

04.07-Climate change

Climate change

Raise the green lanterns

China is using climate policy to push through domestic reforms
Dec 5th 2015 | BEIJING | From the print edition

Vocab

1. lantern n. 灯笼; 提灯 A **lantern** is a lamp in a metal frame with glass sides and with a handle on top so you can carry it.

WHEN world leaders gathered in Paris to discuss cutting planet-heating emissions, a **pall** of smog **hung over** Beijing. In parts of the capital levels of fine particulate matter reached 30 times the limit **deemed** safe. Though air pollution and climate change are different things, Chinese citydwellers think of them in the same, poisoned breath. The **murky** skies seemed **irreconcilable** with the bright intentions promised in France.

Vocab

1. pall n. ~ of sth a thick dark cloud of sth 浓密的云烟; 尘烟

e.g. a **pall of smoke/ dust** 一团烟雾/沙尘

2. hang over 笼罩

3. deem v. = **consider** to have a particular opinion about sth 认为; 视为; 相信

e.g. They would take any action **deemed necessary**. 他们会采取认为必要的任何行动。

4. murky adj. 阴暗的; 昏暗的 A **murky** place or time of day is dark and rather unpleasant because there is not enough light.

e.g. It happened at Stamford Bridge one **murky** November afternoon. 这发生在11月一个阴沉的下午, 斯坦福德桥上。

5. irreconcilable adj. 不可调和的; 无法消除的 An **irreconcilable** disagreement or conflict is so serious that it cannot be settled.

e.g. ...an **irreconcilable** clash of personalities. 不可调和的个性冲突

Sentence

Though air pollution and climate change are different things, Chinese citydwellers think of them in the same, poisoned breath.

主干: A and B are different things

poisoned breath. 可以还原成 which is poisoning breath.

Yet a marked change has taken place in China's official thinking. Where once China viewed international climate talks as a **conspiracy** to **constrain** its economy, it now sees a global agreement as helpful to its own development.

Vocab

1. conspiracy n. ~ (to do sth) | ~ (against sb/ sth) a secret plan by a group of people to do sth harmful or illegal 密谋策划; 阴谋

e.g. a conspiracy to overthrow the government 颠覆政府的阴谋

2. constrain v. ~ sb (from doing sth) to restrict or limit sb/ sth 限制; 限定; 约束

e.g. Research has been constrained by a lack of funds. 研究工作因经费不足而受限制。

Sentence

Where once China viewed international climate talks as a conspiracy to constrain its economy, it now sees a global agreement as helpful to its own development.

主干: China viewed international climate talks

it now sees a global agreement 这里 it 指代的是 international climate talks 这件事

its own development 这里的 its 指代的是 China

China accounts for two-thirds of the world's increase in the carbon dioxide emitted since 2000. It **has come a long way** in recognising the problem. When China first joined international climate talks, the environment was just a minor branch of foreign policy. The ministry for environmental protection had no **policymaking** powers until 2008. Only in 2012 did public pressure force cities to publish air-pollution data.

Vocab

1. **has come a long way** PHRASE 短语 取得巨大进展;取得很多成就 If you say that someone or something **has come a long way**, you mean that they have developed, progressed, or become very successful.

e.g. He **has come a long way** since the days he could only afford one meal a day.那种一天只吃得起一顿饭的日子已经离他很遥远了。

2. **policymaking** n. 政策制定; 决策 **Policy-making** is the making of policies.

Sentence

When China first joined international climate talks, the environment was just a minor branch of foreign policy.

句式: When 从句主语 + 谓语 + 宾语, 主语+谓语+宾语。

也可以写成 The environment was just a minor branch of foreign policy when China first joined international climate talks.

谁在前面主要看想要强调哪个部分先, 这里是想强调第一次参加 international climate talks

Yet today China **pledges** to cap carbon emissions by 2030 (**reversing** its former position that, as a developing power, it should not be bound to an absolute **reduction**); and it says it will cut its carbon **intensity** (that is, emissions per unit of GDP) by a fifth, as well as increase by the same amount the electricity generated from sources other than fossil fuels. The latest five-year plan, a **blueprint** for the Communist Party's intentions that was unveiled last month, contains clear policy **prescriptions** for making economic development more environmentally friendly.

