

A Case Study on Greenpeace's Role in Pressuring United States to Comply with the 1997 Kyoto Protocol

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Introduction

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted on December 11, 1997 and it is unique in that it binds 37 developed countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce GHG emissions. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol was negotiated and signed during President Clinton's administration; however, it was never ratified by the United States' Senate. Once President Bush entered office, he withdrew the United States from the Kyoto Protocol in March 2001.

This case study focuses on the tactics, campaigns, and strategies used by Greenpeace (both its international and U.S. based offices) in pressuring the United States government to sign and ratify the agreement. Particularly, this project aims to showcase the contextual circumstances of the political landscape influencing the decisions that Greenpeace made in adapting its strategies and tactics to pressure the US government.

Timeline



Methodology

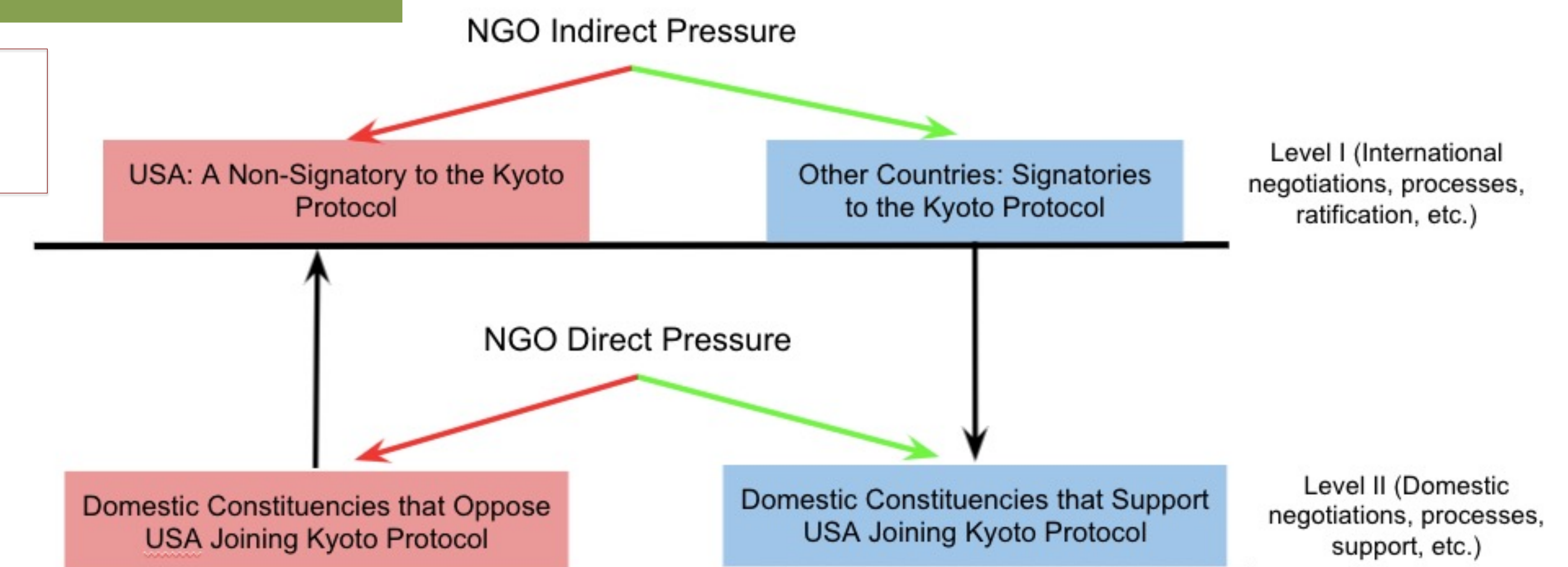
To understand how Greenpeace's strategies and tactics varied in correspondence to the U.S. domestic political landscape during the Kyoto Protocol, I conducted research through the use of historical newspaper databases, Greenpeace's websites, and Greenpeace's annual reports using the following keywords: Greenpeace, 1997 Kyoto Protocol, United States, campaigns, tactics, strategies, pressure. The time frame of these searches were set for January 1st, 1997 to January 1st, 2003.

Notable Greenpeace Strategies

Date	Type of Strategy	Purpose
Nov 2000	Insider; Influencing international negotiations/ processes	Greenpeace delegates attended the Climate Conference at Hague in hopes of addressing the loopholes on the methods and rules to achieve emissions cuts set forth in the Protocol.
April 2001	Outsider; Influencing domestic climate policy	Series of protests and rallies taking place outside of the White House and President Bush's ranch in Texas in the wake of President Bush withdrawing the U.S. from the Protocol.
April –May 2001	Outsider; Influencing industry climate policy and behaviour	Greenpeace wrote to the world's 100 top companies, amongst them were collaborators on U.S. government's opposition to policies on addressing climate change. Firms were asked publicly support the Kyoto Protocol.
June 2001	Outsider; Influencing industry's climate policy and behaviour	Greenpeace led a boycott against ExxonMobil gas stations as ExxonMobil was a key supporter of Bush's decision to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol.
August 2001	Outsider; Influencing industry's climate policy and behaviour	Greenpeace went after other corporations in its strategy of embarrassing large American corporations into pledging support to the Kyoto Protocol to indirectly exert pressure on the Bush administration to reverse its opposition towards the Protocol, such as Ford Motor Company and Coke.
August 2002	Insider; Influencing international negotiations/ processes, industry's climate policy and behaviour	At the UN World Summit On Sustainable Development, Greenpeace forged an alliance with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development to 'call on governments around the world to use the Kyoto agreement as the basis for a new set of commons rules to combat global warming'.

Theoretical Framework of Direct and Indirect Pressure

Framework adapted from Robert O. Putnam's *Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games*



Direct and Indirect Pressure

When the U.S. was a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, Greenpeace embarked on campaigns and actions that were on a smaller scale where they directly pressured the U.S. government regarding their compliance with the Protocol. However, once the Bush administration entered office and withdrew from the Protocol, Greenpeace focused on indirectly pressuring major industry players who had alliances and connections to the federal administration. These industry players had lobbying powers in terms of the amount of donations they provided to the administration, and thus their monetary support suggests that they have influences over the federal political agenda.

The evolution of Greenpeace's campaigns of pressuring the U.S. government to targeting corporate America possibly adds to Robert O. Putnam's two-level game as an NGO's direct pressure on domestic constituencies that oppose a certain international legal instrument in Level II can affect head of state's agenda in Level I to sign/ratify that said international legal instrument.

Discussion

Further research can be conducted on Greenpeace's campaigns in pressuring the U.S. government to comply with the 2015 Paris Agreement. There also exists several limitations to the research project, specifically this case study did not conduct a holistic review of every Greenpeace campaign that occurred during the time frame of 1997 to 2003. As well, it is difficult to understand the impact of Greenpeace on the U.S. government especially as agenda setting and ad hoc negotiations often occurred behind closed doors.

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