



**THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF THE
UNITED STATES ENERGY POLICY UNDER
PRESIDENT TRUMP'S ADMINISTRATION
IMPLICATIONS FOR SUB-SAHARAN
AFRICA (SSA) AND THE GLOBAL
ENERGY ECONOMY**



INTRODUCTION

The recent executive orders issued by President Donald Trump (“Trump”) on January 21, 2025, signal a dramatic shift in United States of America (U.S.) energy policy, particularly concerning climate change and international climate related agreements. These actions come in the wake of alarming global temperature increases and underscore the commitment of the U.S President to prioritise fossil fuel production over environmental considerations.

The "America First Energy Plan" re-emerges as a central theme in President Trump's agenda, with a renewed focus on achieving energy independence and dominance through increased oil, gas, and coal production. By declaring a national energy emergency, Trump has positioned his administration to expedite the approval of energy projects, while suspending existing environmental regulations, viewed as impediments to economic growth. This declaration grants the President expansive powers to facilitate fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure development across the nation.

Under President Donald Trump, the energy policy was characterised by an "America First" approach during his first administration, emphasising fossil fuel production and deregulation. Trump's administration prioritised the expansion of oil and gas exploration, aiming to achieve energy independence by increasing domestic production. This approach contrasts sharply with President Joe Biden's

policies, which focused on transitioning to renewable energy sources and implementing stringent regulations to combat climate change.

Examining the implications of U.S. energy policy is particularly relevant for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and global energy markets. SSA faces unique energy access, economic development, and climate vulnerability challenges. The U.S. approach to energy can either support or hinder progress in these areas. Furthermore, the U.S. energy policy affects global markets, including the UK and other countries heavily invested in renewable energy and natural gas. As these nations navigate their transitions towards cleaner energy systems, shifts in U.S. policy could lead to fluctuations in energy prices and alter investment strategies in renewables.

This report will examine the implications of Trump's executive orders for both domestic and international energy landscapes. It will explore how these policies impact Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in terms of economic opportunities and environmental challenges, in addition to their effects on global energy markets, particularly for countries like the UK that are heavily invested in renewable energy. By analysing these dimensions, we aim to understand how U.S. energy policy under Trump shapes not only national strategies, but also global efforts toward sustainability and climate resilience.



U.S. Energy Policy under President Trump's Administration

The "America First Energy Plan," introduced by President Donald Trump during his first administration, marked a significant shift in U.S. energy policy, prioritising fossil fuel production and deregulation. This plan aimed to revitalise the American energy sector, by focusing on the extraction of domestic resources such as oil, natural gas, and coal, while dismantling many of the environmental protections established during the Obama administration.

Trump's energy policy was rooted in the belief that increasing domestic fossil fuel production would lead to job creation and energy independence. The administration sought to eliminate what it termed "job-killing restrictions" on energy production, thereby fostering an environment conducive to investment and growth in traditional energy sectors. The overarching goal was to make America "energy dominant," reducing reliance on foreign oil and enhancing national security through increased domestic output.

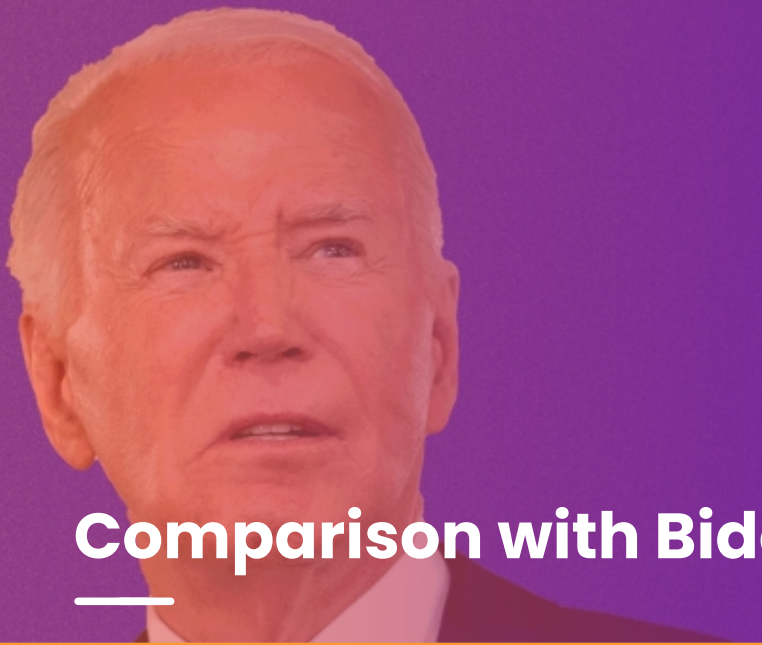
Several key actions were taken under Trump's administration to support this agenda:

