

# McMaster says no redo on Paris climate deal decision

By [Anne Gearan](#) September 17 at 12:28 PM

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**McMaster, Tillerson: Trump is out of Paris Climate Accord, but 'the door is open'**

National security adviser H.R. McMaster and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Trump will still withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord as of Sept. 17, however they maintained the president is also open to re-negotiation. (Elyse Samuels/The Washington Post)

**National security adviser H.R. McMaster denied Sunday that President Trump is reconsidering his decision to pull out of the Paris climate change accord but said the**

door remains open to a better agreement down the road.

“That's a false report,” McMaster said of published reports over the weekend that the administration might not pull out of the deal after all and might seek new terms instead.

“The president decided to pull out of the Paris accord because it's a bad deal for the American people and it's a bad deal for the environment,” he said on “Fox News Sunday.”

*[Post-ABC Poll: Majority oppose U.S. withdrawal from Paris deal]*

The **Wall Street Journal** and Agence France-Presse had cited a top European climate official as saying that the United States was seeking ways to remain a party to the deal. The White House denied those reports in a statement Saturday, and McMaster underscored the U.S. position Sunday.

*[Trump announces U.S. will exit Paris climate deal]*

**“The president's ears are open if, at some point, they decide they can come forward with an agreement that addresses the president's very legitimate concerns with Paris,” McMaster said.**

**Trump had announced in June that the United States would begin a three-year process of withdrawal. He said then that he could revisit the decision if the United States could renegotiate terms he sees as unfair.**

**The U.S. withdrawal was seen as a policy victory for then-adviser Stephen K. Bannon and his deep suspicion of international agreements and obligations. McMaster's disagreements with Bannon over matters of policy, access to Trump and other issues are well known, and McMaster acted to reduce Bannon's role. Last month, [Trump dismissed Bannon](#) in a White House shake-up.**

**Fox host Chris Wallace noted during the interview the bad blood that had existed between McMaster and Bannon and asked McMaster whether the Trump**

**administration is better off without Bannon.**

*[Five takeaways from Steve Bannon's "60 Minutes" interview]*

**McMaster answered carefully.**

**“The administration is better off when we can serve the president by integrating and coordinating across all of our departments and agencies with our key allies and partners and to present the president with multiple options and then, based on his decisions, to help the president implement these policies that prioritize protecting and advancing the interests of the American people,” McMaster began.**

**“And so what's important is to have an inclusive process, not to try to manipulate into a particular decision or to advance your own agenda.”**

**Pressed on whether Bannon was guilty of such manipulation or ulterior motives, McMaster denied that there was an active feud between the two men and**

repeated his goal of open discussion of competing viewpoints.

“There were some who tried to operate outside that process for their own narrow agendas, and that did not serve the president well.”

On ABC's “This Week,” McMaster appeared to leave slightly more room for a reconsideration of U.S. participation in the Paris agreement.

“What the president has said is that we are withdrawing from the Paris accord. He left the door open to reentering at some later time if there can be a better deal for the United States,” the national security adviser said.

“He's open to any discussions that will help us improve the environment, that will help us ensure energy security and will advance our prosperity and the prosperity of American workers and American businesses,” McMaster added.

When host George Stephanopolous asked whether “it is

possible the United States would stay in if you can get a new agreement,” McMaster replied, “If there's an agreement that benefits the American people, certainly.”

*[Fact-checking Trump's claims on the Paris climate change deal]*

Play Video 0:51

Tillerson says Trump is 'willing to work with partners' on Paris climate accord

Appearing on CBS's "Face the Nation" on Sunday, Sept. 17, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson criticized the Paris climate accord for being "out of balance" for America and China, but said the Trump administration would look for ways to work with other countries on tackling climate "under the right conditions." (Reuters)

**On CBS's "Face the Nation," Secretary of State Rex Tillerson criticized the Paris accord as being "out of balance" for the United States and China but said the administration is seeking "other ways" to work with other countries on tackling climate change "under the right conditions."**

**Tillerson said the administration is "willing to work with**

partners in the Paris climate accord if we can construct a set of terms that we believe is fair and balanced for the American people and recognizes our economy, our economic interests, relative to others, in particular the second-largest economy in the world, China. If you look at those targets in terms of the Paris climate accord, they were just really out of balance for the two largest economies.”

The plan, Tillerson said, is to “consider other ways in which we can work with partners in the Paris climate accord.”

“We want to be productive; we want be helpful,” he added.

Asked whether the United States could remain in the agreement, Tillerson also appeared to leave a small window of possibility.

“I think under the right conditions, the president has said he's open to finding those conditions where we can remain engaged with others on what we all agree is a

challenging issue," he said.

