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The Environmental Policy of the USA in the Framework of the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Climate Agreement Before Biden's Administration

Zehra Ayvaz¹, Jelang Ramadhan²

^{1,2}Social Sciences Institute, Bursa Uludağ University, Türkiye

*Correspondence: Jelang Ramadhan, Bursa Uludağ University, Türkiye.

Email: j.ramadhan182@gmail.com

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Abstract:

Despite different kinds of “habitat” research (Moon, Mars, etc.) has accelerated, the Earth is still actually the only habitat for living creatures. However, due to developments in the last century, our world has faced various environmental problems and dangers like climate change. So, countries carry out national and international efforts to minimize and prevent these hazards. One of the countries that researches these problems is the United States. The fact that the United States, the most powerful actor in the international system, has not shown sufficient interest in environmental and climate change issues and that US domestic policy has largely had an impact on these issues, contributed to preparing this study. The paper used qualitative research design by emphasizing literature study and a descriptive method to measure the trend in perceiving climate change from the perspective of the US policy. So, in this study, the US Environmental Policy will be discussed in the context of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement before Biden's Administration which resulted in Washington cannot take a clear stance on environmental and climate issues due to dilemmas in leadership change and domestic politics.

Keywords: USA, Environmental Policy, Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol, Paris Climate Agreement

1. Introduction

In the wake of the development of industrialization has brought many negativities for humanity. Some of these are negativities such as urbanization, traffic density, and sociological and environmental problems. However, the most important of these negativities is undoubtedly environmental pollution (soil, air, water) that threatens the living space of living things. Although each of them has a separate harm to humanity, especially air pollution and the increase in this pollution has brought another problem to the agenda. The development in the industrialization of the countries has increased the amount of chlorofluorocarbon (CFC)-containing gases mixed into the air. Due to the increase of these gases, different environmental problems have occurred. The first of these problems is the perforation of the Ozone Layer, which was discovered over Antarctica in the 1970s. The second one is global warming which develops due to the increase in the amount of carbon gases in the air and the changes in the climates of the world.

These two important problems are the most important problems on a global scale that humanity has been struggling with recently. These problems have been the subject of many Hollywood movies lately. By raising awareness of the whole existence of the ozone layer, the consciousness of environmental problems has begun to be created in a global sense. With the work of the UN on this issue, many countries have increased their interest in environmental problems and developed policies in this direction. However, effective and global studies on the subject started to be carried out only in the 1990s. The organization of conferences and summits on environmental problems under the umbrella of the UN has increased the number of participating states in these events, day by day. One of the first and most important studies on this subject is the Montreal Protocol on the

depletion of the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol has prepared an infrastructure for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC, on the other hand, formed the main lines of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Agreement, which regulated the environment and climate change in the next period and had a global impact.

The Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Agreement are two important international legal instruments in the fight against the environment and climate change. Especially since the Kyoto Protocol is a first in this regard, it took time for states to sign, sign and enter into force. The Paris Climate Agreement, on the other hand, is the agreement that will come into effect after the Kyoto Protocol completes its mandate in 2020. The two agreements constitute an international regime on environmental issues.

Thus, the relationship between these agreements, which have a global impact, and the United States of America, the superpower of today's world, is quite complex. The policies of the USA, which ranks first in the world in carbon emissions, on environmental protection and climate change vary widely. Here, the domestic politics of the USA has an important place. The power struggle between the "Democrats", who have environmentalist identities, and the "Republicans", who follow harsh policies in every subject, also greatly affects the environmental policy of Washington. In this study, the USA's efforts to counter environmental problems and climate change and the developing environmental policy in this context are discussed through the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Agreement.

