¹⁰ China favours the discussion and proposal of the issue, which should be prepared by extensive participation and widely acceptable.

Another astonishing factor is the United States' dynamic change in climate policy. The country is isolating itself from the worldwide efforts to combat global warming issues. In 2017, former United States President Donald Trump announced that 'the United States would withdraw from the Paris climate accord' and considered it a 'pernicious threat to the economy and American sovereignty.'¹¹ The accord was signed by 196 countries worldwide.

⁹ Qiang, "The Impact Of Global Climate Change On International Relations And The Necessary Response,"

¹⁰ Yan Bo, "Securitization And Chinese Climate Change Policy," *Chinese Political Science Review* 1 (2016).

¹¹ "Trump Will Withdraw U.S. From Paris Climate Agreement, 2017," June 1, 2017,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/climate/trump-paris-climate-agreement.html>.

Still, the United States president preferred the ‘America First’ foreign policy doctrine to pursue national interest for security, which affects other countries while pursuing common goals of the world community. In 1992 the United Nations conducted a conference on ‘Environment and Development’ at the Rio De Janeiro ‘Convention on Biological Diversity,’¹² which legally bound ‘conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources,’ but Republican lawmakers opposed the treaty.¹³ They claimed it would threaten the country’s commercial interests and sovereignty, increasing financial burden. Even after winning the election of 1992, American President Bill Clinton failed to ratify it by the Senate. Till now, President Biden is also facing strong opposition to ratifying the Convention by the Senate as they claim that it threatens the state’s sovereignty.¹⁴ In December 1997, the United Nations adopted the Kyoto Protocol and entered into force in February 2005.

At the global level, 192 states ratified it to reduce greenhouse gases, but the United States didn’t approve the treaty, which may cause a severe hazard to the American economy. This treaty allowed the developing countries not to cut down or limit their emission under it, but the developed countries were bound.¹⁵ Stockholm Environment Institute reported in 2010 that the United States emits 37% of global greenhouse gas, whereas the European Union 24%, China 02%, and India 0.1%.¹⁶ The various examples explain how national leaders can interrupt the practical implication of global climate schema. It may be political commitments

¹² "Office Of Legal Affairs," 2023, <https://www.un.org/ola/>.

¹³ Kal Raustiala, "Domestic Institutions And International Regulatory Cooperation: Comparative Responses To The Convention On Biological Diversity," *World Politics* 49, no. 4 (1997).

¹⁴ Benji Jones, "Why The US Won't Join The Single Most Important Treaty To Protect Nature," *Vox*, May 20, 2021, <https://www.vox.com/22434172/us-cbd-treaty-biological-diversity-nature-conservation>.

¹⁵ Jon Hovi, Detlef F Sprinz, and Guri Bang, "Why The United States Did Not Become A Party To The Kyoto Protocol: German, Norwegian, And US Perspectives," *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 1 (2012).

¹⁶ Anton Bepalov, "How Climate Change Is Shaping International Relations," *Valdaiclub*, <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/how-climate-change-is-shaping-international-relations/>.

to their voters or protection of business interests, but these non-state actors viciously affect the relations with other states.

Economic and Trade Perspective

In the realm of economic globalisation, international economic trade exerts a profound influence on international relations. A nation's economic and business landscape resonates across the broader international community, triggering ripple effects. Climate change significantly impacts domestic production and imports by disrupting natural resources. For instance, climate resources are crucial natural assets and foundational elements for a nation's survival. Consequently, a nation's climate resources substantially dictate its economic development trajectory. The Stern Review 2006 underscores that extreme weather/climate events alone could amass costs equivalent to 0.5-1% of global GDP annually by the mid-century, with escalated risk to developed economies due to climate warming. A 5-6-degree Celsius temperature increase could inflict 5-10% global GDP losses, exceeding 10% for impoverished nations.¹⁷ The absence of effective global warming control augurs a profound global economic recession. Notably, the ramifications of climate change on the global economy are unevenly distributed, disproportionately affecting the least developed countries. This results from the heightened vulnerability of agriculture – a cornerstone of many developing economies – to climate change.¹⁸

China and the United States, as the world's two largest economies, grapple with differing stages of development, translating to ambiguous cooperation goals. Despite numerous bilateral and multilateral climate agreements signed, their collaborative initiatives remain fragmented within broader economic and trade agreements. International trade

¹⁷ Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change, "Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis," *Agenda* 6, no. 07 (2007).

