BAB I

GOVERNMENT POLICY FROM THE IMPACTS OF AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY IN 2019-2020

This proposal aims to discuss the problematic issue based on the research question. The author also puts the theoretical framework that will help to identify the phenomenon and formulate a hypothesis. This chapter also contains an explanation of the research methodology, research objective, research scope, and writing structure.

A. BACKGROUND

Environmental issue is one of the issues that are often discussed in International Relations. When talking about International Relations, it is no longer focused on issues of conflict or diplomacy between one country and another. However, environmental issues are also interesting topics to discuss, considering that all the sources we are enjoying come from the environment. The increase in population causes increased human needs. People who are not responsible for damaging the environment, such as forest destruction and illegal burning, will threaten environmental conditions and threaten the future. The bad news is coming from Australia, where wildfires hit Australia during the summer of 2019-2020 the most devastating season of wildfires ever experienced in the country's history. So much was lost, and the effects will be felt for years to come (WWF, 2020).

Australia's forests are recognized and valued for their diverse ecosystems and unique biodiversity.Based on Tourism Australia 2020, Australia has more than 378 species of mammals, 828 species of birds, 4,000 species of fish, 300 species of lizards, 140 species of snakes, two species of crocodiles, and about 50 types of marine mammals. More than 80 per cent of Australia's plants, mammals, reptiles, and frogs do not exist in any other country. Some of our best-known

animals are the kangaroo, koala, echidna, dingo dog, platypus, wallaby, and wombat (Australia T. , 2020). Australia is the driest continent in the world, with nearly 20% of Australia's landmass classified as the driest continent in the world, with nearly 20% of Australia's landmass classified as desert. Average annual rainfall is low, with high rainfall intensity over tropical areas of mainland Australia and some coastal areas (PPI, 2020).

Since the start of 2020, many incidents have threatened harmful impacts on the environment, starting from the floods that hit Jakarta, forest fires in Australia to the earthquake that afflicted Puerto Rico followed by the Covid-19 pandemic that is currently happening (Subagja, 2020). The Australian fires, which have been raging for months from 2019 to 2020, are considered to be deadly. It is recorded that up to a fifth of the forest has been burned (Driantama, 2020). Forest fires that have been reported to occur due to climate change and prolonged drought due to global warming would easily cause fires for several months in Australia.

Australia has a dark history of forest fires in the past. Not only this once, but there have also been several incidents of forest fires that the kangaroo country has experienced. Almost every year, forest fires occur because of the extreme heat in Australia. Apart from prolonged droughts, forest fires in Australia often occur due to extreme heat waves and human carelessness. The first devastating fire was recorded in 1851. Apart from the prolonged drought, the fire was also triggered by humans because, at that time, they were "thirsty" for gold hunting. Forest fires became frequent after the 1960s (Wirayudha, 2020). Some of the wildfires include the "Black Thursday" fire of 1851, the "Black Friday" fire of 1939, and the New South Wales Fires of 1951.

2019-2020 was the year Australia faced the largest forest fire incidence in history. Although, there were certainly some quite severe fires, what happened at the end of 2019 to early

2020 was marked by several fires that coincided in six states and two regions, for months, with several hotspots merging. This is why the recent forest fire incident was recorded as the largest fires ever recorded in Australia. At least 11–18.6 million hectares were recorded burned (110,000–186,000 square kilometres) at the end of January (when 50 hotspots were still burning, BBC 2020), about 5,900 buildings and 2,800 houses burned down, and 33 deaths at that time. Plus, based on the Australian Government's Restoration of Forest and Wildlife Fires identified 113 species, with at least a third of their habitat burned (Baldwin, 2020).

The Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI) is used in Australia to measure the level of fire hazard in Australian forests. It combines drought records, based on precipitation and evaporation, with meteorological variables for wind speed, temperature, and humidity. The results show that high temperatures, a deficit of rainfall and a prolonged drought lead to an increase in fuel availability and a very high fire hazard index. Fires burned nearly 19 million hectares, destroyed more than 3,000 homes, and killed 33 people and more than 1 billion animals (I.Filkov, 2020).