2. The Historical Background of US Environmental Policy

Recently, the world has been largely shaped by the Second World War and the Cold War that followed. The new world order that emerged after the Second War took its present form with the collapse of the USSR at the end of the Cold War. In this period, the technological and economic competitiveness of countries with each other created large industrial countries. Especially in the Second World War, the importance of oil in the process after coal and steel played a major role in the emergence of industrial countries. In Europe, Germany and France have been the leading countries at this point. When we look at the world in general, it is seen that countries such as the USA, China, and Russia come to the fore. However, this development has brought different problems to the agenda over time. Increasing production activities with the developing technology and industry have caused both the rapid use and consumption of natural resources and environmental pollution.

In the occurrence of environmental disasters, destruction of forests (especially rainforests), pollution of seas and oceans, and decrease and extinction of living species together these losses have an important place. However, climate change and global warming are the biggest returns of the changing ecosystem that threaten humanity. In this context, countries have preferred to be at the forefront of "Environmental Awareness" as they come to the fore in industry and economy. The issue of the environment was also given wide coverage by the United Nations (UN), which emerged as a result of the order formed at the end of the Second World War. For this reason, the environmental issue has been on the political agenda of many states as well as the great powers that play a role here. In this context, the USA has started to create an environmental policy. However, the functionality of this policy of the USA is of such a nature that it can be a matter of discussion when looking at the historical background. Because although it is included in the scope of the first countries to adopt a policy on the environment and raise awareness on this issue, its activity on the subject is worth questioning at the point reached the present.

The sensitivity of the USA to the environment started in the 1970s, depending on the developing industrialization. During this period, the rate of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the air increased considerably. The increase in the carbon dioxide rate has led to some environmental disasters (drought, famine, adverse weather conditions) in different parts of the world. For this reason, the attention of the international public has focused on the climate. In this context, Jimmy Carter, the President of the USA at the time, talked about "Climate Change" in his speech called "Science and Technology" in Congress on March 27, 1979. With this speech, Carter became the first president to raise the issue of climate change in front of the masses. In addition, it enabled the establishment of various institutions related to the environment (Oğuz, 2019, pp. 523-543).

One of the influential institutions created for the environment in the USA is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Environmental Protection Agency was established on December 2, 1970, to combine research, implementation, monitoring, and standard-setting activities in a single institution to protect the environment with the concern arising from environmental pollution. Since its inception, the agency has worked to create a cleaner and healthier environment for the American people. The Environmental Protection Agency has also played an important role in President Carter's environmental policy. In particular, the "Global 2000" report, which the agency prepared with other institutions (Department of State, National Science Foundation, Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, etc.) and presented to President Carter in 1980, is important at this point. In this report, under the title of "Protecting the Common Future of the World", current environmental conditions and situations that threaten humanity are discussed and what can be done for the future is included. In addition, it was stated that these measures should not only be related to the USA but also should be global and concern every nation (Reuss & Long, 2001, p. 60).

Ronald Reagan (1981), who became President after Carter in the USA, did not give enough importance to environmental issues. In this regard, it has been especially criticized by the environmentalist section of the US right. However, the Reagan administration has been criticized mostly by Democrats on the environment. It has been stated that issues such as "acid rain and global warming" are ignored and not given enough priority. However, Democratic Senator Timothy Wirth stated that thousands of lakes died in the USA (Shabecoff, 1989). The Reagan administration argued that there should be more scientific research on this subject. However, especially since the issue of climate change began to resonate globally after the 1980s, the USA also accelerated its work on this issue. Thus, as a result of the ongoing studies, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established in November 1988 with the cooperation of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The panel aims to contribute to the development of the climate policy of every government in the world and provide data they can use. In addition, their reports provide important data on global climate change. (As of today, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate has 195 members (IPCC, 11/06/2020). Another development in the US environmental policy during Reagan's presidency was the adoption of the "Global Climate Protection Act" in 1987. But undoubtedly the most important development is the "Montreal Protocol" signed in the same year (Oğuz, 2019, pp. 523-543).

