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## **A STUDY ON 21st CENTURY ENERGY POLICIES OF THE LAST THREE US LEADERS BASED ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

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### ***ABSTRACT***

*US energy-oriented policies in international relations since 2001 started before 2001 and followed the national interests of the US and thereby paving the way for several tensions within half a century, especially in the Middle East, where the energy resources are abundant. However, while policies aimed at reconciling the USA's interests with the global interests, namely the general interests of humanity, and aiming to lead the world states in the fight against climate change, especially during the Obama period, the hopes were somewhat shelved with Trump's taking office; in this perspective, it is beneficial to make a comparative analysis of the policies implemented in the period of Bush, Obama, and Trump in terms of supplying, exporting, and obtaining of energy resources.*

**Keywords:** *US Energy Policies, Bush, Obama, Trump, International Relations.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### ***Common Aspects and Differences***

It is stated that the fight against terrorism is the central argument of US foreign policy, with the September 11 attacks, which took place immediately after Bush took over the presidency and were described as the worst national security failure in US history. In this context, while the USA has mainly made energy security a focal point since 2001, it is possible to say that the main emphasis at the level of discourse, which is among the issues that shape international relations, is the fight against global terrorism (Klare, 2004).

On the other hand, the idea that "the USA should remain the sole driving force of the international system and should be the guarantor of the international order" is considered as a fundamental and determining political element following the Cold War per the analysis on US foreign policy (Behbahani, 2019). However, it is stated that the policy, which Trump initiated during the election campaign with the slogan "America First" and maintained it, created a significant break on the USA's traditional hegemonic role during its rise in the global leadership area and that while the USA puts itself in a semi-isolated process from the world, it started to waver between this and the policy of removing the obstacles in front of the international liberalism with military power and that the initiatives under the name of economic austerity measures, could pose a significant risk against the acquisitions of the interventionist approach, the US has adopted (Veziroğlu, 2012).

When the September 11 attacks are considered a turning point in the USA's international policy, it is stated that the USA has followed a contradictory foreign policy path in forming a unipolar structure (Ozpek, 2016). While the USA has been following a unilateral and almost imperial attitude since September 11, 2001, it tries to maintain a foreign policy to establish an international liberal order by keeping pace with the world's multinational structure (Henderson, 2014). However, both policies have an approach to preserving the dominant power and existence of strategically important geographies and global energy resources per the USA's national interests. Besides, military force per the identified objectives and the common approach, especially against radical threats, are common points of both political approaches (Yilmaz, 2007). However, the US's unipolar approach in liberal hegemony was very prominent in the US foreign policy during the Clinton period. This approach gradually moved away from the Bush administration's foreign policy center, and the US Congress had a structurally more vital role in US foreign policy after the Cold War. Accordingly, it is open to critics of bureaucratic and social circles that resist the USA's integration into an international and multilateral world order (Lindsay, 2011).

The central axis of the Obama administration's strategic approach in foreign policy is considered a reformulated approach based on preserving the USA's leadership position, but considering the changing balance of power in the changing international system and their effects on each other (Çakmak, 2007). In this framework, while it is criticized that it is sensitive to external influences, it is also being stated as a policy that is relatively more positively criticized in terms of taking an approach that puts the use of military power behind, which has been proven with an experience that only limited results can be obtained in combating both economically costly and asymmetric threats. In this perspective, while the USA's position in the international system seems to have regressed, considering its vigorous military, economic and technological structure, and resources, it maintains its superiority and displays it with a functional logic though it is not in the operational field (Muscat, 2013).

While completely agreeing on these issues, Trump's announcing to the public about the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, both during the election campaign and immediately after he took over the presidency and emphasizing that 'the USA will no longer remain in a ridiculous position before other states, to introduce the Obama administration's efforts in the logical approaches and practices in foreign policy as weaknesses and Trump's discourses to find support among the US people, is a course material in the historical process.