Vocab

1. **pledge** v. ~ sth (to sb/ sth) to formally promise to give or do sth 保证给予 (或做) ; 正式承诺

e.g. We all had to **pledge allegiance** to the flag (= state that we are loyal to our country).

2. **reverse** adj. **opposite to what has been mentioned** 相反的; 反面的; 反向的

e.g. The experiment had the reverse effect to what was intended. 实验的结果与原来的意图相反。

3. **reduction** n. 减少; 降低 When there is a **reduction in** something, it is made smaller.

e.g. Many companies have announced dramatic **reductions in staff**.许多公司已经宣布大幅裁员。

4. **intensity** n. **the strength of sth, for example light, that can be measured** 强度; 烈度

e.g. varying intensities of natural light 自然光不断变化的强度

5. **blueprint** n. 蓝图；计划；设想；构想 A **blueprint for** something is a plan or set of proposals that shows how it is expected to work.

e.g. The country's president will offer delegates his **blueprint** for the country's future. 该国总统会向代表们展示他构想的国家未来发展的蓝图。

6. **prescription** n. ~ (for sth) (formal) a plan or a suggestion for making sth happen or for improving it 计划；建议；秘诀

e.g. a prescription for happiness 增进幸福的秘诀

There's more

Right after the Paris summit, however it ends, China is expected to make more promises in a new document, co-written by international experts, that presents a far-reaching programme of how China should clean up its act. It is based on models that account for both economic and political viability. On top of existing plans, such as launching a national emissions-trading scheme in 2017, the government may even outline **proposals** for a carbon tax, something that has **eluded** many **prosperous** countries in the West.

Vocab

1. **proposal** n. ~ (for sth) | ~ (to do sth) | ~ (that...) a formal suggestion or plan; the act of making a suggestion 提议；建议；动议

e.g. to **submit**/ **consider**/ **accept**/ **reject** a **proposal** 提交/审议/接受/拒绝一项建议

2. **elude** v. to manage to avoid or escape from sb/ sth, especially in a clever way (尤指机敏地) 避开，逃避，躲避

e.g. The two men managed to elude the police for six weeks. 这两个男人想方设法逃避警方追捕达六个星期。

3. **prosperous** adj. =**affluent** rich and successful 繁荣的；成功的；兴旺的

e.g. prosperous countries 繁荣的国家

4. **Right after** 就在...之后/就在...之前 If you say that something happened **right after** a particular time or event or **right before** it, you mean that it happened immediately after or before it.

e.g. All of a sudden, **right after** the summer, Mother gets married...突然，刚过夏天，妈妈就结婚了。

5. **far-reaching** adj. likely to have a lot of influence or many effects 影响深远的；广泛的

e.g. **far-reaching consequences**/ **implications** 影响深远的后果；意味深长

Sentence

Right after the Paris summit, however it ends, China is expected to make more promises in a new document, co-written by international experts, that presents a far-reaching programme of how China should clean up its act.

主干: China is expected to make more promises

Right after the Paris summit 即在巴黎峰会之后

however it ends 即表示这个峰会的结局，however 给出了转折，即是对前文，中国在峰会的不同态度的转折

co-written by international experts 解释 a new document

The big question is why China is now so serious about climate change. The answer is not that Communist leaders are newly converted **econuts**. Rather, they want to use environmental concerns to **rally** domestic support for difficult reforms that would sustain growth in the coming decades. Since a global slowdown in 2008 it has become clear that to continue growing, China must **move its economy away from** construction and energy-intensive industry towards services. At the same time, China faces an energy crunch. For instance, in recent years China has been a net **importer** of coal, which generates two-

thirds of China's electricity. It all argues for growth plans that involve less carbon.