- **Lifting Environmental Restrictions:** The Trump administration rolled back numerous regulations that had been implemented to protect the environment. This included rescinding the Clean Power Plan and other policies

aimed at reducing carbon emissions. By removing these restrictions, the administration aimed to facilitate easier access to federal lands for fossil fuel exploration.

- **Promoting Oil and Gas Exploration:** The administration actively promoted oil and gas exploration on federal lands and waters. This included opening previously restricted areas for drilling and supporting infrastructure projects such as the Dakota Access Pipeline and Keystone XL Pipeline, which were designed to enhance transportation capabilities for oil and gas.
- **Exporting American Energy:** Trump emphasised the importance of exporting American energy resources globally. This included plans to refill strategic petroleum reserves that had been depleted and initiatives to enhance U.S. competitiveness in international energy markets.
- **Ending Support for Renewable Initiatives:** The administration signaled a clear departure from renewable energy support. by ending federal preferences for resources like offshore wind farms and withdrawing from international climate agreements such as the Paris Climate Agreement.

Trump's "America First Energy Plan" represented a comprehensive strategy aimed at maximising fossil fuel production, while minimising regulatory burdens. This approach not only reshaped U.S. energy policy but also had far-reaching implications for global energy markets and environmental standards.



Comparison with Biden's Policies

President Joe Biden's energy policies represent a stark contrast to those of his predecessor, Donald Trump, with a strong emphasis on renewable energy and climate change initiatives. Upon taking office, Biden pledged to restore America's climate leadership and committed to ambitious sustainability goals, focusing on transitioning the U.S. economy towards clean energy sources.

Biden's administration prioritised the development of renewable energy technologies, aiming to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Key initiatives include the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which is regarded as the most significant climate spending legislation in U.S. history, attracting substantial private sector investments in clean energy. The administration launched numerous projects aimed at enhancing electric vehicle infrastructure, increasing energy efficiency in buildings, and promoting sustainable manufacturing practices. For example, the government invested over \$12 billion in transitioning federal operations to sustainable practices and set goals of deploying 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations by 2030.

The regulatory approaches between the two administrations are fundamentally different. While Trump's policies favored deregulation to boost fossil fuel production, Biden implemented stringent regulations aimed at reducing carbon

emissions and enhancing environmental protections. Biden's Executive Order 14057 on catalyzing clean energy industries emphasizes federal sustainability and aims for a carbon pollution-free electricity sector by 2035.

Moreover, Biden rejoined the Paris Agreement, which Trump had withdrawn from in 2017. This move underscored Biden's commitment to international climate collaboration and accountability. The administration also launched initiatives like the Justice40 Initiative, ensuring that 40% of the benefits from federal investments in climate and clean energy go to disadvantaged communities historically burdened by pollution.

While Trump's energy policies focused on maximizing fossil fuel production through deregulation, Biden's approach was characterised by a commitment to renewable energy development, regulatory oversight aimed at environmental protection, and active participation in international climate agreements. This fundamental shift not only impacts U.S. energy policy but also has significant implications for global markets and environmental sustainability efforts worldwide.



Executive Order on Energy and Climate Change

On January 21, 2025, President Donald Trump issued a series of executive orders that marked a significant departure from previous U.S. energy policies, particularly concerning climate change and international agreements like the Paris Climate Accord. This section explores the implications of these actions for both domestic energy production and global climate initiatives.

1. Declaring a National Energy Emergency

In his inaugural address, Trump declared a national energy emergency, asserting that the United States faces an inadequate energy supply that threatens national security and economic stability. He cited the need for a reliable and diversified energy supply to support manufacturing, transportation, and defense industries. The declaration allows federal agencies to utilise emergency powers to expedite energy production, transportation, and infrastructure development across the nation.

