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## KEY FACTORS OF TRUMP AND BIDEN'S CLIMATE POLICY

The article explores the transformation of US climate policy in the context of the political opposition between the Democratic and Republican parties, focusing on the administrations of Presidents Donald Trump and Joe Biden. The influence of party ideology on approaches to global climate change, international cooperation, and environmental regulation is examined. It is shown that Trump's presidency marked a period of heightened climate skepticism, withdrawal from international agreements—most notably the Paris Climate Agreement—and strong support for industrial and fossil fuel interests. Attention is drawn to deregulatory decisions related to greenhouse gas emissions, environmental safety standards, and infrastructure projects. In the author's opinion, D. Trump's policy was controversial not only at the national level but also in international interactions, which affected the image of the United States as a global leader on climate change. The article offers an analysis of the communicative dimension of climate policy, in particular, the active participation of mayors from large cities in supporting the Paris Agreement and climate initiatives, despite opposition from the federal government. The climate policy of the J. Biden administration is characterized, which provided for the renewal of the United States' international obligations, institutional reforms, strategic planning, and significant investments in the field of clean energy. The author concludes that U.S. climate policy is a deeply politicized domain in which changes in presidential administration can significantly alter both national and international priorities.

**Key words:** global climate change, climate policy, USA, Trump, Biden.

**Problem statement.** The US policy in the environmental sphere as a global international actor is determined by the divergent positions of the Republican and Democratic presidential administrations, the importance of ensuring the national interests of the state, the strategies of climate policy and its corresponding communicative support, and different visions of combating global climate change. On the one hand, the US initiated negotiations within the framework of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and on the other hand, it avoided international obligations regarding responsibility for environmental pollution and financial support for low-income countries to adapt to climate change.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The scientific discourse on climate policy includes studies by American experts N. Oreskes, J. Marshall (*The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change*), C. Eisenstein (*Climate: a new Story*) (Eisenstein,

2018), D. Kuntley (Climate Denial in American Politics#ClimateBrawl), M. Burgess, L. van Bowen, D. Wanger, etc. (Supply, demand and polarization challenges facing US climate policies); S. Euro, B. Aysos-Ony, etc. (Global strategies for a low-carbon future: Lessons from the US, China, and EU's pursuit of carbon neutrality); M. Goldberg, S. Rosenthal, E. Maybach, A. Leizerowitz, etc. (Climate change belief systems across political groups in the United States); K. Roser-Renouf, D. Marlon, etc (Global Warming's Six Americas: a review and recommendations for climate change communication). We note the specialized study by D. Kuntley, which analyzes in detail the evolution of American political thought on climate change, the growth of climate skepticism in the administrations of American presidents and major US political institutions, as well as the influence of American energy companies on legislative support for their corporate interests in reducing the carbon footprint (Kuntley, 2024). At the same time, it is worth noting that the issue of key factors of US policy in the environmental sphere is presented fragmentarily in the ukrainian literature, which determines the relevance and prospects of the chosen direction.

**Research methodology.** The complexity of the research question of studying the key factors of US policy in the environmental sphere determines the multidisciplinary nature of its solution, in particular, knowledge of international relations, globalization theory, communication theory, and climate theory. This determines the methodological basis of the study, which is based on the principles of objectivity, multifactoriality, and systematicity. Therefore, to study the specifics of the chosen topic, the most justified method is, first of all, the interdisciplinary method of discourse analysis, since it allows you to determine the specifics of the key factors of US policy in the environmental sphere at the current stage of the administrations of D. Trump and J. Biden.

**The purpose of the study** is to identify the basics and characterize the key factors of the policy of D. Trump and J. Biden in the environmental sphere.

**Results.** Since the second half of the 20th century, American climate policy has been characterized by cyclical shifts and has been shaped by the ongoing confrontation between Republican and Democratic party groups (Shevchenko & Makeenko, 2024). Despite differing views between the two parties on the goals and instruments for implementing climate policy at both the national and international levels, by the beginning of the 21st century, both political forces recognized the importance of economic feasibility, flexibility, independence, and the freedom of action in addressing global climate change.

