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Domestic Constraints and International Forces: Explore China's Position on International Climate Change Policy

CONTRAINTES NATIONALES ET LES FORCES INTERNATIONALS : EXPLOREZ LA POSITION CHINOISE SUR LA POLITIQUE INTERNATIONALE SUR LE CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE

YANG Yi[1,*]

[1]School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China
[*]Corresponding author.
Email: bfsuyangyi@yahoo.com

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Abstract
With a growing influence in the world political and economic arena, China is playing a pivotal role in the formation and future development of international climate regime. As the second largest greenhouse gas emission state and the state of highest growth rate of greenhouse gas, China's climate change position and the possible change have aroused wide concerns in the international community. With the development of international climate negotiation, the position of China became positive and openness more and more. Economic development and ecological vulnerability is the domestic constraint China has encountered in forming its climate change policy; And China's international image is the external forces that led China's international climate change policy. These factors became the decision-making basis for making the Chinese climate change policy.

Key words: Climate Change; Domestic Constraints; International Forces; Emission Reduction Commitment

Résumé
Avec une influence croissante dans l'arène politique et économique mondial, la Chine joue un rôle pivot dans la formation et le développement futur du régime climatique international. Comme le deuxième état le plus grand d'émissions de GES et l'état de taux de croissance les plus élevés de gaz à effet de serre, la position de la Chine sur le changement climatique et le changement possible ont suscité des préoccupations dans la gamme de la communauté internationale. Avec le développement de la négociation internationale sur le climat, la position de la Chine est devenue positive et d'ouverture de plus en plus. Le développement économique et la vulnérabilité écologique est la contrainte intérieure de la Chine a rencontré dans la formation de sa politique de changement climatique, et l'image internationale de la Chine sont les forces externes qui ont conduit la Chine en matière de politique internationale aux changements climatiques. Ces facteurs sont devenus la base de décision pour rendre la politique climatique chinoise changement.

Mots clés: Changement climatique; Contraintes Domestiques; Forces internationales; Engagement de réduction des émissions

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China can be characterized as the key actor in solving the global climate change problem because of the size of its GHG-emission. Now it is the second largest emitters of gases causing global warming after the United States. In additions of its size of emission, China has big effluence in the climate change negotiation due to its position in the Group of 77 states (G77). China is the largest and most populous developing country, it has the most important role in forming the attitude of developing countries in climate change negotiation and has the important role in leading the developing countries and forming the same position in climate change regime in the future.

From the late 1980s, China has been participated actively in the negotiation of international climate change. Until now, it has rectified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1994 and the Kyoto Protocol in 2002. And it issued the China's National Climate Change Program in 2007 and China's Policies and Actions for

Addressing Climate Change" (as cited in White Paper) in 2008. Nevertheless China has so far been unwilling to accept any form of abatement commitments justified by arguments based on low per capita emissions, lack of historical responsibility for climate change and the lack of technological and finical resources needed to reduce to emission. But china's attitude to the climate change is more flexible and cooperative. What factors affect China's position on international climate change? This paper analysis the domestic and international factors behind China's climate change policy.

Four parts are included, part I introduced the China's climate change policy from the 1990s and conceptualized trends in China's climate change policy. In part II we examined the domestic constraints China has encountered in forming the climate change policy. In part III, we put China's climate change policy in the globalization and explain how the international forces lead China's climate change policy. The final is the concluding remarks, in which we point out some possibility and challenge that China's government is likely to confront in its attempt to stand on its position of climate change policy.

INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of global environmental problems in 1980s, the environment has become an important issue area of international focus. Climate change caused by the emission of greenhouse gas (GHG) is one of the greatest challenges to the international community. China is one of the countries often mentioned as being central to future international efforts aim to controlling GHG emissions.

In this paper, I will examine the formulation of China's climate change policy and the position on it. What factors affect China's position on international climate change? My main contention is that China's position on climate change and its policy is driven by the domestic constrains and international forces. The domestic constrains includes promoting economic development and reducing poverty, energy strategy and domestic policy making process. The international forces are protecting state sovereignty and international reputation. Based on these, China's attitude to the climate change is become more flexible and cooperative, its position are both continuities and changes.

