

# Individual Foreign Policy Analysis of Donald Trump: A Case Study of the US Embassy relocation to Jerusalem

**Kenny Setya Abdiel**

Department of International Relations, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
kenny.setya.abdiel@gmail.com  
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## Abstrak

*Dalam konteks politik luar negeri, Amerika Serikat di tangan Donald Trump membuat berbagai kebijakan pro-Israel sejak keputusannya memindahkan Kedutaan Besar AS ke Yerusalem di akhir 2017. Kebijakannya yang berisiko seringkali dikecam oleh masyarakat internasional. Kondisi tersebut tidak lain dipengaruhi oleh dimensi personal dari Trump. Penelitian ini bertujuan menyelidiki bagaimana kepribadian Trump terutama gaya kepemimpinannya mempengaruhi lahirnya kebijakan pemindahan kedutaan AS ke Yerusalem dan kebijakan pro-Israel lainnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan psikologi politik dengan metodologi psychobiography dan analisis konten. Dua metodologi ini saling melengkapi untuk membangun gambaran yang utuh mengenai perilaku politik pemimpin. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa Trump adalah pemimpin yang mengabaikan fakta dan informasi di lapangan. Ia dapat dikategorikan sebagai pemimpin agresif karena berani mengambil keputusan berisiko meski menyadari konsekuensinya. Keterbatasannya dalam manajemen organisasi turut mempengaruhi intensitas kebijakan kepentingan Kristen-Yahudi.*

*Kata Kunci: Trump, politik luar negeri, psikologi, Yerusalem, Israel, Palestina*

## Abstract

In the context of foreign policy, the Trump administration has made various pro-Israel moves starting with the relocation of the US embassy for Israel to Jerusalem in late 2017. These high-risk policies frequently denounced by the international community. Despite that, Trump persisted in generating such policy, which was influenced by his personal dimension. This study aims to examine how Trump's personality, precisely his leadership style, affects the decision to relocate the US Embassy to Jerusalem and other pro-Israel policies. In answering the question, this study adopted a political psychology approach by using psychobiography and content analysis as complementary methodologies. The approach was meant to build a complete picture of a leader's political behavior. It was found that Trump often neglected facts and information on the ground. Therefore, he could be categorized as an aggressive leader who is willing to take risky decisions, although he is aware of the consequences. His inadequacy in organization management also increases the intensity of high-risk policies. In addition to that, Trump's policies are motivated by his desire to secure political support amongst Judeo-Christian interest groups.

Keywords: Trump, foreign policy, psychology, Jerusalem, Israel, Palestine

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## INTRODUCTION

Jerusalem is considered a holy city by three religious groups, namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In the political sphere, the city is disputed by two nations as their capital city. The State of Israel claims it as the Jewish people's eternal capital city. Meanwhile, the Palestinians expect the east part of Jerusalem as a capital city for their future state. However, in December 2017, Trump administration, as the third party in the dispute, made a

controversial statement by recognizing the city as Israel's capital.

Trump also announced his plan to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, an action which he claimed to fulfill the mandate drafted in the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995. Exactly five months later, the plan had been carried out. Ivanka Trump and his husband, Jared Kushner, were sent to attend the inauguration of

the new embassy in Jerusalem. The ceremony was intentionally held coincided with the 70th Independence Day of Israel on the 14th of May 2018.

While the U.S. and Israel celebrated their stronger ties, there was the bloodiest day on the other side of the scene. Thousands of Palestinians faced off against Israel security guard protesting at the Gaza border fifty miles away from Jerusalem; at least forty people died and seventeen hundreds of others injured (Goldman & Smith, 2018). At the international level, the U.S. also received several condemnations from its allies and the United Nations as Trump's decision to move the embassy prevailed.

The phenomenon showed the decision was dangerous and could potentially trample the peace process between the conflicting parties. In other words, Trump's decision was irrational if we referred to Janice Gross Stein's requirements for an action to be considered rational. Rational action is required for foreign policymakers, especially in a situation in which every single move is critical such as crisis or devising conflict resolution. Therefore, to avoid unwanted consequences or at least to minimize it, Stein (2012) suggests two requirements for making a decision. Firstly, the decision-makers must be provided with facts and contextual information on the ground level to calculate and predict the consequences of each option they have. Secondly, a decision should be maximizing the objectives while at the same time minimizing the risks. Along with all strong reactions from national and international levels, it can be inferred that Trump's decision did not meet the criteria.

