

We negate, The United States federal government should substantially increase its investment in domestic nuclear energy.

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RWT will be reinvigorated under Trump

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<https://archive.ph/6mkCF#selection-541.0-544.0>,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/12/06/trump-counterterrorism-far-right-white-supremacists/>, DOA 5/10/25) KC

After more than two decades of prioritizing efforts to combat militant Islamist groups, U.S. counterterrorism programs have slowly shifted their focus in recent years to a domestic threat the FBI has said is deadlier and more active: violent far-right movements. But that pivot is likely to halt when President-elect Donald Trump takes office next month, according to analysts and former national security officials. Based on campaign promises and Trump's first-term record, analysts foresee a rollback of initiatives aimed at curbing violent extremism, especially among right-wing movements. Among the predictions: a slashing of domestic terrorism resources, White House pressure to investigate what Trump terms "the radical left" and cuts to programs aimed at the prevention of radicalization. Such moves would reverse steps taken by the Biden administration, which issued the nation's first strategy on countering domestic terrorism in 2021, a document that pledged a whole-of-society campaign to fight white supremacist and anti-government violence that had become "the most urgent terrorism threat the United States faces today." The threat picture has somewhat shifted since 2021, with a drop in far-right attacks and an uptick in foreign-inspired plots. Analysts say the lull among the former is due in part to Justice Department prosecutions of violent extremist groups including the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers and neo-Nazi factions. But researchers say the same domestic movements that mobilized under the first Trump administration are poised to make a comeback if given a permissive climate. An analysis last month by Colin Clarke of the Soufan Center, a security-focused think tank, said "a second Trump term could reduce, if not altogether eliminate, US government funding available for domestic terrorism or at least right-wing extremism." Trump and several of his picks for senior posts have espoused ideologies the Biden counter-extremism project was designed to combat, including white supremacist "replacement" theory, xenophobia, antisemitism and Islamophobia. The president-elect's promise to pardon some rioters who took part in the storming of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, is another setback to what the Biden administration had touted as progress on the domestic terrorism front. Taylor Rogers, a spokesperson for the Trump-Vance transition team, did not address specific questions about the next administration's priorities in combating domestic terrorism. "President Trump will deliver on his promise to protect our country from terrorist threats and Make America, and the world, Safe Again!" Rogers said in a statement. Trump surrogates have pushed back on claims that racial animus and anti-immigrant extremism are core to the MAGA movement, noting that a surge in support from voters of color helped Trump win the 2024 election. The White House sets policy priorities that trickle down to the funding and investigative assets of federal agencies charged with monitoring a wide range of threats to the United States. Analysts and former

officials say their main concern is a **replay of what they saw in the first Trump presidency — attempts to wield counterterrorism powers as a political cudgel and going after Islamist militants and far-left groups while playing down the far-right threat. Such a turn, extremism researchers say, could embolden movements that assert themselves as a shadow MAGA army. Already, anti-immigrant groups have expressed an eagerness to assist with Trump’s promised mass-deportation plan, an offer that raises the specter of militia vigilantism and increased anti-Latino hostility. “This is an exciting prospect for most of them,” said Amy Cooter, a militia specialist at the Middlebury Institute’s Center on Terrorism, Extremism and Counterterrorism. “Border militias have already been engaged with this and see this as sort of a green light to potentially up their aggressive actions.”** Lessons from last time For clues on how Trump might approach violent extremism this time around, analysts **recall the test that came early in his first presidency after a deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville. Analysts say Trump’s muted response to the 2017 hate march indicated a willful blindness to the momentum of the far right. Months earlier, federal authorities issued an intelligence bulletin that said white supremacists were responsible for 49 homicides in 26 attacks from 2000 to 2016, “more than any other domestic movement.” But the Trump White House was loath to address the topic and repeatedly intervened to remove or weaken language in reports related to white supremacist threats,** according to two former counterterrorism officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss national security matters. **Similar accounts emerged in a whistleblower complaint by a then-official who said superiors told him to modify intelligence reports, including about white supremacists, to bring them in line with Trump’s public statements. A Homeland Security spokesman denied the claims. Critics point to a 2018 White House strategy report as an object lesson in the Trump approach to counterterrorism. The 25-page document mentions Islamist militants nearly two dozen times, with descriptions such as “vile,” “hateful” and “totalitarian.” Domestic terrorism gets a brief mention only at the end: “Lastly,” the section begins, followed by a couple of paragraphs that lumped together “racially motivated extremism, animal rights extremism, environmental extremism, sovereign citizen extremism, and militia extremism.” Days after the White House released the report in October 2018, a gunman killed 11 people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, the deadliest anti-Jewish attack in U.S. history.** The following spring brought a **second fatal shooting at a synagogue** — in Poway, California, by an assailant who previously tried to burn down a mosque. A few months after that came a **racist rampage** at a Walmart in El Paso and another bloody milestone: the deadliest assault on Latinos in U.S. history. The El Paso attack prompted a rejection of white supremacist violence from Trump, who previously had **said** he didn’t think it was a growing threat. “In one voice, our nation must condemn racism, bigotry and white supremacy,” Trump said. “These sinister ideologies must be defeated.” That more direct approach was echoed in a 2019 counterterrorism strategy that spelled out the threat of white supremacist movements and pledged aggressive pushback — a departure from the 2018 document. Still, behind the scenes, according to former officials and researchers who worked closely with the administration, there was **little political will** to grapple with the far-right threat. Federal authorities began using terms such as “RMVE,” for “racially motivated violent extremism,” which was criticized by activists and researchers as a euphemism for deadly white supremacists. The term was also vague enough that it allowed officials to introduce a subcategory on “black identity violent extremism,” drawing outrage from civil rights groups who called it an attempt to equate Black Lives Matter protesters with far-right militants. Alex DiBranco, executive director of the Institute for Research on Male Supremacism, said some anti-fascist and gender-focused nonprofits are concerned again about the Trump administration seeking to discredit or even prosecute them by classifying them as far-left domestic terrorist groups. “When you think about Trump and the way he talks about anti-fascist organizations, it’s very easy to think about him delineating lots of organizations as terrorist-supporting,” DiBranco said. During Trump’s first term, former officials said, frustrated staffers tried to push for more balanced positions but were steamrolled by the hard-line senior Trump aide **Stephen Miller**, who is returning to the administration with similar powers. Another polarizing returnee is Trump’s pick to oversee counterterrorism policy at the National Security Council, **Sebastian Gorka**, whose open hostility toward Islam and prickly persona contributed to his **exit** after only a few months in the first Trump administration. For all the dysfunction of the first Trump term, a former official said, counterterrorism leaders aggressively pushed the MAGA agenda while remaining cognizant of legal pitfalls and making sure policies could withstand challenges. “They had an appreciation for the importance of doing it right. ‘Move faster, but do it right,’” the former official recalled. Whether that mantra is carried into a second term is an open question. Some are bracing for a constitutional crisis over policies such as mass deportation that are sure to bring legal battles. “You don’t have another election and you own both chambers of Congress, so what if you just ignored court injunction?” the former official said. “What tools do we have to actually enforce court orders? They’re all in the executive branch.” A shifting threat picture Extremism researchers say they expect one immediate effect of Trump’s return to be a repeal of the culture shift Biden tried to bring about with his 2021 domestic terrorism strategy, which pledged more training and personnel to monitor violent far-right networks. Researchers say Biden

ultimately fell short on promises outlined in the strategy but contributed to what analysts have [described](#) as an overdue rethinking of policies that hadn't evolved to meet the latest threats. **In recent years, Pentagon and homeland security officials have launched efforts to root out extremism within their ranks. Academic researchers and community groups were awarded federal grants to study and prevent radicalization. That work, however, is not in line with the MAGA agenda. Trump-aligned Republicans have portrayed the stepped-up fight against domestic terrorism as a thought-police exercise that could infringe on First Amendment rights.**

Affirming would create two risks

First, increasing enriched uranium

Pashby 25 (Tom Pashby: contributor for the New Civil Engineer. 1/10/25, "US Government assessing risk of SMRs being used to make dirty bombs", New Civil Engineer, <https://www.newcivilengineer.com/latest/us-government-assessing-risk-of-smrs-being-used-to-make-dirty-bombs-10-01-2025/> // DOA: 3/13/25)JDE

The risk of small modular reactors (SMRs) being used to provide access to materials for dirty bombs (radioactive explosive devices) is being reviewed by the US Government. The review follows the publication of a

paper published in the Science journal looking at the increase in **demand for high-assay low-enriched uranium (HALEU) which can be used to fuel advanced modular reactors (AMRs) and SMRs.** The paper, titled The weapons potential of high-assay low-enriched uranium posited that "Recent promotion of new reactor technologies appears to disregard decades-old concerns about nuclear proliferation". Scott Kemp, Edwin S. Lyman, Mark R. Deinert, Richard L. Garwin, and Frank N. von Hippel authored the paper, which said:

"Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons has been a major thrust of international policymaking for more than 70 years. "Now, **an explosion of interest in a nuclear reactor fuel** called high-assay low-enriched uranium (HALEU), **spurred by billions of dollars in US Government funding, threatens to undermine that system of control.** "HALEU contains between

10 and 20% of the isotope uranium-235. At 20% 235U and above, the isotopic mixture is called highly enriched uranium (HEU) and **is internationally recognised as being directly usable in nuclear weapons.** "However, the practical limit for weapons

lies below the 20% HALEU-HEU threshold. **"Governments and others promoting the use of HALEU have not carefully considered the potential proliferation and terrorism risks** that the wide adoption of this fuel creates." The "terrorism risks" the paper refers to **can be understood to mean the creation of dirty bombs, which are relatively**

low-tech devices. Conventional explosives are used, rather than fission or fusion reactions, to spread radioactive material. US Government responds to paper announcing review

U.S. Department of Energy under secretary for nuclear security and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) administrator Jill Hruby wrote a letter published on 2 January in the peer review 'eLetters' section of the academic paper published on 6 June 2024. Hruby said the paper in Science, and a subsequent debate between the authors the wider nuclear community, promoted the NNSA to respond. "Given concerns about climate change coupled with increased energy demand, nuclear energy is poised for growth," she said. "Advanced and small modular reactors (A/SMRs) using HALEU fuel are under active development "NNSA recognises that reactor type, fuel enrichment level, fuel quantity, and fuel form are important factors in evaluating proliferation risks and believes that risk-informed and adaptive approaches to the proliferation challenges inherent in nuclear energy are warranted." She continued: "NNSA has a program to support U.S. A/SMR developers on security- and safeguards-by-design and promotes best practices for nuclear energy deployment by partnering with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). "With its national laboratories, NNSA has regularly collected data and evaluated HALEU risks, and is currently finalising plans to commission a National Academies report.

Although these reports are largely classified, the information is used to inform programs, develop actions, and make recommendations to stakeholders. "It is important to address proliferation concerns about HALEU and important to responsibly develop A/SMRs. NNSA commits to working with academia, industry, the public, and IAEA to do just that." On 20 January 2025, President Trump will be sworn in for a second term, at which point he will be free to replace public servants with his preferred appointees at organisations including the NNSA. HALEU not being considered in the UK's SMR competition The main focus of SMR developers in the UK is the UK Government's Great British Nuclear (GBN) SMR competition. The competition winner or winners will have the opportunity to build a fleet of SMRs with government support on siting and funding. A GBN source confirmed to NCE that none of the developers in its SMR competition – name the developers – were proposing to use

HALEU. NCE [has previously explored the topic of whether waste from SMRs could be used to make nuclear warheads](#) after the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) did not rule out whether it was investigating this possibility. HALEU still popular in wider SMR research Work on SMRs outside of the GBN competition continues to heat up. Last Energy UK and newcleo are both

