

# Obama Says Parts Of Climate Deal Must Be Legally Binding

BY KARL RITTER  
Associated Press

LE BOURGET, France — President Barack Obama said Tuesday that parts of the global warming deal being negotiated in Paris should be legally binding on the countries that sign on, setting up a potential fight with Republicans at home.

Obama's stand won praise at the U.N. climate conference from those who want a strong agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of coal, oil and gas. But it could rile conservatives in Washington, especially if he tries to put the deal into effect without seeking congressional approval.

The Obama administration has pledged during the international talks to reduce U.S. emissions by up to 28 percent by 2025. But inscribing the emissions target in the Paris deal would probably require the president to submit the pact to the GOP-controlled Congress, where it would be unlikely to win ratification. Many Republicans doubt global warming is real or fear that stringent pollution controls could kill jobs.

So the administration is looking to keep the targets out while including binding procedures on when and how countries should periodically review and raise their targets.

"Although the targets themselves may not have the force of treaties, the process, the procedures that ensure transparency and periodic reviews, that needs to be legally binding," Obama said in Paris, "and that's going to be critical."

Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and a fierce critic of Obama's policies, fired back immediately.

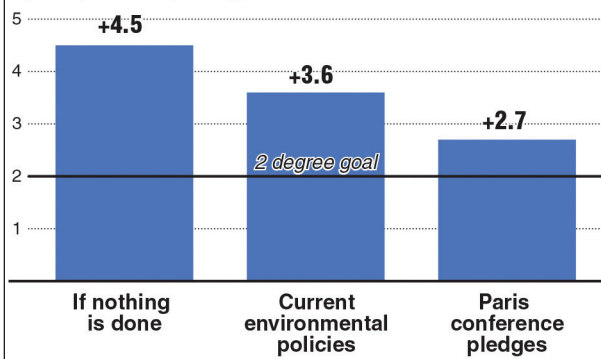
"The U.S. Senate will not be ignored. If the president wishes to sign the American people up to a legally binding agreement, the deal must go through the Senate," he said in a statement. "There is no way around it."

The White House previ-

## Climate change

Nations in the United Nations Conference on Climate Change are meeting in Paris. In 2009, the conference set the goal of keeping the increase in global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels.

Average estimated global temperature increase  
By the year 2100, in degrees Celsius



Graphic: TNS  
Source: Climate Action Tracker, United Nations Conference on Climate Change

ously said parts of the deal should be legally binding, but this is the first time Obama has said it himself and spelled out which ones.

Obama's comments brought relief to the French hosts of the conference, who were worried about whether the U.S. wanted a binding deal at all after Secretary of State John Kerry told The Financial Times that the agreement was "definitely not going to be a treaty" and that there was "not going to be legally binding reduction targets."

"The fact that the United States of America could commit to a binding agreement, whilst before there was a doubt because of Congress, is really extraordinary news that comes at a good time," French Environment Minister Segolene Royal said.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and other top Republicans have warned other countries not to trust any deal Obama may strike. Other GOP politicians moved to block Obama's plan to force steep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

On Tuesday, the House passed two resolutions disapproving Obama's rules to reduce carbon emissions from power plants despite a promised presidential veto.

At a news conference,

House Speaker Paul Ryan was asked whether Congress was out of step with public opinion on climate change.

"I don't think we're out of step with public opinion wanting jobs, wanting economic growth, weighing the costs and the benefits," Ryan said. "I think when you weigh the costs and the benefits against these so-called legally binding obligations, they don't add up. I think it's very clear people want jobs."

At the Paris talks, the European Union has called for a legally binding agreement with emissions targets, but observers said it is likely to drop that demand over the next two weeks of negotiations to make sure the U.S. can join the deal.

"I think at end of the day everyone knows that for the U.S. to be part of this, it can't have the emissions target itself legally embedded in the treaty," said Alden Meyer of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Nigel Purvis, a former U.S. climate negotiator and president of the non-governmental organization Climate Advisers, said Obama has all the legal authority he needs to enter an agreement where only some elements are binding.

Obama on Tuesday also announced a U.S. contribution

of \$30 million to help make insurance against climate-related damage available in the Pacific, Central America and Africa.

Earlier in the day, the president met with leaders of small island nations who fear their countries will be swallowed up by rising seas. The Hawaii-born Obama said he understands the beauty and fragility of island life and called their populations "among the most vulnerable to the ravages of climate change."

Meanwhile, French President Hollande heard from 12 African leaders who described the Sahara Desert encroaching on farmland, forests disappearing from Congo to Madagascar and rising sea levels swallowing homes in West African river deltas. Hollande said France will invest billions of euros in the coming years for renewable energy in Africa and to increase Africans' access to electricity.

"The world, and in particular the developed world, owes the African continent an environmental debt," he said.

African leaders also stressed the need to do something about the Lake Chad region, where the Islamic extremist group Boko Haram has been carrying out bloody attacks. The lake, surrounded by Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria, has shrunk as much as 90 percent since 1960, changing the lives of farmers, fishermen and herders. Some say the increasing desperation is driving people into the extremists' ranks.

The talks, which run through Dec. 11, are aimed at a broader, tougher replacement to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. That treaty required only rich countries to cut their emissions, while this time the goal is for everyone to pitch in.