The implications of this declaration are far-reaching. Domestically, it could lead to a rapid expansion of fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure projects, such as pipelines and drilling operations, particularly on federal lands and waters. This could boost short-term economic growth and job creation in the energy sector, but it may also exacerbate environmental degradation and climate change risks.

Internationally, the declaration signals a shift away from global climate commitments, potentially undermining efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to renewable energy. For Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), this could mean reduced U.S. support for renewable energy projects and climate adaptation initiatives, as the focus shifts toward domestic fossil fuel production. Additionally, the declaration may influence global energy markets by increasing the supply of U.S. oil and gas, which could lower global energy prices and impact the competitiveness of renewable energy investments worldwide.

2. Withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement

A cornerstone of Trump's energy agenda is the initiation of the process to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. This international accord aims to limit global temperature increases to below 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. Trump's executive order asserts that the U.S. will consider its withdrawal effective immediately upon formal notification to the United Nations Secretary-General, circumventing the typical one-year notice period stipulated by the agreement. This move signals a clear intention to prioritise fossil fuel production over international commitments to combat climate change.

Trump's orders dismantle ambitious climate goals set by the Biden administration, including mandates for electric vehicles and carbon-free electricity generation. By revoking these initiatives, Trump aims to reinvigorate fossil fuel industries, while sidelining renewable energy projects.

The implications of this withdrawal are significant. Within the U.S., the decision risks stalling progress on climate action, as federal support for renewable energy projects and emissions reduction initiatives are likely to diminish. This could lead to a resurgence in coal, oil, and gas production, potentially reversing gains made under the Biden administration in areas like electric vehicle adoption and clean

energy infrastructure. At the same time, the withdrawal weakens the global credibility of the U.S. as a climate leader, which may embolden other nations to scale back their own commitments. For Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), this could result in reduced access to climate financing and technology transfers, as international funding mechanisms often rely on U.S. participation and leadership. SSA nations, already grappling with the impacts of climate change, may find it harder to secure the resources needed to build resilient energy systems and adapt to environmental challenges.

Trump's orders also dismantle ambitious climate goals set by the Biden administration, including mandates for electric vehicles and carbon-free electricity generation. By revoking these initiatives, Trump aims to reinvigorate fossil fuel industries, while sidelining renewable energy projects. This policy shift could have ripple effects across the global energy landscape. For instance, the U.S. retreat from renewable energy leadership may discourage private investors from backing clean energy projects in developing regions like SSA, where funding is already scarce. Additionally, the focus on fossil fuels could lead to increased competition in global energy markets, potentially lowering oil and gas prices in the short term but undermining long-term efforts to transition to sustainable energy sources. For SSA, this creates a complex dynamic; while some nations may benefit from expanded fossil fuel exports, others could face heightened challenges in meeting their climate and development goals without robust international support.

The executive orders emphasize increased oil and gas production on federal lands and waters, including lifting restrictions on offshore drilling. This aligns with Trump's goal of establishing the U.S. as a global energy powerhouse, while potentially exacerbating environmental concerns associated with fossil fuel extraction.

Trump's administration has also temporarily halted all federal approvals for new wind energy projects, citing legal deficiencies and potential negative impacts on navigational safety and marine life. This pause could significantly hinder the growth of renewable energy in favor of traditional fossil fuels.

Trump's recent executive orders reflect a comprehensive strategy aimed at reversing progress made in addressing climate change, while prioritising fossil fuel production. The withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement and the declaration of a national energy emergency underscores a commitment to establishing American energy dominance at the expense of international climate commitments. The withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement and the declaration of a national energy emergency underscores a commitment to establishing American energy dominance at the expense of international climate commitments. From a legal standpoint, withdrawal from the Paris Agreement is permissible under the terms of the Agreement itself. Article 28 of the Paris Agreement allows a country to withdraw, but it requires a three-year waiting period from the date the Agreement entered into force (November 4, 2016) and a one-year notice period after formal notification is submitted to the United Nations. Trump's attempt to expedite this process by declaring immediate withdrawal is not legally supported by the framework of the Agreement, and such a move would likely face scrutiny from the international community

As these policies unfold, they will have profound implications not only for U.S. energy markets, but also for global efforts to combat climate change, particularly in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa that are already vulnerable to environmental shifts. Understanding these dynamics is crucial as nations navigate an increasingly complex global energy landscape in pursuit of sustainable development goals.