Radical changes in U.S. climate policy took place during the first presidency of Republican Party representative Donald Trump (2015–2019), who referred to climate change as a “Chinese hoax” and described the Paris Agreement as “harmful to the U.S.” (Gross, 2020). He initiated the country's withdrawal from the international climate accord and supported the interests of major American industrial groups. Trump dismissed issues such as global climate change, environmental pollution, and species extinction as exaggerated and unworthy of attention from state institutions. At the same time, the American media highlighted internal disagreements among Trump's advisers regarding the political decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. For example, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and presidential advisor Jared Kushner supported continued U.S. participation in the international accord, while White House advisor Steve Bannon and then-Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Scott Pruitt expressed support for the president's position (Shear, 2017).

Donald Trump's policy on global climate change can be considered highly controversial, particularly due to the cancellation of the Clean Power Plan, a key climate policy document adopted under the previous administration of Barack Obama. It is important to note that a complete repeal of the Plan was legally impossible under U.S. law, as it was grounded in the Clean Air Act, which classifies greenhouse gases as atmospheric pollutants. The multi-directional character of U.S. climate policy during Trump's presidency is further illustrated by decisions such as reducing the mandatory annual emission reduction rate for power plants to a minimum of 1%, loosening fuel economy standards for automobiles from 5% to 1.5% annually, and weakening regulations on methane flaring and venting during oil and gas extraction on federal lands. Restrictions on the extraction and use of fossil fuels were also lifted. We consider Trump's repeal of mercury and toxic emissions rules from power plants, as well as the loosening of regulations governing the storage of coal combustion residuals, to be politically motivated and aligned with his campaign promises. Other controversial decisions included lifting the ban on oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, in protected areas in Alaska and Utah, and in U.S. coastal waters. His administration also actively promoted the revival of pipeline projects such as Keystone XL, Dakota Access, and the construction of the Marcellus Shale gas pipeline (Gross, 2020). Moreover, the Trump administration used the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to further weaken environmental regulations. This included suspending enforcement of environmental standards for companies that claimed non-compliance due to the pandemic. An executive order was also issued to ease environmental requirements in the planning and development of infrastructure projects as part of the post-COVID-19 economic recovery efforts (EPA, 2020).

Donald Trump's decisions on climate policy effectively paralyzed the operations of federal environmental institutions, particularly the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as a result of a significant internal reorganization. It is worth noting that Trump's stance on climate change was supported by the subsequent heads of the EPA, whose views aligned with climate change denial and led to a reduction in the agency's personnel (Independent, 2017).

The effectiveness of the Trump administration's restrictive environmental measures was limited due to numerous legal challenges. Lawsuits were filed by individual states, municipalities, environmental organizations, and medical associations opposing the administration's decisions. These legal actions were primarily based on violations of the Administrative Procedure Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. According to data from the New York University School of Law, the Trump administration lost 87% of environmental and climate-related court cases (Institute for Policy Integrity, 2021).

Although the global community anticipated the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement—given President Trump's claim that the Agreement undermined U.S. competitiveness and national sovereignty—the official announcement still provoked significant international backlash. Some experts argued that Trump's decision was primarily aimed at reinforcing his political image, despite the negative reactions of global actors, the long-term risks to economic growth, and the loss of U.S. leadership in global environmental governance (Krüger, 2019).

Others noted that the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement was unlikely to reverse global trends in the development of low-carbon technologies or the transformation of climate governance. However, reductions in the U.S. federal research budget could hamper long-term climate objectives and weaken international cooperation (Zhang et al., 2017).

One notable consequence of Trump’s climate policy was the growing popularity of climate skepticism—both among segments of the American public that support anti-climate political positions and among policymakers and government officials who followed the administration’s lead, influenced by shifting public opinion.

The decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement also had a significant financial dimension. According to experts from Climate Nexus, this move risked weakening U.S. competitiveness, as by the end of 2019 the clean energy industry had become one of the most promising and profitable sectors of the American economy (Climate Nexus, 2017). During the Trump presidency, the growth rate of the clean energy sector exceeded that of the overall economy by 70%. It is also worth noting that the implementation of the Clean Power Plan—originally intended as the United States’ primary mechanism for meeting its Paris Agreement commitments—was expected to bring an estimated \$49 billion in economic benefits.