After protesters clashed with police earlier this week, Paris police on Tuesday extended a ban on public demonstrations around the climate conference until it is over.

## Appalachia Grasps For Hope As Jobs Fade

WELCH, W.Va. (AP) — The seams of coal in some of Eddie Asbury's mines in McDowell County are so thin workers can barely squeeze down them. They enter on carts nearly flat on their backs, the roof of the mine crouching by just a few inches in front of their faces. They don't stand up all day.

To keep his business operating with such a paltry amount of coal, Asbury has to do everything himself. He has no use for the shiny, multimillion-dollar mining machines on display this fall at the biannual coal show nearby. His equipment is secondhand stuff that he repairs and refurbishes. The coal he and his workers scrape out of the mountain is washed and prepared for sale in a plant Asbury and a colleague built themselves.

"It's how we survive," says Asbury, 66, a miner since 1971.

Even coal is barely surviving in coal country — and coal is about the only thing Central Appalachia has.

West Virginia is the only state in the country where more than half of adults are not working, according to the Census Bureau. It is tied with Kentucky for the highest percentage of residents collecting disability payments from Social Security, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. And the death rate among working-age adults is highest in the nation, 55 percent higher the national average, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Bush Has Yet To Rise In GOP Race

DUBUQUE, Iowa (AP) — Jeb Bush and his allies are spending circles around his rivals for the Republican presidential nomination. Yet for all the money they've invested — \$26 million on television ads alone — they've yet to see a substantial return.

Having fallen from summer front-runner to autumn afterthought, the former Florida governor made deep spending cuts to his campaign operation in October. But he and his backers plowed ahead with a television blitz three times the size of anyone else's, while putting a new strategic focus on New Hampshire.

Some Bush allies suggested those efforts had to pay off with improved numbers in preference polls in November. Yet as December begins, Bush remains mired in single digits — including in New Hampshire — in a race that continues to be dominated by political novices, most notably billionaire real estate mogul Donald Trump.

Bush's most loyal supporters argue the advertising, mostly financed by an outside group known as a super PAC, has paid off by helping stabilize a campaign that was losing ground. The brother and son of former presidents is showcasing new endorsements, and his team continues to raise a steady stream of money.

In November, Bush's campaign collected at least \$1 million, a tally by The Associated Press found. Top donors will head to Miami on Saturday for a campaign update, and ahead of that gathering Bush strategists are circulating a list of 300 contributors as a show of his staying power.

## Voters Wonder If Cruz Can Heal Divisions

CLINTON, Iowa (AP) — Iowa Republican Sharon Gilbert thinks her party veered off course in the past two presidential elections by nominating candidates who were too moderate.

This time around, the 73-year-old Gilbert wants to send a staunch conservative into the general election, and she thinks Texas Sen. Ted Cruz might be that candidate. But she also has a nagging feeling that Cruz's hard-line views and combative style might keep him from getting anything done in Washington, a city where he's frustrated his own party's congressional leaders as much as — if not more than — the Democrats.

"I know he's very far to the right, but I hope that he could work with both sides," says Gilbert, who attended a town hall event with Cruz in her hometown of Clinton. "We don't know that now because he's been against Washington."

It's a central question of Cruz's campaign as he gains momentum in the Republican primary: Can the uncompromising conservative unite a polarized nation and work with what he's derisively called Washington's "cartel" of career politicians, lobbyists and special interests?

# Mexico Experts: Passageway May Lead To Aztec Ruler

BY MARK STEVENSON  
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — A Mexican archaeologist said his team has found a tunnel-like passageway that apparently leads to two sealed chambers, the latest chapter in the search for the as-yet undiscovered tomb of an Aztec ruler.

The Aztecs are believed to have cremated the remains of their leaders during their 1325-1521 rule, but the final resting place of the remains has never been found. Outside experts said Tuesday the find at Mexico City's Templo Mayor ruin complex would be significant.

The National Institute of Anthropology and History said Monday that a team led by archaeologist Leonardo Lopez Lujan had discovered an 8.4-meter

(27-foot) long tunnel leading into the center of a circular platform where dead rulers were believed to have been cremated.

The mouth of the tunnel was sealed by a 3-ton slab of rock. When experts lifted it in 2013, they found a hollow space marked by offerings both rich and grisly.

Gold ornaments and the bones of eagles and infants were found in an offering box. Two skulls of children between five and seven years old were found with the first three vertebrae, suggesting they might have been decapitated. The kind of stone knives used in human sacrifices were also found, as well as a hand and bones from two feet.

But one researcher detected signs that a passageway appeared to lead deeper into the ceremonial platform,

known as the Cuauhxicalco (kwow-she-KAL-koh), where written accounts from after the 1521 Spanish conquest indicated that rulers' remains were burned.

The passageway proved to be about 18 inches (45 centimeters) wide and 5 feet (1.5 meters) high.

"Once the rocks and dirt were dug out, we saw that it led directly into the heart of the Cuauhxicalco," Lopez Lujan said. "At the end (of the passageway), there are what appear to be two old entrances that had been sealed up with masonry."

The passageway was re-filled for about two years because work was going on at one of the access points to the ruins.

With that work nearing completion, Lopez Lujan hopes to start digging again starting in 2016.

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