Implications for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

The recent withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, as formalised by President Trump's executive orders on January 21, 2025, has significant implications for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). This section examines the potential impacts on renewable energy investments, energy partnerships, financing mechanisms, and opportunities for fossil fuel exporters in the region.

1. **Reduced Focus on Renewable Energy Investments in SSA**

The U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement signals a decreased commitment to global climate action, which could lead to reduced investments in renewable energy projects across SSA. As the U.S. shifts its focus towards fossil fuels and energy independence, international investors may perceive a decline in momentum for clean energy initiatives. This shift is particularly concerning for African nations that rely on foreign investment to develop their renewable energy sectors. The lack of U.S. leadership in climate agreements may undermine global efforts to mobilise funding for sustainable projects, leaving SSA countries vulnerable as they grapple with climate change impacts, while striving for economic development. However, there are potential upsides to this shift, particularly given the region's diverse fuel mix dynamics. Many SSA countries still rely heavily on fossil fuels for energy generation, and the U.S. pivot towards fossil fuel production could create opportunities for collaboration in oil and gas

exploration, infrastructure development, and technology transfer. For instance, countries like Nigeria, Angola, and Mozambique, which have significant fossil fuel reserves, may benefit from increased global demand for oil and gas as the U.S. prioritises energy exports. Additionally, the reduced emphasis on renewable energy investments could allow SSA nations to focus on developing a balanced energy portfolio that includes both fossil fuels and renewables, tailored to their specific economic and developmental needs. This approach could provide short-term economic gains, while gradually transitioning to cleaner energy sources in the long term.

2. Challenges for SSA Nations Dependent on U.S. Energy Partnerships

Many SSA nations have established energy partnerships with the U.S., which have historically included support for renewable energy development and climate adaptation strategies. The pivot towards fossil fuels under Trump's administration may disrupt these partnerships, leading to uncertainty about future collaboration and investment. Countries that have relied on U.S. support for clean energy initiatives may face challenges in securing alternative funding sources or technology transfers necessary for their energy transitions.

To address these challenges, SSA nations must leverage their existing resources and explore innovative solutions at both national and regional levels. One promising approach is the establishment of the Africa Energy Bank proposed by Afrexim Bank and the African Petroleum Producers Organization (APPO), aiming to fund energy projects in Africa. This institution could serve as a centralized funding mechanism to support energy projects across the continent, reducing reliance on external partners like the U.S. By pooling resources and attracting investments from African governments, private sector stakeholders, and international development organizations, the bank could finance a mix of renewable energy projects, fossil fuel infrastructure, and energy transition initiatives tailored to the

region's needs. Additionally, SSA nations could strengthen regional cooperation through platforms like the African Union's Agenda 2063, which emphasises energy access and sustainability as key pillars of development. By prioritising intra-African collaboration, countries can share expertise, develop cross-border energy grids, and create economies of scale for renewable energy technologies. These efforts would not only mitigate the impact of disrupted U.S. partnerships but also position SSA as a leader in shaping its own energy future.

3. Impacts on Financing and Development of Renewable Energy Projects

The reduction in U.S. commitment to international climate agreements can adversely affect financing mechanisms for renewable energy projects in SSA. With diminished confidence in U.S. leadership on climate issues, private investors may hesitate to commit capital to renewable projects that require long-term investment horizons. Additionally, the withdrawal could weaken existing financial frameworks established during previous administrations aimed at supporting clean energy development in developing countries. As a result, SSA nations may struggle to secure the necessary funding to meet their growing energy demands sustainably.