Despite the U.S. withdrawal, climate change policy remained a central pillar of sustainable development for many national governments, local authorities, and non-governmental organizations. These actors continued to pursue strategies for technological innovation and implement climate initiatives. The global dimension of U.S. climate policy under President Trump, particularly the decision to exit the Paris Agreement, did not deter other international actors from advancing their climate commitments. On the contrary, the importance of climate research and engagement with public opinion increased during this period, contributing to a broader understanding of global climate governance.

The communicative dimension of Trump’s climate policy also deserves attention. His decisions sparked widespread public debate at both federal and local levels, eventually leading to the formation of the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ climate initiatives, including the adoption of the Mayors National Climate Action Agenda (2017) (Mayors National Climate Action Agenda; Climate Mayors). These initiatives were aligned with the environmental policies of previous presidential administrations and signaled continued local-level commitment to climate action.

At the same time, President Trump frequently used Twitter (now X) as a key communication channel. His public statements on social media regarding the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement were widely interpreted as a rejection of climate policy. In response, many mayors of major U.S. cities reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement. For example, following Trump’s tweet “I was elected to represent Pittsburgh, not Paris,” then-Mayor of Pittsburgh Bill Peduto replied, also via Twitter, stating that his city would continue to uphold the principles of the Paris Agreement.

American researcher S. Boussalis rightly observes that “...city communications on climate change—namely, which cities discuss climate issues and when, as well as the context of such communications, including vulnerability, extreme weather events, and economic or political factors—serve as indicators of the effectiveness of climate policy at the local level” (Boussalis, 2018). In our view, urban climate communication encompasses not only public statements by mayors and local government officials, but also

information related to climate policy published on official city hall websites in the form of press releases, news updates, and interviews. The active climate stance adopted by many large U.S. cities following the federal withdrawal from the Paris Agreement can be attributed to their increased vulnerability to extreme weather events, sea-level rise, population growth, and the worsening of public health outcomes.

Under the Trump administration, contradictions between federal climate policy and state-level initiatives were significantly exacerbated. While the federal government largely ignored climate change, individual states and municipalities became increasingly vulnerable. For example, the state government of Louisiana—whose economy is heavily reliant on the oil and gas industry—showed reluctance to engage in climate initiatives, whereas the city of New Orleans, which frequently experiences extreme weather events, actively supported climate action. This contrast illustrates the economic and geographic disparities across different jurisdictions. As American scholar P. Egan notes, mayors in vulnerable states, regardless of party affiliation, “...are more likely to use climate change in their communications” (Egan, 2013). He attributes this to the fact that cities exert control over land use, building standards, and zoning policies—factors that influence both the causes of climate change and strategies for mitigation and adaptation.

S. Boussalis conducted an analysis of press releases issued by the mayors of the fifty most populous U.S. cities, which collectively account for approximately 17% of national greenhouse gas emissions. The study identified key climate messaging themes, policy priorities, and the degree of local government engagement in promoting narratives supportive of stringent climate standards through local media channels. During the Trump presidency, the leading cities in climate communications included Portland (Oregon), San Diego (California), Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Boston, Chicago, and Pittsburgh. These cities stood out due to their heightened vulnerability and their increased frequency of climate-related press releases, particularly during periods of extreme weather or major international climate events.

The study revealed that the most frequently addressed topics were energy (78.2%), the impacts of climate change (40.1%), extreme weather events (19.6%), and transportation (4.6%). These figures reflect the climate priorities of urban leadership and the implementation of targeted adaptation and mitigation measures. Boussalis also emphasized that urban climate communication occurs not only in response to general manifestations of climate change or natural disasters, but also within the framework of large-scale initiatives and collaboration with federal programs aimed at implementing specific projects (Boussalis, 2018).

