

Received: 13-04-2022
Accepted: 20-04-2022
Published: 12-06-2022

The United States Of America Withdrawal From Paris Agreement 2015: Desecuritization Of Climate

Fardha Dewi Shinta

Universitas Andalas

Email: fardhadewishinta@gmail.com

Maryam Jamilah

Universitas Andalas

Email: maryamjamilah@soc.unand.ac.id

Anita Afriani Sinulingga

Universitas Andalas

Email: anitaafriani@soc.unand.ac.id

Abstract

The climate change issue has become a great debate in U.S foreign policy. Starting from the year 1980, the United States considered climate change one of the nation's potential threats. It can be traced from the U.S's active participation in climate change international regimes. But in 2015, Donald Trump's administration decided to withdraw from Paris Agreement. This research describes the securitization effort of climate change in the Donald Trump Administration through the U.S withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. The analysis uses four political forms of de securitization of Lene Hansen; stabilization, replacement, re-articulation, and silencing. This research is qualitative with a descriptive analysis approach. This research found that the climate change de securitization in Donald Trump's administration uses the four political forms: stabilize climate change issues, replace climate change with the economic, immigrant, and terrorist Issues, and rearticulate the danger of other three subjects. However, it can be concluded that the silencing effort was not complete; it can be proved by establishing the U.S Coalition of societies (We are still in) which supports the Paris Agreement 2015, and some protests of the American public against Donald Trump's decision.

Keywords: Paris Agreement, Climate Change, De securitization, U.S Foreign Policy

Abstrak

Isu perubahan iklim telah menjadi perdebatan dalam kebijakan luar negeri Amerika Serikat. Dimulai dari tahun 1980, Amerika Serikat menganggap perubahan iklim sebagai salah satu ancaman potensial bagi negara. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari partisipasi aktif Amerika dalam rezim perubahan iklim internasional. Namun pada tahun 2015, pemerintahan Donald Trump memutuskan untuk keluar dari Perjanjian Paris. Penelitian ini menjelaskan upaya de-sekuritisasi perubahan iklim di masa pemerintahan Presiden Donald Trump dengan menggunakan empat bentuk politik dari desekuritisasi Lene Hansen yaitu; stabilisasi, mengganti, reartikulasi dan pembungkaman. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif analisis. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa upaya desekuritisasi perubahan iklim di masa pemerintahan Donald Trump menggunakan empat bentuk upaya politik: menstabilkan isu perubahan iklim, mengganti isu perubahan iklim dengan isu lain yaitu ekonomi, imigran dan teroris, reartikulasi bahaya dari tiga isu tersebut. Namun, dapat disimpulkan bahwa upaya pembungkaman tidak berhasil, hal ini terbukti dengan pembentukan koalisi masyarakat Amerika (We are still in), yang menyatakan dukungan terhadap Perjanjian Paris 2015 dan beberapa protes dari publik Amerika menentang keputusan Donald Trump.

Kata kunci: Perjanjian Paris, Perubahan Iklim, Desekuritisasi, Kebijakan Luar Negeri Amerika.

Introduction

The climate change issue has become a great debate in U.S foreign policy. Since the 1960s, the U.S has always been the pioneer in solving the environmental problem, and they also had progressive and initiative environmental care communities (Falkner, 2005). The public of the U.S started to consider climate change as an issue in the summer of the 1980s. It was claimed as the hottest summer ever in the history of the U.S., and they began to realize the greenhouse effect (Leiserowitz, 2005).

Ronald Reagan (1981-1989), George H.W Bush (1989-1993) from the Republican Party, and also Bill Clinton (1993-2001) from the democrat had the same position concerning climate change. George H.W Bush ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during his reign; Bill Clinton then ratified the Kyoto Protocol. He prioritized the climate change issue by appointing several environmental experts to his administration, such as Timothy Wirth (Department of State), Carole Browner as head of EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), and Sherri Goodman (Deputy Secretary of Defense and Environmental Security) (Harris, 2018).