## Paris climate deal: Trump open to staying in, Tillerson says

1 hour ago



### Media caption

"We want to be productive, we want to be helpful," said Mr Tillerson

**Donald Trump is open to staying in the Paris accord on climate change, his secretary of state has said, just hours after the White House insisted there would be "no change" to US policy.**

Rex Tillerson said the US would stay in the agreement "if we can construct a set of terms that we believe is fair".

His comments come despite the White House earlier denying reports it was softening its stance on the accord.

In June Mr Trump announced the US would withdraw from the pact.

The president said the move was part of his "solemn duty to protect America", painting the agreement as one which aimed to hobble the US economy in favour of countries like China and India.

Mr Trump also said he would "begin negotiations to re-enter either the Paris accord or a really entirely new transaction on terms that are fair to the United States".



### Media caption

Trump: The world won't laugh any more at US

Speaking to US network CBS, Mr Tillerson suggested the US might not leave at all. Asked if there was a chance the US could stay in the accord, Mr Tillerson said: "I think, under the right conditions, the president has said he's open to finding those conditions where we can remain engaged with others, on what we all agree is still a challenging issue."

This backs up reports on Saturday suggesting Mr Trump had softened his attitude towards the agreement.

After a meeting of environment ministers, the EU's top climate official, Miguel Arias Canete, said Trump officials had indicated the US would not renegotiate the Paris accord but "try to review the terms on which they could be engaged under this agreement.

"It's a message which is quite different to the one we heard from President Trump in the past," Mr Canete added.

#### **Five effects of US pullout**

#### **How did world react?**

#### **What is climate change?**

But later the same day, White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said: "There has been no change in the United States' position on the Paris agreement. "As the president has made abundantly clear, the United States is withdrawing unless we can re-enter on terms that are more favourable to our country."



#### Media caption

Can coal make a comeback under Trump?

Mr Trump's national security advisor HR McMaster, echoed her words more closely than Mr Tillerson when he appeared on ABC's This Week programme on Sunday. "He left the door open to re-entering at some later time if there can be a better deal for the United States," he said.

However, even an improved deal is likely to be a hard sell to Mr Trump's base support, many of whom are vehemently opposed to the 2015 agreement.

The Paris accord commits the US and 187 other countries to keeping rising global temperatures "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels and "endeavour to limit" them even more, to 1.5C.

Opponents say withdrawing from the accord is an abdication of US leadership on a key global challenge.

# WH: US staying out of climate

# accord

By [Kevin Liptak](#), CNN White House Producer

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The screenshot shows the top section of The Wall Street Journal website. At the top, the masthead reads "THE WALL STREET JOURNAL" with a "Subscribe \$12 for 12" badge. Below the masthead is a navigation bar with links for Home, World, U.S., Politics, Economy, Business, Tech, Markets, Opinion, Life & Arts, and Real Estate. A row of four small article teasers is visible, including one about "Visitors Tell of Extreme Heat at Florida Nursing Home". The main headline is "U.S. Trump Administration Seeks to Avoid Withdrawal From Paris Climate Accord, International Climate Officials Say", with a sub-headline "White House spokeswoman says 'no change' in U.S. position on deal" and the byline "By Emre Peker".

WH denies change on Paris climate deal 02:09

**(CNN)** President Donald Trump still plans to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement unless there are major changes made to the carbon emissions pact, the White House said Saturday.

The statement came after a European diplomat told reporters that a Trump administration envoy appeared to signal a softening stance during a meeting of climate ministers in Montreal, Canada.

A major point of contention between the United States and its global allies, the Paris climate accord issue reappeared just as Trump was set to make his major diplomatic debut at the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York next week.

If the administration were to reverse itself on dropping out of the accord, it would be a stark retreat on the issue for Trump and a complete break from

his [campaign promise to "cancel" the agreement](#), possibly signaling also that he's moving closer to Democrats on some policy matters.

"There has been no change in the United States' position on the Paris agreement," White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said. "As the President has made abundantly clear, the United States is withdrawing unless we can re-enter on terms that are more favorable to our country."

John Coequyt, the Sierra Club's director of global climate policy, invoked the damage from recent back-to-back Hurricanes Harvey and Irma after the White House denied any change in its stance on the climate agreement.

"For anyone who had any hope that two historically devastating storms striking our nation would wake up the Trump Administration to the reality of the climate crisis, think again," Coequyt said in a statement.

Earlier Saturday, the European climate official had suggested Trump was wavering in his commitment to remove the US from the landmark accord, which was struck in 2015.

The European Union's commissioner for climate action and energy, Miguel Arias Cañete, told reporters in Montreal that US officials have said that they will "review the terms on which they could be engaged" with the Paris deal, according to spokeswoman Anna-Kaisa Itkonen, who spoke to CNN by phone.