¹⁸ Nicholas Stern, *The Economics of Climate Change* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 2006), 45-56.

dynamics further amplify disparities.¹⁹ Developed nations export manufactured goods while developing nations export primary products, the latter exposed not only to their climate impact but also to the climate externalities originating from developed countries. Trade frictions between China and the United States primarily stem from microeconomic disagreement. Several of their collaborative ventures in climate change yield limited substantive outcomes, exacerbating inequality in natural resource distribution and catalysing a ceaseless stream of international trade disputes.

Political Perspective

American political parties, the Republican and Democratic party has a vibrant division in prioritising climate change in their political strategies, even used in the presidential electoral campaign as well. Republicans prefer national economic and trade safety relative to global climate challenges and, on this ground, decide which international climate agreements or organisations to adopt as the recent Republican President Trump did. In addition, such a party's political preferences of the United States, being a hegemonic power, didn't impact only domestic politics. Still, it had grave consequences on international politics and foreign relations. The environmental terrain, shaped by climate change, constitutes the foundation and material underpinning for the international relations system's existence and growth. It intricately intersects with a nation's strength, status, diplomatic strategy, and bilateral relationships, wielding a profound impact on the entire international relations ecosystem. As such, environmental concerns claim a fundamental position on the international relations research agenda. Climate security was considered in low politics for national interests in the past. But now, it has significantly gained importance as high politics like other factors, i.e. economy and trade.

Climate change has a profound transformative impact on global political landscape

¹⁹ Cao Wenshan, "Differences Between China And The United States In Climate Change Cooperation And Their Solutions," *Poyang Lake journal* 06 (2011).

that demands joint action beyond national borders to meet the challenges. Climate change's indivisible, global nature necessitates collective effort by the international community, as reflected in numerous joint declarations and treaties in various global forums. Despite being recognised as a significant challenge to humanity by the world, the intricacies of climate change have failed to achieve much attention in foreign policy and international relations academia. Comprehending the multifaceted manner in which climate change interrelates with conventional security paradigms and ensuring that scholarly discourse considers the urgent realities of our rapidly changing world requires bridging the gap between policy concerns and academic research.

However, despite shared interests in climate change, realising substantive and comprehensive cooperation among nations is often elusive or lacks depth and breadth. This deficiency emanates from a lack of international strategic trust rooted in divergent national interests. The complex dynamics that define the connection between China and the United States provide a compelling illustration of the nature of this phenomenon. Despite mutual recognition of the potential mutually advantageous outcomes, the spirit of climate change cooperation and strategic deception persists due to divergence in dealing with the overarching global problem. Both nations concurrently seek to protect their national interests while vigorously engaging in initiatives to mitigate emissions. This apparent shift from a focus on climate-centred conflicts to landscaped economic, trade, and political decision-making underscores the complex relationship of interests shaping the contours of this nuanced relationship.

Future Prospects for Climate Change and International Relations

Climate change poses a danger to environmental safety that triggers a cumulative threat to security and peace by troubling bilateral relations among states, which may lead to violence, regional tension and humanitarian disasters. In contrast, significant global powers and organisations promote security and political stability by avoiding and examining military

clashes. However, they paid less attention towards environmental degradation and extreme climate-related crises caused by frequent climate changes. The international governance didn't link the climate crises with peace and security at the commencement. The prospect of climate change in future is highly interconnected because it continues to pose significant global challenges to comprehensive stability. From 2015 to 2019, only 0.77% of top international relations journal research focused on the studies of climate-related issues. The main competitors are security, economic interest and immediate political changes in which political leaders and policymakers are more interested than climate change, as universal attention requires cooperation and coordination among states, especially by the developed countries.²⁰