active in the UK and are pushing for micro modular reactors and advanced modular reactors respectively. King's College London research fellow Ross Peel told NCE that **HALEU continues to be popular with SMR developers and the risks faced outside of the USA are similar.** Peel has recently authored papers with King's on Insider Threat Security Considerations for Advanced and Small Modular Reactors and Nuclear Industry Views on the Security of Small Modular Reactors: Results of a pilot survey, both published in October 2024. Peel said he has been "very pro-nuclear" for years but **is working to help the industry to address his security concerns around SMRs, which he believes is "not where it should be".** Peel said: "The article in Science caused a major argument when it came out and since, and is still doing so as more people become aware of it. The American Nuclear Society, for instance, prepared a letter to Science denouncing the article and tearing down the methods used by the authors, who are all highly respected non-proliferation scholars. **"HALEU is central to the plans of many developers of novel nuclear technology because of the various benefits it offers. The potential security and proliferation risks are real,** however, and proper consideration needs to be given to these. **"The technical risks of HALEU in the UK and US are not different,** although we do have a different background level of security risk than they do, which means that those technical risks might be experienced and managed in a different way. "Both countries have well-developed nuclear security infrastructure, however, which will help to manage these risks. **A lot of concern from both countries will likely be around the export of HALEU fuel to reactors abroad, in foreign countries with less mature nuclear security and non-proliferation systems.** **"Normalising the possession and use of uranium of up to 20% U-235 means that many states who might concern the US and/or the UK will be able to maintain a justifiable position that is that much closer to possessing nuclear weapons, whilst non-state actors** (terrorists, criminals, and even simple disgruntled employees at nuclear sites and more) **will potentially see their way to accessing a type of nuclear material that they could previously almost never imagine getting hold of.** "Developers should be taking seriously the increased security and proliferation risks associated with HALEU use. I would recommend this be considered from the earliest stages of reactor and fuel design – the decision to use HALEU must be based on a full consideration of all factors, including security risk and proliferation risk. "Technology designers who think about these issues throughout their design process, in an integrated way alongside safety, economics, operability and all the rest, will have the greatest chance of producing well-conceived designs that address risks effectively and produce cost-effective nuclear energy." Mixed oxide (MOX) fuel is touted by some developers like newcleo as a way of reducing the burden on society of nuclear waste by using it to fuel its own AMR design. newcleo said: "Through an innovative combination of existing and proven technologies, and by reviving a nuclear industry model based on the manufacture and multi-recycling of Mixed Oxide (Mox) fuel, **newcleo aims to close the nuclear fuel cycle while safely producing clean, affordable, and practically inexhaustible energy required for low carbon economies.**" Peel continued: "MOX is different to HALEU. MOX is about using a mixture of uranium oxide and plutonium oxide to make the fuel (usually – other oxides can creep in too). Almost all nuclear fuel today is uranium oxide. "HALEU is to do specifically with the uranium within the uranium oxide, specifically, how much of it is uranium-235 vs uranium-238. Most reactors today operate with 2-5% uranium-235 within the overall uranium. HALEU is about moving that into a range of up to 19.999% - going to 20% would make it HEU (highly enriched uranium, which is considered to be unacceptable due to weapons-use risks). "So in theory, you could put HALEU into MOX, although no-one has proposed this as the whole point of putting plutonium in there is to replace the need for uranium-235. If you have both plutonium and HALEU in the same fuel you're effectively doing two complicated and costly processes a bit, rather than focussing on doing one process more." Anti-proliferation body says lots of **SMRs increases weapons risk** The Nuclear Information Service (NIS) describes itself as "an independent, not-for-profit research organisation" which investigates the UK's nuclear weapons programme. NIS director David Cullen said: **"This move by the NNSA is a tacit acknowledgement that warnings being raised about the proliferation risks of HALEU are not unfounded.** "I hope that some of the results of their study will be made public so that there is a greater understanding of the dangers, which are just as relevant to the UK as to the US. "We don't know very much about what would be done in the UK to mitigate the risk, as none of the SMR reactor designs have progressed very far in getting regulatory approval. "Only the Rolls-Royce SMR has passed the second stage of the Generic Design Assessment (GDA) process, which means that the Office for Nuclear Regulation have not identified any foundational problems with that design." GDA allows regulators to assess the safety, security, safeguards and environmental aspects of new reactor designs before site-specific proposals are brought forward. The GDA process assesses new nuclear power plant designs for deployment in the UK, demonstrating they can be built, operated and decommissioned in accordance with the highest standards of safety, security, safeguards and environmental protection. Cullen continued: "The second stage does assess security and safeguards (i.e. measures to prevent clandestine diversion of nuclear material), but only to identify fundamental flaws. "The third stage of the process is much more detailed. I hope the ONR will have an opportunity to draw upon the work the NNSA is undertaking. "Unfortunately, **the industry's vision for SMRs, where a much larger number of smaller reactors are deployed, substantially complicates both counter-proliferation monitoring and ensuring the security of nuclear material.** "Design measures might be able to counter some of the more opportunistic security threats against an individual site, but they **cannot meaningfully guard**

against the diversion of nuclear material by SMR operators. “Fundamentally, a greater number of sites and more material creates more opportunities for bad actors. There is no way to design around this basic fact.”

This is the missing piece for extremists

NAE 19 (The National Academy of Engineering (NAE) is an American [nonprofit, non-governmental organization](#). It is part of the [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine \(NASEM\)](#), along with the [National Academy of Sciences \(NAS\)](#) and the [National Academy of Medicine \(NAM\)](#), September 16, 2019, National Academy of Engineering , “Prevent Nuclear

Terror”,<https://www.engineeringchallenges.org/challenges/nuclear.aspx>, DOA 3/10/25) KC

Long before 2001, defenders of national security worried about the possible immediate death of 300,000 people and the loss of thousands of square miles of land to productive use through an act of terror. From the beginnings of the nuclear age, the materials suitable for making a weapon have been accumulating around the world. Even some actual bombs may not be adequately secure against theft or sale in certain countries. Nuclear reactors for research or power are scattered about the globe, capable of producing the raw material for nuclear devices. And the instructions for building explosive devices from such materials have been widely published, suggesting that access to the ingredients would make a bomb a realistic possibility. “It should not be assumed,” write physicists Richard Garwin and Georges Charpak, “that terrorists or other groups wishing to make nuclear weapons cannot read.” Consequently, the main obstacle to a terrorist planning a nuclear nightmare would be acquiring fissile material — plutonium or highly enriched uranium capable of rapid nuclear fission. Nearly 2 million kilograms of each have already been produced and exist in the world today. It takes less than ten kilograms of plutonium, or a few tens of kilograms of highly enriched uranium, to build a bomb. Fission, or the splitting of an atom's nucleus, was discovered originally in uranium. For a bomb, you need a highly enriched mass of uranium typically consisting of 90 percent uranium-235, a form found at levels of less than 1 percent in uranium ore. Fuel for nuclear power reactors is only enriched 3 percent to 5 percent with respect to this trace form of uranium, and so is no good for explosions. Highly enriched bomb-grade uranium is, however, produced for some reactors (such as those used to power nuclear submarines and for some research reactors) and might be diverted to terrorists.

Second, plutonium waste

NAE 19 (The National Academy of Engineering (NAE) is an American [nonprofit, non-governmental organization](#). It is part of the [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine \(NASEM\)](#), along with the [National Academy of Sciences \(NAS\)](#) and the [National Academy of Medicine \(NAM\)](#), September 16, 2019, National Academy of Engineering , “Prevent Nuclear

Terror”,<https://www.engineeringchallenges.org/challenges/nuclear.aspx>, DOA 3/10/25) KC

Besides uranium, another serious concern is the synthetic radioactive element plutonium. Produced by the nuclear “burning” of uranium in reactors, plutonium is a radioactive hazard in itself and also an ideal fuel for nuclear explosives. Worldwide, more than 1,000 reactors operate nowadays, some producing electric power, others

mostly used for research. Plutonium produced in either reactor type could be extracted for use in weapons.

Nuclear security therefore represents one of the most urgent policy issues of the 21st century. In addition to its political and institutional aspects, it poses acute technical issues as well. In short, engineering shares the formidable challenges of finding all the dangerous nuclear material in the world, keeping track of it, securing it, and detecting its diversion or transport for terrorist use. What are the challenges to preventing nuclear terror attacks? Challenges include: (1) how to secure the materials; (2) how to detect, especially at a distance; (3) how to render a potential device harmless; (4) emergency response, cleanup, and public communication after a nuclear explosion; and (5) determining who did it. All of these have engineering components; some are purely technical and others are systems challenges. Some of the technical issues are informational — it is essential to have a sound system for keeping track of weapons and nuclear materials known to exist, in order to protect

against **their theft or purchase on the black market by terrorists.** Another possible danger is that **sophisticated terrorists could buy the innards of a dismantled bomb,** or fuel from a nuclear power plant, and build a homemade explosive device. It is conceivable that such a device would produce considerable damage, with explosive power perhaps a tenth of the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. **With help from renegade professional designers, terrorists might even build a more powerful device, equaling or exceeding the force of the Hiroshima bomb.** Detonated in a large city, such a bomb could **kill 100,000 people or more.** Building a full-scale bomb would not be easy, so terrorists might attempt instead to cause other forms of nuclear chaos, possibly using conventional explosives to blast and scatter radioactive material around a city. Such “dirty bombs” might cause relatively few immediate deaths, but they could contaminate large areas of land, cause potential economic havoc to the operation of a city, and increase long-term cancer incidence. There are millions of potential sources of radioactive material, which is widely used in hospitals, research facilities, and industry -- so preventing access is extremely difficult. Responding to a “dirty bomb” attack would also involve engineering challenges ranging from monitoring to cleanup, of both people and places. Concern for nuclear security complicates the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, such as generating electricity. Ensuring that a nation using nuclear power for energy does not extract plutonium for bomb building is not easy. **Diversion of plutonium is much more difficult when a country opts for a “once through” fuel cycle that keeps the plutonium with the highly radioactive spent fuel, rather than a “closed” fuel cycle where spent fuel is reprocessed and plutonium separated out.** Simple record keeping could be faked or circumvented. Regulations requiring human inspection and video monitoring are surely not foolproof.

It's likely

Earnhardt et al 21 (Becca Earnhardt is a Research Associate with the Nuclear Security program at the Stimson Center. Brendan Hyatt is a nuclear security intern at the Stimson Center. Nickolas Roth serves as a senior director of Nuclear Materials Security at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, January 14, 2021, “A threat to confront: far-right extremists and nuclear terrorism”, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, <https://thebulletin.org/2021/01/a-threat-to-confront-far-right-extremists-and-nuclear-terrorism/>, DOA 4/11/23) KC

Last March, neo-Nazi Timothy Wilson was killed during a shootout as he was planning to bomb a hospital treating COVID-19 patients. Like other neo-Nazis, Wilson viewed the pandemic and increased unrest among the American public as an opportunity to popularize Nazi ideas, spark further chaos, and accelerate societal collapse.^[1] This past week, Ashli Babbitt was shot and killed while storming the US Capitol as part of a right-wing uprising; several years earlier, she was an employee of the Calvert Cliffs nuclear plant, exhibiting violent behavior during this period. **[2] Acts of violence by far-right extremists are on the rise in the United States. Until now, most of these incidents have lacked sophistication, but a critical question for national security experts is whether US far-right extremist groups that espouse violence can carry out something catastrophic. Every president serving in the last two decades has said that nuclear terrorism is a significant national security threat. Analysis of this threat has been, for good reason, mostly focused on foreign extremist groups, but recent events raise questions of whether there should be greater focus in the United States on far-right, domestic extremist threats. These extremists represent a unique danger because of their prevalence in federal institutions such as the military and the potential that they might infiltrate nuclear facilities, where they could access sensitive information and nuclear materials.** The far-right extremist nuclear terrorism threat, which has some history, is amplified today by an ideology focused on accelerating the collapse of society and a documented interest in pursuing nuclear terrorism. Officials need to act decisively to better understand and mitigate this threat. Far-right narratives of nuclear terror. **The intersection between violent far-right extremist ideology and catastrophic terrorism goes back decades. In The Turner Diaries, a 1978 novel labeled the “bible of the racist right,” the protagonists use acts of nuclear terror in service of the creation of a “white world.” Protagonists bomb nuclear installations, seize nuclear weapons, target missiles at New York City and Tel Aviv, and ultimately destroy the Pentagon in a**

[illegible]

How can the new Biden administration address the threat of domestic [terrorism](#), most vividly illustrated by the attempted [insurrection at the U.S. Capitol](#) on Jan. 6? Last week, 20,000 members of the National Guard were deployed for the inauguration to [protect](#) the new administration from far-right extremist violence, but a more serious threat looms. **Nuclear and radiological terrorism has prominently appeared in “apocalyptically minded” white-supremacist ideology for decades.** The [policy community](#) perceives the threat of nuclear terrorism as almost uniquely emanating from outside of U.S. borders, specifically from Islamist [terrorism](#) networks such as the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and their splinter groups. But in fact, **U.S. far-right extremist groups have a history of attempted procurement of nuclear weapons and radiological materials to use against the federal government.** Members of neo-Nazi groups such as [Atomwaffen Division](#), which literally means “atomic weapons” in German, and the National Socialist Movement have attempted in the [past](#) to access nuclear materials with the intent to cause harm. Fears of nuclear terrorism among U.S. policymakers go back at least to the 1970s, when armed insurgencies intensified in the Middle East. The 1972 [Munich massacre](#) by