Trump did not observe the latest situation of the conflict. To be rational, Trump firstly needed to restore the dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), which had broken since the second Intifada post-Oslo Accords and Camp David Summit Meeting before addressing the critical status of Jerusalem (Sayigh & Erekat, 2015). Supposedly, he needed time for this; he should waive the implementation of the act as every president did since 1995. However, Trump confidently decided to acknowledge Jerusalem as Israel's capital city and overlooked the other affected party, which was the Palestinians.

Trump justified his act by framing that it was a new approach. According to him, it would produce a different result that would break the prior discontinuation of the peace process, which in the future could hopefully lead to a so-called peace agreement (BBC, 2017). In Trump's mind, recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital is part of it. Trump did not consider the possible consequences following his action as a threat to the U.S. role as a mediator of the Arab-Israel conflict. In that sense, Trump can be categorized as a leader with highly-risk preferences and often overlook facts and contextual information. Thus, the most probable cause of this behavior has related to the psychological aspect of the leader (Hermann, 2001).

This article aims to explore the relations between Trump's personality, precisely his leadership style, and its effect on his action to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and other pro-Israel policies. In explaining this case, the article was divided into two main parts. The first one emphasized the theoretical inquiry of Trump's behavior towards foreign policy. Meanwhile, the second part meant to explain the relations between Trump's political action and his pro-Israel policies. In attaining this, the research used the political psychology approach, which would mainly adopt Margaret Hermann's works of political leaders' foreign policy behavior.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### THE GREAT MAN APPROACH

Pre-Cold War studies of International Relations, especially in the topic of foreign policy analysis (FPA), have always been central to the leader of a state, whether it was president, prime minister, chancellor, king, etc. This method is frequently called "the Great Man approach" (Hudson, 2014). Although its popularity declined in recent decades, which were caused by the development of the state's power-structuralism approach, the method is still relevant to analyze some current foreign policy phenomena. The focus of the approach on the individual in a decision-making environment gives psychological and political understanding, which is not found in any other foreign policy theory. Generally said, political psychology believes that the decision taken by a

a leader is influenced by his personality rather than saying that the state acts rationally as a mere recipient towards international politics of power balancing (Hermann, 1980; 1998; 2001; 2002). Furthermore, political psychology defines why the political actor has specific political behavior.

As James Barber (1992) argued, the leader's ways to secure goals would eventually become his leadership style and political behavior. Therefore, to understand why leaders differ one from another, the study should be traced back to the starting point, which is the leader's orientation towards his position. Hermann (1980; 2001; 2002) suggests two categories of orientation from a decisive president or which she called as a predominant leader. The first is an independent one whose actions are mainly guided by internal factors such as ideas, goals, interests, and ideology, while the other is the participatory type, whose actions are influenced externally by adjusting to the context where he got situated. The distinction between the two is the leader's willingness to compromise his objectives, or we can say the level of leader's aggressiveness in pursuing his interest.

To determine a leader's orientation and aggressiveness, there are three issues that should be dealing with, such as, firstly, a leader's reaction towards political constraints—does he respect or challenge such constraints? Secondly, how open is a leader to facts and contextual information—does he use such details to measure decisions? Thirdly, what motivates a leader to take action—does he try to resolve cases or accentuate his interests?. In answering these questions, this research used two methods of data collection in political psychology, which were psychobiography and content analysis.

Psychobiography for analyzing political leader was introduced by Jerrold Post during his work as Director of the Center of Analysis and Political Behavior in CIA. It is a tool for political scientists to investigate the indirect personality information of a political leader who came from his activities both in office and outside. This information shall be related to the political behavior of the leader. Meanwhile, the content analysis uses direct

information stated by political leaders such as speeches, interviews, writings, and others. The purpose is to acquire a leader's opinion. These two methods work complementarily in understanding a leader's orientation and aggressiveness.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **TRUMP: THE PREDOMINANT LEADER**

Trump's winning in the 2016 U.S. presidential election was quite shocking. He was not even popular amongst the voters compared to other notable Republicans. That was his first time participating in public office elections without having experiences in it, which then resulted in the uncertainty of political direction in the sight of the public. In fact, if we look at the issues Trump has promoted during his campaign, there would be drastic changes in U.S. foreign policies, in which courses were not even popular among Republican factions (Tarzi, 2019). In just two years of his administration, Trump changed what President Obama had built.

Using populist America First, Trump justified his actions to revise international deals, which he claimed as a disadvantage for Americans. The foreign deals are such as the Paris Agreement, North America Free Trade Area, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (Ward, 2019). At the same time, he initiated various new ideas like a plan to build a wall across Mexico border and restriction of immigration from Muslim countries. It demonstrated the high involvement of Trump in generating policies that Hermann & Preston (1994) considered as mainly being caused by either the president has a professional background in international politics, or simply he just feels interested and wants to be in the middle of occurrence despite lacking experience.