To mitigate these challenges, SSA nations should adopt a multi-pronged approach to attract alternative financing and strengthen local capacity for renewable energy development. Firstly, governments can create enabling policy environments by offering incentives such as tax breaks, feed-in tariffs, and streamlined regulatory processes to attract private sector investment. Secondly, SSA countries should explore blended finance mechanisms, which combine public, private, and philanthropic funds to de-risk renewable energy projects and make them more appealing to investors. Thirdly, regional institutions like the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union (AU) should play a more active role in mobilising resources for renewable energy projects. Finally, SSA

nations should strengthen partnerships with other global players, such as the European Union, China, and multilateral development banks, which remain committed to climate action and renewable energy investments. By diversifying funding sources and enhancing regional collaboration, SSA can reduce its reliance on U.S. support and build a more resilient and sustainable energy future.

4. Potential Opportunities for African Fossil Fuel Exporters

Conversely, increased U.S. fossil fuel production could create new markets for African oil and gas exporters, as the U.S. seeks to enhance its position as a leading global energy supplier. With Trump emphasizing "drill, baby, drill," African countries rich in fossil fuel resources might find opportunities to expand their exports to meet global demand, particularly from nations looking to diversify their energy sources; amidst changing geopolitical landscapes. However, this opportunity comes with risks related to long-term sustainability and the need for SSA nations to balance economic growth with climate commitments.

Trump's executive orders and the withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement present both challenges and opportunities for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Beyond the immediate benefits of expanded export markets, African fossil fuel exporters could leverage the opportunity to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in energy infrastructure. For example, countries like Nigeria, Angola, and Mozambique could partner with international energy companies to modernise their extraction technologies and build new pipelines, refineries, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities. These investments would not only boost export capacity but will also create jobs and stimulate local economies. Additionally, the increased global focus on fossil fuels could provide SSA nations with an opportunity to negotiate favorable trade agreements and secure long-term contracts with energy-hungry markets in Europe and Asia, further stabilising their revenue streams.

Moreover, the revenue generated from fossil fuel exports could be strategically reinvested into diversifying SSA's energy mix. For instance, countries could allocate a portion of their oil and gas earnings to fund renewable energy projects, such as solar, wind, and hydropower, ensuring a more balanced and sustainable energy portfolio. This approach would allow SSA nations to capitalize on short-term fossil fuel opportunities, while laying the groundwork for a cleaner energy future.

While there may be short-term gains for fossil fuel exporters, the long-term implications of reduced investment in renewable energy and disrupted partnerships could hinder sustainable development efforts across the region. Addressing these challenges will require strategic planning and diversification of energy partnerships to ensure that SSA can navigate this shifting global landscape effectively.



Effects on the United Kingdom (UK) and Global Energy Markets

The recent changes in U.S. energy policy, particularly under President Trump's executive orders, have significant implications for global energy markets. The United Kingdom's renewable energy transition is at a critical juncture, with ambitious targets set for achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. However, the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and its renewed focus on fossil fuels may create uncertainties in the UK's strategy towards renewable energy and climate commitments.

The UK government has outlined a Clean Power Action Plan, which aims to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy sources and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. This plan is crucial as the country seeks to stabilize energy prices and enhance energy security considering recent global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions affecting fuel supply chains.

Despite these efforts, the UK's Climate Change Committee has indicated that only about one-third of the emissions reductions required to meet its 2030 targets are currently backed by credible plans. The shift in U.S. policy could undermine international collaboration on climate initiatives, potentially affecting investment flows into the UK's renewable sector. As investors assess risks associated with U.S. policy changes, there may be hesitance to commit capital to UK projects that rely on a stable global climate framework.

The UK's departure from the European Union (EU) has already introduced complexities into its energy policy, as it no longer benefits from the collective bargaining power and shared infrastructure of the EU's internal energy market. For instance, the UK has lost access to the EU's unified grid system, which previously allowed for efficient energy sharing and stability across member states. This isolation makes the UK more vulnerable to global energy market fluctuations, including those driven by U.S. policy shifts. With the U.S. prioritizing fossil fuel production, global oil and gas prices could become more volatile, potentially undermining the economic viability of the UK's renewable energy projects. Lower fossil fuel prices, driven by increased U.S. production, might also reduce the competitiveness of renewables, slowing the pace of the UK's energy transition.

Additionally, the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement could weaken international momentum for climate action, making it harder for the UK to rally global support for its net-zero ambitions. As a non-EU member, the UK must now negotiate its own bilateral energy agreements and climate partnerships, which could be complicated by the U.S. retreat from global climate leadership. For example, the UK's ability to attract international investment in renewable energy projects may be affected if investors perceive a lack of alignment between the UK's climate goals and the policies of major economies like the U.S.

