

Rising emissions show Paris climate agreement is an act of delusion

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Naturally the BBC and others have been quick to trumpet the news that China and the US yesterday agreed to ratify last December's Paris agreement on climate change. This "historic landmark", it is being claimed, will be a major step towards saving the planet, by slashing the world's emissions of carbon dioxide, thus supposedly preventing global temperatures from rising more than two degrees C above their pre-industrial levels.

But like everything else we have been told about that Paris agreement, it is all smoke and mirrors. We would never guess from all the hype, for instance, that China – already the world's largest CO₂ emitter, contributing 28 per cent to the world's total – has no intention of halting the rise in its "carbon emissions" at all. On the contrary, while saying it will cut emissions per unit of GDP, it projects that its economic growth will result in a CO₂ rise of 50 per cent by 2030. This alone would add up to 30 per cent of the world's total.

As for President Obama, despite his wish to make "the fight against climate change" a centrepiece of his "legacy", he has no power to ratify any international agreement. This could only be done with the agreement of two-thirds of the US Senate, which it is unlikely to give.

Another empty claim constantly made about the Paris agreement is that it was "legally binding". Even if the agreement is eventually "ratified" by 55 countries representing 55 per cent of global emissions, as is required for it to take effect, this applies to only one part of what they signed up to in December. And this is merely that every signatory country should come up with a "nationally determined contribution" (NDC), giving its own version of just how much CO₂ it expects to be emitting by 2030.

In fact, it is from these NDCs that we can see just how utterly meaningless the whole exercise has turned out to be. From the documents they all submitted in Paris, it is clear that almost all the world's major emitters are planning to build enough new coal-fired power stations to ensure that their CO₂ emissions will rocket. India alone, already the world's third-largest emitter, is planning to build more than 400 coal-fired plants, and anticipates that by 2030 its emissions will actually be three times greater than they are today.

It is hard to recall any event in history that has been more absurdly and comprehensively misrepresented by politicians and the media. "The one huge consolation from all this is that nothing said or done in Paris last December will have the slightest effect on the world's climate". In reality, the Paris agreement was no more than a vainglorious act of collective wishful thinking, orchestrated to fool the world into thinking that anything of significance had actually been achieved.

For the rest of us, of course, the one huge consolation from all this is that nothing said or done in Paris will have the slightest effect on the world's climate – as eventually, to their

undying shame if they live long enough, all those poor deluded politicians may come to realise.