These two factors differ at the level of personality that influences foreign policy. A professional international political background will lead the president to reduce his personal bias in decision making (Hermann, 1980). In contrast, if the involvement is merely caused by personal interest, it will amplify his personal views into the policy. Meanwhile, Trump has neither a record for being in military nor government service, and his multinational affairs are meant for personal business only. His

His involvement in foreign policy is solely caused by his excitement. It's not surprising if a personal judgment plays a vital role in this type of predominant leader (Hermann, 2001).<sup>i</sup> To prove this, we shall examine Trump's statements on the day he recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital city.

During his speech, Trump intensively used singular first-person pronouns in substantial sentences. For example:

- "When I came into office, I promised to look at the world's challenges with open eyes and very fresh thinking."
- "My announcement today marks the beginning of a new approach to conflict between Israel and the Palestinians."
- "Therefore, I have determined that it is time to officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel."
- "Today, I am delivering"—referring to his decision to break a failure trend from his predecessors in implementing the act."
- "I've judged this course of action to be in the best interests of the United States of America and the pursuit of peace between Israel and the Palestinians."
- "That is why consistent with the Jerusalem Embassy Act; I am also directing the state department to begin preparation to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem." (BBC, 2017).

As Hermann (2002) argued, the intensity of "I", "my", "myself", "me", and "mine" used by speakers in a speech indicates confidence and a pretension to be counted of having a vital role in the situation. In sentences such as "therefore, I have determined...", "today, I am delivering", "I've judged this course of action ...", "I am also directing the state department ...", Trump wanted to be regarded as the initiator and the judge of this action. In other words, he wanted to be admitted as the one who was authorized.

The characteristic following a government with a predominant leader is the mechanism used in decision making, which embeds the leader an authority to decide

the final decision. Although many options are available for a predominant leader to organize his administration—either he wants to know everything that happens in the ground level by putting himself in the hub of information or he wants the debate to be resolved before reaching the top table, the entity who is allowed to draw the final judgment is the leader itself. Furthermore, despite the presumption that Christianity-based and right-wing American Jews interest groups play a pivotal role in establishing the Jerusalem Embassy Act, it was only Trump who has the authority to approve such action. If Trump personally did not agree with the plan, it could be ensured that the act would be waived.

The next section will explore the prominent features of Trump's personality and leadership styles on foreign policymaking. There are at least two things that should be noted. Firstly, Trump's approach to foreign policymaking is characterized as aggressiveness when he encounters political constraints. Secondly, the process of decision-making in Trump's administration has been full of deviation at the procedural level. These features make any decision barely get supported by other government officials and the American public.

#### **AN AGGRESSIVE AND DISORGANIZED FOREIGN POLICY UNDER TRUMP'S ADMINISTRATION**

It would be plausible to consider Trump as a "goal-driven president" since his acts are mainly focused on "achieving" a goal rather than "resolving" a situation. Although he frequently claimed that his action is able to alleviate problems, like what he did on the Jerusalem case, he would never compromise to any other demands. Instead of convincing contenders to his plan with reasonable arguments and searching feasible options, Trump left them unsettled. He feels that as far as the strains outside are under control, then there are no excuses to revoke the plan.

The only kind of information needed by a goal-driven president is the one that supports his personal preference. As Hermann (1994) noted that to gain optimum outcome, every policy requires information concerning individuals or groups on the field which get affected to measure the consequences that it posed. A goal-driven

president will eventually overlook or resist any conflicting information. Therefore, it does not put the affected people as a priority even though they know the risk. By the objective that has been determined, the president does not look for alternative options and calculate the risk of each. Thus, the most salient feature of a goal-driven president is the aggressiveness when they encounter political constraints.<sup>ii</sup>

Let us take a quick look at Trump's plan to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, which he promised during the 2016 presidential campaign as another example of this aggressiveness. Until his first four-year term of presidency, which nearly ends, Trump has difficulties in getting his plan funded by U.S. Congress. Furthermore, the majority member of U.S. congress claimed such wall would be ineffective to stop illegal human, drugs, and goods smuggling, thus they rejected the idea and made deadlock as a result. Hermann (2001) stated that a deadlock could presuppose an aggressive behaviour.<sup>iii</sup> By conducting deadlock, it indicates that no parties are willing to relinquish their preferences to reach an agreement.