the Palestinian group Black September and the 1973 oil price shock that suddenly [empowered](#) petroleum-exporting countries fueled concerns of a [violent](#), non-White, Muslim world. India's 1974 nuclear explosion, Pakistan's nuclear weapons acquisition in response and new nuclear energy programs funded by petrodollars in Iran, Libya, Iraq and elsewhere further fanned [fears](#) of nuclear materials falling into "rogue" hands. In 1979, as the Iran hostage crisis played out on national [television](#) for over a year, the idea of radical Islam as a security threat became entrenched in U.S. political culture. But **nuclear terrorism was also a domestic threat in the 1970s. Nuclear power was expected to grow that decade, and a large amount of plutonium (a radioactive material used in nuclear weapon design) was feared to be widely available. By the end of the decade, white-power activists, many of whom were Vietnam War veterans hardened by military training, had [organized](#) for a violent armed struggle of "leaderless resistance" against the federal government. To them, the government was the source of unacceptable societal change that hurt White Christian Americans. In 1978, William [Pierce](#), the founder of the neo-Nazi group National Alliance, published the novel "The Turner Diaries" under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald. It sold over 500,000 copies worldwide and remains highly [popular](#) among white supremacists. In the novel, right-wing extremists invade the Capitol to overthrow the U.S. government. Its narrator, Earl Turner, gloats that "not one of them is beyond our reach." [Dubbed](#) by the FBI as the "bible of the racist right," the novel depicts 18 nuclear explosions in Manhattan alone and the destruction by nuclear weapons of Baltimore, Miami, the California coast and Detroit. It also provides plans to deliberately contaminate with radioactive materials a nuclear power plant in Evanston, Ill. The novel ends with Turner detonating a nuclear bomb over the Pentagon. He justifies the nuclear explosions and sabotage against non-White populations and "race criminals" (liberal Whites) in the name of establishing white supremacy in the United States and worldwide. "The Turner Diaries" has [inspired](#) racially motivated armed robberies and more than [200](#) killings in the United States. It greatly [influenced](#) Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber, who perpetrated the [deadliest](#) domestic terrorist attack on U.S. soil that killed 168 people in April 1995. The book has received [renewed](#) attention after the attack on the Capitol.** Amazon has [prevented](#) its sale, **and major [news](#) outlets have reported on its influence over far-right and white-supremacist groups.** The analogies are chilling. The violent white-supremacist ideology that calls for nuclear and radiological attacks against non-White populations has spread outside the United States. Norwegian far-right terrorist Anders Behring Breivik, who [killed](#) 77 people in July 2011, had called for the [use](#) of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents against "cultural Marxists," "multiculturalists" and those responsible for the Islamic "colonization" of Europe. In his 1500-page manifesto, he laid out plans for theft or unauthorized access to nuclear weapons and the procurement of nuclear materials through transnational smuggling networks. Breivik recommended the use of radiological agents and nuclear weapons after Jan. 1, 2020 — his deadline for Muslims in Europe to "assimilate." Given the [leaderless](#) transnational networks of white supremacists, the call for nuclear and radiological attacks in Breivik's manifesto as well as "The Turner Diaries" poses grave concerns. Policy experts reassure us that if taken seriously as a threat, nuclear terrorism is both [preventable](#) and [solvable](#). That violent white supremacists can easily infiltrate the [police](#), the [military](#) and [nuclear](#) facilities make them an extremely serious and hard-to-detect national security risk. The [involvement](#) in the Capitol attack of the [Oath Keepers](#), a far-right anti-government group that recruits former U.S. military and law enforcement personnel, demonstrates the extent of this threat. Screening far-right extremists within government institutions at local, state and federal levels needs to be a priority for the Biden administration. The key to preventing such a catastrophic attack will be moving beyond a one-dimensional understanding of terrorism as the violent threat of radical Islam, and better understanding the different ways in which far-right domestic terrorism has grown in the United States and the specific threats this brings. **Despite ample evidence to support the concern that [insider threats](#) pose high security risks in nuclear and radiological environments, little has been done at the policy level. The threat of nuclear terrorism is such that we must act preemptively, not after a devastating attack.** The lessons of the past tell us that action will involve breaking down the artificial border between foreign and domestic policies. National security does not just mean preventing attacks from abroad. **The siege of the Capitol came close to being far worse, and there are indications that some rioters intended to [harm](#) lawmakers. But just because we escaped the worst does not mean we can rest easy. We must be proactive to prevent far-right domestic terrorism from going nuclear in this country.**

This triggers retaliation

Hayes 18 (Peter Hayes is Director of the Nautilus Institute and Honorary Professor at the Centre for International Security Studies at the University of Sydney. "NON-STATE TERRORISM AND INADVERTENT NUCLEAR WAR," *Nautilus Institute*, 1/18/18,

<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-special-reports/non-state-terrorism-and-inadvertent-nuclear-war/>) dwc
18

Conclusion We now move to our conclusion. Nuclear-armed states can place themselves on the edge of nuclear war by a combination of threatening force deployments and threat rhetoric. Statements by US and North Korea's leaders and supporting

amplification by state and private media to present just such a lethal combination. Many observers have observed that the risk of war and nuclear war, in Korea and globally, have increased in the last few years—although no-one can say with authority by how much and exactly for what reasons.//// However, states are restrained in their actual decisions to escalate to conflict and/or nuclear war by conventional deterrence, vital national interests, and other institutional and political restraints, both domestic and international. It is not easy, in the real world, or even in fiction, to start nuclear wars.[19] Rhetorical threats are standard fare in realist and constructivist accounts of inter-state nuclear deterrence, compellence, and reassurance, and are not cause for alarm per se. States will manage the risk in each of the threat relationships with other nuclear armed states to stay back from the brink, let alone go over it, as they have in the past. //// This

argument was powerful and to many, persuasive during the Cold War although it does not deny the hair-raising risks taken by nuclear armed states during this period. Today, the multi-polarity of nine nuclear weapons states interacting in a four-tiered nuclear threat system means that the practice of sustaining nuclear threat and preparing for nuclear war is no longer merely complicated, but is now enormously complex in ways that may exceed the capacity of some and perhaps all states to manage, even without the emergence of a fifth tier of non-state actors to add further unpredictability to how this system works in practice. //// The possibility that non-state actors may attack without advance warning as to the time, place, and angle of attack presents another layer of uncertainty to this complexity as to how inter-state nuclear war may break out. That is, non-state actors with nuclear weapons or threat goals and capacities do not seek the same goals, will not use the same control systems, and will use radically different organizational procedures and systems to deliver on their threats compared with nuclear armed states. If used tactically for immediate terrorist effect, a non-state nuclear terrorist could violently attack nuclear facilities, exploiting any number of vulnerabilities in fuel cycle facility security, or use actual nuclear materials and even warheads against military or civilian targets. If a persistent, strategically oriented nuclear terrorist succeed in gaining credible nuclear threat capacities, it might take hostage one or more states or cities.//// If such an event coincides with already high levels of tension and even military collisions between the non-nuclear forces of nuclear armed states, then a non-state nuclear terrorist attack could impel a nuclear armed state to escalate its threat or even military actions against other states, in the belief that this targeted state may have sponsored the non-state attack, or was simply the source of the attack, whatever the declared identity of the attacking non-state entity. This outcome could trigger these states to go onto one or more of the pathways to inadvertent nuclear war, especially if the

terrorist attack was on a high value and high risk nuclear facility or involved the seizure and/or use of fissile material. //// Some experts dismiss this possibility as so remote as to be not worth worrying about. Yet the history of nuclear terrorism globally and in the Northeast Asian region suggests otherwise. Using the sand castle metaphor, once built on the high tide line, sand castles may withstand the wind but eventually succumb to the tide once it reaches the castle—at least once, usually twice a day. Also, theories of organizational and technological failure point to the coincidence of multiple, relatively insignificant driving events that interact or accumulate in ways that lead the "metasystem" to fail, even if each individual component of a system works perfectly. Thus, the potential catalytic effect of a nuclear terrorist incident is not that it would of itself lead to a sudden inter-state nuclear war; but that at a time of crisis **when alert levels are already high**, when control systems on nuclear forces have already shifted from primary emphasis on negative to positive control, when **decision making is already stressed**, when **the potential for miscalculation is already high** due to shows of force indicating that first-use is nigh, when **rhetorical threats promising annihilation** on the one hand, or collapse of morale and weakness on the other **invite counter-vailing threats by nuclear adversaries or their allies** to gain the upper hand in the **"contest of resolve,"** and when organizational cybernetics may be in play such that purposeful actions are implemented differently than intended, **then a terrorist nuclear attack may shift a coincident combination of some or all of these factors to a threshold level where they collectively lead to a first-use decision** by one or more nuclear-armed states. If the terrorist attack is timed or happens to coincide with high levels of inter-state tension involving nuclear-armed states, then some or all of these tendencies will likely be in play anyway—precisely the concern of those who posit pathways to inadvertent nuclear war as outlined in section 2 above. //// The critical question is, just as a catalyst breaks some bonds and lets other bonds form, reducing the energy cost and time taken to achieve a chemical reaction, how would a nuclear terrorist attack at time of nuclear charged inter-state tension potentially shift the way that nuclear threat is projected and perceived in a four or five-way nuclear-prone conflict, and how might it affect the potential pathways to inadvertent nuclear war in such a system?//// Such a pervasive incremental effect is shown in Figure 6 below. Figure 6: Impact of a Terrorist Nuclear Threat or Attack on Interstate

Nuclear Use Control //// Any one or indeed all of these starting nuclear control profiles may be disputed, as might the control profile at the end of the response arrow. (In Figure 6, each nuclear state responds to a terrorist nuclear attack by loosening or abandoning negative controls against unauthorized use, and shifts towards reliance mostly on positive procedural controls biased towards use). But each nuclear armed state will make its moves in response to the posited terrorist nuclear attack partly in response to its expectations as to how other nuclear armed states will perceive and respond to these moves, as well as their perception that an enemy state may have sponsored a terrorist nuclear attack—and considered together, it is obvious that they may not share a common image of the other states' motivations and actions in this response, leading to cumulative potential for misinterpretation and rapid subsequent action, reaction, and escalation.

Extinction

Starr 14 (Steven Starr: Director, Clinical Laboratory Science Program at the U of Missouri. Senior scientist for Physicians for Social Responsibility. 5/30/14, "The Lethality of Nuclear Weapons: Nuclear War has No Winner", Centre for Research on Globalization,

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-lethality-of-nuclear-weapons-nuclear-war-has-no-winner/5385611>

// DOA: 4/1/21)JDE

Paul Craig Roberts held top security clearances. He has repeatedly warned that a US-Russian nuclear war would wipe out the human race, along with all other complex forms of life. As a scientist with expert knowledge, I wish to echo and explain his warning.//// **Nuclear war has no winner.** Beginning in 2006, several of the world's leading climatologists (at Rutgers, UCLA, John Hopkins University, and the University of Colorado-Boulder) published a series of studies that evaluated the long-term environmental consequences of a nuclear war, including baseline scenarios fought with merely 1% of the explosive power in the US and/or Russian launch-ready nuclear arsenals. They concluded that **the consequences of even a "small" nuclear war would include catastrophic disruptions of global climate**^[i] **and massive destruction of Earth's protective ozone layer**^[ii]. These and more recent studies predict that **global agriculture would be so negatively affected by such a war, a global famine would result, which would cause up to 2 billion people to starve to death.**^[iii]//// These peer-reviewed studies – which were analyzed by the best scientists in the world and found to be without error – also predict that **a war fought with less than half of US or Russian strategic nuclear weapons would destroy the human race.**^[iv] In other words, a US-Russian nuclear war would **create such extreme long-term damage to the global environment that it would leave the Earth uninhabitable for humans and most animal forms of life.**//// A recent article in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, "Self-assured destruction: The climate impacts of nuclear war",^[v] begins by stating://// "A nuclear war between Russia and the United States, even after the arsenal reductions planned under New START, could produce a nuclear winter. Hence, **an attack by either side could be suicidal, resulting in self-assured destruction.**" In 2009, I wrote an article^[vi] for the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament that summarizes the findings of these studies. It explains that **nuclear firestorms would produce millions of tons of smoke, which would rise above cloud level and form a global stratospheric smoke layer that would rapidly encircle the Earth. The smoke layer would remain for at least a decade, and it would act to destroy the protective ozone layer** (vastly increasing the UV-B reaching Earth^[vii]) as well as block warming sunlight, thus creating Ice Age weather conditions that would last 10 years or longer.//// Following a US-Russian nuclear war, **temperatures in the central US and Eurasia would fall below freezing every day for one to three years; the intense cold would completely eliminate growing seasons for a decade or longer. No crops could be grown, leading to a famine that would kill most humans and large animal populations.**//// **Electromagnetic pulse from high-altitude nuclear detonations would destroy the integrated circuits in all modern electronic devices**^[viii], including **those in commercial nuclear power plants. Every nuclear reactor would almost instantly meltdown; every nuclear spent fuel pool** (which contain many times more radioactivity than found in the reactors) **would boil-off, releasing vast amounts of long-lived radioactivity. The fallout would make most of the US and Europe uninhabitable. Of course, the survivors of the nuclear war would be starving to death anyway.**////

C2) Oil

The US maintains a strong presence in the ME

Masters and Merrow 25 (Jonathan Masters is a deputy editor at the Council on Foreign Relations, and writes on national security and civil liberties issues, he received his BA in Political Science from Emory University, Will Merrow creates data visualizations for a range of CFR content. He previously worked at Graphicacy designing visualizations for mission-driven clients. He holds a bachelor's degree in international relations from Tufts University and a master's degree in data analytics and visualization from the Pratt Institute, "U.S. Forces in the Middle East: Mapping the Military Presence", March 28, 2025, Council on Foreign Relations,

<https://www.cfr.org/article/us-forces-middle-east-mapping-military-presence>, DOA 4/3/25) KC

The United States maintains a considerable military presence in the Middle East, with forces in more than a dozen countries and on ships throughout the region's waters. That presence expanded in 2024 as the United States focused on deterring and defeating threats from Iran and its network of armed affiliates in the region.

including Hamas (Gaza Strip), Hezbollah (Lebanon), the Houthis (Yemen), and several Iraq- and Syria-based militant groups. In March 2025, U.S. Central Command forces launched an offensive air strike on Houthi-controlled territories in Yemen from war ships stationed in the Red Sea. Since the October 2023 outbreak of war between Hamas and Israel, a U.S. ally and defense partner, U.S. forces in the Middle East have been increasingly targeted by some of these groups—and have regularly responded with counterstrikes. Meanwhile, U.S. and coalition ships have been protecting merchant shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, defending against near-daily Houthi drone and missile attacks. The Pentagon has also responded as hostilities between Israel and Iran as well as Israel and Hezbollah have flared in recent months. In April 2024, U.S. warplanes and ships successfully intercepted dozens of drones and missiles fired at Israel in an unprecedented direct attack by Iran. In October of the same year, the United States announced it sent dozens of additional aircraft (four squadrons) to the region. The move came as Israel commenced a ground incursion against Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Iran launched another, larger barrage of missile strikes against Israel. U.S. naval forces reportedly shot a dozen interceptors at the Iranian missiles. In March 2025, B-2 stealth bombers were also reportedly being deployed from their home base in Missouri to the joint U.S.-United Kingdom military base in Diego Garcia, an island part of the British Indian Ocean Territory that is within striking range of Houthi territory and Iran. U.S. troop levels in any given region can fluctuate greatly depending on the particular security environment, national defense priorities, and various other considerations. As of October 2024, U.S.

defense officials said there were some forty thousand servicemembers in the Middle East, many on ships at sea in the region. **In total, the**

United States has military facilities across at least nineteen sites—eight of them considered to be permanent by many regional analysts—in countries including Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan,

Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates. The U.S. military also uses large bases in Djibouti and Turkey, which are part of other regional commands but often contribute significantly to U.S. operations in the Middle East. All host countries have basing agreements with the United States, except Syria, where U.S. forces had been opposed by the government. (Syria's interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa has indicated an interest in restoring ties with the United States.) Qatar hosts U.S. Central Command's forward headquarters. Bahrain hosts the most permanently assigned U.S. personnel and is home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. The navy had multiple large warship formations conducting operations in the region, but since the start of the second Donald Trump administration, several warships have been returned to the United States to support domestic border security efforts. **As of March 2025, two carrier strike groups will**

overlap in the region, with the USS Harry S. Truman extended another month and the USS Carl Vinson set to arrive in the coming weeks at U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility. The move to deploy the

two aircraft carriers follows renewed firing between the United States and Houthi rebels in Yemen and the Red Sea earlier that month.