I. CHINA'S POSITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS POLICY

China can be characterized as the key actor in solving the global climate change problem because of the size of its GHG-emission. Now it is the second largest emitters of gases causing global warming after the United States. In additions of its size of emission, China has big effluence in the climate change negation due to its position in the Group of 77 states (G77). China is the largest and most populous developing country, it has the most important role in forming the attitude of developing countries in climate change negotiation and has the important role in leading the developing countries and forming the same position in climate change regime in the future.

Environmental concerns have been on China's policy agenda since the early 1970s, as the consequence of its participation in the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. However, its concern was ignored by state planners and production ministries, especially heavy industry (Ross, 1992, p.628). With the economic reform, the environmental protection began to receive more and more attention. By the 1990s, worsening environmental conditions and growing public awareness domestically, combined with the increased saliency of environmental concerns in international relations and the anticipation that those concerns might be leveraged into financial and technological assistance from abroad, it seem to result in a modest shift in China's approach to environmental protection (Hatch, 2003, p.43).

1.1 Climate Change Becomes One of China's Political Agenda

In the late 1980s, climate change developed into an important international issue attracting increasing attention from the public, media, scientists and policymakers around the world (Chayes and Kim, 1998, p.507). With climate change became a major issue on the international political agenda, China responded by initiating the coordination of its own climate policy. In 1988, an inter-agency group was established by the Environmental Protection Commission. When the negotiations moved towards a more formal phase the climate change policy coordination structure was expanded and a National Climate Change Coordination Group was established to facilitate the work of formulating China's positions for the upcoming international climate negotiations (Chayes and Kim 1998, p. 514; Tangen et al. 2001, p.238). The group involved four different bureaucracies, the State Science and Technology Commission (SSTC), the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), the State Meteorological Administration (SMA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) (Economy 1994, p.148). SMA was in charge of scientific assessment and acting as the lead agency, SSTC was responsible for response strategies while NEPA was in charge of impact assessment. MOFAs responsibility was to lead the Chinese delegation to the negotiations (Hatch, 2003, p.49).

When the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) initiated its work on drafting an effective convention on climate change in 1991, two issues emerged as especially critical in order to successfully create a convention. First, whether a convention should give what degree and extent the developing countries should participate (Economy, 1994, pp.18-19). During the INC negotiations, the Chinese delegation strongly opposed

the idea of targets and timetables and supported a general framework convention with no specific responsibilities for the parties. It insisted on the protection of national sovereignty with an emphasis on developing countries' right and need to develop and thus not be committed to take on measures in conflict with development or conditional aid; the historical responsibility of industrial countries; and transfer of new and additional funding and technologies to developing countries (Hatch, 2003, p.50). China also succeeded to establish a unified developing country front in order to resist any claims of developing country commitments from the industrialized countries. Together, the developing countries emphasized the historical responsibility of developed countries for climate change, and agreed to participate in the climate negotiations only on the condition that they should not be required to take any substantial commitments of their own (Harris, 2003, p.27).

1.2 From Rio to Kyoto

China signed the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992 and rectified it in 1994. Six more INC meetings were held between Rio and the first Conference of the Parties (COP-1) preparing for the Convention's entry into force. The most central issue discussed at COP-1 was the adequacy of the commitments of the Convention including the proposal of a follow-up protocol. On the issue of adequacy of commitments, China together with G77 stressed that implementation of the existing commitments should be the COP's main concern. The Chinese delegation was skeptical of the proposal of a protocol to follow up the Convention, and expressed that it was not interested in negotiating a protocol before the Annex I Parties had implemented all their commitments in accordance with the Convention (ENB, 1995, p.4).

When a group of key developing countries including India and China decided to support a statement by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) declaring the current commitments inadequate and called for industrialized countries to address the problem. By doing this the "G77 and China" indicated a general recognition of the need to address climate change (ENB 1997b, p.15). Consequently COP-1(shaped by this) adopted the Berlin Mandate to begin a process to negotiate a follow-up protocol to the Convention containing more specific obligations and established the Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate (AGBM) to begin this work (Chayes and Kim, 1998, p.506).