The problem of deadlock is that when people are not in the state of "agree to disagree" and still manage their way outside the stage. Hermann (2001) called it a fragmented symbolic action. The situation happened in Trump's wall case in which he worked to surpass the bureaucratic barrier by shutting the government down for 35 days starting on 22nd of December 2018 and declaring an emergency afterward. The declaration is regulated in the National Emergencies Act of 1976, which grants the president extraordinary powers during crisis time, such as abolishing procedural processes, namely, Congress legislation to obtain funding as soon as possible. However, to exert the order, the president is required to make justification of urgency related to the situation.

On the 15th of February 2019, Trump decided to declare the state of emergency in respect of the narcotics, criminals, and illegal immigrants' flows on the U.S. southern border. Referring to such situation, it resulted in threatening American national security. Following his action, the Democrats accused him of being

unconstitutional and violating authority (Baker, 2019). Nonetheless, despite this objection from the political rival, Trump's move was factually untenable since the beginning.

The situation on the border, which he referred to the crisis, did not meet the actual condition on the ground. As Al-Jazeera (2019) reported, the statistics of illegal immigration coming to the U.S. through the southern border was at the lowest level for the past 20 years. At the same time, the U.S. government statistics paradoxically showed that eighty to ninety percent of narcotics such as heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine entered the country through official ports. According to this fact, Trump's decision to overcome political constraints was not based on the factual data at the ground level.

If this is the case, Trump will fit the political behavior of an aggressive leader, according to Hermann (1980) et al. (2001) criteria. This leader is characterized by practices of confronting the situation head-on, desires of achieving a quick resolution, being decisive, and is not objected to use such forceful or manipulative action. Based on this phenomenon, we can also identify that Trump was confident with his power and control over the situation. He did not see political constraints as a limit to his move; instead, he saw it as a challenge that he needed to overcome. These behaviors were apparently profoundly rooted in his background as a real estate mogul. Most of the time, in his business practices, Trump has always depended on his intuitions and instincts, which affected his procedural disregard and rejection of advice. The one who witnessed this unwillingness to conform to situation demands and obey the rule was Rex Tillerson, his former Secretary of State.

Compared to Trump, Tillerson has broader experience in foreign affairs, not to mention his professional principle of respecting regulation and procedure. It was when the two of them argued each other, which then led to Trump dismissal of Tillerson (Cillizza, 2018). In his interview with TIME (Vesoulis, 2018), Tillerson described his relationship with Trump as follows:

- "So often, the President would say, 'here's what I want to do, and here's how I want to do it,' and would have to say to him, 'Mr. President, I



understand what you want to do but you can't do it that way. It violates the law.”

- “I think he grew tired of me being the guy every day that told him you couldn't do that.” (Vesoulis, 2018).

It shows that some actors probably have the ability to hinder the ambition of a goal-driven president as well. In this case, the president's closest official became the entity to influence decision making. Thus, to secure his position, the president needed to get rid of people who confronted him and, by that, he looked for people who supported his ideas. The president encountered two options in choosing officials. It was whether he wanted to ensure that the job was done well by expertise—yet with the probability of having a conflictual debate if there is a different stance on issues—or he emphasized interest commonality of the officials despite not acquiring any professional background.

Trump chose to lean on people with loyalty to support his interest; these people were unfortunately dominated by his fellow business partners or to be worst, his family members. The problem of having these close-related officials in the administration is the tendency of them to overlap other government officials who are, in fact, in the position to do the work. In Trump's administration, family members, like Kushner and Ivanka, occupied a pivotal role as President's Senior Advisors, which in several cases, expropriated the duty of Chief of Staff Reince Priebus at Trump's early presidency.

The phenomenon above remarks on the beginning of deviation practice in Trump's administration. Furthermore, Trump handed greater responsibility and authority to his family members. In Kushner's case, Trump permitted him to access information that only the president is allowed, such as highly classified documents and the President's Daily Briefing (PDB) (Burke, 2018). At the same time, Trump put Kushner to lead or contribute to several major foreign affairs from maintaining relations with China and Mexico to masterminding a resolution to the Middle East conflict. Meanwhile, Kushner frequently made informal appointments with foreign envoys, which were much inconvenience to other U.S. officials (Edward &

LaFraniere, 2019). Despite that, Kushner still holds a dominant position in directing significant foreign policies in his father-in-law's administration.

