

The Planet and Trump's Selfish Ethics

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The news that Trump has decided that the United States will abandon the Paris climate agreement has not surprised the world, even though it may have disturbed you. Trump repeatedly announced his intention during his election campaign. The decision is only a consequence of the motto that inspires his government: America First.

That America-is-first thing was not just a simple slogan to capture the disgruntled and nostalgic American vote. It was very much how he saw it. But the real reason is foreign policy. The president is clear: no decision should be taken on international issues that could harm the United States.

According to Trump, Obama, unfortunately, did so when, with his support for the Paris Accord, he allowed an unwarranted waiver of sovereignty over gas emissions and secured a multimillion-dollar economic aid package to countries in need that could have been better spent serving American interests.

Is Trump right? To deny that the Paris Agreement has committed the United States government is to deny the evidence. Otherwise, of course, America must be the first thing for the president of the United States and the American people, as Spain should be the first thing for the Spaniards, Aguascalientes first for hydrocarbons, the company Trampolin first for its shareholders and employees, and the family López Martínez the first for each one of its members. Moreover: oneself must be first for itself. We could add this one to close the circle. What's wrong with all this? Why do we tear our garments before this elementary principle of human behavior?

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In my opinion, what fails is not the formulation of the America -first principle, which is true and valid, but its correct interpretation. This interpretation must be made, not from an exclusionary ethic based on self-interest, but from an inclusive ethics based on solidarity.

The ethics of self-interest is unacceptable in our day, since it establishes an artificial barrier between the own and the other, besides neglecting the common thing, that is the

main ingredient of what today we call globalization. This ethical model interprets everything in terms of power and understands any act of solidarity - disinterested - as an unjustified denial. It is an ethical of balance of wills that impose themselves and search for interested consensuses resulting from the struggles between different powers.

To greater power comes greater ability to freely impose one's will by consensus. Unfortunately, the ethics of self-interest has been and is prevalent in the management of the refugee crisis, in Brexit, in the Catalan question, and is the one that has dominated international relations between human beings, with honorable exceptions, to this day. This is how we have gone. Let us not, therefore, demonize Trump. He is but one more in the great human jungle, who, according to this ethic, has not gone so badly.

“America is not a project that can be closed tightly. Your isolationism, sooner or later, will be invoiced.”

Globalization as a phenomenon has allowed us to experience that any extreme and unappealing separation between the self and the alien is artificial. The self-alien duality, like any radicalized and exclusive duality, is itself reductionist, because it prevents us from grasping important aspects of a much richer reality.

You cannot think of a self without a you, a you without a us, and a us without them that must become, in turn, a unitary whole. A me, America, and a you, rest of the world, without an us, which is humanity, is a half-truth, and, at bottom, constitutes, as all half-truths, a great deceit and a source of Confusion and falsehood.

Trumpism, in this sense, is remarkably reductionist, as are almost all the isms, and, as such, is artificial, and in the long run unproductive. Trump is mistakenly mistaken in claiming to defend America without taking sufficient account of the universal common good. America is not a single, canned project that can be sealed. That is why, its isolationism, sooner or later, will take its toll.

“Trump's move to renounce the Paris Agreement questions U.S. international reputation”

International as well as national relations must be based on an ethics of solidarity, which far surpasses the ethics of self-interest as it has been selfishly understood until now. It is not a question, of course, that states do not have to act in their own interests, but the need to consider global interest as an integral part of each political community's own interest.

The global interest has now become a sufficient condition in the making of national decisions, as well as safeguarding national interests is, as much as possible, a necessary but not sufficient condition in global decision-making.

A state acting in accordance with the global interest is acting, by definition, jointly, as well as a state that works in its own interest integrating global interests into its decision, acting jointly. This explains why where there are global interests, such as climate change, it is absolutely possible, and even ethically enforceable, to reach agreements. The international community, for its part, should try to safeguard the interests of nations as much as possible.

“American leadership can not keep on imposing its own agenda at the expense of the universal common good”

This ethic of solidarity is much more necessary in our present time than in earlier times. The reason is obvious: greater interdependence, greater need for involvement and, therefore, greater demand for solidarity. In fact, solidarity is becoming the only valid way to live reasonably in a globalized world. We have no alternative.

That is why I am convinced that globalization, even if it requires a great effort on the part of the nations, is going to require a substantial leap in the level of human solidarity, and this leap will allow mankind to reach a much deeper degree of comprehension of our own reality. It is, in essence, a new evolutionary phase of human consciousness.

Trump's unsustainable move to renounce the Paris Agreement seriously questions the international reputation of the United States, which is its greatest intangible asset. American leadership cannot be maintained by imposing its own agenda, or by seeking self-interest at the expense of the universal common good. America first, yes, but not only in economic and military power, in scientific and technological development, in universities and companies, in security, communication, and entertainment, but also in solidarity democracy. The cradle of democracy must solidify its international relations and consolidate its world leadership, as a mature fruit of its well-deserved international reputation and not of its petty political interest.

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