Contemporary Strategies of China and Climate Challenges

China perceives climate change as a danger to be resolved for economic security and development, social system, food security and natural ecosystem instead of a national security issue. China actively played its role in tackling climate change and remained a responsible and constructive member in relevant international cooperation besides individual responsibility. When America refused to fulfil its responsibilities in the Paris Agreement, China didn't change its policy towards the agreement and followed it as per commitments. To counter the climate challenge, China also promotes south-south cooperation to benefit developing countries. No doubt climate change will likely impact peace and security, but the connection between security and climate is very complex in nature. Potentially, the 'micro-concept' of climate change, food shortages, drought and floods, unfair distribution of resources and environmental degradation are realistically immediate factors in the emergence of conflicts and tension. Transmission and consideration of climate change as a security risk, practically and scientifically, is unfair to humanity. For international

²⁰ Ole Jacob Sending, Indra Øverland, and Thomas Boe Hornburg, "Climate Change And International Relations," *Journal of International Affairs* 73, no. 1 (2020): 184-194.

cooperation and effective conflict resolution, diverting global attention to the core issues will not be beneficial.²¹ President Xi Jinping, in a speech to the 19th Party Congress in 2017, expressed that climate change is an “unconventional security threat like terrorism, cyber-insecurity, [and] major infectious diseases.”²² In 2013, Ireland and Niger presented a “Draft Resolution on Climate and Security” to the United Nations Security Council, in which the Chinese delegation desisted from the voting and cleared its position on the stance that to avoid the worst impact of climate change is to reduce greenhouse gas emission until net zero is achieved significantly. The responsible states should apply the values of joint and differentiated tasks on every climate change platform without distressing the basic principle. Developing and island nations are the primary victims of climate change problems, and developed countries are responsible for enhancing social and economic resilience and strengthening the capacity building of those affected countries. However, the developed nations are not ready to fulfil their commitments and historical responsibilities.²³

The projections laid out by the China Meteorological Administration 2010-20 draw a picture of climate change’s projected influence in the years to come.²⁴ As greenhouse gas emissions persist, global and regional climate systems are set up to undergo further transformations. The consequences of these changes encompass shifts in all climate system components. A collective effort toward substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions becomes imperative to navigate this impending challenge effectively. The urgency to mitigate the impact of climate change on the international stage underscores the need for coordinated and swift action. Climate change remains a source of tension between

²¹ “Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Zhang Jun On the Security Council Draft Resolution on Climate and Security,” Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN (2021), http://un.china-mission.gov.cn/eng/hyyfy/202112/t20211214_10469514.htm.

²² Arnaud Boehmann, National Security And The Climate Crisis – China Is Still Not Joining The Dots (2023), <https://Merics.Org/En/Comment/National-Security-And-Climate-Crisis-China-Still-Not-Joining-Dots>.

²³ Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Zhang Jun On the Security Council Draft Resolution on Climate and Security.

²⁴ “China Metrological Administration,” (2010), <https://www.cma.gov.cn/en/aboutcma/brochure/201203/P020120319791316093320.pdf>.

the United States and China relations. Most prominent are disagreements over issues like intellectual property rights, trade barriers over clean energy technologies, and carbon pricing. Recent Developments of the Biden Administration's Climate Policies

In 2017, the United States withdrew from the Paris Agreement. It further strained the climate relations between the United States and China, as China endorsed its obligations to the agreement and "positioned itself as a global leader in climate action."²⁵ President Biden revised American policy towards climate crisis and modified it as required by the scientific studies. The President focused on a clean energy economy for the advantage of the American people. President Biden restored American leadership on the world stage and rejoined the Paris Agreement. He formed the first-ever National Climate Task Force (NCTF), which will work under cabinet leaders to achieve the targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, producing 100% carbon pollution-free electricity, achieving a net zero emissions economy, and utilising federal investment in climate and clean energy to disadvantaged communities.²⁶