Vocab

1. **econut** n. [俚语、贬义]生态迷, 环境(资源)保护狂, 鼓吹生态保护的狂热分子, 热中于保护生态的人, 起劲的环境保护论者(= ecofreak)

2. **rally** v. ~ (sb/ sth) (around/ behind/ to sb/ sth) to come together or bring people together in order to help or support sb/ sth 召集; 集合

e.g. The cabinet rallied behind the Prime Minister. 内阁团结一致支持首相。

3. **move sth. away from ~ to/away from sth** a change in ideas, attitudes or behaviour 改变; 转变; 动摇

e.g. There has been a move away from nuclear energy. 人们对于原子能的想法已经转变。

4. **importer** n. 进口商; 进口者 An **importer** is a country, firm, or person that buys goods from another country for use in their own country.

e.g. ...an **importer** of exotic food. 外国食品进口商

Sentence

in the coming decades 在未来的几十年内

This is where signing international **accords**, such as the one hoped for in Paris, **come in**, for they will help the government fight **entrenched** interests at home. **Observers** see a **parallel** with China's joining the World Trade Organisation in 2001. It allowed leaders to push through internal economic reform against **fierce** domestic opposition. In the same way, a global climate treaty should help it take tough measures for **restructuring** the economy.

Vocab

1. **accord** n. a formal agreement between two organizations, countries, etc. 协议; 条约

e.g. The two sides signed a **peace accord** last July. 在刚过去的七月, 双方签订了和平条约。

2. **observer** n. a person who watches sb/ sth 观察者; 观测者; 目击者

e.g. **To the casual observer** (= somebody who does not pay much attention), the system appears confusing. 乍看起来, 这个系统好像条理不清。

3. **parallel** n. similar features 相似特征; 相似特点

e.g. It is possible to **draw a parallel between** (= find similar features in) their experience and ours. 在他们的经历和我们的经历之间找到相似点是可能的。

4. **fierce** adj. (感情或行动)激烈的, 狂热的 **Fierce** feelings or actions are very intense or enthusiastic, or involve great activity.

e.g. He inspires **fierce** loyalty in his friends. 他激发了朋友们对他的无比忠诚。

5. **restructure** v. to organize sth such as a system or a company in a new and different way 调整结构; 改组; 重建

restructuring n.

• 1,520 workers were laid off as part of a **restructuring**. 作为改组计划的一部分, 公司裁减了1,520名工人。

6. **come in** PHRASAL VERB 短语动词 (在某件事中)起作用, 发挥作用 If you ask where something or someone **comes in**, you are asking what their role is in a particular matter.

e.g. Finally, he could do no more, which is where Jacques **came in**. 最后, 他再也无能为力了, 这也正是雅克发挥作用的时候。

7. **entrench** v. to establish sth very firmly so that it is very difficult to change 使处于牢固地

位；牢固确立

e.g. **entrenched attitudes / interests / opposition** 顽固的态度；固有的利益；顽固的反对

Sentence

This is where signing international accords, such as the one hoped for in Paris, come in, for they will help the government fight entrenched interests at home.

这里 **come in** 是指 signing international accords 起作用了，

for 在这里起连词的作用，表原因：(old-fashioned or literary) **used to introduce the reason for sth mentioned in the previous statement** 因为；由于

e.g. We listened eagerly, for he brought news of our families. 我们急不可待地听着，因为他带来了我们家人的消息。

It will not be easy. Provincial party bosses and state-owned enterprises hate to shut factories, particularly in those parts of the country, such as Shanxi and Inner Mongolia in the north, where coal is a big employer. Cutting demand for energy is even harder. Even if the amount of electricity used by state industry falls, that used by private firms and households is **bound** to increase. **What is more**, environmental regulations and laws laid down by the centre are **routinely flouted**.

Vocab

1. **routinely** adv. 惯常地；毫不意外地 If something happens **routinely**, it happens repeatedly and is not surprising, unnatural, or new.

e.g. Any outside criticism is **routinely** dismissed as interference...任何来自外界的批评通常都被当作干涉而不予理睬。

2. **flout** v. =**defy** to show that you have no respect for a law, etc. by openly not obeying it 公然藐视，无视（法律等）

e.g. Motorists regularly **flout the law**. 驾车者经常无视法律。

3. **bound** adj. ~ **to do/ be sth** certain or likely to happen, or to do or be sth 一定会；很可能会

e.g. There are bound to be changes when the new system is introduced. 引进新系统后一定会发生变化。

Sentence

what is more 而且，另外，此外，更有甚者，更重要的是

But cleaning up China's air has, for the central government, become a political necessity too. Environmental issues have been major public concerns for over a decade, says Anthony Saich of Harvard University, which has **conducted** polls. True, rural people **fret** most (and with good reason) about water pollution. But those in the cities **gripe** about their **toxic** air. Both represent a **reproach** to the government over its neglect of people's lives and health.