The Montreal Protocol is an agreement signed as a result of developments related to the depletion of the Ozone Layer. The first studies on the depletion of the Ozone Layer formed the agenda of the UN Environment Program in 1976. For this reason, the Coordinating Committee of the Ozone Layer (CCOL) was established with the cooperation of the UN Environment Program and the World Meteorological Organization. Thus, in the global arena, studies have started to reduce the use of gases that deplete the Ozone Layer, especially "Chlorofluorocarbon" (CFC). As a result of the studies, it was determined that there was a hole in the Ozone Layer in Antarctica in 1985. In this context, while the "Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer" was adopted in 1985, the Montreal Protocol was adopted in 1987 (Turkish Ministry of Climate Change, 11/06/2020). The Montreal Protocol is the most significant development of the United States on the environment in this period. Because President Reagan's priority was to grow the economy, he did not give enough importance to this area and avoided following policies to reduce greenhouse gases (Oğuz, 2019, pp. 523-543). Besides the USA, the Montreal Protocol has been the most important development in the environment for the whole world. The protocol, which continues today, also laid the groundwork for the steps to be taken later in the environment.

With 196 countries becoming parties to the Protocol, it is considered the most successful of the "Multilateral Agreements" on the environment. With its success in this field, the Montreal Protocol led to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1988). The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is the most important international step in this field, with the results of the studies carried out in the international arena on the environment (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 09/06/2020).

Thanks to the initiatives of the UN Environment Program and the World Meteorological Organization, many joint conferences on the environment have been organized. In this context, a conference was held in Rio De

Janeiro on 3-14 June 1992. As a result of this conference, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was formed (UNCED, 09/06/2020). The UNFCCC has achieved global success by being submitted to the signature of all UN member states. Reducing "greenhouse gases", which is the main objective of the contract, was presented to the parties voluntarily (Turkish Ministry of Climate Change, 04/06/2020). With this development, which coincided with the period of President Bush, the USA became the first industrially developed country to sign the climate change agreement. However, because the article is voluntary and non-binding regarding the use of greenhouse gases (emission reduction), adequate applicability has not been achieved during the period of President Bush (Oğuz, 2019, pp. 523-543). After the Bush administration, a leader from the Democrats, who was very critical of the Republicans on the environment, led to a renewed emphasis on the environment and climate in the USA.

Bill Clinton and his deputy, Al Gore, are commemorated among leaders of environmental and climate issues in the 1990s (Oğuz, 2019, pp. 523-543). It is seen that steps towards the environmental policy of the USA were taken during the Bill Clinton era. The most important of these developments is the Kyoto Protocol, which is the most important stage of environmental studies in the international arena (Oğuz, 2019, pp. 523-543).

2.1 The Issue of Global Warming and Climate Change

With the development of humanity, the amount of carbon-containing gases mixed with nature has increased. The increase of these gases in the atmosphere creates what we call the "greenhouse effect". The greenhouse effect is the reflection of the rays coming from the sun to the earth's surface after reaching the earth's surface by being held by these gases before they reach space again (Aksay, Ketenoğlu & Kurt, 2005, pp. 29-42). This event causes the world to warm up. This warming of the world by the greenhouse effect is called "Global Warming". Global Warming has been observed by scientists since the middle of the 20th century. In the formation of the greenhouse effect, besides the water vapor in the air, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, nitrous oxide, and chlorofluorocarbon gases are effective (National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 18/06/2020). Increasing global warming is becoming a major problem threatening humanity and all living species.

Climate Change, according to the definition made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, is the change in climates, such as temperature and precipitation, over a long period due to human or natural effects (Doğan & Tüzer, 2011). Global Warming is seen as the biggest cause of this change in climates. Along with global warming, the temperature in the world has been determined to be at the highest levels of the last 800 thousand years. With this warming, the glaciers melt and the sea level rises. Therefore, climate change includes not only average temperatures but also changing weather events, changing populations, and habitats of living populations (National Geographic, 18/06/2020). For this reason, humanity has recently started a global struggle against global warming and climate change that develops accordingly.