An Analysis of Future International Relations

In the contemporary global context, guiding principles for peace and development are the pillars of international engagement. In an era of profound interconnectivity and interdependence, the imperative of cooperation and the pursuit of mutual benefit has become increasingly pronounced. This paradigm dictates that nations and international organisations embrace a cooperative ethos, minimising avoidable conflicts and disputes. A noteworthy case lies within the intricate interplay between China and the United States. The tenure of the Trump administration accelerated the recalibration of Sino-U.S. relations. Instead of healthy economic competition, the trade war initiated by America mainly engaged in

²⁵ Gustavo Sosa-Nunez and Ed Atkins, "Environment, Climate Change and International Relations" *E-International Relations Bristol*, 2016, ISBN 1910814091.

²⁶ "National Climate Task Force | The White House," Whitehouse, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/climate/>.

recreation, a critical role in diversifying the ties between the two economic powers. Concurrently, the global upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic propelled the underlying trajectory of strategic competition and confrontation between these two major powers. This juxtaposition of dynamics underscores the delicate balance that nations must ensure as they steer their strategic interests and global responsibilities.²⁷ Oleg Barabanov noted that “experts are increasingly often talking about “environmental neo-colonialism when advanced countries are denying the poorest states the right to development.”²⁸

The evolving international landscape also incites academic introspection and research. The shift in global power dynamics has compelled scholars and policy experts to reassess long-standing assumptions. China’s ascendancy and concurrent diplomatic recalibration have become focal points of intellectual inquiry. By leveraging the insights from such research, China and the United States can chart a more constructive course for bilateral relations. The pandemic’s transformative impact on global dynamics and the heightened awareness of ‘a great change in the past hundred years’ offers a broader historical perspective essential for informed decision-making. Developing countries and China preserved that climate change should be debated as sustainable development rather than a security threat or securitisation of climate change.

Assessment of Climate Change’s Effects on International Affairs

As the future unfolds, economic globalisation and political multi-polarisation forces will gain momentum, fostering an environment conducive to collaboration and potentially mitigating international conflicts. In the meantime, differences in the individual interests of the state, clean electricity production, agriculture, industry and transportation need to be

²⁷ Zhou Wenxing, "Strategic Competition Between China And The United States And Strengthening International Political Research Turn: A Review Of China's International Political Research Works In 2020," *China Book Review* 05 (2021). 106-115.

²⁸ "How Climate Change Is Shaping International Relations ,” (2023), https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/how-climate-change-is-shaping-international-relations/#masha_2=2:1,2:109;7:1,7:23|masha_3=5:22,5:23.

prioritised through collaborative actions for a better future for the interdependent world. While climate change remains a formidable challenge, the concerted efforts of global institutions such as the IPCC, the Norwalk Declaration 2008,²⁹ the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Kyoto Protocol 1997 promise to elevate global climate governance to new heights.³⁰ The strategic imperative of effectively tackling climate change is creating robust and equitable international mechanisms. This approach facilitates international cooperation and positions climate change governance as a cornerstone for addressing many global challenges.³¹

The relations among states could also be controversial because of the involvement of climate-related non-state actors, like non-governmental organisations and intergovernmental organisations, in environmental diplomacy, as it has the aptitude to undermine states' authority at the decision-making level. The state sets its agenda and priority policy for its security and interests, which may interlink to the state's economy, trade or defence determinations. The policies of the said organisation cannot meet the state's security dimensions as the United Nations Security Council deals with peace and security but sometimes intervenes in the developing countries' sovereignty in climate change. Moreover, such organisations and environmental diplomacy have grown in importance due to the complex ecological challenges at the global level. But sometimes, states prefer their concerns as the United States did so.

Notably, international relations rooted in climate change governance transcend traditional geopolitical boundaries. They possess a depth and resonance that can withstand the shifting sands of national interests. Climate change is an issue of planetary concern, transcending individual nations. This profound interdependence aligns with the vision of a

²⁹ "Norwalk Community College For Active and Responsible Environmental Sustainability," (USA, 2012), <https://norwalk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/climateactionplan.pdf>.

³⁰ "What is the Kyoto Protocol? | UNFCCC," 2023, https://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol.