The policy initiated by the Bush administration, which focuses on the concept of "War on Terror", has reached and brought negative consequences. It is overcome by the Obama administration and is based on the global leadership of the USA (Obama, 2012). However, it pursued a foreign policy based on the allies' shared interests and values that adopt US leadership. As he highlighted that "methods of combating global terrorism have damaged the core values that made the USA strong" immediately after Obama took over the presidency, such policies constituted a positive groundwork and global perception that US priorities provide international support. The energy policies pursued against the fight against global climate change and initiatives on nuclear disarmament paved the way for clear and positive perception. Besides, having China sign the Paris Agreement to reduce carbon emission results from the Obama administration's consistent attitude (Klare, 2004).



While the 9/11 terrorist attacks had a shock effect per a statement on 9/11 attacks, it was not a surprise for the United States because it is stated that the possibility of such a terrorist attack by Al-Qaeda was relatively high in the information received by the US intelligence until the spring of 2001. The lack of precautions against such a terrorist attack is not due to the lack of intelligence but to the insufficient perception of the Bush administration of the possibility of such an attack directly on US soil. Iraq is regarded as the primary threat to the United States, the US Cold War mentality (Renner, 2003). Besides, while internal affairs were the basis of Bush's agenda for the few months just before and after Bush took over the presidency, the priority shifted towards China and Russia in foreign policy (Ekinci, 2014). However, following the September 11 attacks, Bush's "every state should decide whether to side with the USA or with terrorists in the war against global terrorism" has caused the USA to deepen its relations with some states and make it tenser with others in its foreign policy. US views on terrorism correspond to Nazism in the past and fascism and communism during the USSR period (Muscat, 2013).

After the Bush administration, Obama, who took over the presidency, was the United States' first president during the 'Terror Age.' Obama is expected to have significant success in the fight against global terrorism in the first term of his presidency (Leffler, 2011). However, he preferred to stay away from the doctrine put forward by Bush on this issue and not to use the term 'war on terror' as much as possible during Obama's election campaign and the very beginning of his presidency. While the US continued to fight terrorism, and the discourses in Obama's speeches showed a positive change, it is emphasized that it is being carried out against terrorist organizations. It is not against Muslim societies. Obama made the most significant change that left the Bush administration. In this context, as Obama followed a method that rejects the foreign policy principles exhibited by Bush against the world and did not see the place of globalization in current world politics, the USA cannot achieve a single result in the fight against global terrorism only through the use of armed force. In this struggle, instead of intimidating other states, a policy that tries to find partners and create an environment of cooperation started to be pursued, and diplomacy became a priority in US foreign policy (Klare, 2002).

The international policy followed by the Obama administration in the economy is called pragmatic multinationalism, and it focuses on establishing regional trade mechanisms. It leads to a geopolitical transformation, as well as trade blocks that will compete with each other. US sees (Trans-Pacific Partnership) as a tool to break China's economic hegemony over Asian countries and to take the leading role in the international trade system with the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). It also seems possible to use it as a legal basis. Besides, it would be useful to note that the US support against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the past played an essential role in the possible strengthening of the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, or the groups that may arise from them, which may threaten US national security in the future (Muscat, 2013). As Trump takes over the presidency, the US foreign policy's predictions outlook has been significantly shaken. Per the framework of advanced military deployment in Europe and Asia, the strategic liberal order policy followed by the USA since the Second World War is more protective and nationalist, which led to a significant retreat in the US's commitments to distant geographies and therefore to global economic and geopolitical ruptures and crises. While it is agreed, one of the factors in Trump's pursuit of this policy is that the US has gone beyond being a self-sufficient country, especially in natural gas and renewable energy resources, due to the initiatives initiated before him supply security (Keskin, 2006).



Besides, the US public believes that Obama left Trump in a much better position than his predecessor when he took over the presidency in economic growth, energy supply security and evaluation of energy resources, innovative approaches while transferring his presidency (Albureikan, 2020). The reasons for such developments include Obama's efforts to protect the US national interests. The international liberal order was more sustainable and less aggressive. He followed a cautious, long-term policy that meticulously observes different balances without surrendering to opposing pressures within the country and establishing international cooperation by clearly identifying the issues that require joint action in a global sense.