During the George W. Bush administration, many elites doubted the threat of climate change, even considering it a non-urgent issue (Barnett, 2004). Unlike the previous President, Barack Obama declared his concern on climate change, "*The United States will once again engage vigorously in these negotiations, and help lead the world toward a new era of global cooperation on climate change*" (Lucke, 2015). On January 20, 2015, he also stated that climate change is "*the greatest threat to future generations and considering that it poses immediate risks to our national security.*" (Torres Camprubí, 2016). Eventually, the U.S. ratified the Paris Agreement on October 5, 2016.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump chose a different direction by withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, and he erased the climate change discourse from the U.S. national security strategy (Borger, 2017). The Paris Agreement is a climate change international regime negotiated by 195 states (developing and developed countries). As the world's second-largest emitter, U.S. participation in this regime had a significant impact on stabilizing the world climate (Falkner, 2013)(Falkner, 2013). On November 4 2020, the U.S. formally withdrew from the Paris Agreement. The U.S. became the first

nation to withdraw from the agreement formally (McGrath, 2020).

For the Trump Administration, climate change is not the real threat to national security. However, the real threat to national security is Middle Eastern terrorism, rogue nuclear states, unfair trade practices, U.S immigration, and unfair burden-sharing with allies (Orr, 2021).

Some previous research analyzed this topic. The first research is "The withdrawal of the U.S from the Paris Agreement and its impact on global climate change governance," written by Zhang Yong-Xiang et.al. This study found no significant effect of U.S. withdrawal to the worldwide response to climate change, and it remains in the right direction (Zhang et al., 2017). The following research is "U.S withdrawal from the Paris Agreement: Reason, Impacts and China's response," written by Zhang Hai bin et al. This study argued that U.S withdrawal from the Paris Agreement aggravated the leadership deficit in the global climate change governance, and China got pressure from the international community to take the global climate leadership after U.S. (Dai et al., 2017)

Duy Nong and Mahinda Siriwardana research entitled "Effect on the

U.S economy of its proposed withdrawal from the Paris Agreement: A quantitative assessment" looks at this Issue from the domestic point of view. It assessed the potential effects on the U.S. economy. The finding suggests that this policy will increase the real GDP and actual private consumption by 1.13% and 0,78%, respectively. The coal, natural gas, and electricity energy sector would experience expansion when the U.S withdrew from the Paris Agreement. (Nong & Siriwardana, 2018) "Trump vs. Paris: The impact of climate policy on U.S. listed oil and gas firm returns and volatility" written by Ivan Diaz Rainey et al. also had a similar conclusion. The findings show that the Paris Agreement had a significant negative impact on the oil and gas sector in the U.S (Diaz-Rainey et al., 2021).

Those five previous research focus on the impact of the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement internationally and domestically. Authors assume that there is no research elaborating on the policy of President Donald Trump and how the efforts to de securitize Donald Trump's government conducted the climate change issues. This research describes the de securitization of climate change in the Donald Trump administration by withdrawing from the Paris Agreement.

The object of analysis in this research is the Donald Trump administration. The research question is how the effort of the Donald Trump administration to de securitize the climate change issue in withdrawing from the Paris Agreement.

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The data used is secondary data, like journal articles, news, book, government document, and all information related to this topic. In analyzing de securitization efforts, the authors use *four political forms of de securitization* of Lene Hansen (HANSEN, 2012)

The first form, change through stabilization, means decreasing the tension or easing an issue and a country's political situation. A problem is considered a stable threat and will not be potentially dangerous. The second is the replacement effort; the Issue is being replaced by another more threatening situation to national security. The third is rearticulation, the discourse that the replaced Issue is already solved and fixed repeatedly by speech act. The final form of de securitization effort is silencing; the actor chooses to silence, eventually forgetting the Issue.

Tabel 1
Four Political Forms of De securitization

No	Desecuritization Outcomes	Indicators
1	Change Through Stabilization	Explicit change in the security discourse
2	Replacement	One Issue is excluded, and another is securitized
3	Rearticulation	Offering a political solution to the threat and addressing the source of conflict
4	Silencing	An issue disappears or fails to register in a security discourse

Source : Hansen 2012: 15-21

Result and Discussion

This research found that President Donald Trump's effort to de securitizes climate change by applying the four political forms of de securitization: stabilize climate change, replace climate change with other potential threats, re-articulation, and silencing). However, the silencing effort of climate change is not fully complete because there is still climate change awareness in the U.S society through the "We are still in" movement and some protests of the American public.