Vocab

1. **conduct** v. 进行；组织；实施 When you **conduct** an activity or task, you organize it and carry it out.

e.g. I decided to **conduct** an experiment...我决定进行一次实验。

2. **poll** n. the process of questioning people who are representative of a larger group in order to get information about the general opinion 民意测验；民意调查

e.g. to **carry out/ conduct** a poll 进行/做民意测验

3. **fret** v. ~ (about/ over sth) to be worried or unhappy and not able to relax 苦恼；烦躁；焦虑不安

e.g. Fretting about it won't help. 苦恼于事无补。

4. **gripe** v. ~ (about sb/ sth) (informal) to complain about sb/ sth in an annoying way 抱怨；发牢骚

e.g. He's always griping about the people at work. 他老是抱怨共事的人。

5. **toxic** adj. containing poison; poisonous 有毒的；引起中毒的

e.g. **toxic chemicals/ fumes/ gases/ substances** 有毒的化学品/烟雾/气体/物质

6. **reproach** n. blame or criticism for sth you have done 责备；批评

e.g. The captain's behaviour is **above/ beyond reproach** (= you cannot criticize it). 队长的行为无可厚非。

That is why national economic goals, political goals, **public opinion** and international pressure all point towards trying to cut emissions, pollutants included. In particular, says Zhang Zhongxiang of Tianjin University, now that dealing with climate change is a **pillar of China's diplomacy**, the government must show it can keep its promises. It has some tools **at its disposal**. Across the country, the environmental record of government officials has become a crucial part of their evaluation by the Communist Party; and **cadres** will be held **accountable for** their actions even after leaving their position. Several provinces have already punished officials for environmental accidents and for not enforcing environmental laws.

Vocab

1. **public opinion** n. 舆论；民意 **Public opinion** is the opinion or attitude of the public regarding a particular matter.

e.g. He mobilized **public opinion** all over the world against hydrogen-bomb tests. 他动员全世界的舆论反对氢弹试验。

2. **pillar** n. a basic part or feature of a system, organization, belief, etc. (组织、制度、信仰等的) 核心，基础，支柱

e.g. the central pillar of this theory 这一理论的核心支柱

3. **at sb. disposal** n. **at your/ sb's disposal** available for use as you prefer/sb prefers 任某人处理；供某人任意使用；由某人自行支配

e.g. He will have a car at his disposal for the whole month. 他将有一辆汽车归他使用一个月。

4. **cadre** n. (尤指共产党的)党务工作者，干部 In some political parties, especially the Communist Party, a **cadre** is a party worker or official.

5. **accountable** adj. ~ (to sb) (for sth) responsible for your decisions or actions and expected to explain them when you are asked (对自己的决定、行为) 负有责任，有说明义务

e.g. Someone must be **held accountable** for the killings. 必须有人要对这些凶杀事件负责。

Sentence

In particular, says Zhang Zhongxiang of Tianjin University, now that dealing with climate change is a pillar of China's diplomacy, the government must show it can keep its promises.

主干: says Zhang Zhongxiang of Tianjin University

这里的倒装可以换成 Zhang Zhongxiang of Tianjin University says now that dealing with... 这样就很容易看出句子成分了

the government must show it can keep its promises. 这里其实省略了 that, 不然乍一看就两个谓语:

the government must show **that** it can keep its promises

Fifty shades of grey

But there are **obstacles** to real change. The electricity grid and national power market are **ill-equipped** to increase renewable generation by much. **Corruption** in industrial procurement remains widespread, which does nothing to promote long-term efficiency or reductions in emissions. **Competing incentives** are also in play: earlier this year, the authorities forced a big Chinese investment company to buy back shares it had sold in **old-fashioned** industrial fields, for fear that it might **depress** share prices (which crashed anyway in a more general stockmarket meltdown). The government will not trust market mechanisms alone, says Yang Fuqiang of the Natural Resources Defense Council, an **activist** group.