The fires centred in New South Wales, Australia, prompted the government to declare a state of emergency in November 2019. The fires quickly spread across states to become some of the most destructive on record. An area the size of South Korea, about 25.5 million hectares, has been burned. At least 33 people have died, including at least three volunteer firefighters, and many more are missing. About 3,000 houses were destroyed or damaged. As the flames escalated in the days leading up to New Year's Eve, thousands of displaced people sought refuge on beaches across New South Wales and Victoria (Calma, 2020).

It continued until mid-January until finally, a wave of heavy rain provided assistance in several areas hit by forest fires, however, the presence of the rain was not enough to

extinguish the fire. Nevertheless, that was quite a respite for firefighters in some areas who had only occasionally seen the weather in previous months. Hotter temperatures, drought, and strong winds again intensified the crisis during the first weekend of February. In mid-February, a thunderstorm helped firefighters extinguish all the fires in New South Wales (NSW), even though the fires continued in Victoria. All fires were successfully extinguished or contained by March 4, 2020, nine months after the first started burning (MyFireWatch, 2020).

In a situation like this, the policies and decisions of the government are eagerly awaited by the people so that this condition can improve as soon as possible. Morrison has faced harsh criticism for the way his government has responded to bushfires and its climate policies. The Morrison administration is seen as not doing enough to address climate change, which experts say could increase the intensity, frequency and scale of fires. When asked about his plans to reduce carbon emissions, Morrison insisted that his government was on track to achieve its targets. Under the Paris climate agreement, Australia has committed to reducing emissions by 26% to 28% by 2030 compared to 2005. However, Morrison said a "global solution" was urgently needed to tackle climate change (bbc, 2020). This made the people in several cities staged demonstrations to the streets. Since then, the government has taken several initiatives to deal with the fires, but it seems that some Australians think these decisions are not enough. This thesis tries to discuss more focus on the environment security perspective where the impact of forest fires will certainly have many impacts on the environment, especially humans.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the background above, the research question is as follows:

"How the Australian governments make a policy to handle the bushfires in 2019-2020?"

C. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The environmental issue is not new. In the era of the 1990s, environmental issues have become the international agenda. Environmental issues greatly affect the stability of a country where if the environment is damaged, it will negatively impact the country. The existence of a comfortable and quality environment will certainly make it a safe place for humans to live in.

"As we move into the 21st century, the relationship between security and the environment will become clearer." So said former Secretary of State Warren Christopher following his April 1996 announcement of an unprecedented State Department initiative to place environmental concerns near the top of foreign policy. Environment and security concepts focus differently on what is secured (what is the object of security), what is secured, who tries to provide security, and what methods are used to provide security. Key differences emerge between the goals pursued by various institutions and policies. Some efforts are fundamentally directed at broad sustainable development goals to address the root causes of environmental problems and improve human, economic, and international security. Others, focused on preventing or containing certain threats or symptoms of environmental problems to protect more traditional national security interests. Similarly, observers disagree over the appropriate institutions, tools, and means actors should use to build solutions (Wiliams, 2008).

In some cases, policy responses include methods and objectives that sometimes conflict with if not mutually exclusive. Once an analyst has decided on the meaning of security and what security they are focusing on, it is important to ask what constitutes a security issue for a particular reference. It involves analyzing the process through which the threat agenda is built. In other words, who decides which references an object's valuable values are threatened with, and by what or by whom? Despite our individual worries and anxieties, most of life's insecurities are shared by other individuals and groups. This means that when studying security it is important to pay attention to how representatives of certain groups and organizations construct threat agendas. It is also important to recognize that not all groups, and therefore not all threat agendas, have the same political significance.

Studying security is important because it can help people as individuals and groups – to achieve it. Asking how security is achieved not only implies that we know what security means and what it looks like in different parts of the world, but that there are certain actors who, through their conscious efforts, can shape the future in any desired way. In this sense, how we think about security and what we consider a safe environment will require will inevitably shape the security policies we advocate. Not all of these security concerns require the exercise of much military force, but in a society where security concerns remain important, the environment is part of this policy.

Environmental security refers to the concept of state security achieved by fighting poverty, environmental damage, and lack of access to knowledge. Environmental security is a major challenge regarding the global environmental change, with a focus on the interaction between ecosystems and humans, the effects of global environmental change on environmental damage, the impact of increasing social demand for resources, ecosystem services, and environmental-related items (Kurniawan, 2016). Therefore, security for both

humans, animals, and plants comes from a safe environment too. As the explanation above, that environmental security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of a threat to the values obtained, in a subjective sense, there is no fear that such values will be attacked. Then the safety measure for life around comes from a safe environment.