In addition to adequacy of commitments Joint Implementation (JI) or Activities Implemented Jointly (AIJ) was the other main topic for China in this period. Chinese negotiators viewed JI as an instrument created primarily to benefit developed countries helping them to avoid domestic actions. Moreover, JI was regarded with suspicion because it could be a means of introducing commitments for developing countries, shifting responsibility from Annex I to non-Annex I Parties. JI was up for discussion both at COP-1 and COP-2 and China, together with the G77 expressed their skepticism fearing that the introduction of JI projects involving developing countries could be on the expense of financing and technology transfers stipulated in the FCCC (ENB, 1996).

At the third Conference of the Parties (COP-3) in Kyoto, the 'G77 and China' contributed to pushing higher targets by supporting the EU's emission reduction position. In general the developing countries proved to be quite influential in Kyoto. The 'G77 and China' also succeeded in deleting an article on voluntary commitments for developing countries (ENB 1997a, p. 15). The Kyoto Protocol also included three 'flexible mechanisms', the Clean Development Mechanism (Article 12), Joint Implementation between Annex I Parties (Article 6) and emission trading (Article 17). In general China was skeptical to the introduction of the so-called Kyoto mechanisms (Tangen et al., 2001, p.241). China and other developing countries objected to Article 17 on emission trading, stating that it would not reduce emissions, and proposed to delete it from the Protocol (ENB, 1997a, p.11).

During this Conference, The 'G77 and China' denied to the proposal made by New Zealand that the developing countries should assure that they would be willing to take on binding commitments after the first commitment period, if Annex I Parties succeeded in fulfilling their commitments. They insisted that it was not the time to address developing countries commitments, and focus should continue to remain on strengthening developed country commitments because the developing countries have low capita emissions and must therefore prioritize economic and social development.

1.3 The Position of China's Climate Change Policy in Post-Kyoto Period

The main issues in Chinese climate diplomacy during this stage have been how to uphold the avoidance of developing country commitments and how to relate to the Kyoto Mechanisms, especially the CDM (Harris and Yu, 2005, p.53).

Despite the developing countries' successful effort to remove the proposed article on voluntary commitments for non-Annex I countries from the Protocol, the issue was brought up once again by the US at COP-4 in Buenos Aires. China and India (and other developing countries) recalled that the debate at Kyoto had rejected the idea of voluntary commitments, because it was an idea not implied in the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities'. According to the Chinese delegation, voluntary commitments would not promote the FCCC and was just a way to avoid existing commitments by some Parties (ENB, 1998). The idea of voluntary commitments for developing countries also raised the concern that developing countries risked losing financial assistance and technology transfer as stipulated in the Convention

if they agreed to take on commitments voluntarily. China moreover expressed concern that voluntary commitments would create a new category of Parties under the FCCC and destroy the unity of 'G77 and China' (ENB, 1998, p.3).

One of the most important developments in this period of China's climate change policy is the changing attitude towards the flexible mechanisms. As already mentioned China was initially critical to proposals of Joint Implementation involving developing countries, including the Clean Development Mechanism when it was proposed as a part of the Kyoto Protocol. However, at COP-5 in Bonn in 1999 China did not raise its usual objections to the flexibility mechanisms when they were up for discussions (ZHANG, 2003, p.69).

After this meeting China also began to take a more active part in discussions on rules and procedures guiding the practical implementation of CDM projects. In China's view all technologies should be allowed under the CDM, including nuclear energy projects, with the exception of sink activities. China argued against the inclusion of sinks based on the difficulties in ensuring that the resulting reductions from sink projects were of a permanent character (Tangen et al., 2001, p.242). By ratifying the Kyoto Protocol in 2002 China became eligible to CDM projects. China's position regarding the CDM developed from initial skepticism to a more pragmatic focus on maximizing benefits that might result from China's participation in such projects (Tangen et al., 2001).

At COP-9 in Milan China stated that the 'purpose of the discussion was to double the chances for developing countries to be more able and then more willing to participate in mitigation actions in the future' (Pew Center, 2003). This was a possible sign that some developing countries were moving towards becoming involved in discussions about future steps. China also said that 'once developed countries have taken the lead in mitigating emissions, developing countries would be able to make a contribution' (ENB, 2003, p.14).