Despite numerous pressing issues during Donald Trump’s presidency—including illegal immigration, tensions with North Korea, the Iran nuclear deal, and the investigation into Russian election interference—climate change remained a consistent topic of discussion in major national print media. Researcher M. Simon from the University of Pennsylvania found that in the first year of the Trump administration alone, coverage of climate change increased across all national print outlets. Specifically, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* increased the number of articles on climate-related topics by 19.73% and 13.99%, respectively (Simon, 2019).

In contrast, local newspapers showed a sharp decline in climate coverage during the same period. For instance, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reduced its climate-related content by 47.62%, while the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* decreased such coverage

by 78.33%. Although the liberal-leaning Post-Gazette paid more attention to climate issues than the more conservative Tribune-Review, both significantly curtailed their reporting on climate policy. It is worth noting that U.S. climate policy under President Trump was widely characterized by climate skepticism and denial, which negatively impacted the country's international standing on environmental matters.

Under Democratic President Joe Biden (2020–2024), U.S. climate policy underwent substantial strategic changes, effectively resuming and expanding many of the initiatives from the Obama administration. The United States formally rejoined the Paris Agreement, and federal agencies were instructed to review and reverse all environmental and climate-related restrictions and regulations introduced during the Trump era. In early 2021, President Biden established the White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy, granting it wide-ranging powers and responsibilities. These included coordinating the development of domestic climate strategies, advising the president on climate matters, ensuring policy alignment with the administration's stated climate goals, and overseeing the implementation of the president's climate agenda (The White House, 2020).

At the 2021 Global Climate Summit, convened by the Biden administration and attended by 40 world leaders from both industrialized and climate-vulnerable nations, the United States unveiled an updated national climate finance strategy, presented as its renewed contribution under the Paris Agreement. The summit was preceded by a series of bilateral meetings conducted by John Kerry, the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, with key counterparts including the College of European Commissioners and the Ministers of Environment from China and India. These diplomatic efforts culminated in the release of the U.S.-China Joint Statement on Addressing the Climate Crisis and the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership. In line with President Biden's agenda, the new U.S. climate commitments included reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% below 2005 levels by 2030, achieving 100% clean electricity by 2035, and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 (The White House, 2021a). It should be noted that during the Climate Leaders' Summit, renewed commitments were announced by major international actors. The United Kingdom pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035; the European Union committed to a 55% reduction by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050; China reaffirmed its target to peak emissions by 2030 and reach neutrality by 2060; and Japan increased its emissions reduction target to 46% by 2030. It is important to emphasize that the Biden administration played a significant role in shaping the political decisions of countries seeking to position their climate policies as frameworks of global leadership.

Within the framework of the forum, the creation of several new international coalitions was initiated, along with the launch of climate initiatives. Notably, the Global Initiative to Support Low-Income Countries in Achieving Climate Goals and the Clean Zero Producers Forum were introduced. The latter united countries that collectively produce around 40% of the world's energy resources, including Canada, Norway, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. The outcomes of the summit were described by Climate Action Tracker as "...a step forward in combating climate change" (Climate Action Tracker, 2021).

In November 2021, at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow, United Kingdom, the United States reaffirmed its intention to reestablish itself as a global leader in the fight against climate change. In his address, President Biden stated, "...climate

change is a critical threat to the existence of humanity in its current form. With every day that we delay, the cost of inaction increases” (The White House, 2021b). During COP26, the United States, in cooperation with the European Union, launched the Global Methane Pledge—a landmark initiative aimed at reducing global methane emissions by at least 30% by 2030 compared to 2020 levels (The White House, 2022). On the international stage, President Biden framed the Methane Pledge as a key expression of U.S. leadership in global climate governance. The initiative is intended to foster international cooperation in deploying effective technologies for monitoring, controlling, and reducing methane emissions, particularly in the energy, agriculture, and waste management sectors. Although the Methane Pledge is not legally binding, participating countries have made both political and practical commitments to develop national strategies, invest in innovative technologies, and strengthen international collaboration. The initiative has brought together over 150 countries, including the world’s leading economies, highlighting its importance within the framework of global climate policy.