According to the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) definition, Environmental Security aims to protect humans from natural damage, long-term and short-term damage, and environmental damage by human actions, and deterioration of the natural environment, such as global warming, air pollution, and forest pollution, and others (Clark, 2013).

Based on the definition above, the interconnections among humans and natural resources make the environment become a safe place for humans. Environmental security will be achieved if humans' safety and their surroundings are guaranteed. The impact of Australian forest fires is loss and destruction of wildlife habitat. Australia is one of the countries that has unique wildlife, such as kangaroos and koalas, making Australia a tourist spot for tourists to see the uniqueness of these animals. More than 1 billion animals are estimated to have been killed in the fires (I.Filkov, 2020).

Also, the emergence of air pollution which has a direct impact on a number of cities in Australia. Smoke from the wildfires has blanketed much of Australia's southeast coast. The air quality of several Australian cities has reached dangerous levels. These cities include Latrobe Valley, Melbourne, the central region, the entire Gippsland region, and the north-central part. Air quality in these cities is said to be at dangerous levels. The impact of the emergence of air pollution has resulted in more than one hundred schools being closed. The South Australian Department of Education announced the closing of 111 schools and Kindergartens as a security measure. Forest fire smoke was responsible for 417 excess

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deaths, 1,124 hospitalizations for cardiovascular problems, 2027 for respiratory problems, and 1305 presentations for emergency departments with asthma (I.Filkov, 2020).

As for how the Australian government's efforts in handling to protect humans and the environment from these fires, such as the Australian military sending planes and ships as well as 3,000 Australian reservists to New South Wales in an effort to help extinguish the severe fires in the state as a follow-up to the response to the severe forest fires that occurred in the state. hit the territory of his country (Khan S. , 2020). However, the government is asked to take a quick decision to make a policy in dealing with this case so that it can recover quickly

D. HYPOTHESIS

Based on the background and theories mentioned above, the Australian government makes a policy to handle the Bushfires issues in 2019-2020, as follows:

1. Establishes royal commission on national natural disaster management
2. Cooperate with Wildlife Rescue Organization to helping the animals effected the bushfires
3. Accepting the assistance from other country

E. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Data Collection Method

This research uses the library research method by looking for the data source, data collection, data analysis. This research will be using secondary data by looking for data sources through library studies, journals, print media, and reports from the internet or printed books. After collecting the data, the authors will describe and identify the specific data.

2. **Data Analysis Method**

This research was conducted using a qualitative research method. The qualitative method is a method that encourages writers to understand phenomena as a whole and carry out a holistic analysis, which needs to be described. The author will take all of the data that has been selected and classify from the literature review and use a descriptive approach to link it to the theoretical framework that has been chosen.

F. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The author's objective in this research is to explain the forest fires that occurred in Australia in 2019-2020 and find out how the government policy to handles this case.

G. SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The research scope for this proposal thesis is limited in the year 2019 until 2020 since the Australian bushfire just started at the end of 2019. Forest fires in Australia in 2019-2020 are the biggest fire season in Australia in history. However, in the past there were certainly some quite severe fires, what happened at the end of 2019 to early 2020 was marked by several fires that coincided in six states and two regions, for months, with several hotspots merging.

H. OUTLINE

The outline of this research consists of the framework of the exact outline from four chapters. The following are the descriptions of the outline:

1. **CHAPTER 1**

This chapter is an introduction that contains the background of the case study, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, research

methods, the purpose of research, the scope of research, and systematics of writing.

2. **CHAPTER 2**

   In this chapter, the author will explain the incidence of forest fires in Australia in 2019-2020 starting from the History of bushfires, chronology of Bushfires in 2019-2020, and the impacts for the environmental of Bushfires in 2019-2020

3. **CHAPTER 3**

   In this chapter, the author will explain the government policy related the bushfires in Australia in 2019-2020 starting from Scott Morrison establishes royal commission on national natural disaster management, Cooperate with Wildlife Rescue Organization to helping the animals effected the bushfires and accepting the assistance from other country.

4. **CHAPTER 4**

   This chapter provides a comprehensive conclusion of the research that has been discussed.