2.2. Short Brief about Kyoto Protocol

Due to the developments in the world, environmental problems have occurred. During the Cold War, the technology race of the Eastern and Western Blocs and the industrialization that followed played an important role here. However, after the 1970s, there was a period of softening between the two blocks and the tendency towards the environment in the international arena has led to the acceleration of studies in this field. During this period, besides the environment, the issue of climate gained importance and global climate changes formed the agenda of many countries. With the UN's work on this issue, the issue of environment and climate change has been a common issue in the international arena. In the 1990s, these global studies began to yield their results, and joint institutions and agreement texts emerged. For this reason, the "Kyoto Protocol" constitutes the most important global step taken regarding environmental problems.

The Kyoto Protocol is the UNFCCC's "3rd Session," held in Kyoto (Japan) in December 1997. It was adopted as a result of the "Conference of the Parties". The Protocol partners with the target entities of the UNFCCC. But there are also major differences between the two. This difference between them is related to the use of greenhouse gases. According to the UNFCCC, while the reduction of greenhouse gas use is based on the voluntary basis of the parties, this situation is obligatory in the Kyoto Protocol. Especially in industrially

developed countries, the provisions for reducing and limiting greenhouse gas emissions have become binding (Turkish Ministry of Climate Change, 02/06/2020). Since global climate change is on the agenda is directly related to the use of greenhouse gases, greenhouse gases have been the main subject of the Kyoto Protocol. While there was no binding on the subject in the UNFCCC, this binding has been brought with the Kyoto Protocol. Therefore, the Kyoto Protocol covers the emissions of six main greenhouse gases:

- a. *Carbondioxide (CO₂);*
- b. *Metan (CH₄);*
- c. *Nitros Oxide (N₂O);*
- d. *Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs);*
- e. *Perfluorokarbonlar (PFCs);*
- f. *Sulfur Hexafluoror (SF₆) (UNFCCC, 13/06/2020).*

Although the Kyoto Protocol was adopted on 11 December 1997, it only came into force on 16 February 2005 after a complex ratification process (UNFCCC, 02/06/2020). After the protocol was accepted by the UNFCCC parties in 1997, it became fully ready and applicable for the approval of the parties at the 7th Conference of the Parties held in Marrakesh (Morocco) in 2001. These implementation-oriented rules, which are described as the Marrakesh Accords, were approved by the parties at the 1st Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol in 2005 (UNFCCC, 13/06/2020). Thus, this process, which was initiated in 1997, yielded its fruit in 2005 and gained a tangible character with global impact. As of today, there are 192 parties to the Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has set binding emission reduction (gases given above) targets for 36 major industrialized countries and members of the European Union. These targets were set primarily for the first five-year period (2005-2012) (UNFCCC, 13/06/2020). In this first five-year period, it was aimed to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of developed countries to 5% below the 1990 level (Turkish Ministry of Climate Change, 02/06/2020). However, the same discount rate commitment was not valid for each country. While this rate was 7% for the USA, it was different in countries with developed industries (EU countries 8%, Japan 6%) (Duru, 2001, pp. 301-333). Within the scope of the Kyoto Protocol, another implementation period is planned to cover the years 2013-2020. As a result of the conference held in Doha (Qatar), according to the plan, which is called the "Doha Amendment" and covers the new commitment period, it is aimed that the states included in the Annex-B list of Prokokol will reduce their emission reductions by 18% in 2020 compared to the 1990 level. The Doha Amendment was adopted by 126 countries on 21 February 2019 (Stratejik Düşünce Enstitüsü, 02/06/2020).