Affirming reverses this

Sivaram and Saha 18 (Varun Sivaram and Sagatom Saha: Council on Foreign Relations, New York, USA. 1/12/2018, "The Geopolitical Implications of a Clean Energy Future from the Perspective of the United States", The Geopolitics of Renewables,

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-67855-9_5 // DOA: 3/27/25) JDE

5.3 The Fading Geopolitics of Fossil Fuels: New Dynamics with Established Powers **America's relationship with the Persian Gulf could drastically change by 2050 as it adopts clean energy. The United States currently maintains a strong military presence in the region, in large part to prevent disruptions in global oil supplies. But the American economy could be far less exposed to oil shocks in the future if it reduces its oil demand and develops stronger buffers against supply disruption.** The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the Gulf during the Cold War provides a template for how America's drawdown might look. **In such a scenario, America might substitute its permanent presence for a lighter footprint and redirect its naval power elsewhere to address more pressing security concerns.** Yet regional instability might deter a full U.S. withdrawal.

5.3.1 Context America has long considered the Persian Gulf central to its national interest. Driven by concerns over global oil supply, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared "the defense of Saudi Arabia as vital to the defense of the United States" in 1943, authorizing U.S. military aid to the Kingdom (Klare 2013). As the region constituted most of the world's non-Soviet oil at the time, a large supply disruption in the Gulf would have been disastrous to the United States (Glaser and Kelanic 2017). Such a disruption came to pass when the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) set an embargo on oil in 1973 (DOS n.d.). The price of oil in the United States quadrupled, imposing daunting costs on consumers and the wider economy. Between 1973 and 1975, U.S. GDP plummeted 6% and unemployment doubled to 9% (Hayward 2015). The U.S. economy is still exposed to oil prices today. Though it is difficult to estimate the direct economic cost of oil dependency, economists suggest a 10% increase in oil prices shaves 0.4% from GDP. If prices were to double today, economic output would shrink by 3% or about \$550 billion (Glaser and Kelanic 2017). Echoing FDR's doctrine, President Carter, in a State of the Union address, proclaimed that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." (Peters and Woolley n.d.a). He later created the Rapid Deployment Force, which would become U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), America's unified U.S. military command responsible for the Middle East (Cordesman 1991). Today, the U.S. military presence in the Gulf is still motivated by preventing both deliberate and unintended oil supply disruptions. The first mission is to ensure that countries in the region—in particular, Iran—cannot purposefully disrupt the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz. An extended closure would be devastating, blocking 20% of the world's oil supply (EIA 2012; Glaser and Kelanic 2017). The second mission is to backstop stability for major supplier-countries to guarantee steady production. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait alone cumulatively wiped 420 million barrels from world supply from 1990 to 1991 (Fattouh 2007). Either scenario—deliberate or unintended disruption to oil supply—would cause a surge in the price of oil, harming the U.S. economy. **To guard against these scenarios, the United States maintains roughly 35,000 troops in the Gulf, one-third of which are stationed in Kuwait (Katzman 2016). The remainder are positioned throughout the region in the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, and Qatar. America's naval presence in the region is anchored by the Fifth Fleet, which patrols the Persian Gulf (Allen 2017).** The fleet consists of several carrier strike groups, expeditionary strike groups, and a number of other ships and aircraft (Pike 2011a). The U.S. military also operates rotating Marine Expeditionary Units, brigade-size quick reaction forces for immediate crisis response (Pike 2011b). **It is difficult to attribute exactly how much the United States spends on protecting the flow of Gulf oil, given that many of these military assets also serve other purposes. However, experts estimate the cost at between 12 and 15% of the defense budget—roughly \$90 billion dollars (Crane et al. 2009). Another assessment places U.S. defense spending attributable to oil imports at roughly \$15 for each imported barrel (Hall 1992).**

Its strategic

Sivaram and Saha 18 (Varun Sivaram and Sagatom Saha: Council on Foreign Relations, New York, USA. 1/12/2018, "The Geopolitical Implications of a Clean Energy Future from the Perspective of the United States", The Geopolitics of Renewables, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-67855-9_5 // DOA: 3/27/25) JDE

5.3.2.3 Scenario Summary Thus, the U.S. would be largely protected from an oil crisis in the Gulf, having satisfied two requirements: **its economy would need less oil to function, and it would have better safeguards to mitigate supply disruptions that come to pass.** And if global oil demand flags and Gulf production lags behind that of other regions, Gulf oil will be even less important to global oil markets and the U.S. economy. **As these trends unfold, U.S. policymakers might finally decide to scale down America's military presence in the Gulf.**

5.3.3 Implications Something as simple as a strong push toward reduced defense spending—a subject of continuing debate in Congress—could force the U.S. to reevaluate the value of its military

commitment toward securing oil flows. If limited, what exactly might America's force posture in the region look like in 2050? The British withdrawal from the Middle East provides one prominent example. Until the late 1960s, the United Kingdom maintained a large military presence in the region chiefly to secure access to oil. Indeed, after World War II, Gulf oil supplies accounted for most of the world's non-Soviet oil and were therefore critical to British security and that of its European allies (Luce 2009). Britain maintained garrisons with air and naval support in Sharjah and Bahrain while also financing local police and military forces in Oman and Abu Dhabi (Sato 2009). Despite this, the need to cut defense spending and stimulate the economy forced the United Kingdom to abdicate its special influence. In 1968, the British government announced a complete military withdrawal "east of the Suez" (Sato 2009). Most of the military was either redirected to Europe to confront the Soviet Union or cut altogether. Dennis Healey, UK secretary of defense at the time, noted, "Although we have important economic interests in the Middle East, Asia, and elsewhere, military force is not the most suitable means of protecting them, and they would not alone justify heavy British defense expenditure" (Francis 2000). **With far lower dependence on Gulf supplies, American policymakers could reach a similar conclusion by 2050. A persuasive push to rein in ballooning defense costs—as in the United Kingdom—could compel the United States to withdraw from the Gulf. In fact, it may become strategically sensible for the U.S. to abdicate its role as security guarantor if that role is perceived as a responsibility and burden to secure supply for other countries. Support for maintaining America's military presence could evaporate when it becomes clear that India and China, not the United States, would actually suffer most from an oil supply disruption** (Murtaugh et al. 2016). There may be little support for shouldering security costs that benefit other countries that are more dependent on global oil markets and Gulf production. Yet the United States is unlikely to completely relinquish an active presence in the Gulf because of its commitments to combatting terrorism and checking Iranian aggression. Still, **whatever military assets remain would require more specific justification than the broad fiat exercised today. America's role may mirror its current security posture in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it maintains a relatively small handful of bases and spends comparatively less on counterterrorism operations** (Taylor 2014). **Concretely, the United States could forego its legacy of permanent military bases and naval assets in favor of a lighter footprint. America could pursue its non-oil- related strategic goals in the Gulf by relying on coalition building with regional and international partners. The president might deactivate the Bahrain-based Fifth Fleet or redirect it to the Asia-Pacific where it originally operated**. In coming decades, China's growing influence in the region may drive the United States to build a stronger presence there.

A lack of US military presence would create chaos

Stroul 25 (Dana Stroul is Director of Research and Shelly and Michael Kassen Senior Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, "A Return to Maximum Pressure: Comprehensively Countering the Iranian Regime's Malign Activities", April 1, 2025, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/return-maximum-pressure-comprehensively-countering-iranian-regimes-malign>, DOA 4/3/25) KC

In my view, the window is open for the United States to work with like-minded partners to advance opportunities in a region no longer held back by Iran's nefarious influence. To emphasize, this is a window of opportunity: **how the United States proceeds in the coming months will determine whether a more stable and secure Middle East emerges from the post-October 7 environment**. To press the advantage, Washington must be prepared to bring more to the table than pressure. Military force and sanctions are critical elements of strategy but insufficient on their own. The United States must lean into diplomacy as well, testing the possibility of a negotiated settlement that can prevent Iran's nuclear program from delivering weapons while also supporting new leaders across the region that oppose Tehran's interest in rebuilding its "axis of resistance." To implement a comprehensive strategy, **the United States will need to empower its diplomats, work with allies and partners, restore assistance and stabilization programs, and maintain a robust military posture and security commitments across the Middle East. Iran's strategy for regime survival has relied on decades-long investments in three key areas: (1) the nuclear weapons program, (2) its threat network of terrorists and proxies, and (3) its conventional missile arsenal. Tehran has used each of these pillars to threaten its neighbors, challenge Israel's existence, and try to push the United States out of the region, all in the pursuit of imposing its will and**

vision on the Middle East. **Regional developments since October 7, 2023, have significantly reshaped the regional threat landscape. In the aftermath of Hamas's attack, Israel, with U.S. support, has systematically dismantled Iran's proxy network in Gaza, Lebanon, and elsewhere, disrupting the regime's ability to project power by funding, arming, and training nonstate groups. In Syria, Tehran lost its one Middle East strategic partner with the ouster of Bashar al-Assad, who had willingly permitted the use of Syrian territory for destabilizing Iranian activities. As a result, Tehran's ability to exert asymmetric pressure through its regional proxies has been greatly reduced. New leaders in Damascus and Beirut alike are working to stabilize their countries and do not want them to be dominated by Tehran.** In Gaza, Palestinians have taken to the streets to protest against Hamas, signaling some resistance to the group's stranglehold on governance. **These new leaders and movements on the ground will need long-term assistance and support.** The combination of Israel's offensive strikes inside Iran and U.S.-led defensive action in the region has lowered the fear barrier in confronting Iranian aggression. **From the emergence of a U.S.-led regional air defense coalition in April 2024 to Israel's defeat of a large-scale ballistic missile attack in October, allies have demonstrated that Iran's complex conventional attacks and missile threats can be effectively countered.** Israel's strikes inside Iran targeted key missile production facilities, disrupting the regime's ability to replenish critical components of its arsenal and degrading its strategic air defense systems. Tehran's military infrastructure is now exposed to future military action. **These developments not only altered Iran's deterrence posture, but also reinforced the credibility of integrated air and missile defense networks in mitigating threats posed by state and nonstate actors in the region. To build on this, the United States will need to prioritize the operational integration of partner air defenses across the region,** which includes accelerating foreign military sales, providing security assistance funding, and prioritizing defense diplomacy. **Washington will also need to maintain an increased military posture across the region in the medium term as the operational backbone for integration and deterrence.**

This causes Iran proliferate

Stroul 25 (Dana Stroul is Director of Research and Shelly and Michael Kassen Senior Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, "A Return to Maximum Pressure: Comprehensively Countering the Iranian Regime's Malign Activities", April 1, 2025, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/return-maximum-pressure-comprehensively-countering-iranian-regimes-malign>, DOA 4/3/25) KC

Yet sanctions alone cannot stop Iran's nuclear program. In the past, the regime responded to economic pressure by taking provocative nuclear steps or attacking the interests of its neighbors. Today, it is perilously close to crossing the nuclear weapons threshold. Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has expressed significant concern over Iran's uranium enrichment activities, stating that it is "pressing the gas pedal" by dramatically accelerating enrichment to near weapons-grade levels. He highlighted that Iran's production of uranium enriched to 60 percent purity has increased from approximately seven kilograms per month to over thirty, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic is the only non-nuclear-weapons state producing uranium at this high level of enrichment, which he finds "seriously concerning." Since the United States withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, Iran has significantly advanced its nuclear capabilities. It has expanded its stockpile of high-enriched uranium and is now producing fissile material at enrichment levels and in quantities far beyond the JCPOA's original limits. Additionally, it has installed and operated advanced centrifuges at key facilities such as Natanz and Fordow, increasing the rate of enrichment and shortening its capacity to stage a quick breakout. The regime has also restricted international oversight by limiting cooperation with the IAEA, reducing transparency over its nuclear activities. As my Washington Institute colleague Michael Singh pointed out in a recent paper for the Trump administration, **Iran could have sufficient weapons-grade uranium for a weapon in just days and could produce a usable weapon in six months or less.** Although Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard recently testified that **Iran is not actively pursuing a nuclear weapon at this time,** the U.S. intelligence