### COMPARISON OF PERIODIC VALUES IN US ENERGY SUPPLY, EXPORTS, AND IMPORTS

Since 2001, the implementations of the Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations on the basis of energy supply security both in domestic and foreign policies have had significant implications for energy supply and exports of the United States. Especially in electrical energy supply, along with the supply shortage in 2000, the negative change observed in the US's energy consumption data between 2009 and 2015 is remarkable, although it increased until 2008. We can observe that it increased, especially per the need for supply, constitutes one of the significant grounds of the US's foreign policy relations based on energy supply security, especially the military intervention initiatives that intensified during the Bush period (Lindsay, 2011).

Per IEA data, the total energy supply that made the US the first in the world in 2001 is the amount of energy produced and imported to meet its energy need was 2.23 thousand Mtoe, while it remained behind China reduced to 2.16 thousand Mtoe in 2009. It realized around 2.19 thousand Mtoe without a significant change in 2015. Considering the change in the US's total energy consumption data, while the total amount of energy consumption in 2001 increased from 1.52 thousand Mtoe until 2009, the value in 2009 decreased to 1.45 thousand Mtoe. The total consumption amount in 2015 came back to its 2001 value and was realized at the level of 1.52 thousand Mtoe. Per BP's World Energy Outlook 2018 Report, the US's total energy consumption in 2017 reached approximately 2.24 thousand Mtoe (ENR, 2020).

### Oil

Per the 2017 report of the IEA on world oil data, the US followed a stable line between 2006-2011 in oil production, displaying a positive increase trend following 2011 and being the world's largest oil producer with its production of 588 MT in 2016. The Statistical Report on the World Energy Outlook published by BP in June 2018 observes that the available balance in the world's oil production and consumption may change due to the US's high oil amount in recent years (The White House, 2017; Albureikan, 2020).

BP reports that the proven oil reserves of the US as of 2017 are 50 billion barrels. However, the same report's central striking situation is that while the US's proven oil reserves in both 1997 and 2007 are between 30.5 billion barrels, it follows a trend that has increased by approximately 40%. We understand that this increase was due to the initiatives and incentives made during the Obama period to find and use the US's oil and natural gas resources. As indicated by the high increase in the number of proven oil reserves, the oil production amount of the US, which was 6,860 kb/d in 2007 and 7,263 kb/d in 2009, was increased by more than 44%, reaching 13,057 kb/d, leading the US to become the world leader in oil production (ENR, 2020).



Considering the oil consumption amounts of the US by years, no significant difference is observed between 2007 and 2017, while the consumption amounted to 20,680 kb/d in 2007 decreased to 18,771 kb/d in 2009, with a slight increase in the following years. While it reached 19,880 kb/d in 2007, we observed that it remained below the total oil consumption amount in 2007. Besides, we assess that it is due to the development in research and production in natural gas and shale gas revolution initiated by the Obama administration and R&D activities towards the use of renewable energy resources technologies, which were applied during Obama and Trump administration and highlighted by the Federal Government incentives during Obama administration. The importance the Trump administration will attribute to the development of R&D activities in such areas remains unclear (The White House, 2017).

### *Natural Gas (Including Shale Gas)*

Per the IEA statistical data, the US's natural gas production in 2002 was 441.17 Mtoe, it ranked second in the world after Russia (Dagoumas *et al.*, 2006). While increasing the natural gas production to 469.66 Mtoe in 2008 and 558.22 Mtoe in 2012, and took over Russia's world leadership in natural gas production. In 2015, it continued the increase in natural products and increased it to 636.49 Mtoe. The US was also the first country among OECD countries in natural gas production and increasing trend between 1960 and 2016 (ENR, 2020).