The Kyoto Protocol not only imposes binding obligations on developed countries on greenhouse gas reduction but also imposes obligations on developing countries at the meeting held in New Delhi (India) in 2002 (Demir, 2001, pp. 241-251). An "Adaptation Fund" has been established to assist these countries in their struggle to prevent greenhouse gas use and climate change (UNFCCC, 13/06/2020). The fact that the Kyoto Protocol is binding on both developed and developing countries is a testament to the global struggle on climate, environment, and climate change. Nevertheless, the applicability of the Kyoto Protocol is controversial, although especially industrialized countries have a great responsibility. Because countries with responsibility have the potential to easily abandon this responsibility and have acted in this way.

2.3. Paris Climate Agreement

Due to the problems in the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, new searches have been made for climate change in the global sense. The fact that developed countries such as the USA are not a party to the agreement has created this need. As a result of these studies, the "Paris Climate Agreement" was created.

It is based on the UNFCCC of the Paris Climate Agreement and for the first time brought all countries together as a result of a joint effort to combat global climate change and its effects. The main objective of the agreement is to keep the global temperature level below 2 Celcius degrees (2°C) compared to the pre-industrialization period and in addition to keeping this increase below 1.5°C (UNFCCC, 15/06/2020). With the hard work carried out for these purposes, the Paris Climate Agreement, which was accepted by all parties, was born as a result of the Paris Climate Summit on 12 December 2015. One of the conditions that make the acceptance of the agreement obligatory is that the Kyoto Protocol will expire in 2020. For this reason, the Paris Agreement is

foreseen to come into effect after 2020 (Turkish Ministry of Climate Change, 15/06/2020). The Paris Climate Agreement, which constitutes the main line of the issue of climate change in the period after 2020, was adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties on 5 October 2016, and with the acceptance of the agreement by 55 party countries, which constitute 55% of the emissions (greenhouse gas), entered into force on 4 November 2016 (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15/06/2020). The agreement, which was opened for signature on the 46th "Earth Day" celebrated at the UN's headquarters in New York, was signed by 175 countries. In addition to this, the agreement with the widest mandate and coverage in the global arena regarding the climate has also achieved the distinction of being the international agreement with the most signatures in a single day (BBC News Türkçe, 04/06/2020).

When the Paris Agreement is taken into consideration and examined, it is seen that it is a historical agreement that left its mark on this field. It has been adopted as a treaty affecting large and small economies, societies, and the environment. The agreement has features that have a global impact to a large extent, based on the countries that are party to it. As of today, it has been ratified by 189 of the 197 party countries of the UNFCCC (UNFCCC, 15/06/2020).

The important articles in the text of the agreement are as follows;

- a. All the states that are party to the agreement are under the obligation of emission reduction (greenhouse gases). However, in the case of this reduction obligation, more responsibilities are imposed on the industrially developed countries, while a reduction situation is foreseen for the countries with less developed industries according to their capacities.
- b. It has been decided that the warming situation of the world, which has reached 1°C from the development of the industry to the present day, should be reduced below 2°C and even kept around 1.5°C.
- c. It has been decided that industrialized countries will provide financing and technology support (for low-carbon use) to developing countries in the fight against climate change.
- d. It has been decided that the targets of the party countries on emission reduction (greenhouse gases) and the policies they carry out in this context, the progress towards reaching the target should be clear, precise, and calculable.
- e. In the light of science, it has been decided to impose a regular emission reduction obligation on the parties for every five years in the future.
- f. The Paris Climate Agreement emphasized the issue of adapting countries to the negative effects of climate change. He emphasized that underdeveloped countries, which will be most affected by the developments arising from this situation, should be assisted (UNFCCC, 12/06/2020).

The approval of the Paris Climate Agreement by countries such as the USA, China, and India, which are among the first in the world in carbon emissions and therefore cause environmental pollution, is very important in terms of the applicability of the agreement and its impact in the global arena (Karakaya, 2016, pp. 1-12).