As stated in numerous official documents, the reform of U.S. climate policy under President Joe Biden primarily centered on the implementation of large-scale investment programs totaling approximately \$1.2 trillion. In 2021, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was enacted, allocating \$7.5 billion to modernize infrastructure—including railways, bridges, urban and residential buildings—advance electromobility and green transportation, upgrade water systems, and protect communities from the impacts of climate change (The White House, 2021c).

Subsequently, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act, which marked a significant shift in U.S. climate policy. The law provided substantial investments in renewable energy, including tax incentives for the production of clean energy and the development of renewable energy sources. It also introduced measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, allocating approximately \$370 billion to energy security and climate initiatives intended to accelerate emissions reductions. As IMF analyst J. Bordoff rightly noted, this legislation represents “...the most significant federal investment in U.S. history aimed at combating climate change” (IMF, 2022).

The act also imposed a fee of \$1,500 per ton of methane emissions on oil and gas companies to curb excessive leakage and revoked the 10-year moratorium on offshore wind leasing established under the Trump administration. In addition, the law allocated \$27 billion to establish the first national Green Bank, designed to mobilize private investment in clean energy projects. Furthermore, the Biden administration announced an additional \$3.7 billion to support the development of the U.S. carbon dioxide removal (CDR) industry, including programs aimed at commercializing technologies that address legacy carbon pollution. Despite these comprehensive reforms and investments, the Climate Action Tracker rated U.S. climate policy at the end of 2024 as “Insufficient,” indicating a gap between policy ambition and the level of action required to meet international climate targets (Climate Action Tracker, 2024).

**Conclusions.** As the analysis of U.S. political discourse shows, climate policy under the Trump and Biden administrations reflects sharply divergent strategic orientations shaped by partisan ideology. Democratic administrations, including that of President Biden, typically emphasized international cooperation, global

leadership, and robust climate initiatives. In contrast, the Trump administration's climate policy was characterized by withdrawal from multilateral agreements, regulatory rollback, and climate skepticism, marking a clear departure from global climate priorities. The Biden administration's approach prioritized restoring international partnerships, reinvigorating national climate institutions, and implementing ambitious investment-driven strategies to address climate change. Nonetheless, the persistent politicization of climate policy in the United States continues to result in fluctuating commitments and implementation gaps depending on the party in power.

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## **КЛЮЧОВІ ЧИННИКИ КЛІМАТИЧНОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ Д. ТРАМПА І Д. БАЙДЕНА**

Резюме

У статті розглядається трансформація кліматичної політики США в контексті політичної боротьби між Демократичною та Республіканською партіями на прикладі адміністрацій президентів Д. Трампа та Д. Байдена. Проаналізовано вплив партійної ідеології на підходи до подолання глобальних змін клімату, міжнародної співпраці, регулювання екологічної сфери та забезпечення національних інтересів. Показано, що період президентства Д. Трампа характеризувався зростанням кліматичного скептицизму, виходом США з Паризької кліматичної угоди, демонтажем екологічних регуляторних норм, дерегуляцією в енергетичному секторі та підтримкою вуглеводневих промисловості. Значну увагу приділено комунікативним стратегіям, що супроводжували кліматичну політику Трампа, зокрема використанню соціальних мереж і протидії з боку місцевих органів влади та муніципалітетів, які, попри позицію федеральної адміністрації, підтримували міжнародні кліматичні зобов'язання. Політика адміністрації Д. Байдена стала етапом повернення США до глобального кліматичного порядку денного, що передбачало відновлення участі в Паризькій угоді, створення інституційної основи для координації кліматичної політики, масштабні інвестиції у відновлювану енергетику, запуск низки міжнародних ініціатив, зокрема Глобальної метанової ініціативи. У дослідженні застосовано міждисциплінарний підхід із використанням дискурс-аналізу політичних рішень і комунікаційних стратегій. Зроблено висновок, що кліматична політика США залишається глибоко політизованою сферою, де зміна адміністрації здатна суттєво трансформувати не лише внутрішні пріоритети, а й вплив країни на глобальне кліматичне врядування.

**Ключові слова:** глобальні зміни клімату, кліматична політика, США, Д. Трамп, Д. Байден.