### **THE EFFECT OF TRUMP'S PREDOMINANT LEADERSHIP ATTITUDE TOWARDS U.S. EMBASSY RELOCATION TO JERUSALEM AND OTHER PRO-ISRAEL POLICIES**

In an interview with Trinity Broadcast Network upon the embassy relocation, Trump expressed his gratitude for Christian evangelicals' praises instead of worrying disapproval and condemnation from others. Obviously, it has been known that the majority of U.S. evangelicals are very supportive of the State of Israel than the American Jews community itself (VICE News, 2018). However, Trump's explication was considered as his indifference to the deteriorating situation. He seemed to be not bothered with the fact that his move was deemed to be illegitimate even by U.S. main allies. He triggered clashes between the Palestinians and Israel Defense Force (IDF) both in Gaza and West Bank (The Jerusalem Post, 2017).

In the worst scenario, supposedly, Trump did not know the critical status of Jerusalem towards the conflict and the stability of the Middle East; he still had enough time to realize that his move was illegitimate and revoke it. On the contrary, Trump was not disrupted by any obstruction. The plan was fulfilled, inciting skirmish in Gaza, which killed at least sixty people (Austin, 2018). A few months earlier, thousands of Palestinians conducted weekly protest, which they called The Great March Return. The protest was designed as a commemoration to the Palestinian refugees after the State of Israel was established. It showed that Trump's decision was not a simple problem. Trump revived some severe issues which had faded away before. However, Trump had figured out all these matters back and took some precaution actions.

Since the beginning, Trump has made several excuses or justifications to rationalize his action, and by that, he wished he could minimize the risks. In his speech at the White House in 2017, Trump stated that his move was a new approach to the conflict, which may bring Israel and Palestine to a future agreement. At the same time, while he made a rational justification, he also added some relieving-made statements as follow:

- His recognition did not determine the final status of Jerusalem's border either for Israeli or Palestinian (Underwood, 2018). For him, it should be discussed by the related parties.
- He would not infringe on the idea of a "two-state solution" (Wilner, 2018).
- He also stated that the relocation of the US embassy would not change the status quo of Jerusalem as the holy city of Jews, Christianity, and Islam.
- Lastly, to show good faith, Trump promised an arrangement of resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Middle East, which he called "U.S. Peace Plan on the Middle East."

By making these pleas, Trump was willing to portray himself as a neutral and reliable mediator, which was ironically contradicted with every next step he has taken.

Hermann (2002) noted that this behavior could be interpreted as a form of confidence of the leader to control what is happening and a form of a habit of taking unilateral action. The following table demonstrates Trump's bias towards Israel and the reality of his unwillingness to discuss with Palestinian and other U.S. adversaries.

Based on the table, it can be inferred that Trump was a pro-Israel, and, as a result, the conflict did not stop with the implementation of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995. In fact, Trump mobilized his administration to ensure Israel's national security, which was related to the problems in the region. First and foremost, Trump had to deal with Israel's main threat: Iran. There are at least essential policies regarding Iran's nuclear development and the sanction which was carried out by Trump to the end of 2019. Those policies were meant to disarm the

**Table 1.** The list of U.S. Foreign Policies Initiated by Trump's Administration.

No.	Policies	Date
1	Recognizing Jerusalem as Israel capital city	December 6, 2017
2	Withdrawal of Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA)	May 8, 2018
3	The inauguration of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem	May 14, 2018
4	Withdrawal of U.N. Human Rights Council due to bias allegation to Israel	June 19, 2018
5	Chopping the amount of USAID for Gaza and West Bank as much as \$200 million	August 25, 2018
6	Ending U.S. aid to U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in respect of Palestinian Refugees	August 31, 2018
7	Shutting down the Palestinian (PLO) Diplomatic Mission Office in Washington, D.C.	September 10, 2018
8	Re-enacting Iran sanctions	November 5, 2018
9	Withdrawal of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in respect to Russia, China, and Iran	February 1, 2019
10	Shutting down U.S. Consulate for Palestine in Jerusalem	March 4, 2019
11	Recognizing Golan Heights as part of Israel territory	March 25, 2019
12	Executive Order on Imposing Sanctions in respect to the iron, steel, aluminum, and cooper sectors of Iran	May 8, 2019
13	Executive Order on Imposing Sanctions on the Supreme Leader of Iran and the Worst Elements of Iranian Regime	June 24, 2019
14	Organizing Workshop entitled <i>Peace for Prosperity in Bahrain</i> , which was led by Jared Kushner	June 25, 2019
15	Declaring that Israeli settlement in West Bank was no longer illegal	November 18, 2019

Data were retrieved from the Council on Foreign Relations (2018), White House (2019), Al-Jazeera (2019, March 4), and The Guardian (2019, June 17; 2019, June 25; 2019, November 18).

the offensive capacity of Iran; thus, they would not threaten Israel as U.S. pro-Israel policies being executed.