3. Method

Creswell (2014, p. 205) defined the qualitative research design as stressed text or image data such as literature, interview, and observation, whilst having specific steps in data analysis and drawing on diverse designs. The research will be concluded from the outcomes as objectively as possible by running a correct methodology. The research will begin with the reading process of previous research and literature review, which then proceeded to highlight factors and draw the progress. Later, data collection started by absorbing secondary resources as the first step to analysis and continued to the writing process. After the writing has been conducted, there will be proofreading and finalization of the paper. It is important to address the issue of research conducted objectively, despite the research object being the ongoing process of the framework of a nation's foreign policy in the international politics and environmental regime.

This research is utilizing a descriptive method to determine an objective result to develop the research and bring the concern of climate change into foreign policy implementation. According to Bhattacharjee (2012, p. 93), case research or often called case study, is a method of intensively studying a phenomenon from time to time

within its natural setting in one or several sites. This research aims to determine the implementation of the US foreign policy in the framework of environmental policy which is influenced by the national interest on economic matters. The typologies in research can provide a useful path between the extremes of unattainable idiosyncratic contextualization and universal generalization where it can easily turn to descriptive or analytical typologies which differentiate forms of a phenomenon (Klotz, 2008, p. 56). The descriptive research in this study is directed to make thorough observations and precise documentation of a phenomenon of interest (Bhattacharjee, 2012, p. 6). The project will be emphasized with literature studies and secondary resources to develop the theories and describe the implementation of the foreign policy of great power.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Washington's Attitude towards the Kyoto Protocol

The USA has become the most powerful economy in the world with the disintegration of the USSR after the Cold War ended. While this gigantic economy is on the rise, it has also become a leader among countries with advanced industries that trigger environmental problems. During this period, the USA tried to take part in studies such as the fight against environmental problems and climate change that started in the global arena. Especially, its position in the UN has made this situation somewhat compulsory. These studies gained momentum in the 1990s and began to bear fruit in the 2000s. The most important work in this context is the Kyoto Protocol, as emphasized before. The aspect of the Kyoto Protocol that differs from the UNFCCC is that it imposes binding obligations on the parties. The Kyoto Protocol constitutes an international regime on climate change which is defined as sets of procedures, rules, principles, and norms, that govern specific issue areas in international relations (Griffiths, O'Callaghan & Roach, 2008, p. 276).

The representative of the USA in the Kyoto Protocol negotiations was the Vice President of the period, Al Gore, who came to the fore with his environmentalist identity. As a result of long negotiations, the USA stated that it will reduce its carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 7% of 1990 levels in the period 2008-2012 – the first commitment period. In this context, President Clinton signed the Kyoto Protocol in November 1998. However, he did not submit the Protocol to the Senate, thinking that it would not be accepted the Senate, since there is no regulation in the Protocol regarding emission reductions in developing countries (Oğuz, 2019, pp. 523-543). For this reason, as a result of the studies on the Kyoto Protocol, emission reduction binding has been brought to developing countries (Neale, 2008, p. 217).

However, President Clinton chose to be a party to the Kyoto Protocol despite everything, but the elections in the USA changed everything. G. Walker Bush's coming to office in 2001 led to the breaking of the bond that was tried to be created between the USA and the Kyoto Protocol. President Bush refrained from signing the Protocol, arguing that the emission reduction in the Kyoto Protocol would seriously harm the US economy. At the same time, the Kyoto Protocol at that time was described as "Unfair" by Bush because it did not impose a binding obligation on countries with underdeveloped industries (Oğuz, 2019, pp. 523-543). The negotiations held after Bush's withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol did not yield any results either. Despite being one of the first in the world in terms of carbon gas emissions, the USA refused to be a party to the Kyoto Protocol. At the World Climate Conference held in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 2004, the USA declared that they were looking for an alternative solution to Kyoto. Being a party to the World Climate Agreement adopted in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and not being a party to the Kyoto Protocol prepared for the implementation of the agreement, the USA's inconsistency in this regard has been shown (DW.COM, 04/06/2020). The USA continued its stance of not being a party to the Protocol in the following years.

