

## Landing the Paris Climate Agreement: How It Happened, Why It Matters, and What Comes Next

### Todd Stern

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US Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern's insightful environmental history *Landing the Paris Climate Agreement* covers how the groundbreaking global pact came to be, explains its significance, and outlines the next steps.

Stern, who served as the US's chief negotiator at the 2015 Paris Agreement, reveals the struggle to reach a consensus on containing climate change. This daunting feat required widespread cooperation and multifaceted action. Negotiations between ministers from across the globe are captured in this text, conveying the urgency of the climate crisis and the complexity of addressing it.

Stern covers White House strategy sessions and conference room discussions with figures including Denmark's environment minister; it's a fascinating look at diplomacy in action. Those who negotiated the agreement are sketched in with descriptions of the relationships they leveraged behind the scenes. There are memorable characterizations, including of a large, walrus-mustached negotiator who would hold forth "at inordinate length" on any subject. The tactics for getting developing countries on board, and the issues that China would or would not budge on, are also covered.

In addition to defending the agreement itself—reviewing the science, rebutting naysayers, and issuing a stirring call to action—Stern also contextualizes it by outlining the history of international efforts to tackle greenhouse gas emissions, recapping what happened afterward, and making it clear what is still left to be done. He's a candid narrator who addresses the logistical challenges involved in cleaning up energy and agricultural production too. Practical obstacles, including inertia and political and business interests, also receive space.

A legacy project, *Landing the Paris Climate Agreement* is an incisive history text covering one instance of world leaders coming together to combat climate change.

JOSEPH S. PETE (September / October 2024)

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