Donald Trump Administration Effort to Stabilize Climate Change

The Republican Party Platform 2016 clearly stated that climate change is not the U.S national security priority but rather than economy, health, education, immigration, and energy. "Climate change is far from this nation's most pressing national security issue." (Peters & Wolley, 2016).

The party strongly believes that the environmental condition of the U.S is not in danger and is even much healthier. The climate change problem can be solved by giving citizens adequate information and incentive for developing new technology and innovation (Peters & Woolley, 2016).

This platform becomes guidance in making policy in Donald Trump's administration. He also mentioned the same thing in his account @realdonaldtrump: "*Global warming has been proven to be a canard repeatedly over and over again. <http://t.co/RK1UoS8e> The left needs a dose of reality.*" (@realdonaldtrump, 2012). "*Newly released emails prove that scientists have manipulated data on global warming. The data is unreliable.*" (@realdonaldtrump, 2011).

Donald Trump said in his speech that The Paris Agreement impoverishes the U.S. It is an unfair agreement. According to National Economic Research Associates (NERA), The cost of the Paris Agreement for the U.S will be as much as 2.7 million lost jobs by 2025. By 2040, this agreement will cut the production of several sectors: Paper down by 12%, Cement by 23%, Iron and steel by 38%, and coal miners by 86%. (Garden, 2017). He also stated that the Paris Agreement only benefited the developing countries and the world-leading polluter China. At the same time, the U.S as the world's leader in environmental protection only gets the punishment and obligations. (Climateanalytics, 2017).

President Donald Trump's speech act made an effort to stabilize the climate, but the government was accused of hiding The Fourth National Climate Assessment. The report said that the continued growth in the emission would impact the annual losses in some economic sectors of the U.S and is projected to reach hundreds of billion dollars lost (BBC, 2018).

The Donald Trump Administration Replaces Climate Change with other more threatening issues.

During the presidential campaign in 2016, Donald Trump spoke about the decline of the U.S economy, which is one factor behind the origin of the "Make America Great Again" slogan. Donald Trump believed that the U.S condition in 2016 was in chaos, and he promised that he would bring back the greatness of the U.S if he were elected as the President (Edwards, 2018). Donald Trump claimed that the U.S. economy only grew 1.1% last quarter under the Obama and Clinton administrations, million lost jobs, and doubled the national debt (Berenson, 2016).

Donald Trump sees that the U.S has lost in the economy and is constantly defeated by other nations (Wolf, 2017). Trump has listed some countries that defeated and humiliated the U.S economy: China, South Korea, Japan and Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Iran, and other free-riding allies. (Wolf, 2017). According to Donald Trump, the economic aspect is essential. China will potentially replace the U.S as the world's largest economy (Trump, 2016). In withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, the economic aspect became one primary reason among the Donald Trump narrative.

Another main concern of the Donald Trump administration is the illegal migrant issue. According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on the data of Office Immigration Statistic 2012, the total amount of illegal migrants in the U.S is 11.4 million (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2013).

The number of illegal migrants in the U.S raises the concerns of Donald Trump and his party. It showed in The Republican Platform 2016, which stated that unlawful immigration endangered the U.S and gave risks to the safety and sovereignty of the U.S. The security of borders and all ports of entry has become the highest priority of the U.S government (Peters & Woolley, 2016). Donald Trump even accused the Mexican immigrant is a threat to U.S national security; they are drug dealers, criminals, and rapists (Time Staff, 2015).

On some occasions, Donald Trump refers to Illegal Mexican immigrants as "vicious coyotes," which is a very negative calling. He also often addresses them as an alien (Lange, 2019). This statement is based on the belief that domestic security is essential for the U.S. due to the state central position in international relations. Donald Trump prioritized the safety and security of U.S. citizens (Nurhasanah & Fuad, 2020).

Terrorists in the Middle East, or the term Donald Trump preferred to use is, Islamic terrorism has also become an essential threat to U.S national security. President Trump's executive order 13769 Protecting the Nations from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the U.S. or the Muslim Ban indicated The U.S fear of terrorist attacks (Haner et al., 2019). This policy banned people from seven Muslim-majority countries; Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen (Muslim Public Affairs Council, 2019)

The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has become a central part of Donald Trump's foreign policy (Hall, 2021). To the National Security Strategy of the United States of America December 2017, the U.S. government will continue to wage a long war against terrorist groups such as ISIS until they are destroyed (National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2017).