Until the COP-14 which the latest conference held in Poznan, China insisted that developed countries should take the lead in reducing their GHG emissions, strictly fulfill their emission reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol for the first commitment period, and make further deep cut their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25-40% below 1990 level by 2020. Meanwhile, developed countries should also fulfill their commitments under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol supporting developing countries with financial resources, capacity building and the transfer of technology. For their part, developing countries will also take positive and effective mitigation and adaptation measures in the context of sustainable development and with the support of developed countries (XIE, 2008).

China has a positive attitude to the climate change and gradually formulated and implemented a series of policies and measures to address climate change. The Chinese Government released *China's National Climate Change Program* (CNCCP) in June 2007 and the White Paper called "China's Policies and Actions for Addressing Climate Change" in 2008. In these documents, China stated "According to the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" of the UNFCCC, the Parties included in Annex I to the Convention should take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For developing countries with less historical emission and current low per capita emission, their priority is to achieve sustainable development. As a developing country, China will stick to its sustainable development strategy and take such measures as energy efficiency improvement, energy conservation, development of renewable energy, ecological preservation and construction, as well as large-scale tree planting and afforestation, to control its greenhouse gas emissions and make further contribution to the protection of global climate system; China is ready to cooperate with the international community to actively participate in activities for climate change adaptation and formulation of relevant legal documents." (CNCCP, 2007).

1.4 The Continuities and Changes in China's Climate Change Policy

From 1990s, there are both continuities and changes in China's climate change policy. What has not changed is that China still refuses to make a binding greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions reduction commitment, while China's attitude toward the international climate negotiations has become more flexible and cooperative. Abatement costs, ecological vulnerabilities, and principles of equity are the major factors contributing to the continuities and changes in China's position.

China's position has primarily evolved around a handful of central elements. The first and most important dimension of China's climate policy is the position on commitments for China and other developing countries. China's position on this issue has been more or less unaltered throughout the history of climate change negotiations and has been characterized by strong opposition to even discuss the issue. Even the issue of voluntary commitments for developing countries has been met with resistance on the occasions it has been up for discussion. The 'G77 and China' have been quite successful in their effort to keep the question of commitments for developing countries off the official agenda, it has however been looming in the background all the time. Since the issue of future commitments has never been subject to formal negotiations, there have still not been any discussions of when, how large and what kind of commitments developing countries should have.

On the policy dimension labeled differentiation of commitments, China and the other developing countries have advocated highly differentiated commitments

between developed and developing countries. The position has been that commitments should be differentiated according to historical responsibility or per capita emissions. In addition there should be a transfer of technologies and financial resources from developed to developing countries in order to enhance the developing countries capacities to meet the climate change challenge.

The central arguments employed by China to defend its positions in the negotiations are founded on China being a developing country which should not be required to reduce its emissions in a way that harms further development. As a developing country China has limited capacity to reduce emissions and lacks the necessary technological solutions to do so. Moreover, China's per capita emissions are low compared to the world average and especially compared to the US. Another argument repeatedly used is that China's historical responsibility for emission of greenhouse gases is very limited. China often refers to the measures already implemented that have limited the growth of China's GHG emissions such as energy conservation and population control (Tangen et al. 2001, p.239).

China's absolute rejection of emission targets for developing countries does not necessarily mean that China is unwilling to change its behavior as a response of being involved in climate change cooperation. China has also shown willingness and a more flexible approach towards bilateral cooperation projects aimed at reducing emissions (Kobayashi, 2003). China has moreover established new domestic institutions to coordinate policy responses and to deal with implementation of CDM as part of its response to participation in the international climate change regime. In recent documents released by Chinese government, it stated that China will take adjusting economic structure, improving energy efficiency, optimizing energy mix and promoting afforestation as the mitigation measures.

