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Trump Will Withdraw U.S. From Paris Climate Agreement

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WASHINGTON — President Trump announced on Thursday that the United States would withdraw from the Paris climate accord, weakening efforts to combat global warming and embracing isolationist voices in his White House who argued that the agreement was a pernicious threat to the economy and American sovereignty.

In a speech from the Rose Garden, Mr. Trump said the landmark 2015 pact imposed wildly unfair environmental standards on American businesses and workers. He vowed to stand with the people of the United States against what he called a “draconian” international deal.

“I was elected to represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris,” the president said, drawing support from members of his Republican Party but widespread condemnation from political

Mr. Trump said he wanted to negotiate a better deal for the United States, and the administration said he had placed calls to the leaders of Britain, France, Germany and Canada to personally explain his decision. A statement from the White House press secretary said the president “reassured the leaders that America remains committed to the trans-Atlantic alliance and to robust efforts to protect the environment.”

But within minutes of the president’s remarks, the leaders of France, Germany and Italy issued a joint statement saying that the Paris climate accord was “irreversible” and could not be renegotiated.

The decision was a victory for Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump’s chief strategist, and Scott Pruitt, the Environmental Protection Agency administrator, who spent months quietly making their case to the president about the dangers of the agreement. Inside the West Wing, the pair overcame intense opposition from other top aides, including Gary D. Cohn, the director of the National Economic Council, the president’s daughter Ivanka Trump, and his secretary of state, Rex Tillerson.

Ms. Trump, in particular, fought to make sure that her father heard from people supportive of the agreement, setting up calls and meetings with world leaders, corporate executives and others. But by Thursday, aides who pushed to remain part of the agreement were disconsolate, and it was Mr. Pruitt whom the president brought up for victory remarks at the Rose Garden event.

The president’s speech was his boldest and most sweeping assertion of an “America first” foreign policy doctrine since he assumed office four months ago. He vowed to turn the country’s empathy inward, rejecting financial assistance for pollution controls in developing nations in favor of providing help to American cities struggling to hire police officers.

“It would once have been unthinkable that an international agreement could prevent the United States from conducting its own domestic affairs,” Mr. Trump said.

In Mr. Trump’s view, the Paris accord represents an attack on the sovereignty of the United States and a threat to the ability of his administration to reshape the nation’s environmental laws in ways that benefit everyday Americans.

President Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement drew immediate reaction from big-city mayors, governors and Congress members.

“At what point does America get demeaned? At what point do they start laughing at us as a country?” Mr. Trump said. “We don’t want other leaders and other countries laughing at us anymore. And they won’t be.”

But business leaders like Elon Musk of Tesla, Jeffrey R. Immelt of General Electric and Lloyd C. Blankfein of Goldman Sachs said the decision would ultimately harm the economy by ceding the jobs of the future in clean energy and technology to overseas competitors.

Mr. Musk, who had agreed to be a member of a two business-related councils that Mr. Trump set up this year, wrote on Twitter that he would leave those panels.

“Climate change is real. Leaving Paris is not good for America or the world,” he said.

Under the accord, the United States had pledged to cut its greenhouse gas emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025 and commit up to \$3 billion in aid for poorer countries by 2020.

By stepping away from the Paris agreement, the president made good on a campaign promise to “cancel” an agreement he repeatedly mocked at rallies. As president, he has moved rapidly to reverse Obama-era policies aimed at allowing the United States to meet its pollution-reduction targets as set under the agreement.

“We are getting out,” Mr. Trump said Thursday. “But we will start to negotiate, and we will see if we can make a deal that’s fair. And if we can, that’s great.”