Per BP Statistical Report on World Energy Outlook for 2018, the US's reserve was identified as 4.5 tcm in 1997, while it was 6.4 tcm in 2007 and 8.7 tcm in 2017 within the proven natural gas reserves around the world. The increase in the proven natural gas reserves of the US also includes shale gas. Thanks to the shale gas revolution initiated in the Obama period, the large amount of shale gas reserves detected in the US soil and started to be brought to the ground by hydraulic fracturing affected the overview of a natural gas reserve world. Besides, such developments in shale gas have also changed the balance of supply and demand in the oil market, supporting the view that the abundance of supply will ensure continuing the price decline (Lindsay, 2011).

Thanks to the initiatives conducted for shale gas in direct proportion to the increase in the US's natural gas reserve, the natural gas production, which was 521.9 bcm in 2007, reached 617.4 bcm in 2011 734.5 bcm in 2017. Thus, the US increased its natural gas production amount by 30% in the ten years between 2007 and 2017, taking Russia's leadership, ranked first in the ranking of natural gas production in 2007, from Russia since 2009. The difference between Russia and the production amount increased every year (ENR, 2020).

The USA's natural gas consumption has also increased in parallel with the increase in production. The natural gas consumption, which was 624.1 bcm in 2007, decreased to 617.6 bcm in 2009, yet increased to 743.6 bcm in 2015. It was reflected as 739.5 bcm in 2017 in the statistics. The US alone meets 20% of the world's natural gas production in 2017 while realizing 20.1% of the world's natural gas consumption at the same time. Such a figure illustrates that the US, of which ratio of natural products to consumption amount was around 83% in 2001, has become a fully self-sufficient country by 2017 (The White House, 2017). As explained in the previous chapters per the future predictions, the US is expected to take the lead in natural gas export following 2020. The impact of the shale gas research and production process initiated by the Obama administration ranks first.





The increase in natural gas production and consumption has also been reflected in the USA's electricity generated using natural gas. The US produced the highest electricity from natural gas worldwide with 1,373 TWh production as of 2015 (ENR, 2020).

Moreover, it is 2.6 times ahead of its closest rival, Russia, per IEA data. While the nationwide power outages, when Bush took office, were a significant problem for the United States, the positive results of the natural gas and shale gas initiatives initiated under Obama showed themselves with the termination of the USA's electricity cuts (Lindsay, 2011).

### ***Renewable Energy Technologies***

Wind and solar energy technologies, which have a 1.5% share in the world's total energy supply as of 2015 and increase every year, especially with global initiatives in combating climate change, have turned into a commercial area among developed countries (Sisca and Zilfa; 2020). Besides, the use of technology for renewable energy has turned into an increasingly developing industrial area with solar cells in a more mobile structure and a smaller volume, storing more energy (Dadar and Alamatian, 2020). During the Obama period, the US's efforts to keep the industry under the US's leadership against China and Germany's progress were stood out. It has been a significant resource for the R&D and production of renewable energy technologies since 2012 with the federal government's credit support and incentives (Muscat, 2013).

In this context, the US has increased its consumption corresponding to 24.8 Mtoe in 2007 in energy consumption obtained from renewable energy sources at an exponential rate since 2009, and with 94.8 Mtoe in 2017, it ranked second in the world ranking after China. Besides, it ranked 4th after Japan, with a share of 13% in 2015 in the utilization rate of solar energy among the total electrical energy produced worldwide. Its electricity generation from wind power generated 193 TWh of electricity as of 2015, having a share of 23 percent worldwide and surpassing China. Despite this development, while the US realizes the 9.2% global import in 2017 with an import increase at 8% between 2013-2017 towards high technology equipment trading such as semiconductor materials sensitive to solar light, photovoltaic solar cells, and diodes used to convert solar energy to electrical energy, it realized 6.5% global export in 2017 with an export increase at 1% at the same period. In this framework, as of 2017, the USA's total imports of such materials are approximately 33% higher than the export value (ENR, 2020). We have identified how Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations, who have served as the presidency in the US since 2001, have directed the foreign policy and international relations of the USA in the energy supply security and the methods they followed in their discourses and implementation. We explained the orientation differences of the US foreign policy per such assessments.