Bush stated at the "G8 Summit" held in 2005 that the United States should reduce its dependence on carbon gases for its national security and interests. However, he argued that greenhouse gases should be combated, but that Kyoto should be ended. He said that the USA would resort to different solutions in this struggle (CNN Türk, 15/06/2020). Bush's alternative plan, which was later heard as "Clean Skies", was aimed to reduce the mixing of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by 70% in approximately 16 years. However, this plan was criticized by Democrats and the EU and was seen as Bush's election plan (NTV, 15/06/2020).

4.2. Prolonged Dilemma of the USA in the Paris Climate Agreement

The elections that took place after Bush in the USA again had an impact on environmental policy. Supported by both Republicans and Democrats, Barack Obama has focused on climate change. It has adopted a policy that plans to develop the Washington economy on environmentalist foundations. The “Climate Action Plan” and the “Clean Energy Plan” are the steps that took place in the context of the US environmental policy during the Obama era. Attaching importance to the environment and climate change issues, President Obama also attached great importance to the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement in this context. In this respect, he participated in the “Climate Change Conference” held in November 2015 and gave a speech there. In this speech, he stated that the USA would take the necessary responsibility for climate change. Thus, President Obama drew attention to both the place of the USA in global climate change and the role it will play in this fight (Oğuz, 2019, pp. 523-543).

The USA also played an important role in the creation and negotiation process of the Paris Agreement as a result of President Obama's intense work on the environment. At the same time, it accepted the Agreement in 2015 and signed it in 2016, and became one of the parties. In this context, the USA has committed to reducing emissions by 26-28% from 1990 levels by 2025 (WWF, 04/06/2020). However, with the change of the Obama administration, the attitude of the USA on this issue has also changed. Donald Trump, who was elected President after Obama, has adopted a very different policy from the previous term on the issues of environment and climate change.

President Donald Trump started to follow different policies from the Obama era, starting from the very first days when he took office in January 2017. The biggest change in this regard is about the environment and climate change. He claimed that the Paris Climate Agreement, which was signed during the Obama era, believing that the USA had a high-level role, was inversely proportional to the US national interests. For this reason, in June 2017, the USA announced that it would withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. In his election promise, Trump said that the United States should withdraw from the agreement to develop the coal and oil industry. In the first year after being elected, he took the first step to fulfill this promise (BBC News Türkçe, 01/06/2017). Trump's decision has even received a reaction from large companies that use fossil fuels. Despite everything, it was stated that the USA should be in this agreement. The withdrawal of the USA, which is in first place in the world in carbon emissions, from the agreement has been a negative decision both for the applicability of the agreement and for the world.

Nonetheless, Trump has stated that the US will continue to reduce emissions even if he withdraws from the agreement (McGrath, 02/06/2016). The decision of the USA to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement created a global reaction. Other major actors of the system involved in the agreement criticized Trump's policy. The first of these criticisms came from within the USA itself. John Kerry, who served as the Secretary of State during the Obama era and signed the agreement, described the US withdrawal from the agreement as a disaster and emphasized that the US was self-destructing. In addition, the leading countries of Europe and the EU, Germany, France, and Italy, issued a joint statement and expressed their regret for this decision of the USA. In addition, French leader Emmanuel Macron published the phrase “Glorify Our Planet Again”, referring to Trump's election slogan “Glorify America Again” on his personal social media account. Although the whole world reacted to the decision, US President Trump did not give up on this decision. On the contrary, he took a more determined stance toward environmental issues.