community has warned for the past year that regime nuclear experts are engaging in activities that better position Tehran to develop a nuclear device should the leadership decide to do so. These activities include work on uranium metal production, which has direct weapons applications, and advancements in explosive technologies relevant to nuclear warhead development. While Iran insists that these measures are for civilian energy and research purposes, **the pattern of activity suggests that it is methodically reducing the time needed to weaponize if it chooses to move in that direction. The intelligence community has long assessed that Tehran's decisionmaking is the only thing precluding a breakout, not any technical inhibition.** A crucial question for this hearing, therefore, is whether we can keep Iran from making that decision. President Trump has indicated that while economic and military pressure will continue, his preferred path for addressing Iran's nuclear ambitions remains diplomacy and negotiation. As the administration considers potential talks, it must address several questions. The first is the scope of any agreement—whether negotiations will focus solely on the nuclear program (as with the 2015 JCPOA) or seek a more comprehensive deal that also addresses support for terrorist organizations, proxy militias, and the missile, space-launch, and drone programs. Second, the administration must decide whether to pursue a unilateral negotiation strategy or engage in a multilateral framework involving key allies such as Israel, European partners, and Gulf states. A multilateral approach could enhance enforcement mechanisms and diplomatic legitimacy, but it would also slow the process. A good deal, as National Security Advisor Mike Waltz has emphasized, would be one that permanently blocks Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon rather than just delaying its capability. It must include consistent, regular inspections to ensure full transparency and prevent the regime from exploiting loopholes. The Trump administration should prioritize testing Tehran's willingness to reach a diplomatic deal on the nuclear program while also preparing to set the program back through military means should diplomacy fail. Yet the time window to test Iran's openness to negotiate is short, partly due to the looming October expiration of remaining restrictions on the nuclear program via UN Security Council Resolution 2231, and also because of Iran's current exposure to Israeli military strikes. Policymakers should assume that Russia and China will work with Iran to rebuild its military-industrial capacity and air defenses, limiting the scope of what can be achieved through military strikes beyond the near term. Moscow and Beijing are already supporting Tehran diplomatically, so Washington will need to prepare for a complex negotiation in which these powers do not contribute to a diplomatic process like they did as part of the P5+1. Also unclear is how Russia and China would respond should Iran decide to weaponize. **To strengthen the U.S. approach toward Iran, the administration needs a hard-nosed diplomatic plan backed by economic and military leverage:** To effectively signal U.S. resolve in pursuit of an agreement, the administration should clearly articulate how sanctions relief would be structured if Iran dismantles its nuclear program and exports key elements out of the country. A well-defined framework for phased economic relief would provide clarity on the benefits of compliance. This is also an area where Congress can contribute. At the same time, **the administration must continue taking steps to keep its military options open. This includes maintaining a robust U.S. military presence in the region, strengthening regional air and missile defense capabilities, and reinforcing America's commitment to deterring Iranian aggression against Israel and Gulf allies. The recent announcements about sending a second aircraft carrier to the region and deploying B-2 bombers to Diego Garcia are important steps in reinforcing U.S. readiness to use military force.**

Otherwise, war occurs in 2 ways

First, cascading prolifer

Gowan 18 (Richard Gowan is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research at United Nations University in New York. He also holds fellowships with the European Council on Foreign Relations and New York University Center on International Cooperation, and teaches at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. 2018, "MINIMUM ORDER: The role of the Security Council in an era of major power competition", *United Nations University Center for Policy Research*, <https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6677/UNU-Minimum-Order-FINAL.pdf> // DOA: 10/22/22) SED

It is less certain that the council could now divest itself of its counter-proliferation duties. **If the P5 give up on cooperative approaches to WMD challenges, a series of dangers could quickly arise.** At the most basic level, **more governments could be tempted to experiment with low-grade WMD attacks – such as chemical weapons use** – against their opponents, **on the assumption that the council will not punish them.** On the nuclear

plane, **the failure of council efforts to contain DPRK or Iran's nuclear programmes could open the way to more middle and rising powers developing nuclear weapons**, playing P5 members off one another in the process. Lastly, **a deeply divided P5 is extremely unlikely to be able to respond to crises involving new technologies and weapon systems in an effective manner. If the council loses its non-proliferation role, it could presage a series of arms races and potential uses of WMD that would destabilize the international system.** The P5, unable to control a patchwork of non-conventional threats, would surely struggle to maintain cooperation on other issues including conventional crisis management and counterterrorism issues. This, short of an all-out great power war, is the worst-case scenario for the council.

This causes nuclear war

Kroenig 15 (Matthew, Associate Professor and International Relations Field Chair in the Department of Government and School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. January 2015, "The History of Proliferation Optimism: Does It Have a Future?" Journal of Strategic Studies, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273960071_The_History_of_Proliferation_Optimism_Does_It_Have_a_Future// DOA: 10/29/20)JDE

"The spread of nuclear weapons poses at least six severe threats to international peace and security including: nuclear war, nuclear terrorism, global and regional instability, constrained US freedom of action, weakened alliances, and further nuclear proliferation. Each of these threats has received extensive treatment elsewhere and this review is not intended to replicate or even necessarily to improve upon these previous efforts. Rather the goals of this section are more modest: to usefully bring together and recap the many reasons why we should be pessimistic about the likely consequences of nuclear proliferation. Many of these threats will be illuminated with a discussion of a case of much contemporary concern: Iran's advanced nuclear program. Nuclear War The greatest threat posed by the spread of nuclear weapons is nuclear war. The more states in possession of nuclear weapons, the greater the probability that somewhere, someday, there will be a catastrophic nuclear war. To date, nuclear weapons have only been used in warfare once. In 1945, the United States used nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, bringing World War II to a close. Many analysts point to the 65-plus-year tradition of nuclear non-use as evidence that nuclear weapons are unusable, but it would be naïve to think that nuclear weapons will never be used again simply because they have not been used for some time. After all, analysts in the 1990s argued that worldwide economic downturns like the Great Depression were a thing of the past, only to be surprised by the dot-com bubble bursting later in the decade and the Great Recession of the late 2000s.⁴⁸ This author, for one, would be surprised if nuclear weapons are not used again sometime in his lifetime. **Before reaching a state of MAD, new nuclear states go through a transition period in which they lack a secure-second strike capability. In this context, one or both states might believe that it has an incentive to use nuclear weapons first. For example, if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, neither Iran, nor its nuclear-armed rival, Israel, will have a secure, second-strike capability.**

Even though it is believed to have a large arsenal, given its small size and lack of strategic depth, **Israel might not be confident** that it could absorb a nuclear strike and respond with a devastating counterstrike. Similarly, Iran might eventually be able to build a large and survivable nuclear arsenal, but, when it first crosses the nuclear threshold, Tehran will have a small and vulnerable nuclear force. In these pre-MAD situations, there are at least three ways that nuclear war could occur. First, the state with the nuclear advantage might believe it has a splendid first strike capability. **In a crisis, Israel might, therefore, decide to launch a preventive nuclear strike to disarm Iran's nuclear capabilities. Indeed, this incentive might be further increased by Israel's aggressive strategic culture that emphasizes preemptive action. Second, the state with a small and vulnerable nuclear arsenal, in this case Iran, might feel use them or lose them pressures.** That is, in a crisis, Iran might decide to strike first rather than risk having its entire nuclear arsenal destroyed. Third, as Thomas Schelling has argued, **nuclear war could result due to the reciprocal fear of surprise attack.**⁴⁹ If there are advantages to striking first, one state might start a nuclear war in the belief that war is inevitable and that it would be better to go first than to go second. Fortunately, there is no historic evidence of this dynamic occurring in a nuclear context, but it is still possible. In an Israeli–Iranian crisis, for example, Israel and Iran might both prefer to avoid a nuclear war, but decide to strike first rather than suffer a devastating first attack from an opponent. **Even in a world of MAD, however, when both sides have secure, second-strike capabilities, there is still a risk of nuclear war. Rational deterrence theory assumes nuclear-armed states are governed by rational leaders who would not intentionally launch a suicidal nuclear war.** This assumption appears to have applied to past and current nuclear

powers, but there is no guarantee that it will continue to hold in the future. Iran's theocratic government, despite its inflammatory rhetoric, has followed a fairly pragmatic foreign policy since 1979, but it contains leaders who hold millenarian religious worldviews and could one day ascend to power. **We cannot rule out the possibility that, as nuclear weapons continue to spread, some leader somewhere will choose to launch a nuclear war, knowing full well that it could result in self-destruction"**

Second, an Israeli first strike

Farley 19 (Robert Farley, received his Ph.D. for Political Science. "Why Israel Would Start a Nuclear War," 9/12/2019, National Interest, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/why-israel-would-start-nuclear-war-80016>. DOA: 10/18/2019) DE

If a hostile power (let's say **Iran**, for sake of discussion) **appeared to be on the verge of** mating **nuclear devices** with the systems needed to deliver them, **Israel might well consider a preventive nuclear attack.**

In the case of Iran, we can imagine scenarios in which **Israeli planners would no longer deem a conventional attack sufficiently lethal to** destroy or **delay the Iranian program.** In such a scenario, and absent direct intervention from the United States, **Israel might** well decide to **undertake a limited nuclear attack** against Iranian facilities.

Causes extinction

Avery 20 (John Scales Avery is a theoretical chemist at the University of Copenhagen. Since 1990 he has been the Chairman of the Danish National Group of Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Between 2004 and 2015 he also served as Chairman of the Danish Peace Academy. He founded the Journal of Bioenergetics and Biomembranes, and was for many years its Managing Editor. He also served as Technical Advisor to the World Health Organization, April 1 2020, "Attacks On Iran, Past And Present", Counter Currents, <https://countercurrents.org/2020/01/attacks-on-iran-past-and-present/>, DOA 1/1/23) RK

An attack on Iran could escalate We recently passed the 100th anniversary **World War I**, and we should remember that this colossal disaster **escalated uncontrollably from what was intended to be a minor conflict.** There is a danger **that an attack on Iran would escalate into a large-scale war in the Middle East, entirely destabilizing a region that is already deep in problems. The** unstable **government of Pakistan might be overthrown, and the revolutionary Pakistani government might enter the war on the side of Iran, thus introducing nuclear weapons into the conflict. Russia and China, firm allies of Iran, might also be drawn into a general war in the Middle East.** In the dangerous situation that could potentially result from an attack on Iran, there is a risk that **nuclear weapons would be used, either intentionally, or by accident or miscalculation.** Recent research has shown that besides **making large areas of the world uninhabitable** through long-lasting radioactive contamination, **a nuclear war would damage global agriculture to such a extent that a global famine of previously unknown proportions would result. Thus, nuclear war is the ultimate ecological catastrophe. It could destroy human civilization and much of the biosphere.** To risk such a war would be an unforgivable offense against the lives and future of all the peoples of the world, US citizens included. Recent research has shown that **thick clouds of smoke from firestorms in burning cities would rise to the stratosphere, where they would spread globally and remain for a decade,** blocking the hydrological cycle, **and destroying the ozone layer. A decade of greatly lowered temperatures would also follow. Global agriculture would be destroyed. Human, plant and animal populations would perish.** We must also consider the very long-lasting effects of radioactive contamination. One can gain a small idea of what it would be like by thinking of the radioactive contamination that has made large areas near to Chernobyl and Fukushima permanently uninhabitable, or the testing of hydrogen bombs in the Pacific in the 1950's, which continues to cause leukemia and birth defects in the Marshall Islands more than half a century later. In the event of a thermonuclear war, the contamination would be enormously greater. We

have to remember that the total explosive power of the nuclear weapons in the world today is 500,000 times as great as the power of the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. **What is threatened today is the complete breakdown of human civilization and the destruction of much of the biosphere.**

Thus, we negate.

REBUTTAL:

On IFRs

1. NU: Emissions down

Gaffney et al 25 (Michael Gaffney: research analyst with Rhodium Group's Energy and Climate practice, attended UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy where he earned a Master of Public Policy specializing in energy and environmental policy. He holds a bachelor's degree in political economy from UC Berkely. Ben King: associate director with Rhodium Group's Energy and Climate practice, focusing on the effects of policy and economic changes to the US energy system. He previously worked for the US Department of Energy in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. John Larsen: partner at Rhodium group where he leads the firm's US energy system and climate policy research, a non-resident Senior Associate at the Energy and National Security program at CSIS. He has lectured at Johns Hopkins and Amherst College. He holds a master's degree in Environmental Policy and Planning from Tufts University. January 9, 2025, "Preliminary US Greenhouse Gas Emissions Estimates for 2024", Rhodium Group, <https://rhg.com/research/preliminary-us-greenhouse-gas-estimates-for-2024/> . DOA March 17, 2025) CLS

Since peaking in 2004, emissions have trended downward in a bumpy fashion. But after a significant decline in 2023, we estimate that 2024 emissions were down by just 0.2% year-on-year while the economy grew by 2.7%, continuing a decoupling of emissions and economic activity. Emissions are still below pre-pandemic levels and remain about 20% below 2005 levels, the benchmark for US commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Lower manufacturing output drove the overall decrease in 2024 emissions, with industrial sector emissions falling by 1.8%. In the oil and gas sector, continued reductions in methane emissions intensity led to a 3.7% drop in emissions. Increased air and road travel partially offset these reductions, which drove up transportation sector emissions by 0.8%. Demand for electricity—led by the residential sector—also rose by 3% and was met by higher natural gas, wind, and solar generation, while coal generation saw just a slight decline. For the first time, combined solar and wind generation surpassed coal, although overall power sector emissions increased by a slight 0.2%. In the buildings sector, emissions crept up 0.4% due to slightly elevated fuel use. The modest 2024 decline underscores the urgency of accelerating

decarbonization in all sectors. To meet its Paris Agreement target of a 50-52% reduction in emissions by 2030, the US must sustain an ambitious 7.6% annual drop in emissions from 2025 to 2030, a level the US has not seen outside of a recession in recent memory. Economic growth and slightly lower emissions in 2024. Economic growth is one of the major determinants of GHG emissions, and in 2024, the US gross domestic product (GDP) expanded at a projected annual rate of 2.7%. This growth was driven by strong consumer spending as well as public and private investment, despite persistent inflation, high interest rates, and elevated labor and materials costs. Clean technology played a significant role. Record-high investment in the manufacturing and deployment of clean technologies accounted for 5% of total private investment in structures, equipment, and durable consumer goods in Q3, according to the latest data from the Clean Investment Monitor, a joint effort between Rhodium Group and MIT's Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research (CEEPR). While the economy grew, we estimate that US GHG emissions fell slightly in 2024. The US will get its final GHG report card for 2024 when the EPA finalizes its annual GHG inventory in spring 2026. However, using preliminary economic and energy activity data, we project that economy-wide emissions declined by just 0.2% in 2024 (Figure 1). This puts US emissions at about 20% below 2005 levels, and down by 8% from pre-pandemic levels.