Vocab

1. **obstacle** n. =**hindrance** ~ (to sth/to doing sth) a situation, an event, etc. that makes it difficult for you to do or achieve sth 障碍；阻碍；绊脚石

e.g. A lack of qualifications can be a major obstacle to finding a job. 学力不足可能成为求职的主要障碍。

2. **ill-equipped** adj. ~ (for sth) | ~ (to do sth) not having the necessary equipment or skills 装备不完善的；技术不够的

e.g. Universities were **ill-equipped** to meet the massive intake of students...各大学设备不足,难以满足招入的大量学生的要求。

3. **corruption** n. dishonest or illegal behaviour, especially of people in authority 腐败；贪污；贿赂；受贿

e.g. allegations of **bribery and corruption** 对贿赂与贪污的指控

4. **competing** adj. 相互冲突的;相互矛盾的 **Competing** ideas, requirements, or interests cannot all be right or satisfied at the same time.

e.g. ...the **competing** demands of work and family. 工作与家庭难以同时满足的需求

5. **incentive** n. something that encourages you to do sth 激励；刺激；鼓励

e.g. tax incentives to encourage savings 鼓励储蓄的税收措施

6. **old-fashioned** adj. =**dated** not modern; no longer fashionable 陈旧的；过时的；不时髦的

e.g. old-fashioned clothes/ styles/ methods/ equipment 过时的衣服/式样/方法/设备

7. **depress** v. to make sb sad and without enthusiasm or hope 使抑郁；使沮丧；使消沉；使失去信心

e.g. **It depresses me to** see so many young girls smoking. 看到这么多女孩抽烟令我感到很沮丧。

8. **activist** n. a person who works to achieve political or social change, especially as a member of an organization with particular aims 积极分子；活跃分子

e.g. gay activists 积极支持同性恋者

Nor are leaders yet pushing for change on all **fronts**. For instance, government efforts to cut emissions of carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide are greater than for many other greenhouse gases. Scarce and polluted water, one of China's most severe environmental challenges, is almost entirely beyond the **scope** of the current raft of reforms. And China refuses to publish its estimate of the environmental **toll** of economic growth.

Vocab

1. **front** n. (某个)方面, 领域 If you say that something is happening on a particular **front**, you mean that it is happening with regard to a particular situation or field of activity.

e.g. **We're moving forward on a variety of fronts.** 我们正在多个方面向前推进。

2. **scope** n. 机会;施展余地 If there is **scope for** a particular kind of behaviour or activity, people have the opportunity to behave in this way or do that activity.

e.g. He believed in giving his staff scope for initiative...他认为应给员工提供发挥主动性的机会。

3. toll n. (死亡、事故或灾难的)总数 A **toll** is a total number of deaths, accidents, or disasters that occur in a particular period of time.

e.g. There are fears that the casualty toll may be higher.有人担心伤亡总数可能会更高。

Sentence

Nor are leaders yet pushing for change on all fronts.

这里 nor...yet 构成了否定, nor..yet: 也没有, 也不; 也不 即 leaders 不会推动所有方面的改变

Sceptics scoff that China's promises in Paris are irrelevant because emissions will probably peak **regardless**, long before the promised 2030. Nor has the government said how high that top might be. Yet the sceptics underestimate the importance of an international agreement for China and beyond. Like other countries, China has to date followed a pattern of "grow first, clean up later". Yet very quickly it has recognised the dangers and drawbacks of such a policy and has been pouring money into clean energy and other innovations it hopes will provide green growth. **In that**, it may prove a model for other fast-developing countries. That might signal a small **patch** of blue sky.