³¹ Wang Zishuai, "The Game and Coordination of Great Powers in the Issue of Climate Change" (2017), <https://cdmd.cnki.com.cn/Article/CDMD-10276-1017850669.htm>.

‘community of human destiny’ championed by Chinese President Xi Jinping. As governments increasingly recognise their shared responsibility for safeguarding the planet, the prospects for international relations based on climate change governance set-up to evolve positively. However, this optimistic trajectory also carries the potential for climate change to emerge as a new focal point for international disputes, underscoring the need for proactive diplomacy and cooperative engagement. Bilateral relationships should not be affected by the so-called strategic competition, promote win-win cooperation, and open all means of communication and dialogues.

Conclusion

Climate change is an issue of unparalleled significance, transcending mere environmental concerns. It encompasses shared interests of humanity and has evolved into a complex and pressing challenge. This urgency and gravity inherently spur international collaboration in the climate domain. The global community recognises that the climate issue directly impacts the shared interests of all, and international cooperation represents the most viable path toward addressing this formidable global challenge. The signing and implementation of the UNFCCC policies and the Kyoto Protocol are tangible testaments to the feasibility and necessity of international climate cooperation. The UNO, especially the UNSC, should force the developed nations to fulfil their commitments and obligations in technological transfer, monetary mechanisms and capacity building of climate change practically.

Despite various challenges in their geopolitical relationship, China and the United States have multiple opportunities to cooperate on climate change, especially carbon capture and storage, climate finance and technological development-related measures for renewable energy. China and the USA made bilateral agreements and took noteworthy initiatives to promote clean energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The United States and China can serve as key examples of how international cooperation can be revolutionary in resolving

one of the most significant matters of our day. Both countries signed the US-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change in 2014 to control carbon emissions and increase renewable energy in their sources. Besides the differences in climate perspective, the cooperation between China and the United States may reduce the long-standing climate issues for developing and developed states.

As we peer into the future, the intersection of climate change and international relations reveals a dual-edged dynamic. The disparities between developed and developing nations may sow seeds of disputes and conflicts, illustrating the interwoven nature of climate change and international relations. The changes on one front inevitably reverberate on the other. Climate change has seemingly transformed into a new arena for global competition, extending beyond politics, economics, and soft power. The increasing elevation of climate challenges goes beyond their status as environmental issues, and their significance provide a fertile ground for shaping determinants of global governance, security, and socioeconomic stability to this novel brand of international relations. The importance of climate change in international relations arises as a powerful force influencing our collective global future as nations deal with this intricate connection's complexities.

Climate change has caused devastating consequences quicker than we feared and it simultaneously affects every corner of the world. Besides affecting human lives, it also threatens global peace and security. The socioeconomic tensions among states amplified the competition for resources such as water, food and land. This race, along with the climate emergency, made relations among states worse. 'The climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win,' said the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the 75th anniversary of United Nations Organizations in 2020. Collective measures are compulsory to manage the challenge, which requires positive interstate relations based on mutual respect. The imperatives of survival and progress embody collective interests of humanity. These interests revolve around crucial components like space, resources, and environment. Upholding human survival and progress requires

preserving the sovereign space of nations against external aggression, ensuring equitable distribution and exchange of vital resources, and safeguarding the environment from widespread devastation.

While future remains uncertain, cultivating a proactive approach toward climate change and international relations remains imperative. Strengthening international exchanges, fostering cooperation, and mitigating conflicts and disputes constitute essential steps forward. International cooperation to resolve the challenge is dynamic through setting common grounds, trust building and fostering diplomatic relations. Over the years, dozens of international climate conferences have been convened, propelled by the framework set by the United Nations Convention on Climate Change. Climate governance has progressively evolved from conceptual frameworks to practical essences. The policymakers must also diminish the division between developed and developing nations in the climate change discourse. The enhancement of mechanisms and the fortification of institutions emerge as pivotal strategies in elevating the significance of climate change within international relations. Through these efforts, the international community can aspire to forge a future where environment and global cooperation thrive.

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