Pref: we are only side analyzing emissions data

2. T: nuclear power plants increase carbon emissions

Jacobson 24 (Mark Z. Jacobson

Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering & Director of the Atmosphere/Energy Program, Stanford University, "7 reasons why nuclear energy is not the answer to solve climate change"

<https://www.oneearth.org/the-7-reasons-why-nuclear-energy-is-not-the-answer-to-solve-climate-change/>, 10/10/24, DOA 3/6/25) AKD

There is no such thing as a zero- or close-to-zero emission nuclear power plant. Even existing plants emit due to the continuous mining and refining of uranium needed for the plant. Emissions from new nuclear are 78 to 178 g-CO₂/kWh, not close to 0. Of this, 64 to 102 g-CO₂/kWh over 100 years are emissions from the background grid while consumers wait 10 to 19 years for nuclear to come online or be refurbished, relative to 2 to 5 years for wind or solar. In addition, all nuclear plants emit 4.4 g-CO₂e/kWh from the water vapor and heat they release. This contrasts with solar panels and wind turbines, which reduce heat or water vapor fluxes to the air by about 2.2 g-CO₂e/kWh for a net difference from this factor alone of 6.6 g-CO₂e/kWh. In fact, China's investment in nuclear plants that take so long between planning and operation instead of wind or solar resulted in China's CO₂ emissions increasing 1.3 percent from 2016 to 2017 rather than declining by an estimated average of 3 percent. The resulting difference in air pollution emissions may have caused 69,000 additional air pollution deaths in China in 2016 alone, with

additional deaths in years prior and since.

3. T: tradeoff- w/o nuclear better forms of energy are prioritized

Bird et al 25 (Lori

Bird: director of World Resources Institute US Energy Program. Previously principal analyst in the Markets and Policy Group of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, co-authored studies on the costs and benefits of renewable electricity standards, and previously worked for the US Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency. She holds a master's degree in environmental studies from Yale. Andrew Light: program manager for IREC with a Master's in Environmental Policy from the University of Michigan's School of Environment and Sustainability. Ian Goldsmith: research analyst with US energy program, he holds a Master's in Public Policy from the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University. February 21, 2025, "US clean power development sees record progress, as well as stronger headwinds", World Resources Institute, <https://www.wri.org/insights/clean-energy-progress-united-states> . DOA March 17, 2025) CLS

Following the record-breaking outcomes of 2023, 2024 was another impressive year for clean energy deployment in the United States. These upward trends signal that clean electricity sources are an increasingly vital part of the U.S. economy and power system, with renewable sources and battery storage making up the vast majority of new additions to the grid. Solar and battery storage continue to set installation records, while wind energy has plateaued. Solar surpassed 2023's record installations in 2024, adding an

estimated 39.6 gigawatts (GW) of capacity, compared

to 27.4GW in 2023. Installed solar capacity in the U.S. now totals about 220 GW, enough to provide over 7% of the nation's electricity. This continues a decade-long trend of rapid growth in solar power. Battery

storage nearly doubled in 2024, with total installed capacity reaching almost 29 GW — and projected to grow another 47% in 2025. This growth in capacity will help support the grid when variable

renewable energy technologies, such as solar and wind, are unavailable, making the U.S. power system more stable and secure. At the same time, onshore wind capacity growth has tapered off, with only 5.3 GW of new generation added in 2024, significantly less than wind installation levels in previous years.

According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), installed wind capacity totaled 153 GW at the end of 2024. Limited growth of wind power resulted in part from a focus on repowering older facilities as well as continued challenges related to supply chains, financing, interconnection and permitting.

CAP 08 (Center for American Progress. 2008, "10 Reasons Not to Invest in Nuclear Energy", CAP<

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/10-reasons-not-to-invest-in-nuclear-energy/> //.

DOA: 3/2/25)JDE

Nuclear reactors require water use amid shortages. Large areas of the United States already face water shortages, and the effects of global warming are expected to exacerbate this problem. “Electricity generation accounts for nearly half of all water withdrawals in the nation,” and nuclear power stations require more water than fossil fuel use does. The only alternative to the water usage associated with nuclear energy is less efficient (and more expensive) dry cooling systems. 7. **Safety concerns still plague nuclear power.** After the Three Mile Island and Chernobyl accidents, the United States stopped granting licenses for new nuclear plants. The crises demonstrated that the nuclear industry is vulnerable to public concern. While modern reactors are safer than those that failed in the past, **another accident anywhere in the world could turn public opinion against nuclear power as a whole.** 8. **Nuclear is already a mature technology—it will not get cheaper.** The American nuclear industry has benefited from \$100 billion in direct and indirect subsidies since 1948, and nuclear power provides 20 percent of electricity in the United States. The technology behind nuclear power is fully developed, so nuclear energy is unlikely to get much cheaper. Continued subsidies would be necessary to make nuclear cost-competitive with other energy sources, but will not lower the overall price of nuclear power. 9. **Other clean energy technologies are cheaper, cleaner, and faster to build.** Solar power, photovoltaics, advanced biofuels, wind power, and other energy technologies promise to revolutionize how electricity is generated in the 21st century. Already, wind energy can produce electricity for less than five cents per kWh, and concentrated solar power can produce energy for 11-12 cents per kWh—even at night—and these costs are decreasing. Alternatives do not produce nuclear waste, and they do not face the same extensive safety, regulatory, and construction costs and delays that nuclear does. 10. **Nuclear subsidies take money away from more effective alternative energy subsidies.** Subsidies for nuclear reactors wouldn’t subsidize nuclear technology—they would subsidize the nuclear industry. **Congress should fund research of clean, alternative energy technologies that promise to rival fossil fuels in cost—without subsidies.** Congress should also provide tax credits that would make such technologies cheaper by encouraging production and moving them down the **experience curve.** Such support would encourage a growing American industry and create American jobs. **By squandering our limited resources on subsidies for the nuclear power industry, the United States is missing an extraordinary opportunity.**

4. T: radioactive waste

FE 24 (Friends of the Earth has been campaigning against climate change for over 50 years starting in 1971, August 19 2024, “Is Nuclear Power Bad for the Environment”, Friends of the Earth, <https://foe.org/blog/is-nuclear-power-bad-for-the-environment/>, DOA 3/6/25) JZ

Is nuclear power bad for the environment? Yes. Is it a threat to public health and environmental justice? Yes. Is it also dangerous and expensive? Yes. Electricity

from nuclear power plants is generated through the process of nuclear fission. This occurs when a neutron hits the nucleus of certain atoms, splitting the nucleus into smaller nuclei, producing other neutrons, which then hit other atoms, creating more nuclei and more neutrons, resulting in a chain reaction within a nuclear reactor core. This releases massive amounts of energy as heat, radiation, and radioactive waste. The heat generated is used to boil water to create steam, which then turns an electric turbine to create electricity.

Nuclear power plants require “enriched uranium” for their fuel to sustain the fission reaction and produce electricity. Naturally occurring uranium must be “enriched” to increase the concentration of the fission-able (“fissile”) isotope of uranium (U-235). According to the US Energy Information Administration, as of July 2024, there are 94 active commercial nuclear

reactors at 54 nuclear power plants. **The**

production and use of nuclear power produces waste at every step of the

process. Waste produced in nuclear

power plants is radioactive and remains so for many thousands of years. There

is no safe way to dispose of this radioactive waste,

and it has piled up for decades at nuclear facilities. Spent nuclear fuel

(i.e., old fuel removed from reactors) can be dangerous for thousands-to-millions of years.

According

to the Nuclear Information and Resource Service, “For every pound of “enriched” uranium that goes into a nuclear reactor, there are, on average, over 5,000 pounds of radioactive waste...produced in the mining and processing of uranium.”

And every pound of spent fuel that comes out of the reactor becomes millions of times more radioactive by the time it is taken out. Uranium, the metal that commonly fuels nuclear power, is extracted through underground or open-pit mining, or through a chemical process called in situ leaching. Underground uranium mining exposes workers to severe health risks, including lung cancer. Open-pit mining destroys ecosystems, leaving toxic, radioactive remnants and polluted land and water. In situ leaching permanently contaminates groundwater.

Nuclear power is bad for the environment. Thousands of abandoned uranium mines dot the Southwest of the United States, disproportionately in Native American territories and communities of color. These markers of environmental injustice continue to harm the health and well-being of impacted communities and their air, lands, and waters. **Nuclear**

disasters serve as prescient reminders of the unimaginable dangers of nuclear

power. They may be caused by human error, mechanical failures, and/or natural

disasters. The Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine in 1986 remains the worst nuclear

accident in history. It will take at least 3,000 years for the area surrounding

the nuclear power plant to be habitable. The second worst nuclear accident occurred in 2011 after an

earthquake and tsunami struck the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station in Japan, causing all three operating reactors to melt down. The Three Mile Island Generating Station in Pennsylvania experienced a partial meltdown in 1979, leading to increases in cancer and other diseases. The worst radiation disaster in U.S. history is the Church Rock uranium spill, which occurred on the Navajo

Nation a few months after Three Mile Island. **Nuclear accidents pose extreme threats to life and have forced abandonment of wide swaths of land. Health impacts include increased risk of different types of cancer, immune**

deficiencies, infant mortality and birth defects, acute radiation syndrome (radiation poisoning), and harms to mental health.

5. T: water pollution

Wasserman 16 (Harvey Franklin)

Wasserman is an American journalist, author, democracy activist, and advocate for renewable energy. He has been a strategist and organizer in the anti-nuclear movement in the United States since 1973, and in the election protection movement since 2004. 9/21/2016, “How Nuclear Power Causes Global Warming”, The Progressive Magazine, <https://progressive.org/latest/nuclear-power-causes-global-warming/>, DOA: 3/7/2025) SMB

Supporters of nuclear power like to argue that nukes are the key to combatting climate change. Here’s why they are dead wrong. Every nuclear generating station spews about two-thirds of the energy it burns inside its reactor core into the environment. Only one-third is converted into electricity. Another tenth of that is lost in transmission. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists: Nuclear fission is the most water intensive method of the principal thermoelectric generation options in terms of the amount of water withdrawn from sources. In 2008, nuclear power plants withdrew eight times as much freshwater as natural gas plants per unit of energy produced, and up to 11 percent more than the average coal plant. Every day, large reactors like the two at Diablo Canyon, California, individually dump about 1.25 billion gallons of water into the ocean at temperatures up to 20 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the natural environment. Diablo’s “once-through cooling system” takes water out of the ocean and dumps it back superheated, irradiated and laden with toxic chemicals. Many U.S.

reactors use cooling towers which emit huge quantities of steam and water vapor that also directly warm the atmosphere. These emissions are often chemically treated to prevent algae and other growth that could clog the towers. Those chemicals

can then be carried downwind, along

with radiation from the reactors. In addition, hundreds of thousands of birds die annually by flying into the reactor domes and towers. The Union of

Concerned Scientists states: The

temperature increase in the bodies of water can have serious adverse effects on aquatic life. Warm

water holds less oxygen than cold water, thus discharge from once-through

cooling systems can create a “temperature squeeze” that elevates the metabolic rate for fish. Additionally, suction pipes that are

used to intake water can draw

plankton, eggs and larvae into the plant’s machinery, while

larger organisms can be trapped against the protective screens of the pipes. Blocked intake screens have led to temporary shut downs and NRC fines at a number of plants.

And that's not all. **All**

nuclear reactors emit Carbon 14, a radioactive isotope, invalidating the industry's claim that reactors are "carbon free." And the fuel that reactors burn is carbon-intensive. The mining, milling, and enrichment processes needed to produce the pellets that fill the fuel rods inside the reactor cores all involve major energy expenditures, nearly all of it based on coal, oil, or gas.