### **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS:**

In the study, we have compared the energy policies implemented by the Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations and analyzed the common policies and differences followed by the US presidents based on energy security. We observed that the US pursued a unipolar policy to protect global energy resources in the September 11 attacks. However, it moved the US away from international integration (Patrick, 2014). The reason why Obama transferred his presidency to Trump in a better position than in the past in economic growth, energy supply security and diversification of energy resources was due to having pursued a cautious policy by



considering international balances. Unless there are sharp declines in oil and natural gas prices and technology in energy import-export, we foresee that the USA will be an energy exporter worldwide from 2022.

We should also note that the US energy policies implemented since 2001 should be interpreted per Neorealism and Neoliberalism doctrine. We should emphasize some of the reflections of US energy and foreign policy per Neorealism and Neoliberalism. Accordingly, the Neorealist theory was insufficient to explain the success of the Paris Agreement. The concepts that make the Paris Agreement meaningful are absolute interest, multiple gain, and institutional dependency. While energy security and carbon emissions can be explained based on the concept of anarchy in a theoretical context, Neoliberal policy does not see it as an element of direct attack. Instead, it strives to minimize anarchy by creating rational models and institutions (Bozdağlıoğlu and Çınar, 2004). Under the neoliberal theory, energy puts the US in constant pursuit of markets. However, a collective understanding of politics is that gains can be made. The role of taking an active role in climate negotiations is to establish energy security mechanisms. While the concept of multi-dependency developed by Nye and Keohane keeps the concepts of military and security in the background, together with the negative aspects of anarchy, the importance of cooperation increased.

## CONCLUSION:

US energy-oriented strategies in global relations since 2001 commenced before 2001 and followed the domestic benefits of the United States and thus paving the path for numerous frictions within half a century, particularly in the Middle East, where the energy supplies are rich. Nevertheless, while strategies intended integration of the US interests with the international interests, in other words the broad-spectrum welfares of humankind, and targeting to lead the world states in the fight against climate change, particularly during the Obama period, the hopes were somewhat descended with Trump's taking office; in this standpoint, it was constructive to make a comparative analysis of the strategies applied in the phase of Bush, Obama, and Trump in terms of providing, exporting, and procurement of energy supplies.

As the US energy policy has a realistic stance in energy supply, transmission, and security, it forms the basis of climate and carbon emission negotiations. Neorealist and Neoliberal theories explain in a common framework that reaching international agreements without guaranteeing energy security will not benefit (Keohane and Baldwin, 1994). In conclusion, the Paris Agreement concluded the global environmental threat to energy security through global cooperation. The Paris Agreement displays that Neorealism's concepts, such as self-help, survival, and anarchy, are also placed on the right ground per Neoliberalism.

Besides, Trump's approach to terrorism is closer to Bush. While Trump is not as enthusiastic as Bush about the energy-focused war trend, he follows a harsh policy with his discourses. The use of soft power elements was not preferred during the Trump era. While Bush and Trump are deemed unsuccessful in establishing public diplomacy, Obama is considered successful.

Considering that Trump focused on "America First" by his initiatives on international politics of the US over such discourses before he took over the presidency, the final analysis predicts that the US would be a vital element in creating conflict/confrontation in the global politics in the medium and long term, the international efforts for fighting against climate change would be interrupted, the US would face increasing international community reaction. Besides, we can



assess that if there is no change in the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the UN's work against global warming will be adversely affected by its implementation as of 2020. However, as a set of initiatives and incentives successfully implemented during the Obama administration, we can also envisage that Trump will continue his self-sufficiency efforts. Furthermore, export activities that will guide the global natural gas market in shale gas export will be initiated as of 2020. China and Russia, which have significant energy resources, are not satisfied with the US's energy policies and other areas. However, they express their reactions. We should note that China and Russia's opposition could be assessed as evidence of the transition to the multipolar structure with regional connections and agreements. However, to the extent of local, regional, and international developments and elements that do not exist and/or are unforeseen at the time of writing this article, it should be acknowledged that the probability of realization of the predictions may also vary.

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