To mitigate these risks, the UK will need to strengthen its domestic renewable energy policies and forge new alliances with countries and regions that remain committed to climate action, such as the EU, Japan, and emerging markets in Asia. By leveraging its expertise in offshore wind and other renewable technologies, the UK can position itself as a global leader in clean energy, even as it navigates the challenges posed by shifting U.S. energy policies and the post-Brexit landscape.

Also, if U.S. fossil fuel production increases significantly, it could lead to lower global oil prices, impacting the competitiveness of UK renewables. As the UK strives to become a leader in clean electricity production, it must navigate these challenges, while ensuring that its policies remain aligned with its long-term climate goals.

The shift towards increased U.S. fossil fuel production has broader implications for European markets that are heavily reliant on natural gas and are transitioning towards clean energy solutions. Many European countries have been working to reduce their dependence on Russian gas supplies, especially considering recent geopolitical events. The U.S. has positioned itself as a key supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Europe, which has provided some relief amidst rising energy prices.

However, Trump's executive orders may complicate this dynamic. If U.S. policies prioritize domestic fossil fuel consumption over exports, European nations could face challenges in securing stable gas supplies. Additionally, as Europe aims to decarbonize its economy and transition to renewable sources, any increase in U.S. fossil fuel availability could lead to a potential delay in investment in cleaner technologies.

European markets are also under pressure to meet ambitious climate targets set by the European Union (EU), which aims for carbon neutrality by 2050. The EU's Green Deal emphasizes investments in renewable energy and infrastructure improvements necessary for a sustainable future. However, if U.S. policies encourage greater reliance on fossil fuels, this could create tension within European strategies focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Changes in U.S. energy policy under Trump's administration present both challenges and opportunities for global energy markets. The UK's renewable energy transition may face uncertainties due to reduced international

collaboration and investment risks associated with shifting U.S. priorities. Meanwhile, European markets must navigate their reliance on natural gas, amidst a changing landscape influenced by U.S. fossil fuel production dynamics as they strive toward cleaner energy futures.

Conclusion

The implications of President Donald Trump's energy policies, particularly following his recent executive orders, have far-reaching consequences for both Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and global energy markets.

Firstly, Trump's renewed focus on fossil fuel production and withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement may lead to decreased investments in renewable energy projects across SSA. This shift poses significant challenges for nations in the region that have historically depended on U.S. support for their energy transitions, potentially disrupting established partnerships and financing mechanisms vital for sustainable development. Conversely, increased U.S. fossil fuel production could open new markets for African oil and gas exporters, presenting a complex landscape of opportunities and risks.

Secondly, the effects on global energy markets are profound. The UK's renewable energy transition may face uncertainties due to reduced international collaboration, while European markets that rely on natural gas must navigate their dependence on U.S. fossil fuel exports amidst a changing geopolitical landscape. As these dynamics unfold, the role of SSA as a potential supplier of fossil fuels becomes increasingly significant, yet it raises questions about long-term sustainability and climate commitments.

Considering these developments, it is crucial for African policymakers to adapt proactively to shifting global energy dynamics. Embracing flexible strategies that diversify energy partnerships and leverage both fossil fuels and renewables will be essential for navigating this evolving landscape. Policymakers must advocate for equitable climate financing mechanisms to support sustainable development goals, while balancing economic growth with environmental responsibilities.

Finally, the broader role of the U.S. in shaping global energy futures cannot be understated. As Trump's administration emphasizes domestic energy production at the expense of international climate commitments, it is vital for the global community to reassess collaborative efforts in addressing climate change. The future of energy will require a concerted effort to balance traditional fossil fuel use with renewable investments, ensuring that all nations can contribute to a sustainable and resilient energy future.

In conclusion, as we move forward into 2025 and beyond, the interplay between U.S. energy policies and global dynamics will continue to shape the contours of energy production and consumption worldwide. It is imperative that stakeholders across all sectors remain vigilant and responsive to these changes to foster a more sustainable and equitable energy landscape for all.

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