Although Donald Trump announced that he would withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement in 2017, this was not immediately possible. Because to withdraw from the agreement completely, a period of 3 years must pass from the date of its entry into force. For this reason, November 4, 2019, was foreseen as the date of withdrawal of the USA from the agreement (Johnson, 04/06/2020). In this context, on 04.11.2019, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made an official application to the UN for the US to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. Thus, the process of withdrawal of the USA from the agreement officially started. As this process continues for approximately 1 year, withdrawal from the agreement will take place before the presidential elections in 2020 (Euronews, 04/11/2019). In this case, it will continue to exist in the system as an industrialized

country that is not in the agreement. The issue of the USA's fight against the environment and climate change became a debatable topic in the presidential candidacy between Trump and Biden, though many assumed that there will not much significant changes during Biden's administration regarding environmental issues and climate change. Therefore, the presence of the Kyoto Protocol and continued with Paris Agreement are considered important sources of stability in the international arena, especially as states increasingly face problems that do not oblige to territorial boundaries and require international cooperation (Griffiths, O'Callaghan & Roach, 2008, p. 277).

5. Conclusion

The world, which is the only and only living space for its living form, has faced some dangers with the progress of humanity and the development of civilizations. The development of countries with the industrial revolution, the economy, and the development race in the following period brought some problems with it. The industrialization capacity of the countries that increased especially in the 20th century has been effective in the occurrence of these problems. The widespread use of oil and coal, along with the developing industry, has led to unavoidable air pollution and so do other natural resources like water and soil.

Carbon-containing gases mixed into the air have damaged nature and the atmosphere. In the 1980s, it was observed that there was a hole in the Ozone Layer over Antarctica. After this observation, the states started to need a control mechanism due to the carbon-containing gases released into nature. In this context, the UN has made great efforts. The importance given by the UN to the environment has increased in the 1990s with the global warming and the climate changes that will be experienced as a result of the global agenda. While drawing attention to this issue, the foundations of a global struggle have begun to be laid. In this framework, important developments such as the World Climate Panel, the Montreal Protocol, the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Climate Agreement have been experienced. Especially the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Agreement are important international agreements in this regard. For the implementation of these agreements and the formation of a determined attitude toward the environment and climate change, states are given a great responsibility. The states that will take responsibility are primarily the great powers of the system whose industry is developing.

In this context, one of the actors that should take responsibility is the USA. Although the USA is one of the countries in the first place in carbon emissions, it has a great dilemma regarding the environment and climate change. The dilemma faced by Washington on the environment and climate change, and environmental policy in general can be easily seen in the axis of the attitude it follows in the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Agreement. The influential factor here is US domestic politics. The election and power struggle between the Democrats, who are known for their environmentalist and more moderate identities, and the Republicans, who are on the opposite side, are directly effective in the environmental policy of the USA.

President Bill Clinton, who was elected by the Democrats, signed the Kyoto Protocol, although he thought that they would not accept it (because it did not impose an obligation on undeveloped countries to reduce emissions) and did not submit it to the Senate. However, in the later period, President G. W. Bush, who came from the Republicans, completely severed the US ties with Kyoto because the Protocol was incompatible with US interests. This contradictory situation in the environmental policy of the USA was also seen in the Paris Climate Agreement, which will replace the Kyoto Protocol.

The Paris Climate Agreement was signed in 2016 as part of the US's environmental policy during the Democratic-elected President Obama era. The Paris Agreement, which will have an important place in the global fight against environmental problems and climate change, will completely replace the Kyoto Protocol after 2020. However, the change of Presidency in the USA in favor of the Republicans again in 2017 and the election of Donald Trump as President were directly reflected in the environmental policy of the USA. Trump announced to the world public in 2017 that they would withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement because it did not comply with the interests of the USA. However, the legal period required to withdraw from the

agreement started in November 2019. The USA did not give up its stance on this issue and made an official application to the UN. The full withdrawal after the official application will only take place in November 2020. Recently, the USA, as a superpower, acts entirely in line with its interests in the leadership race in the international system. For this reason, it cannot take a clear stance on environmental and climate issues. Environmental policy has a set of contradictions. The benefits of withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement will become clear in the coming period. The environmental policy of the USA will be reshaped after the elections held in 2020 as Joe Biden was elected as the 46th President of the USA.

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