



[Advocates Fear the Chinese Government is Pressuring the United States to Ease Its Criticism of the Former's Human Rights Violations](#)

As the Biden administration seeks to address two of its top priority issues, climate change and the defense of human rights, officials face a dilemma and advocates fear that the Chinese government is pressuring the United States to ease its criticism of the former's human rights violations in order for it to cooperate on key climate change talks. U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry has been working to form international collaboration to combat one of the greatest threats to modern society, and a debate on how to handle China's necessary place at the table has taken shape. While climate change deliberations move forward, many advocacy groups are concerned that the Chinese regime will use human rights as a bargaining chip. The United States and others have expressed trouble with China's poor track record on human rights and the array of abuses they are accused of, from their treatment of Uyghurs to repressive policies in Hong Kong and Taiwan. However, due to China's much-needed involvement in the climate negotiations, it may become more difficult to speak out against them on human rights and the Biden administration will have to try and adopt a delicate balancing act approach to achieve its desired progress on the two important fronts.

The United States has not said that human rights will be a negotiable issue in climate discussions, but since China is an essential partner in the latter, analysts note that they have some leverage. With the Chinese government's annoyed reaction to international condemnation of their human rights violations and political repression, there is a legitimate concern that the United States in particular will pull back on its commitment to the defense of these principles to ensure that China cooperates on climate issues. However, advocates are quick to point out that strong climate change policies and consistent respect of human rights are inherently intertwined. As recognized in the International Declaration of Human Rights, there is an obligation to safety and climate change is a direct threat to this.

During the 2020 presidential campaign, then-candidate Biden stressed that two of his main foreign policy objectives were the defense of human rights and climate change. With China being one of the largest contributing nations to the climate crisis and their less than stellar record on human rights, America's dealings with them were put to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy. China's strategy seems simple: it will address climate change concerns if less attention is given to human rights and conversely, a focus on human rights will jeopardize the success of climate change policy. Analysts have voiced the importance of the Biden administration not succumbing to this negotiation tactic. China's human rights abuses stretch across a variety of areas, from the ongoing mistreatment of the Uyghurs to repression of Hong Kong's freedoms and a lack of respect for Taiwanese sovereignty, and this behavior cannot go unchecked and requires repercussions regardless of the complicated nature of the situation.

While it appears as though the United States may need to choose between efforts to tackle climate change or human rights separately, this is a false choice fallacy, as the two are interrelated with climate change itself being arguably the most critical human rights issue.