Vocab

1. **sceptic** n. 持怀疑态度的人;怀疑论者 A **sceptic** is a person who has doubts about things that other people believe.

e.g. But he now has to convince sceptics that he has a serious plan.但是他现在得让怀疑者相信他有一个严肃的计划。

2. **scoff** v. ~ (at sb/ sth) to talk about sb/ sth in a way that makes it clear that you think they are stupid or ridiculous 嘲笑; 讥讽

e.g. He scoffed at our amateurish attempts. 他对我们不在行的尝试嗤之以鼻。

3. **regardless** adv. 不顾; 不管; 不论 If something happens **regardless of** something else, it is not affected or influenced at all by that other thing.

e.g. It takes in anybody regardless of religion, colour, or creed...任何人, 不论宗教、肤色或信仰, 都可以加入。

4. **pour** v. 使 (液体等) 连续流出; 倾倒; 倒出 If you **pour** a liquid or other substance, you make it flow steadily out of a container by holding the container at an angle.

5. **in that** 因为; 由于; 既然

6. **patch** n. a small area of sth, especially one which is different from the area around it 色斑; 斑点; (与周围不同的) 小块, 小片

e.g. a black dog with a white patch on its back 背上有一块白斑的黑狗

Sentence

Yet very quickly it has recognised the dangers and drawbacks of such a policy and has been pouring money into clean energy and other innovations it hopes will provide green growth.

主干: it has recognised the dangers and drawbacks

并列 has been pouring money into clean energy and other innovations

From the print edition: China

Climate change Raise the green lanterns 气候变化: 高举环保大旗

China is using climate policy to push through domestic reforms.

中国以环境政策推动国内改革。

WHEN world leaders gathered in Paris to discuss cutting planet-heating emissions, a pall of smog hung over Beijing. In parts of the capital levels of fine particulate matter reached 30 times the limit deemed safe. Though air pollution and climate change are different things, Chinese city dwellers think of them in the same, poisoned breath. The murky skies seemed irreconcilable with the bright intentions promised in France.

当各国领导人齐聚巴黎讨论有关减少温室气体排放的问题时，北京则被厚厚的雾霾笼罩。在首都的某些地方，大气细颗粒物的含量达到了最低安全指标的30倍。尽管空气污染和气候变化不是一件事，但生活在城市的中国居民认为这两样都会在呼吸的过程中毒害我们的健康。灰蒙蒙的天空似乎和领导人在法国所承诺的美好意愿不太相符。

Yet a marked change has taken place in China's official thinking. Where once China viewed international climate talks as a conspiracy to constrain its economy, it now sees a global agreement as helpful to its own development.

然而中国官员的思维模式已经开始有了显著的变化，中国曾认为国际气候谈判是一场阻碍其发展的阴谋，现在视其为有助发展的一种推动。

China accounts for two-thirds of the world's increase in the carbon dioxide emitted since 2000. It has come a long way in recognising the problem. When China first joined international climate talks, the environment was just a minor branch of foreign policy. The ministry for environmental protection had no policymaking powers until 2008. Only in 2012 did public pressure force cities to publish air-pollution data.

自2000年以来，全球三分之二二氧化碳排放量的增长量都来自中国，中国在认识这个问题上取得了长足的进步。当中国第一次参加国际气候谈判时，环境问题仅仅只是其外交政策的一个小分支。环境保护部在2008年以前都没有制定政策的权利，在2012年各市政府才出于公众舆论的压力公布了空气污染数据。

Yet today China pledges to cap carbon emissions by 2030 (reversing its former position that, as a developing power, it should not be bound to an absolute reduction) ; and it says it will cut its carbon intensity (that is, emissions per unit of GDP) by a fifth, as well as increase by the same amount the electricity generated from sources other than fossil fuels. The latest five-year plan, a blueprint for the Communist Party's intentions that was unveiled last month, contains clear policy prescriptions for making economic development more environmentally friendly.