The official position on climate change has resolved around four themes. First, China is a victim of global climate change. China maintains that just like other developing countries, China suffers from the adverse effects of global climate change. Second, developed countries are the principle emitter of GHGs and therefore should bear the primary responsibility in addressing the climate change problem. Third, in light of their current and historical responsibilities and respective capabilities, developed countries should undertake transfer of advanced, environmentally friendly technologies and provide financial assistance to developing countries in combating climate change while meeting the needs of sustainable development. Fourth, China's overriding priority is poverty eradication and economic development. China's main concern is to improve the livelihood of its citizens and develop its national economy. Economic conditions have constrains China from making great contributions than it has already made to address climate change.

So what are the driving forces of China's position on climate change policy? Next parts I will explore and analysis them from domestic and international level.

2. DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS OF CHINA'S CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

China's climate change policy is influenced by several domestic considerations: economic development and poverty reduction, energy strategy and domestic policy making process.

Economic Development and Poverty Reduction

China's main official priorities are economic development, poverty reduction, and social stability. Climate change is one area where the conflict between poverty and sustainable development is apparent, as it is closely linked to economic development, resource management, poverty reduction, and energy use. Taking on emission-reduction commitments presently runs counter to China's economic development strategy.

A large population and a relatively low level of economy determine that China's development task is a formidable one. The population of the mainland of China reached 1.321 billion at the end of 2007, ac-counting for 20 percent of the world's total. China has a comparatively low level of urbanization, with an urbanization rate of 44.9 percent in 2007, lower than the world's average. The large population also brings huge employment pressure. New urban labor force entrants of million and above need jobs every years; as the urbanization process moves forward, tens of millions of rural laborers transfer to the urban areas every year. Statistics from the International Monetary Fund show that the per-capita GDP of China in 2007 was US$2,461, ranking 106th, a low-to-middle place, among 181 countries and regions. China is characterized by unbalanced regional economic development and is still nagged by large income gap between urban and rural residents. The country is still troubled by poverty, with an impoverished rural population of 14.79 million inadequately fed and clad. Those who just have enough to eat and wear and earn an unstable, low income number 30 million nationwide. Moreover, China has a relatively low level of science and technology and weak capacity of independent innovation. Developing the economy and improving people's lives are imperative tasks currently facing China.

Natural resources are fundamental to the development of a national economy. The industrial structure and economic advantages of a country are determined to a considerable degree by its resources availability and combination. China is a country with a large population and at a relatively low level of development, and its economic development has long been constrained by the

scarcity of per capita resources and it will continue to be so for a long time. The development history and trend of various countries has revealed the obvious positive correlations between per capita CO2 emissions, per capita commercial energy consumption and the economic development level. In other words, with current level of technology development, to reach the development level of the industrialized countries, it is inevitable that per capita energy consumption and CO2 emissions will reach a fairly high level. In the development history of human beings, there is no precedent where a high per capita GDP is achieved with low per capita energy consumption. With its ongoing economic development, China will inevitably be confronted with growing energy consumption and CO2 emissions. The issue of GHG mitigation will pose a challenge to China to create an innovative and sustainable development pattern.

Energy Strategy

Economic growth in China continues to be fuelled by fossil based energy. Expansion of energy consumption has been critical to China's development. The country's energy policy is therefore one of the key priorities in China's development process. Understanding the background for energy policy making can help us reach a better understanding of a crucial determinant for its climate policy.

China is one of the few countries whose energy mixes are dominated by coal. In 2005, 68.9% of China's primary energy consumption was coal, while the world average was only 27.8%. Compared with oil and natural gas, coal's carbon content per unit calorific value is 36% and 61% higher, respectively. Because of the coal-dominated energy mix, CO2 emission intensity of China's energy consumption is relatively high. China will face much more difficulties than other countries in decreasing its carbon intensity per unit of energy for mainly three reasons: its energy mix adjustment is constrained by the mix of energy resources to certain extent; its energy efficiency improvement is subject to the availability of advanced technologies and financial resources, and its coal-dominated energy resources and consumption structure will not change substantially for a long-term period in the future.