According to the data above, there are indications that the Donald Trump administration put aside the danger of climate change to national security and emphasized the importance of other threats such as the economy, illegal migrants, and terrorists. It is parallel with the content of the National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2017, which consist of

four pillars; the first is to protect the American people, homeland, and the American Way of life (Secure the U.S. border and also Defeat terrorist), second is to promote American Prosperity, third is preserve peace through strength and the last is advance American influence (National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2017)

The Re-Articulation of Economic, Migrant, Terrorism Issue

In the rearticulation, the functional actor of de securitization will ensure the public about the new threat repeatedly. It can be done by issuing some policies. After taking office, Donald Trump issued the executive order, which was divided into three; immigration enforcement, border security, and protecting the nation from the foreign terrorist (Fullerton, 2017)

The immigration enforcement policy was signed on January 25, 2017. This policy intends to prevent the entry of illegal migrants from another country, especially Mexico, and deter smuggling illegal goods into the U.S. It is related to the second policy, border security, the implementation of this policy is the building of a wall across the southern border of the U.S. the wall is 200 miles long with a height of 12.2 m. The third policy has been mentioned above is

the Executive order: Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The US. (Fullerton, 2017). Simultaneously, the top official at the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the U.S. Department of State issued the order to revoke all valid nonimmigrant and immigrants visas for National of Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen (DOS Cable Revoking Visas for 7 Target States (1-27-17), 2017)

The Silencing of Climate Change Issue

Silencing is the last part of de securitization effort. In the silencing, the referent object or the citizen should believe that climate change is no longer a real threat to the U.S. and remain silent. But in this case, the author found that the awareness of the U.S. citizen on climate change is still high, it showed by the actions of a special community, referred to themselves as We are still, in which a joint declaration to support Paris Agreement 2015.

We are still in the declaration signed by more than 3.900 CEOs, majors, governors, tribal leaders, college presidents, religious leaders, and health care executives. They committed to taking action on climate awareness and filling the leadership to pursue climate action, while the Donald Trump administration chose not. Until today they continue their activity. One of

their action is collecting, aggregating, and reporting on the progress that U.S non-federal actors are making in reducing emissions based on the Paris Agreement (We Are Still In, n.d.)

However, On July 2, 2017, hundreds of people gathered outside the White House to protest against Donald Trump's decision regarding the Paris Agreement. They consist of environmental groups and scientists (Cummins, 2017). Data indicated that less than one-third of Americans support the withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Agreement. Only 18% of respondents that this policy will benefit the.S. economy, and 52% still worry about the negative effect of U.S. withdrawal (Steny Hoyer Majority Leader, 2017). The data above indicate that the de securitization effort of the Donald Trump administration did not succeed in making climate change disappear from the American public concern.

Conclusion

This research concludes that even though the Donald Trump administration tried to de securitization climate change by stabilizing the Issue, replacing it with other issues, and rearticulating the danger of other topics, climate change still is a concern for most Americans. The silencing

effort of climate change in the Donald Trump administration was unsuccessful.

References

- Barnett, A. (2004). Bush attacks environment' scare stories. *The Guardian For 200 Years*.
- BBC. (2018). Trump on climate change report: "I don't believe it." *BBC News*.
- Berenson, D. (2016, September 15). Read Donald Trump's Speech on Jobs and the Economy. *TIME*.
<https://time.com/4495507/donald-trump-economy-speech-transcript/>
- Borger, J. (2017). Trump drops climate change from U.S. national security strategy. *The Guardian For 200 Years*.
- Climateanalytics. (2017). *FACT CHECK: President Trump's speech on intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, June 1 2017*.
- Cummins, C. (2017). U.S. protests Trump's climate change withdrawal. *Euronews*.
<https://www.euronews.com/2017/06/02/us-protests-trumps-climate-change-withdrawal>
- Dai, H.-C., Zhang, H.-B., & Wang, W.-T. (2017). The impacts of U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on the carbon emission space and mitigation cost of China, E.U., and Japan under the constraints of the global carbon emission space. *Advances in Climate Change Research*, 8(4), 226–234.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.accre.2017.09.003>
- Diaz-Rainey, I., Gehricke, S. A., Roberts, H., & Zhang, R. (2021). Trump vs. Paris: The impact of climate policy on U.S. listed oil and gas firm returns and volatility. *International Review of Financial Analysis*, 76, 101746.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.irfa.2021.101746>
- Edwards, J. A. (2018). Make America Great Again: Donald Trump and Redefining the U.S. Role in the World. *Communication Quarterly*, 66(2), 176–195.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2018.1438485>
- Falkner, R. (2013). Handbooks of Global Policy Series. In D. Held (Ed.), *The Handbook of Global Climate and Environment Policy*. A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.,.
- Fullerton, M. (2017). Trump, Turmoil, and Terrorism: The U.S. Immigration and Refugee Ban. *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 29(2), 327–338.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/eex021>
- Garden, R. (2017, June 1). *Statement by President Trump on the Paris*