但是中国决定在2030年前控制碳排放（该决定与中国过往的立场完全不同，中国之前的立场是作为发展中国家的中国不应该被规定做出绝对数目的减排目标），宣布大幅减少碳浓度（即每单位GDP的排放量）达五分之一，同时中国将增加五分之一用除化石燃料以外的清洁能源来发电的电量。在上个月最新出炉的五年计划里包含着中共对中国未来的规划，其中明确包含促使经济更环保发展的政策规定。

Right after the Paris summit, however it ends, China is expected to make more promises in a new document, co-written by international experts, that presents a far-reaching programme of how China should clean up its act. It is based on models that account for both economic and political viability. On top of existing plans, such as launching a national emissions-trading scheme in 2017, the government may even outline proposals for a carbon tax, something that has eluded many prosperous countries in the West.

不管过程如何，各国在巴黎峰会上通过了一份由各国专家共同撰写的文件，其中要求中国对环境问题上给出更多的承诺，同时该文件中还有一个计划长远的项目用以指导中国该如何规

范其行为，且其是基于那些给出经济可行性和政治可行性的模型。在现存计划之外，如2017年开始运行的全国碳排放交易系统，中国政府甚至开始拟定征收碳排放税，而在许多发达的西方国家，这都是一件避而不谈的事。

The big question is why China is now so serious about climate change. The answer is not that Communist leaders are newly converted econuts. Rather, they want to use environmental concerns to rally domestic support for difficult reforms that would sustain growth in the coming decades. Since a global slowdown in 2008 it has become clear that to continue growing, China must move its economy away from construction and energy-intensive industry towards services. At the same time, China faces an energy crunch. For instance, in recent years China has been a net importer of coal, which generates two-thirds of China's electricity. It all argues for growth plans that involve less carbon.

最大的问题是为什么中国现在对气候变化如此重视？答案不是因为中共领导人最近变成了生态迷，他们反而希望用环境问题来召集国内支持，增援改革瓶颈，维持接下来几十年的经济增长。自2008年全球经济增长放缓以来，中国领导人开始明白，要实现经济的持续增长，中国经济需要摆脱建筑业密集型和能源密集型的特点，转向服务集中型经济，而与此同时，中国还面临能源枯竭问题。举个例子，近几年中国是煤炭净进口国，而煤炭发电量占中国总发电量的三分之二，这些都让低碳经济增长计划提出了理由。

This is where signing international accords, such as the one hoped for in Paris, come in, for they will help the government fight entrenched interests at home. Observers see a parallel with China's joining the World Trade Organization in 2001. It allowed leaders to push through internal economic reform against fierce domestic opposition. In the same way, a global climate treaty should help it take tough measures for restructuring the economy.

也正如巴黎气候大会所预设达成的协议那样，签署这些国际协议能够让各国政府更有利地对抗国内根深蒂固的利益集团。有分析人士认为中国2001年加入世贸组织的行为也同样有着这一目的，而此举让中国领导人能够在强烈的国内反对声音中继续推动内部经济改革。同样，全球性的气候条约能够使得一些重构经济的硬措施成为可能。

It will not be easy. Provincial party bosses and state-owned enterprises hate to shut factories, particularly in those parts of the country, such as Shanxi and Inner Mongolia in the north, where coal is a big employer. Cutting demand for energy is even harder. Even if the amount of electricity used by state industry falls, that used by private firms and households is bound to increase. What is more, environmental regulations and laws laid down by the centre are routinely flouted.

而这不会是件简单的事。各省级政府以及各个国企领导不希望关闭工厂，特别是像山西和内蒙古这些以煤矿业提供工作岗位的北方省份。降低能源需求就更加艰难了，即使国有产业的用电量下降了，民用和私营企业的用电量一定都会上升。另外，由中央政府制定有关环境的法律法规常常遭到各地政府的无视。

But cleaning up China's act has, for the central government, become a political necessity too. Environmental issues have been major public concerns for over a decade, says Anthony Saich of Harvard University, which has conducted polls. True, rural people fret most (and with good reason) about water pollution. But those in the cities gripe about their toxic air. Both represent a reproach to the government over its neglect of people's lives and health.