Hermann (2001) argued that foreign policy requires a series of decisions. Instead of waiting for what would come after taking one action, leaders should take another step to secure their interest and avoid disruption from other actors. For example, when Trump recognized the disputed Golan Heights as part of Israel territory after discussion with Kushner (Holmes & Kierszenbaum, 2019), Iran became one of the most vocal confronting actors. Although the condemnation also came from European allies and Islamic countries such as Turkey, it was only Iran, in the U.S. point of view, that could give an offensive retaliation to Israel. Therefore, to avoid unwanted consequences, Trump decided to also deal with Iran by dismantling any agreement and imposing sanctions.

Luckily for Israel, the way Trump dealt with Iran was intersected with the interest of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It is not surprising as it turned out that Trump frequently consulted with Netanyahu before dealing with Iran. When Trump was convinced to pull out from JCPOA and thus to reenact the sanction to Iran, it was Netanyahu who gave the recommendation as what he called as a finding from Mossad investigation that Iran was abusing the deal. On the other hand, U.S. proximity to Saudi Arabia, which was another regional power, also maintained Trump's confidence in acting antagonistic in the region. Therefore, it is plausible for Trump to take every step without waiting for Palestine and other adversaries to sit down and talk first.

The first thing he did after relocating American Embassy to Jerusalem was withdrawing the U.S. from the U.N. Human Rights Council due to his claim that the organization was antagonizing Israel. Soon after that, he cut down aid for the Palestinians from USAID and UNRWA. By framing that the aid reduction was necessary to be allocated to more critical needs, the U.S. was actually punishing the Palestinians for what the administration perceived as uncooperativeness to American policies (DeYoung & Ruth, 2018). After that, with quite a similar reason, Trump shut down the Palestinian (PLO) Mission Office in Washington and

Jerusalem. It emphasized that Trump had no interest in the Palestinians, and the proposed U.S. Middle East Peace Plan possibly would be advantageous only for Israel.

Finally, to achieve these pro-Israel interests, Trump's administration should be filled with people who shared the view. In his early presidency, Trump nominated David Friedman as U.S. Ambassador to Israel and Nikki Haley as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. The two officials were known for their support on Israel occupation in West Bank and the restriction of Gaza. However, the most controversial moment was Jared Kushner's assignment as White House Senior Advisor and, ultimately, the designer of the U.S. Middle East Peace Plan. Regardless of Kushner's Jewish ancestry, which could lead to partiality, it was generally considered inappropriate to post a family member in a government office. Kushner was not professionally capable of becoming a drafter to such a perpetual conflict that did not even get resolution in the past 70 years. In other words, supposedly that Kushner considered the demand of both sides of the conflict, he would still need a lot of time, considering his professional background was only in business instead of conflict resolution, negotiation, or diplomacy.

Kushner eventually proved his incapability in the first phase of the U.S. Middle Peace Plan in the form of Peace for Prosperity Workshop in Bahrain, June 2019. During that occasion, Kushner stated that the key to resolving the prolonged conflict was enhancing the economic welfare of the Palestinian people, which could be accomplished by giving aid as much as \$50 billion (Chulov, 2019). Therefore, many of the invitees denounced the forum and accused Kushner of being ignorant by stating that he wanted to buy peace with money. As a matter of fact, the real topic of the conflict, the political side, the humanity issue, and the land disputes were not discussed during the event. Furthermore, both Israel and Palestine were not invited to the event. Kushner contended that he did not invite the Israeli government. Nonetheless, the reason for PA—as the representation of Palestinian people—absence was not because they were not invited. It was because of their stance to boycott every American move since they were disappointed with the U.S. Embassy relocation.



Consequently, the event was more like a forum for business people from countries in the Gulf, except Iran, than a multilateral diplomatic meeting for conflict resolution (Saphiro & Guzansky, 2019).

This issue could be implied as Trump's mismanagement in the administration, either Kushner or Trump did not incorporate PA and the Palestinian people who should be mediated with Israel. In fact, the burden of these foreign affairs should have been given to the Secretary of State. As the one who currently holds the position, Mike Pompeo even felt skeptical at one point with the peace proposal of Trump to be accepted by every party (The Times of Israel, 2019). However, Trump saw that Pompeo's skepticism was not excessive if one did not examine the situation more in-depth. In contrast, Trump himself believed that the future peace proposal could be implemented.