One of the main reasons for China's low energy efficiency and high GHG emission intensity is the backward technologies of energy production and utilization in China. On one hand, there are relatively large gaps between China and the developed countries in term of technologies of energy exploitation, supply and transformation, transmission and distribution, industrial production and other end-use energy; on the other hand, out-of-date processes and technologies still occupy a relatively high proportion of China's key industries. For example, the overall energy consumption per ton of steel in large-scale iron & steel enterprises is about 200 kgce lower than that in small enterprises, and the overall energy consumption per ton of synthetic ammonia in large or medium enterprises is about 300 kgce lower than in small enterprises. Owing to the lack of advanced technologies as well as the large proportion of out-of-date processes and technologies, China's energy efficiency is about 10% lower than that of the developed countries, and its per unit energy consumption of energy-intensive products is about 40% higher than the advanced international level. Science and technology are the ultimate resort for humankind to tackle climate change. As China is now undergoing large-scale infrastructure construction for energy, transportation and buildings, the features of intensive emissions associated with these technologies will exist for the next few decades if advanced and climate-friendly technologies could not be made timely available. This poses severe challenges to China in addressing climate change and mitigating GHG emissions.

So energy is definitely the key to economic development in China. Poverty alleviation and economic development are main priorities for China's leadership, so climate-change policy must be seen in this context. Fossil-based energy has been the main energy source and will remain so in the near future. China's continued reliance on energy consumption and production results in considerable domestic air pollution and GHG emissions. The leadership has recognized the need to curb local air pollution resulting from energy consumption and production and has made energy policy a priority. But mechanisms are needed to ensure the successful implementation of this policy. Moreover, China's increasing energy demand will pose challenges, as will the rapidly growing transport sector. In addition to being crucial to economic development, energy is also central to China's climate change policy (NDRC, 2007).

Domestic Policy Making Process

China's climate change policy is shaped by the interests and priorities of a few key actors, with input from several less influential actors. The State Development Planning Commission (renamed the NDRC in March 2003) was charged in 1998 with coordinating the country's climate-change efforts, following the governmental reorganization that year. To promote coordination among the numerous ministries involved in climate work, the National Climate Change Coordination Leading Small Group (CCCLSG) which include15 members was established in 1990. It is an inter-ministerial level committee chaired by the NDRC and the highest climate policy-making organ in China. A Climate Change Office, established within the NDRC in 1998, functions as secretariat to the coordination group.

The NDRC is one of the most powerful commissions in China. The commission is a latecomer in the climate-change policy making process, but it has assumed an increasingly salient role as economic and energy issues have inched upwards on the domestic agenda (Hegelund,

2007, p. 171). The Climate Change Office functions as the secretariat to the National Climate Change Coordination Committee, but in practice has the responsibility for climate work in China. The office has grown in size with the increasing activity in the climate change area, in particular the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

Delegating the responsibility to the NDRC signified that climate change was no longer perceived solely in scientific terms, but increasingly in political and economic terms. Moreover, it signified that the domestic discussion about China's potential contribution to the international efforts to combat climate change had taken a moderate, and not very proactive, direction. The NDRC (together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MFA) emphasized economic development and sovereignty concerns in the climate negotiations, which has resulted in a limited Chinese response. Other actors (such as the State Science and Technology Commission, now the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the then National Environmental Protection Agency, renamed the State Environmental Protection Administration in 1998) had been more positive and believed there were potential benefits for China (for instance access to technology) with a more proactive approach in the negotiations.

Several ministries and administrations are engaged in formulating China's negotiation positions, with varying degrees of influence. The NDRC heads the delegation to climate negotiations (on the vice-minister level) while the lead negotiator is often from the MFA's Department of Treaty and Law. The NDRC sets the agenda on domestic issues and MOST provides technical advice. The NDRC has responsibility for both economic policy and energy policy, since a precondition for economic development is to have sufficient energy resources. In negotiations the NDRC, together with the MFA, has the responsibility to ensure that China does not take on commitments that can impede economic development or impact on energy security, as would be the case, in their view, with emission-reduction commitments. Climate change being defined as a foreign-policy issue, the MFA exercises great influence on what positions China should take in climate negotiations. International climate policy in general is regarded as a highly sensitive topic, as it is seen as closely linked to the country's economic development. The positioning is therefore usually left to Chinese negotiators with lengthy experience in handling such delicate foreign-policy questions.

