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A Climate Treaty Is Pointless Unless China And India Cut CO2

Posted By [Andrew Follett](#) On 1:44 PM 10/21/2015 In | [No Comments](#)

No matter what the U.S. does to fight global warming, it's efforts will amount to nothing if China and India keep increasing carbon dioxide emissions, according to expert research.

The problem is partially why the Obama administration has long claimed that the United States must "lead by example" as, mathematically, American CO2 reduction schemes are futile without global participation.

China is, by far, the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide and has been since 2006, while India has long accounted for the largest share of global emissions growth. According to a 2014 study by the European Union, China emits 29 percent of the world's carbon dioxide while the US is only responsible for 15 percent of the world's emissions (the European Union itself only accounts for 10 percent and India accounts for another 6 percent.)

CO2 emissions are declining rapidly in the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Germany, the nations most interested in negotiating a treaty. Developed countries simply cannot cut enough emissions to account for the emissions growth of developing countries.

Developed nations have already made all the easy and cost effective emissions cuts, making additional cuts disproportionately expensive. American emissions have already declined by roughly 10.4 percent in the last 5 years for which data was available, largely because clean burning natural gas is replacing dirtier coal power.

The costs of reducing emissions further for the United States is incredibly high, comparable to the cost of fighting a major war. For example, a fully implemented version of the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan would cost consumers and businesses a staggering \$41 billion or so annually. That's comparable to the \$40 billion or so the US spent on fighting the Iraq War in 2006. Yet, according to analysis by the libertarian Cato Institute, using models created by the Environmental Protection Agency, all that spending will only avert only 0.019° Celsius of warming by the year 2100, an amount so small that it couldn't be detected.

The \$140 billion the European Union spends annually on renewable energy subsidies prevents 6 times fewer carbon emissions than the fall of the Soviet Union did. In fact, the massive annual expense of European renewable subsidies averts only as many emissions as very simple, and virtually free, land-use changes in India have.

Furthermore, under its proposed Paris commitments, India can triple its CO2 emissions by 2030. Even with that, India has expressed disappointment in the draft text of the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris with their climate change minister saying he was "not at all happy" with the draft for reasons of "equity." An estimated 400 million Indians, 31 percent of the population, lack access to electricity, so the country is reluctant to adopt any policy which could slow down growth.

India has made it clear that it will only begin reducing its emissions if it receives substantial assistance from Western countries, equivalent to \$2.5 trillion over the next 15 years in direct

aid, grants, and cheap financing.

Attempts to reduce the emissions of developing economies have proven very ineffective, as they would inevitably be costly and reduce economic growth. For example, in exchange for a commitment by the United States to reduce its carbon emissions by 26 to 28% by 2025, China only agreed to stop increasing its emissions footprint by 2030. Even the deal's supporters agree that it alone is "very unlikely to keep future warming below 2 [degrees] Celsius", the benchmark beyond which they say climate change will be "dangerous."

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