If we identify Trump's previous policies, such as the Muslim travel ban and the U.S. withdrawal from Paris Agreement, it can be concluded that Trump only needed much information when he encountered a situation that he did not fully master or have an interest in. In leaving Paris Agreement, for example, Trump was involved in significant debates for months with every related institution. The interested parties—the pro and the contra—were competing with each other to convince the president what was the best decision. Nevertheless, on different occasions like the travel ban, Trump devised the order secretly before enacting single-handedly. The same approach would be taken by Trump on pro-Israel policies and the coming U.S. Middle East Peace Plan on which he had an interest. Therefore, it is hardly possible for Trump to engage with actors who would divert his objectives—in this case, the Palestinians. Based on this pattern, it can be argued that Trump is unwilling to build a consensus inside his administration, as what has happened to Pompeo.

Although his decisions triggered an uproar and even armed conflict between IDF and Hamas, Trump was still insisted that his plan would entirely succeed. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, Trump did not want to evaluate his mentality towards the ongoing situation. Secondly, he got an interest related to his motivation to pursue personal desire. In the first instance, it is

acknowledged that a leader who is unwilling to evaluate himself tends to conceive his environment simplistically and act with an excess of self-confidence and ambition (Hermann, 2002). By his reluctance to compromise, Trump is a type of leader who prefers to choose a “take it or leave it” way when he confronts the situation. He wants his plan to be completely worked out. Otherwise, it is better not to have it at all.

In the second instance, Trump's aggressiveness could be understood as a form of necessity to fulfill some political desires. Those desires varied from recognition, approval, acclaim, to political support not only from the Israeli government but also from several interest groups in the U.S. Those groups are dominated by American Evangelical Christian and right-wing Orthodox American Jews. Despite the fact that these actors do not have their political party, they still have significant influence over American politics, especially in the Trump administration. In fact, it is not uncommon to see Trump officials admitted themselves as Evangelicals and supporters of Israel, including Vice President Mike Pence. Pence used to say that his support towards Israel is not merely due to hierarchical obedience to Trump's instruction, but rather because of his Christian belief as well (Pro Rethoric, LLC, 2017).

#### **JUDEO-CHRISTIAN LOBBYING GROUP AS TRUMP POLITICAL DRIVING FORCE**

One of the facts frequently overlooked about Trump winning the 2016 presidential election is the 81% evangelicals who voted for him (Berlinerbrau, 2019). This number counts for 26% of the total ballots voted nationally. The problem is that these Evangelicals often claimed themselves as the faithful adherent of Christianity, who has no tolerance to God's law abuse. Meanwhile, Trump's frequent divorce, hate-messenger, arrogance, and greedy life obviously do not meet the moral standard of Christian. Therefore, the most logical reason why Evangelicals are eager to support Trump is not because of his personal life, but for his bravery in advocating the group's agendas, such as restricting Muslim immigrants (C-SPAN, 2016) and supporting the nation of Israel.

The question is why American Evangelical Christians are very supportive of Israel? The answer will not touch material aspects such as shared political ideology, profitable economic partnership, or military, technology, and other forms of cooperation. Rather, it is because of the religious doctrine inside Christianity. They believe that the modern state of Israel and Jews exist as God is willing to preserve and gather His chosen people before His second coming and final judgment of Earth. This belief evolved to political ideology and acts which require every Christian to support Jewish existence and whatever political problem they face. By the establishment of organizations, such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) or Christian United for Israel (CUFI), the idea has currently advocated the government.

US Evangelical Christians have been involved in U.S. politics—whether as lobbying group or becoming state officials—for at least the last four decades. Unfortunately, their imagination of witnessing the U.S. to be thriving as a Christian nation and letting alone in compelling the state to support Israel is getting obscure over the time since the time of President Jimmy Carter as the leftist and liberal promoters frequently posed an obstacle. Some experts called this as cultural marginalization: the value of common American Christian family life that intersects with conservative-libertarian economic and right-wing populism ideas (Brittain, 2018). In other words, their religion-based political interests are losing their priority in U.S. national politics. However, under Trump's government, they got another chance to be on the stage once again.

Trump is the president that evangelicals had wished for, a leader who does not overthink to support Israel. In the eye of evangelicals and right-wing orthodox Jews, Trump is a hero who bravely made radical changes to support Israel and stood against the hypocrite Democrat and left-wing liberal Jews (Yavuz & Okur, 2018). Such a claim also came from the Israeli people and government, who counted Trump as a friend for the nation of Israel. They named an area in Golan Heights by Trump as a tribute.