Actors representing core energy interests as well as economic development interests have dominated the climate decision-making process in the past decade, in particular the NDRC. Actors representing economic interests may be less positive toward policies that give priority to climate mitigation measures that may result in negative effects on economic growth. MFA and NDRC have common interests to fend off taking on commitments, although the reasons for this may be different. MFA stresses the responsibility of the industrialized countries to reduce emissions, and it protects China's membership in the G-77. NDRC emphasizes economic and energy aspects. There have also been differences of opinion between the two actors, mainly concerning domestic issues, and differences within the NDRC as well.

As the technical agency, the China Meteorological Administration (CMA) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) are responsibility for climate change. They provide the information and knowledge for the climate change policy making in China. Some research institutes and academies and agencies played the active role in the process of climate change policy making. They may be independent bodies, or subordinate to commissions or ministries. A number of independent think tanks and NGOs have their influences in the field of climate change more and more in recent years. Some research reports and academic paper give some suggestion to the government and received more attention from the domestic and international society.

3. INTERNATIONAL FORCES

China has been an active participant in international climate negotiations, usually acting in concert with the G-77/China. It has ratified the Kyoto Protocol, but has opposed any discussion about commitments for the developing countries. Chinese negotiators have repeatedly emphasized that developing country follow up of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is contingent on the developed countries fulfilling their obligations, on new and additional funding, and on transfer of technology. Their main argument has been that China is still a developing country. Chinese officials argue that increased emissions must be allowed in order for China to develop its economy and industry. The argument of low per capita emissions has been convincingly used in negotiations—one eighth of the U.S. emissions and about half of the world average. Chinese negotiators have contrasted the "survival emissions" of developing countries with the "luxury emissions" of developed countries, saying that the developed countries should change their own patterns of production and consumption, not force developing countries to remove food from people's tables.

Historical responsibility for global warming is another argument: Beijing's position is that, since China industrialized long after the United States and Europe, it is the latter countries that have a historical responsibility for taking the lead. China has also carried out measures that have meant substantial emission cuts.

Protecting State Sovereignty

In participating in the climate change regime, China has been mindful and vigilant to safeguard it sovereignty and ensures that its policy agenda is not to be dictated by

other countries or multilateral agencies. Climate change negotiators from China have resisted any attempt to impose new obligations on developing countries beyond FCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, such as subjecting the developing countries to emissions targets. As the Chinese delegation has repeatedly stated at COP sessions, China is willing to participate the climate change regime and will continue to make efforts to limit GHGs emissions, but will only do so according to its own policy agenda. The timetable that China has set for itself is such that it will not take on emissions reduction obligations until the Chinese economy and standard of living are comparable to that of mid-level of developed countries(LIU, 2000).

Like other international environmental treaties, the FCCC entails commitments by its signatories, including both developed and developing countries, based on the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities". Some of these commitments may be construed as an erosion of sovereignty. For example, Article 12 of the FCCC requires that all parties submit information related to their GHG emissions and implementation of the Convention. The review process of the national communications may be perceived as intrusive, possibly resulting in infringement of state sovereignty.

The objection to the review process by the Chinese delegation might have stemmed from concerns over erosion of sovereignty, but nonetheless China's defense of possible erosion of sovereignty in this instance did not appear to be vigorous. In fact, despite its critical rhetoric, China was actually developing project with the FCCC Secretariat involving GHG emissions inventories and had undertaken a number of bilateral and multilateral studies on the sources of China's GHG emissions and mitigation strategy. Chinese reactions to the reporting and review became mostly positive once it had been invited to participate in the in-depth reviews of some Annex I countries. Indeed, engaging China in the process is essential in building an effective climate change regime. It contributes to confidence building and creates "a sense of 'ownership' that would help legitimize intrusive international regulation" (Chayes and Kim, 1998, p.519). In doing so, it induces China to become a willing and active participate in the regime. Thus, erosion of sovereignty and international cooperation are not inherently contradictory for China; being treated respectfully as an equal partner is just as important. China is willing to "play the game" as long as it is involve in making the rules.