但对于中央政府来说，变更中国的行为模式也开始有了政治必要性。哈佛大学的安东尼·塞掣进行了一项投票调查，称环境问题在过去十年中变成了公众关心的主要问题之一。的确如此，比如农村居民最（合理的）担心的是水污染问题，而那些居住在城市的人则抱怨空气中的毒害成分，这两种人都表达了对政府忽略人民生命健康的斥责。

That is why national economic goals, political goals, public opinion and international pressure all point towards trying to cut emissions, pollutants included. In particular, says Zhang Zhongxiang of Tianjin University, now that dealing with climate change is a pillar of China's diplomacy, the government must show it can keep its promises. It has some tools at its disposal. Across the country, the environmental record of government officials has become a crucial part of their evaluation by the Communist Party; and cadres will be held accountable for their actions even after leaving their position. Several provinces have already punished officials for environmental accidents and for not enforcing environmental laws.

这也是为什么国家的经济目标、政治期望、民众意见以及国际压力都将矛头指向了减少某些污染物在内的排放量。就像天津大学的张忠祥所说的一样，现在气候变化问题成为中国外交的重点之一，政府必须要做出行动来遵守承诺。中国有着其自身可用的方法处理环境问题。环境行政档案成为了中共评定一个政府官员的重要依据，各级政府官员即使在离职后依然要对其在职时所作的决策负责。某些省份已经因为出现有关环境问题的事故或者没有依环境法行政等问题对一些官员进行了惩处。

But there are obstacles to real change. The electricity grid and national power market are ill-equipped to increase renewable generation by much. Corruption in industrial procurement remains widespread, which does nothing to promote long-term efficiency or reductions in emissions. Competing incentives are also in play: earlier this year, the authorities forced a big Chinese investment company to buy back shares it had sold in old-fashioned industrial fields, for fear that it might depress share prices (which crashed anyway in a more general stockmarket meltdown). The government will not trust market mechanisms alone, says Yang Fuqiang of the Natural Resources Defense Council, an activist group.

但想要真正做到改变，前面还有一些障碍。国家电网和国家能源市场对于新能源大量涌入没有足够的准备。行业采购中的腐败行为依然泛滥，这对于提高长期效率以及减少排放没有好处。这其中还包含自相矛盾的激励政策：今年早些时候，一家中国大型投资公司在旧工业领域出售了许多股份，但有关部门因为担心抛售会使股份价格贬值（虽然其股价在股市暴跌情况下依然跌至低谷），于是强制要求其购回相应股份。积极团体自然资源保护委员会的杨富强称，政府不会把宝都压在市场机制上的。

Nor are leaders yet pushing for change on all fronts. For instance, government efforts to cut emissions of carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide are greater than for many other greenhouse gases. Scarce and polluted water, one of China's most severe environmental challenges, is almost entirely beyond the scope of the current raft of reforms. And China refuses to publish its estimate of the environmental toll of economic growth.

但政府也没有打算在每个方面都推进改革。例如，政府对于减少二氧化碳和氮氧化物所采取行动明显大于其他温室气体。日益稀缺且受到污染的水资源是中国最严重的环境威胁之一，但却几乎没有没能在这一轮改革的方案之中看到相关措施。而且中国政府拒绝透露经济增长所带来的环境破坏预估值。

Sceptics scoff that China's promises in Paris are irrelevant because emissions will probably peak regardless, long before the promised 2030. Nor has the government said how high that top might be. Yet the sceptics underestimate the importance of an international agreement for China and beyond. Like other countries, China has to date followed a pattern of "grow first, clean up later". Yet very quickly it has recognised the dangers and drawbacks of such a policy and has been pouring money into clean energy and other innovations it hopes will provide green growth. In that, it may prove a model for other fast-developing countries. That might signal a small patch of blue sky.

持怀疑态度的人嘲讽中国在巴黎气候大会上的承诺根本毫无意义，因为全球温室气体排放量达到最大的时间，无论如何都会早于2030年。而且政府没有公布这个最大的具体数值是多少，但这些都低估了国际协议对于中国和中国之外的其他国家的重要性。和其他国家一样，中国曾经采用“先污染后治理”的模式，但是政府很快就意识到了其中的危害和缺点，并投入大量资金建设清洁能源和其他有助于绿色增长模式的研发。因此，这或许能够成为其他高速发展国家的可模仿的例子，而这可能也标志着天空那一抹蔚蓝色即将出现。