And of course there's the problem of nuclear waste. After more than a half-century of well-funded attempts, we've seen no solution for the management of atomic power's intensely radioactive waste. There's the "low-level" waste involving enormous quantities of

troublesome irradiated liquids and solid trash that must be dealt with outside the standard civilian waste stream. And that handling involves fossil fuels burned in the process of transportation, management, and disposal as well As

for the high-level waste, this remains one of humankind's **most persistent and dangerous problems**. Atomic apologists have claimed that the intensely radioactive spent fuel rods can somehow be usable for additional power generation. But after a half-century of efforts, with billions of dollars spent, all attempts

to do that have utterly failed. **There are**

zero successful reactors capable of producing more reactor fuel than they use, or able to derive more energy from the tens of thousands of tons

of spent fuel rods they create. Some reactors, like Fukushima, use "mixed-oxide" fuels that have proven to be extremely dirty and expensive. It's possible some of this "MOX" fuel containing plutonium, actually fissioned at Fukushima Unit Three, raising terrifying questions about the dangers of its

use. **The mushroom cloud that appears on video as Fukushima Unit Three**

exploded stands as an epic warning against further use of these

impossible-to-manage fuels. The MOX facility under construction near Aiken, South Carolina,

is now projected to require another ten years to build with another ten possible after that to phase into production. U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz said on September 13, 2016, at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace that the mismanaged project was "impossible" to carry out and that it could cost \$30 billion to \$50 billion. Even the current pro-nuclear Congress won't fully fund the project and the Department of Energy DOE continues

to recommend abandoning it. **There are**

no credible estimates of the global warming damage done by the intensely hot explosions at the

four Fukushima reactors, or at Chernobyl, **Or** at any other past and **future**

reactor meltdowns or blowups. Atomic apologists argue that the disposal of high-level reactor

wastes should be a relatively simple problem, lacking only the political will to proceed. The industry touts New Mexico's Waste Isolation Pilot Project, or WIPP, which has long been the poster child for military attempts to deal with high-level trash from the nuclear weapons program. Accepting its first shipment of waste in 1999, WIPP was touted as the ultimate high-tech, spare-no-expense model that proved radioactive waste disposal "can be done." But a series of disastrous events in February, 2014, led WIPP to stop accepting wastes—the sole function for which it was designed. Most significant was the explosion of a single barrel of highly radioactive waste materials (it was mistakenly packed with organic rather than clay-based kitty litter). About a dozen WIPP workers

were exposed to potentially harmful radiation. The entire facility remains closed. In a phone interview, facility management told me it may again accept some wastes before the end of this year. But at least part of the cavernous underground labyrinth may never be reopened. The Los Angeles Times estimated the cost of this single accident at \$2 billion. Overall, **the idea that atomic power is “clean” or “carbon free” or “emission free” is a very expensive misconception**, especially when compared to renewable energy, efficiency, and conservation. Among conservation, efficiency, solar and wind power technologies, there are no global warming analogs to the heat, carbon, and radioactive waste impacts of nuclear power. No green technology kills anywhere near the number of marine organisms that die through reactor cooling systems. Rooftop solar panels do not lose ten percent of the power they generate to transmission, as happens with virtually all centralized power generators. S. David Freeman, former head of numerous large utilities and author of *All Electric America: A Climate Solution and the Hopeful Future*, says: “Renewables are cheaper and safer. That argument is winning. Let’s stick to it.” **No terrorist will ever threaten one of our cities by blowing up a solar panel. But the nuclear industry that falsely claims its dying technology doesn’t cause global warming does threaten the future of our planet.**

Ocean health is k2 climate

UN N.D. (United Nations: intergovernmental organization that aims to maintain international peace and security, as well as to achieve international cooperation. N.D., “The ocean – the world’s greatest ally against climate change”, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/ocean> . DOA March 12, 2025) CLS

The ocean generates 50 percent of the oxygen we need, absorbs 25 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions and captures 90 percent of the excess heat generated by these emissions. It is not just ‘the lungs of the planet’ but also its largest ‘carbon sink’ – a vital buffer against the impacts of climate change. The ocean is central to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and stabilizing the Earth’s climate. However, increasing greenhouse gas emissions have [affected the health of the ocean](#) – warming and acidifying seawater – causing detrimental changes to life under water and on land, and reducing the ocean’s ability to absorb carbon dioxide and safeguard life on the planet. **Here are a few reasons we need to safeguard the ocean as our best ally for climate solutions.**

On fusion

On space

1. No earth xtinction – reuters is fearmongering. Volcanic eruptions and stellar explosions are routine, we've survived an asteroid. They do no incentive analysis on nuke war or bioweapons. If we win more than a 1/2 probability on any of our turns or case you negate.

2. T: Mars Colonization destroys ozone layer

Allen 22 (Gabe Allen, contributor for Discover Magazine, BA in Biology and Creative Writing from Skidmore. April 5, 2022. Discover Magazine. "Efforts to Colonize Mars Could Have a Negative Impact on Global Health",

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/environment/efforts-to-colonize-mars-could-have-a-negative-impact-on-global-health> . DOA: July 20, 2022.) ALP

In 1985, a group of atmospheric researchers led by Pawan Bhartia presented a terrifying satellite image to a room-full of scientists, policymakers and journalists at a conference in Prague: There was a gaping hole in the ozone layer of the stratosphere directly above Antarctica. The culprits were a group of chemicals used by refrigerator manufacturers called chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs. Just two years later, the Montreal Protocol was signed by 46 countries; over the next decade, CFCs were phased out by industry around the globe. Today, ozone levels are slowly rebounding. But space travel could endanger the ozone layer once again. Black carbon is an excellent greenhouse gas — excellent in the sense that it is very good at absorbing sunlight and converting it into heat. When rockets travel through the upper atmosphere, they raise temperatures in their wake. At the moment, there are too few space launches for this effect to be very pronounced. But Toohey warns that consistent launches, like the ones required to populate a Martian city, could pose a problem. "The effect is to cause a slight temperature gradient between where the black carbon is warming things and other parts of the planet that aren't launching rockets," he says. "You end up with a change in the winds in the stratosphere and mesosphere, which may not sound like much, but those winds move ozone from one part of the planet to another. In a research project that is now more than a decade old, Toohey and his colleagues modeled the atmospheric outcome of a scenario where 1,000 rockets were launched every year. What they found was striking: Stratospheric ozone levels were expected to shift by 1 percent in tropical regions and as much as 6 percent at the poles. "You're not creating an ozone hole, but you're basically just changing things by the same amount," Toohey says. "Those are the same numbers that triggered the whole Montreal protocol." In a landmark 1995 paper, dermatologist Frank De Grujil estimated that even a 1 percent change in stratospheric ozone could increase the prevalence of skin cancer by 2 percent. As is the case with many environmental issues, the public health cost of emissions poses an ethical dilemma for those who are tempted by the prospect of space colonization. "Whose life is more important?" asks Toohey. "A billionaire astronaut or someone in Bangladesh?"

That causes extinction

Rosenberg 21 (Lizzy Rosenberg, SEO editor at Green Matters, writing articles about sustainable living. September 17, 2021. Green Matters. "Efforts to Colonize Mars Could Have a Negative Impact on Global Health",

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/environment/efforts-to-colonize-mars-could-have-a-negative-impact-on-global-health> . DOA: July 20, 2022.) ALP

As previously mentioned, the ozone player protects life on planet Earth from exposure to UV rays and radiation. The stratospheric layer, which lies 10 to 30 miles above Earth's surface, consists of naturally created ozone molecules. But in the 1970s, researchers discovered a "hole" in the ozone that was caused by the use of CFCs, which destroy ozone molecules, according to NASA. And as per the EPA, the hole is causing more UV radiation to make its way to life on planet Earth. UV ray exposure can cause skin

cancer, cataracts, and immune system problems among human beings. as well as famine in humans and wildlife due to lower crop yield and destruction of marine life. So if the hole in the ozone layer gets much bigger — or if the ozone layer depletes entirely — **it could cause increased life-threatening problems to human, animal, and plant life. It could ultimately make planet Earth truly uninhabitable** — even more than it is as of right now. But the 1987 Montreal Protocol, which ended the use of CFCs worldwide, has done wonders in protecting the ozone layer. An Earth Observatory study showed if human activity had continued as it had been, regarding the use of CFCs. The hole would have continued growing, with holes forming over both the Arctic and Antarctica. UV exposure would be astronomical and continuously life-threatening — but luckily, it doesn't seem as though that will be the case, as long as we stick to the Montreal Protocol.

3. T: Disease

O'Neill, 3-11-2008, writer for Universe Today. "Germs Living In Space," [Universe Today](http://www.universetoday.com/2008/03/11/germs-living-in-space-almost-three-times-as-likely-to-cause-disease/), <http://www.universetoday.com/2008/03/11/germs-living-in-space-almost-three-times-as-likely-to-cause-disease/>. DOAI

In one experiment on board Space Shuttle Endeavor (STS-123) launched early this morning (at 2:28 am EST), the reaction of terrestrial bacteria to zero-G will be tested. When compared with test bacteria bred here on Earth, previous studies suggest that **germs bred in space are far more potent and are more likely to cause illness** to people in space. The Endeavor mission will continue this experiment in the aim to find some way to prevent these microscopic astronauts causing too many problems to the continuing missions on board the International Space Station and future space tourism companies. Until a solution is found, don't go ordering fish off the in-flight menu on your next spaceship ride... **Wherever humans go, a whole zoo of bacteria will follow**. Most of the bacteria hitching a ride on our skin and inside our bodies live in symbiosis with us, but occasionally problem bugs like salmonella or Escherichia coli (E-coli) **can get out of control**, causing problems such as common food poisoning to more serious, life-threatening ailments such as tetanus, diphtheria, syphilis, cholera... (the list is pretty long.) So, as humans venture into space, it is inevitable that bacteria will come too - the whole symbiotic and parasitic jungle - exploring space with us. **Bacteria will mutate, often very quickly**, adapting to the environment surrounding the little microbes. Mutation is the difference between a bacteria being harmless to becoming deadly. **Mutations help bacteria** to survive and as an example, they **can become antibiotic resistant**. This is a huge problem in places where antibiotics are used very regularly (such as hospitals); genetic information is passed down the generations of bacteria (often doubling in population in a matter of minutes). **If just one microbe has the genetic ability to survive** a type of antibiotic, its number will multiply, **creating a strain of "superbug" that can avoid being killed** by antibiotics - one of the most basic examples of "natural selection". Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is one particular nasty strain of the otherwise benign Staphylococcus genus which has mutated to resist commonly used antibiotics.

causes extinction.

Abraham 96 (Dr. Ben Abraham= "called "one of the 100 greatest minds in history" by super-IQ society Mensa" and owner of "Toronto-based [biotechnology company](#), Structured Biologicals Inc" according to same article)

Despite the importance of the discovery of the "facilitating" cell, it is not what Dr Ben-Abraham wants to talk about. There is a much more pressing medical crisis at hand - one he believes the world must be alerted to: the possibility of a virus deadlier than HIV. If this makes Dr Ben-Abraham sound like a prophet of doom, then he makes no apology for it. AIDS, the Ebola outbreak which killed more than 100 people in Africa last year, the flu epidemic that has now affected 200,000 in the former Soviet Union - they are all, according to Dr Ben-Abraham, the "tip of the iceberg". Two decades of intensive study and research in the field of virology have convinced him of one thing: in place of natural and man-made disasters or nuclear warfare, **humanity could face extinction because of a single virus, deadlier than HIV. "An airborne virus is a lively, complex and dangerous organism,"** he said. **"It can come from a rare animal or from anywhere and can mutate constantly**. If there is no cure, it affects one person and then there is a chain reaction and it is unstoppable. It is a tragedy waiting to happen." That may sound like a far-fetched plot for a Hollywood film, but Dr Ben -Abraham said **history has** already **proven** his theory. Fifteen years ago, **few could have predicted the impact of AIDS on the world**. Ebola has had sporadic outbreaks over the past 20 years and the only way the deadly virus - which turns internal organs into liquid - could be contained was because it was killed before it had a chance to spread. Imagine, he says, if it was closer to home: an outbreak [of that scale in London](#), New York or Hong Kong. It could happen anytime in the next 20 years - theoretically, it could

happen tomorrow. The shock of the AIDS epidemic has prompted virus experts to admit "that something new is indeed happening and that the threat of a deadly viral outbreak is imminent", said Joshua Lederberg of the Rockefeller University in New York, at a recent conference. He added that the problem was "very serious and is getting worse". Dr Ben-Abraham said: "Nature isn't benign. The survival of the human species is not a preordained evolutionary programme. **Abundant sources of genetic variation exist for viruses to learn how to mutate and evade the immune system.**" He cites the 1968 Hong Kong flu outbreak as an example of how viruses have outsmarted human intelligence. And as new "mega-cities" are being developed in the Third World and rainforests are destroyed, disease-carrying animals and insects are forced into areas of human habitation. "This raises the very real possibility that lethal, mysterious viruses would, for the first time, infect humanity at a large scale and imperil the survival of the human race," he said.

4. T: Interplanetary genocide

Williston 20 (Byron Williston, Professor of Philosophy at Wilfred Laurier University, member of the Interdisciplinary Centre on Climate Change at the University of Waterloo. May 26, 2020. *Boston Review*. "The Case Against Mars", <https://bostonreview.net/articles/byron-williston-taking-space-back-space-cadets/> . DOA: July 20, 2022.) ALP

On Earth, **speciation can occur when spatially expanding populations become geographically isolated from one another** (the unique diversity of species on the Galapagos Islands is the paradigm example of this phenomenon). **Because of the vast distances between planets it is likely that similar fragmentation would eventually occur in outer space.** Along with the interplanetary spread of cyborgs and artificial intelligences, **the result, centuries after a viable Mars colony is established, will probably be a plethora of intelligent species,** all of which will have evolved to fit their distinctive ecological constraints—an archipelago of politically distinct worlds. The idea is common in sci-fi, from Verner Vinge's 1993 *A Fire Upon the Deep* to Mark Fergus and Hawk Otsby's *The Expanse*, both Hugo Award winners. Multi-world pluralism can look attractive if we assume that everyone will get along, regardless of the profound morphological, technological, and ideological differences that are bound to grow up around and between these groups. Here, however, the space expansionist invocation of natural selection bites back. **Radiating and diversifying species notoriously compete with one another for available space and its resources or, in the case of intelligent species, just for glory and prestige.** This is all familiar enough from the history of life on Earth, as is the mostly sorry result of the human interaction with other species as well as earlier human groups. We exterminated the Neanderthals (after breeding with them for a while) and are, according to the United Nations, currently in the process of eviscerating the non-human biosphere. Doesn't it seem likely that our deep-space descendants will inherit these destructive tendencies and turn them on each other? A space archipelago will be composed of mutually suspicious and competitive groups, millions of them eventually. But the bonds of sameness that can foster respectful recognition or mutual forbearance will surely diminish with increased interplanetary spatial dispersion and the ordinary workings of evolution. Not that we should expect a space-based Hobbesian war of all against all. There will doubtless be a good deal of room for interspecies and interworld diplomacy in this scenario. However, in the absence of a pacific trans-planetary government—and given our inability to create a single world government here, the chances of that seem slim—**opportunities for plunder and general mayhem will likely abound. The temptation to cast the interplanetary Other as subhuman will be pronounced.** Remember that the intelligent aliens in *Starship Troopers* are "bugs," and in *Battlestar Galactica* they are "toastmasters." Even in our fiction, it seems, we have a difficult time imagining what peaceful co-existence among wildly disparate beings might look like. Because of this, **all minimally viable colonies will have compelling reasons of state to stockpile awesome weapons of mass destruction: not only hydrogen bombs, but more importantly the ability to convert asteroids into planetoid bombs.** Somehow this possibility—potentially genocidal or xenocidal wars of worlds—seems not to matter much to space expansionists, even though it's standard fare in the well of sci-fi from which many of them have drunk so deeply.

