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Obama Administration on Climate Change

Efforts to combat the effects of climate change can be seen in the Obama Administration as something that the President was passionate about. In his remark about the future, he claimed that someday our children and their children will ask whether we did enough to secure the safety and stability of the future of the world through our efforts. There were visible action steps having been taken by the Obama administration to combat climate change. The first evidence was seen in the 2013 Climate Action Plan in which Obama’s administration would take up the initiative of cutting carbon pollution, assist in preparing America for effects of climate change and actively participate in international climate change mitigation strategies. It is necessary to take action now for the sake of future generation, which is the thing Obama’s Administration was doing. This paper is based on the theme that climate change is real, and it has a significant impact on the world.

Through the Climate Action Plan, the President intends to combat climate change effects successfully. Cutting back on carbon emissions is meant to trigger business innovations, which will, in turn, lead to creation of employment as power plants are modernized to produce cleaner energy. In addition, the dependence on foreign oil will be eliminated. This plan is meant to reduce energy consumption in average American families, thus cutting back on utility bills. The Plan consists of several executive actions but is divided into three main pillars, namely Cutting Carbon Pollution, Preparing the US Citizens for Impacts of Climate Change, and Leading International Efforts on Combating Climate Change and Preparing for its Effects. In the process of these changes, there are different government departments that play a big role in it.

With the seriousness of the Obama government on issues of climate change, US politics reached a turning point. It was during this period that the chances for implementing forceful measures to address climate change arose. However, some of the conditions that need to trigger climate change policies in the US are currently fixed. Although there is a hope, there are a number of hurdles from different divides including the politics, institutional and domestic challenges. Some systems were adopted before the climate agreement was reached. Having been signed earlier means that the hopeful strategy against climate change can only be achieved through a skilled political management system.

PUBLIC OPINION AND CLIMATE POLITICS

A large number of American citizens have already accepted the impacts of climate change. The research indicates that more than 70% of the citizens acknowledge that it is a challenge that exists and needs fixing (Bowman Tom n. p). What is not known, however, is how prepared citizens are to embrace the discomfort that may come with some of the mitigation steps being taken to curb the problem. The major divide on climate stand depends on political party affiliation. The Republicans, for instance, are distrustful of science and mainstream media that have an impact on climate change. This means that such a group is going to base their conclusions on personal observations rather than established facts. This plays out a situation in Congress when a Republican member of Parliament was likely to receive less support from constituents, even when the representative was convinced of the dangers of climate change. The public debate on climate change has been a contentious one and not only because of opposition from well financed skeptics, anti-environment groups or free market proposers (McCright & Dulap 499). Such groups with the aim of discrediting them and warranting them untrustworthy have politicized most research on climate change. These groups worked on undermining the adoption and implementation of remedies that had the potential of turning around climate change effects. They achieved this effect through magnification of scientific uncertainties and by increasing the knowledge gaps, thus creating doubts. The impact of these groups led to public confusion on whom the people should trust concerning climate information.

Fortunately, there were a number of ways that these challenges had been countered within the Obama Administration. NGOs related to environment protection as well as leadership at community, political, and corporate levels were active in sensitizing the public on the correct scientific information on climate. The American discussion on climate change had been shifting until it reached a point where it was described as a tipping point. Currently many Americans believe that global warming is real and is already progressing. The citizens accept the fact that humanity has a great part to play in these changes with nature.

THE ROLE OF CONGRESS IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE

External factors show that the Congress was likely to adopt the policies that promote aggressive climate change mitigation, however the trends indicated completely different situation. The direction that Congress pointed to was contradictive. The US led majority of world environmental protection measures that Congress adopted in the 1960s and 1970s. During this period there was an enactment of the law with 22 environmental statues having been enacted. This is the period within which efforts to conserve endangered species was unanimous and nonpartisanship was high. The endangered species legislation was passed by Democrats’ majority and signed by Republicans. The partisanship rift on environment came as a backlash to regulations on environment, which was a target to conservatives, and business minded people who observed high economic cost, unacceptable government authority expansion, and property right infringement. With the history of environmental protection known, President Obama, despite the struggling economy, proposed several steps that should indicate and emphasize on the previous commitments. There was no doubt in the administration’s seriousness about combating global warming as proven by the administration’s ability to put rhetoric frameworks into action (Foshay & Keith n. p).

The President put the discourse on climate change from being a threat to the economy of the country to being a vital means of putting US out of the economic crisis. According to his proposals, the use of renewable energy would increase competitiveness of US in the long run not to mention the numerous jobs that would result from it. His approach is parallel to the Roosevelt’s one in the 1930s. Obama’s new green deal was equated to different efforts around the world in the past. The Obama agenda was a combination of broad policies and concrete measures. It encompassed objectives on broader economic development objectives. It also focused on particular goals that reflected the said ambitions. The concrete targets were meant to meet goals, and lastly, they showed the means to achieve these goals. The proposed environment and energy agenda was also presented by the energy overview plan, thus indicating that energy and climate go hand in hand. There were four broad policy issues to be addressed. First was the provision of short term relief to American families. Second was the elimination of existing imports from the Middle East. Third was the creation of numerous green jobs, and the last one was the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. To sum it up, the Obama administration’s climate and energy agenda specified the factors that would have a substantially positive climate impacts. Outside the US boarders there was a lot of focus on the President and the Congress as the important and visible actors of the factors that were engaged in constructing the US public policy.

EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL POWER AND ROLES

There were numerous expectations on President Obama within the US and around the world at large. The power of the US Presidential office could be the reason behind high expectations around the globe. However, the Constitution separates powers within an elaborate system that makes the President to be dependent on the legislature that is the Congress, and judicial that is the Supreme Court. Due to the facts mentioned, there are three ways that the executive can exert its power, especially on matters of climate change. First, the executive draws attention and defines issues on climate. It also formulates the policy proposals. The climate wields a significant influence on major climate policy changes through the federal bureaucracy. This is a channel which is often least followed, yet is the one of the most powerful and visible to effect substantial changes, especially in the short term. Certain agendas are highly influenced by the executive under the leadership of the President by way of nominations, budget allocation and executive orders.

The role played by the judiciary on climate change cannot also be taken for granted. The courts had been engaged by NGOs and the state on several occasions to weigh in on climate matters. This had been raised in lawsuits by plaintiffs who were world environmental leaders mostly. In most cases, these lawsuits were intended for compelling federal regulations, taking common law against emitters and violators of the law and requiring organizations to adhere to climate impact considerations. In the end, the Obama administration brought into account a sharper focus on climate changes and the impacts which were likely to result from it. The reality of climate change and the impacts of it cannot be escaped.

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