International Reputation

China traditionally considers solidarity with developing countries as fundamentally important. The climate change issue has provided unprecedented opportunity for China to boost its prestige and shore up support from developing countries. Moreover, China has used climate change to enhance its relationship with developed countries. Compared with most countries, China is particularly sensitive to external criticisms of its policy and behavior in international regime, and would go out of its way to avoid diplomatic isolation and international censure. It can lead to more cooperative behavior (Johnson, 1998, p.519). Even though some developed countries viewed China as the environmental villain, it does not appear to be widely shared in the international community, particularly among developing countries. On the contrary, China enjoys wide support from developing countries, and from early on has successfully build strong solidarity with them together to advance their position and interests. Indeed, the coalition of the "G-77 and China" was established in March 1991 in the run-up to the UNCED, and since has become one of the principle climate change negotiation blocs.

As the largest developing country and a permanent number of UN Security Council, China positioned to play a leadership role among developing countries in global environmental politics. Despite its recognized importance in the climate change debate, China tends to avoid placing itself along at the centre of confrontation. During the negotiation of FCCC and subsequent COP sessions, China united with G-77 in pressing their demands. China always insists that it is a developing country and frequently speaks in terms of defending the interest of developing countries. China maintains that developed countries are the major culprits while developing countries the victims of global climate change.

When Chinese negotiators interpret climate negotiations in the context of foreign affairs, China's status in the G-77 is also relevant, for many of those countries hold China in high regard because it is a shrewd, well-prepared negotiator. China enjoys considerable influence in this group and there are no indications of its intending to leave the G-77 in the near future.

China scholars generally agree that China used to be skeptical about these regimes, but this may gradually be changing as China is also interested in preserving an image as a responsible power. This interest is related to the country's rising status in the world, in both economic and political terms. China aspires to be seen as a nation abiding by the rules and regulations of international environmental regimes. The country is also an emerging economic superpower, and the pressure to take on commitments is intensifying. This is increasingly acknowledged by Chinese officials and is reported in the media. The level of national economy will be an important issue in future negotiations. Incomes are rising and the estimated level of income, in terms of purchasing power parity, is four times higher than the official Chinese figures. When the Kyoto Protocol was negotiated in 1997, China indicated that it would not even consider taking on emission-reduction commitments until it had achieved a "medium level of development," indicating a per capita annual income of $5,000. This argument appears to have diminished in relevance and is seldom heard now. Indeed, China has stated that it will remain a developing country

for some time to come. Although China has become more willing to enter into dialogue at the climate negotiations in the past few years, its stance of no commitments has not changed. Moreover, at the latest COP/MOP in Nairobi 2006, China seemed to be preoccupied with legal aspects and wording details, which was seen by negotiators as a step back. China thus seems unlikely to bow to the growing international pressure and take on new commitments in the near future.

CONCLUSION

Protecting China's economic interest and promoting economic development are the first and foremost consideration of Chinese policymakers. Any climate change initiative that harms the economy or hampers the economic growth is likely to be resisted by China. China's decision to participate in the climate change regime stems from not only concerns over the harms that climate change may bring it but also potential economic gains and opportunities to advance its foreign policy goals, including safeguarding national sovereignty and elevating China's international reputation in the international community.

Concerns over national interest usually motivate China to participate in the climate change regime with low-cost commitments. Although China is unlikely to assume obligations harmful to its economy, it will continue to pursue "no regret" climate change mitigate strategies especially if external finical assistant is available. Sovereignty is often considered a serious obstacle to global environmental cooperation. It may also be used as ground to fend off criticism or turn away from commitments. Despite the unfavorable light in which sovereignty is cast, countries sensitive to sovereignty concerns such as China often take part in international cooperation. They do so by choice, effectively surrendering some of their sovereignty. China tends to hold out against negative aspects of sovereignty but respond favorably to positive ones. A broader understanding of sovereignty is needed to foster China's cooperation in climate change regime. China's concerns over its international reputation always induce cooperative behavior and contribute to international cooperation.

Among these constrains and forces, economic interest tends to be figured out the most prominently in guiding the direction of China's climate change policy, while sovereignty and international reputation complement economic considerations. Under these circumstances, advancing one policy goal may be achieved at the minimum expense of other policy goals.

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