Upon examining the psychological relations between American Evangelicals and Israel, what should be addressed currently is why Trump personally supports Israel and Jewish people. Despite pragmatist political reasons or faith matters, the answer lies in the historical background of Trump's family neighborhood. His father, Fred Trump, actively donated for the goodness of Jewish people starting from funding Long Island Jewish Hospital to giving some area in New York to Talmud Torah of the Beach Haven Jewish (Berkowitz, 2019). Besides common reasons for practicing a good Christian life, it was also because Fred's associates in his business property were dominated by the Jews. Furthermore, Trump's family also agreed with the prejudiced notion that Jewish people are brilliant, diligent, and have integrity.

Inheriting this philanthropy habit from his father, Trump brought his family Jewish-favor to the extent of politics. His first donation was around 1980 when many Israeli were driven away in the area of North Sinai after the agreement with Egypt. Later in 2005, Trump helped the recovery for Jewish people who were removed from Gush Katif, Gaza, and not long after that, he donated \$10,000 to American Friends of Beit El Institutions and several religious organizations in Samaria. Moreover, and probably the most illogical thing, was that Trump's family attempted to synthesize Jewish identity inside. For example, his older brother, Fred Jr., joined a Jewish fraternity called Sigma Alpha Mu when he was studying at Lehigh University. Trump was also very welcome when his daughter, Ivanka, married to Kushner, a Jewish who later served as Trump's Senior Advisor. This endorsement got even more amplified when Trump became the U.S. President. Trump did not only stop with his radical foreign policies but also he meddled to an issue in which he was unauthorized. The latest controversial statement of Trump is about U.S. Representatives Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib's official visit plan to Israel and Palestine. Trump interfered with Israel's domestic business by stating that if the Israelis let those anti-Israel and anti-Semitic figures enter their country, it would be the same as admitting a submission to enemies (Pilkington & Helmore, 2019).

This incident incited condemnations by the American public and left-wing American Jews. It also shows the high tense of polarization in U.S. politics, which could make Trump the most hated president in U.S. history more than Nixon. Nonetheless, while he risked his performance overview for this year's election, Trump could also become the most loved president by his fanatic supporters whose interests were upheld by him. If Trump wins the second term, it will be possible that more pro-Israel policies prevail. After recognizing Jerusalem and Golan Heights, we might see he would recognize West Bank, which he already did informally (Borger & Holmes, 2019), and even the Old City along with Temple Mount as Israel sovereignty (Lazaroff, 2019).<sup>iv</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Upon examining Trump's personality and governance, this study concludes that his leadership style and political behavior contributed to the pattern of U.S. foreign policy. According to an authoritative decision unit theory by Hermann (2001), Trump is a predominant leader who is not only involved in formulating plans but also deciding the final decision. Besides creating several foreign policy maneuvers on free trade, immigration, and security, Trump administration frequently produces extreme pro-Israel policies starting with his recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and consequently moving the U.S. embassy there. It has also been known that despite condemnation within the domestic and international level, Trump persisted in pursuing his goal. He believes that as far as he can handle the situation, then there is no reason to compromise. This mentality makes him an aggressive leader who works to overcome political constraints and to ignore facts on the ground. In the end, Trump's confrontational behavior is intended to secure his political primacy amongst American Evangelicals and right-wing American Jews.

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<sup>1</sup> Predominant leader is one of the three decision units Hermann has elaborated from Graham T. Allison's (1971) decision making models. The two other decision units are single group and coalition of autonomous actors. Decision units refer to every political entity which has the ability to commit resources in order to deliver a decision and prevent others to reverse their position. Predominant leader has the ability to stifle any opposition and is equipped with power to make decision alone if necessary.

<sup>2</sup> In order to execute his policy, especially a foreign policy, a leader has to deal with his constituent and circumstances in domestic and international level. Many cases show that the leader's plan is contradicting with his surroundings and therefore should be compromised with other parties'

interests. Thus, the leader is compelled to adjust his objective. Hermann calls this "political constraint," where the political situation prevents the leader to accomplish his full objective.

<sup>iii</sup> Generally, there are two levels in the decision making process to reach the final outcome as Hermann (2001) argued. The first level is the decision process itself, when various parties involved in the contestation of ideas. This practice could lead to different outcomes from deadlock to concurrence, and others. Secondly, since the authoritative decision unit is the leader alone, he is vested with power to make the final judgment and then make the actual content of foreign policy.

<sup>iv</sup> Before the end of 2019, Trump gave the Israeli government reminiscence in the form of a statement that U.S. government no longer considers Israeli West Bank settlements illegal according to international law. Mike Pompeo says that the U.S. State Department's 1978 legal opinion did not led the dispute anywhere and to the peace especially (Jakes & Halbfinger, 2019).