Cañete added that the US "has stated that they will not renegotiate the Paris accord."

The Agence France-Presse and The Wall Street Journal first reported Cañete's remarks Saturday.

The secondhand remarks suggested a softening stance on the Paris agreement, which Trump vowed to abandon unless he could strike a more favorable deal. That would likely include greatly lowering the carbon emission reduction targets set by the Obama administration when it signed

onto the accord two years ago.

During his June announcement, Trump downplayed the prospects of finding areas of agreement with other participating countries.

"We're getting out," he said during Rose Garden remarks. "And we will start to renegotiate and we'll see if there's a better deal. If we can, great. If we can't, that's fine."

Since then, Trump has signaled to fellow leaders that he could be open to finding a way to remain a part of the agreement as long as he believes US interests are better protected.

"He told me he was going to try to find a solution in the coming months," French President Emmanuel Macron said after meeting Trump in Paris in July. "We spoke about the details that could allow him to stay in the accord."

On Monday, climate ministers from about a dozen large-economy nations will meet in New York with Gary Cohn, head of the National Economic Council, where the US position on the Paris agreement is expected to be discussed.

Ministers will look to Cohn for greater clarity on the US position. As Trump weighed a decision on withdrawing from the Paris agreement last Spring, Cohn advocated against a full withdrawal.

## **Paris climate deal: US denies it will stay in accord**

3 hours ago



Image copyright

REUTERS

Image caption

The Paris deal commits the signatories to keeping rising global temperatures "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels

**The US has insisted it will leave the Paris climate accord, despite reports that it may be softening its stance.**

Officials who met a White House representative on Saturday said afterwards the US would either stay in the 2015 accord or change its approach.

The White House said "there has been no change" in the US position "unless we can re-enter on terms that are more favourable to our country".

President Donald Trump said in June he wanted a new "fair" deal for the US.

He added it was important a new deal would not disadvantage US businesses, but opponents say withdrawing from the accord is an abdication of US leadership on a key global challenge.

The Paris agreement commits the US and 187 other countries to keeping rising global temperatures "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels and "endeavour to limit" them even more, to 1.5C.

Only Syria and Nicaragua did not sign up to the deal.

### **What did Trump originally announce in June?**

Speaking **in the White House Rose Garden**, he characterised the Paris agreement as a deal that aimed to hobble, disadvantage and impoverish the US.

He claimed the agreement would cost the US 6.5 million jobs and \$3tn in lost GDP - while rival economies like China and India were treated more favourably.

"In order to fulfil my solemn duty to protect America and its citizens, the United States will withdraw from the Paris climate accord... but begin negotiations to re-enter either the Paris accord or a really entirely new transaction on terms that are fair

to the United States," he said.

During his visit to France in July, however, **Mr Trump hinted** that the US could shift its position on the deal - but did not elaborate.

"Something could happen with respect to the Paris accord... We'll see what happens."

## What is now being reported?

On Saturday, **the Wall Street Journal quoted** European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Canete as saying that Trump administration officials said the US would not pull out of the agreement, and were offering to re-engage in the international deal to fight climate change.

The WSJ said the shift in the position came at a meeting of environment ministers from about 30 countries at a gathering in Montreal, Canada.

That meeting was attended by a US observer.

The US "stated that they will not renegotiate the Paris Accord, but they [will] try to review the terms on which they could be engaged under this agreement," Mr Canete said.

He said that "there would be a meeting on the sidelines of next week's UN General Assembly with American representatives "to assess what is the real US position", according to the AFP news agency.

"It's a message which is quite different to the one we heard from President Trump in the past," Mr Canete added.

At the same time, Chilean Environment Minister Marcelo Mena **tweeted (in Spanish)**: "I was in the meeting, and the [US] negotiator effectively did not close the door on continuing in the agreement, and ruled out looking for a new agreement."

But in a statement later on Saturday, White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said: "There has been no change in the United States' position on the Paris agreement,

"As the president has made abundantly clear, the United States is withdrawing unless we can re-enter on terms that are more favourable to our country."

## How could this change things?

Bloomberg **reported** that the US is "no longer seeking to withdraw from the pact and then renegotiate it, but rather wants to re-engage with the Paris Agreement from within".

While the White House insists its stance has not changed, deciding not to withdraw from the Paris deal and instead focus on negotiating while remaining a signatory would represent a significant about-turn.

The **Los Angeles Times** said staying in the Paris deal would be "one of the most controversial" reversals of the Trump presidency.

It would also risk angering Mr Trump's more conservative supporters at a time he is facing criticism for engaging with Democratic leaders, the liberal magazine **Mother Jones** wrote.