- Climate Accord. Securitization of Illegal Immigration*
Fueling Populism in the U.S.
Leiserowitz, A. A. (2005). American risk perceptions: is climate change dangerous? *Risk Anal*, 25(6), 1433–1442. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6261.2005.00690.x>
- Hall, J. (2021). In search of enemies: Donald Trump's populist foreign policy rhetoric. *Politics*, 41(1), 48–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263395720935377>
- Haner, M., Sloan, M. M., Cullen, F. T., Kulig, T. C., & Lero Jonson, C. (2019). Public Concern about Terrorism: Fear, Worry, and Support for Anti-Muslim Policies. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, 5, 237802311985682. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023119856825>
- HANSEN, L. (2012). Reconstructing desecuritisation: the normative-political in the Copenhagen School and directions for how to apply it. *Review of International Studies*, 38(3), 525–546. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1017/S0260210511000581>
- Harris, P. G. (2018). *The United States and International Environmental Politics*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.348>
- Lange, N. (2019). *Speaking and Perceiving Security A Case Study of the Trump Administration's*
- Luicke, F. von. (2015). *The Securitisation of Climate Change in the United States: The Integration of Climate Threats Into the Security Sector* (No. 10; ClimaSec).
- McGrath, M. (2020). Climate change: U.S. formally withdraws from Paris agreement. *BBC News*.
- Muslim Public Affairs Council. (2019). *MUSLIM PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD Joint Hearing on "Oversight of the Trump Administration's Muslim Ban."* <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/2029/text>.
- Nong, D., & Siriwardana, M. (2018). Effects on the U.S. economy of its proposed withdrawal from the Paris Agreement: A quantitative assessment. *Energy*, 159, 621–629. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.energy.2018.06.178>
- Nurhasanah, S., & Fuad, M. (2020, December 14). *Analyzing President Donald Trump's Measures in*

- Securing The US-Mexico Border Security from Realist Perspective.* <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.6-11-2019.2297259>
- Orr, A. (2021). *Presidential Views of Climate Change as a National Security Concern.* American Security Project. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep30913>
- Peters, G., & Woolley, J. T. (2016). *2016 Republican Party Platform.* Republican Party Platforms. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2016-republican-party-platform>
- Steny Hoyer Majority Leader. (2017). *Americans to Trump: Pulling Out of Paris Agreement Is Bad for Business.* U.S. House of Representatives. <https://www.majorityleader.gov/content/americans-trump-pulling-out-paris-agreement-bad-business>
- National Security Strategy of the United States of America, The White House Washington DC (2017).
- Time Staff. (2015, May 16). Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech. *TIME*.
- Torres Camprubí, A. (2016). *Securitization of Climate Change: The Inter-Regional Institutional Voyage.* *Yearbook of International Environmental Law*, 27, 82–105. <https://doi.org/10.1093/yiel/yvy079>
- Trump, Donald. J. (2016). *Great Again How to Fix Our Crippled America* (1st ed.). Treshold Editions.
- DOS cable revoking visas for 7 target states (1-27-17)*, 1 (2017) (testimony of United States Department of State).
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2013). *2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.*
- We Are Still In. (n.d.). *We Are Still In.* We Are Still In. Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://www.wearestillin.com/about>
- Wolf, R. (2017). *"Make America Great Again" Donald Trump's Mission to Restore Respect for America.*
- Zhang, Y.-X., Chao, Q.-C., Zheng, Q.-H., & Huang, L. (2017). The withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Agreement and its impact on global climate change governance. *Advances in Climate Change Research*, 8(4), 213–219. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.accre.2017.08.005>