Extinction

Williston 20 (Byron Williston, Professor of Philosophy at Wilfred Laurier University, member of the Interdisciplinary Centre on Climate Change at the

University of Waterloo. May 26, 2020. *Boston Review*. “The Case Against Mars”, <https://bostonreview.net/articles/byron-williston-taking-space-back-space-cadets/>. DOA: July 20, 2022.) ALP

We might shrug off this worry. After all, we are talking here about wars among humans and semi-humans unfolding at the farthest reaches of traversable space. But **the risks to Earth security posed by even minimal expansion—say, establishing a fully independent Martian colony—is just as dire. Earth will be extremely difficult to defend from hostile galactic groups** since we Terrans are stuck at the bottom of a relatively deep gravity well. Rockets must achieve an escape velocity of 25,000 miles per hour to break free of Earth’s gravitational pull, which is why almost all the rocket’s fuel is burned in this stage of the flight; getting back is comparatively easy. So, unfortunately, is **lobbing weapons down at us from the elevated height of the Moon, a nearby asteroid, a space platform or Mars itself** (whose gravity well is shallower than ours). We might suddenly find ourselves occupying catastrophically low strategic ground vis-à-vis our Martian (or other interstellar) enemies. The failure to grapple with this kind of scenario underlines what Deudney takes to be an entirely unexamined assumption of space expansionists: that “humanity will be succeeded by creatures who are significantly better than humans.” He calls this the ascensionist assumption, the notion that by going up we will inevitably become morally and politically better. So of course space colonists and their descendants pose no threat to us. Again, the point is not limited to space cowboys. Most techno-utopians—the giddier boosters of geoengineering, Artificial Superintelligence, nanotech, de-extinction, genetic enhancement, you name it—operate with some version of this background assumption. And that is putting the case charitably, because the other alternative is that they simply don’t care about the potentially catastrophic consequences of their dreams and schemes. But evolutionary theory gives us no reason to endorse any version of the ascensionist assumption. It is obviously not the case that over 3.5 billion years of development, species—including Homo sapiens—have become appreciably more tolerant of each other. Life has always been, and remains, red in tooth and claw. In fact, while appealing to evolutionary arguments, space expansionists are covertly counting on the magical disappearance of this aspect of the evolutionary process. It appears that even as we bring life generously to space, **we run the very significant risk of erasing our own future:** Habitat space expansionists are in effect saying that humanity will—and should—pursue a series of steps that will lead inevitably to its own demise. **Space expansion may be an agenda of survival for life, but for humanity it is an expensive suicide cult.** Unlike every other species that has ever existed, we humans are assumed to be “uniquely stupidly suicidal.” But our destiny, if we’ve got such a grandiose thing, is surely not to be mere vehicles for the dispersal of other life forms to the farthest reaches of space. To the extent that the whole program of space expansion rests on this faulty evolutionary logic, Deudney shows that it is a moral and intellectual sham.

On china

1. NU: The tech race isn’t escalating

Hartung 23 (William D. Hartung is a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. His work focuses on the arms industry and U.S. military budget. 6 December 2023, “Hyped China fears are driving a high-tech arms race” Responsible Statecraft, <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/china-arms-race/> DOA: 7/10/24) LLO

Building new systems, based on complex new technologies, able to be produced in large numbers in short order would be a daunting task. It would run counter to the record of the Pentagon and the arms industry over the past five decades, which is rife with examples of cost overruns and schedule delays. The Pentagon’s dream of new high-tech systems that are affordable and quick to produce is unlikely to be fulfilled. A forthcoming **report** from the Pentagon on the nation’s “defense industrial strategy” suggests that the solution is to fund smaller, more nimble arms firms, because “the traditional defense contractors in the [defense industrial base] would be challenged to respond to modern conflict at the velocity, scale, and flexibility necessary to meet the dynamic requirements of a major modern conflict.” Regardless of who takes up the challenge of building next generation systems, **the notion that new technology can solve the array of security challenges facing America is a dubious proposition.** Every generation brings hopes of a new, miracle technological fix that will allegedly dramatically increase U.S. military capabilities. From the “**electronic battlefield**” in Vietnam to the “revolution in military affairs” that

was touted in the 1990s, this approach has produced some systems that are more accurate and better networked. But the existence of this technology has not enabled the United States to actually win wars — in Vietnam, Iraq, or Afghanistan. That’s because technology cannot overcome a determined adversary engaged in irregular warfare on its home turf, and that the goal of reshaping entire societies by force was wildly unrealistic in the first place. The idea that emerging technologies will do any better and increase the ability to “win” a war with China is misguided at best. War with China would be an unprecedented disaster for all concerned, and the goal of U.S. policy should be to prevent such a conflict, not spin out scenarios for “winning” a war against a nuclear-armed power. In addition, contrary to the claims of the Pentagon and the arms industry, China’s military is not 10 feet tall, nor is its arms industry. As I note in a new [paper](#) for the Brown University Costs of War project, however one chooses to measure it, the U.S. spends two to three times what China spends on its military. The U.S. also has large advantages in numbers of basic systems, including nuclear weapons, aircraft carriers, advanced combat aircraft, nuclear-powered submarines, and transport aircraft. In fact, as Dan Grazier of the Project on Government Oversight [has noted](#), China’s military strategy is “inherently defensive.” When it comes to emerging military technology, the relative strengths of the U.S. and China are harder to assess given a lack of transparency on research into these areas. But the best course is not to run an arms race with China in the development of AI-driven robotic weapons. As Michael Klare has noted in a [report](#) for the Arms Control Association, there are real concerns that “AI-enabled systems may fail in unpredictable ways, causing unintended human slaughter or uncontrolled escalation.” The best hope of fending off a war between the U.S. and China over Taiwan rests with smart diplomacy, not “smart” weaponry. A good start would be to revive the “[One China](#)” policy, which calls, among other things, for China to commit itself to a peaceful resolution of the question of Taiwan’s status, and for the U.S. to forswear support for Taiwan’s formal independence and maintain only informal relations with the Taiwanese government. That approach has kept the peace in the Taiwan Strait for five decades.

Pref: they read no uq for esc

2. T: Chinese escalation

Bajak 24 (Frank Bajak is an Associated Press technology reporter who focuses on hacking, privacy, surveillance and military AI. 12 April 2024, “US-China competition to field military drone swarms could fuel global arms race” AP,

<https://apnews.com/article/us-china-drone-swarm-development-arms-race-e5808a715415d709f466da00cdeab10f> DOA: 7/5/24) LLO

The competition is not apt to build trust or reduce the risk of conflict, said William Hartung, a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. If the U.S. is “going full speed ahead, it’s most likely China will accelerate whatever it’s doing,” Hartung said. There’s a risk China could offer swarm technology to U.S. foes or repressive countries, analysts say. Or it could be stolen. Other countries developing the tech, such as Russia, Israel, Iran and Turkey, could also spread the know-how. U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in January that U.S.-China talks set to begin sometime this spring will address AI safety. Neither the defense secretary’s office nor the National Security Council would comment on whether the military use of drone swarms might be on the agenda.

o/w prob: china has historically only aggressed when they perceive a threat

3. T: Chinese cooption

Fedasiuk 21 (Ryan Fedasiuk, China Technology Policy Advisor at the U.S. Department of State, where he is sponsored by the Center for Security and Emerging Technology’s (CSET) State Department Fellowship. He also serves as an Adjunct Fellow (on leave) at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). Ryan previously worked as a Research Analyst at CSET, where his portfolio spanned military

applications of artificial intelligence, U.S. security posture in East Asia, and China's influence operations and efforts to acquire foreign technology, 10 November 2021, "We Spent a Year Investigating What the Chinese Army Is Buying. Here's What We Learned.", Politico, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/11/10/chinese-army-ai-defense-contracts-520445>, DOA 4/4/2023) ESR

Last week, the U.S. Department of Defense released its annual [report on Chinese military power](#), mentioning "artificial intelligence" 20 separate times. The report echoed longstanding concerns that **the Chinese People's Liberation Army is investing heavily in "intelligentized warfare" — a strategy based on making weapons systems and military operations more networked and autonomous — and that artificial intelligence may be "changing the future of warfare faster than expected."** The so-called [arms race for AI](#) has come to define debates about the competition between the United States and China. The idea that the two nations are racing to dominate in AI — and, in particular, that China is surging ahead in this race — has garnered [high-profile supporters](#) as well as [skeptics](#). But while much discussion, including the DoD report, has focused on China's longer-term grand plans to become an AI superpower, it has been less clear what the country is doing in the short term to make those ambitions a reality. Over the past year, I was part of [a team of researchers](#) at the Center for Security and Emerging Technology that **sifted through 350 Chinese military equipment contracts related specifically to AI**. The sample we analyzed is part of a larger, publicly available dataset of 66,000 procurement records published between April and November 2020. [Our just-published report](#), based entirely on open-source information, shows how **China is already using artificial intelligence in its military strategy**, as well as how **it plans to acquire future AI capabilities**. We found that **the Chinese military is "intelligentizing" warfare by purchasing AI systems for all manner of applications, including autonomous vehicles, intelligence analysis, decision support, electronic warfare and cyber operations**. At the same time, we found reason to be **skeptical of the most ominous predictions about China's efforts to fully automate warfare through "doomsday"-like weapons**. Perhaps most importantly for U.S. policymakers, our investigation into the PLA's buying habits shows how **Chinese progress in military AI is being driven**, in part, **by access to American technology and capital**. Our report highlights the critical role **U.S. companies** play in **supplying China with data, software and funding**. This points to serious shortcomings in **the U.S. export control system**, which **wasn't built to screen the high volume of technology transfer and capital flows into China, and** which **struggles to distinguish between military and civilian purchasers**. Even as the United States attempts to decouple supply chains from China when it comes to American goods, it also needs to consider new strategies to prevent American know-how from inadvertently powering China's technological advancements. Procurement contracts show what the Chinese military wants to buy, what it's actually buying and from where. Some of the contracts we reviewed are mundane, documenting purchases of office supplies like toilet paper and staplers. More salient are the records showing that **China is working to make its military more connected and autonomous in the immediate future**. We found several instances in which **PLA units were already buying commercial, off-the-shelf autonomous drones and AI-enabled surveillance software** — in other words, ready-made AI tools that can be used right away. Intelligent and autonomous vehicles, for example, accounted for more than a third of the contracts in our dataset. These include **swarms of fixed-wing drones and rotorcraft, which could be used to saturate U.S. or Taiwanese air defenses** in a conflict over the island. Several PLA units seemed to be purchasing unmanned vehicles through "the Drone Network" — an online marketplace similar to eBay, but for military equipment. Notably, based on the public contracts in our dataset, **China doesn't appear focused on lethal autonomous weapons or automated nuclear launch**, as some have suggested. In fact, of the seven areas canvassed in our report, **command and control systems and automated targeting software were purchased the least often** — and **most of these systems seem designed to support human decision-making processes, not to replace them outright**. Like the United States, China's most promising AI applications so far seem to be for back-office tasks like intelligence analysis and [predictive maintenance](#). Overall, while the U.S. military's annual budget still eclipses China's by \$500 billion, we estimate that the countries spend [roughly the same amount](#) on military AI, likely more than \$1.6 billion. Our research also highlights that **U.S.**

companies are inadvertently powering Chinese military advances in AI. The overwhelming majority of advanced computer chips at the heart of China's military AI systems are designed by U.S. firms like Intel, NVIDIA and Xilinx, and [manufactured in Taiwan](#). We found that suppliers actually depicted NVIDIA-branded processors in [photos of their products](#), providing clear evidence of the role U.S. technology plays in powering China's advances. One company, which won a contract to supply chips for the PLA Strategic Support Force, even bought the domain "nvidiagpu.com." Some **Chinese suppliers make an entire business out of sourcing foreign data or components and reselling them to sanctioned Chinese defense companies and army units.** [Others partner](#) with U.S. tech firms on [AI research](#) or buy ship-tracking data from [U.S. satellite companies](#). Notably, **some companies that supply the Chinese military with AI-based battle management and cybersecurity software are financed by U.S.-based venture capital companies.** Although China is working diligently to make its military supply chain more independent of the U.S. and free itself from reliance on Taiwan for semiconductors, industry leaders say it will likely be years before Beijing can achieve its dream of self-sufficiency. The interdependence between the United States and China has been well-documented, but our report provides one of the clearest illustrations yet of how loopholes and shortfalls in the export control system are enabling the outflow of U.S. technical know-how to the PLA. Among the 273 AI equipment suppliers identified in the study, less than 8 percent are found on the Commerce Department's Entity List of individuals and organizations subject to U.S. government licensing requirements. The overwhelming majority of PLA suppliers are also not blacklisted by either the [Treasury Department](#) or the [Defense Department](#). To be fair, the U.S. [export control system](#) was never intended to deny resources to the world's second-largest defense-industrial base. It was stood up to put selective pressure on rogue states and companies involved in nuclear weapons proliferation or human rights violations — with the promise of an off-ramp if they comply with international norms and regulations. This ad hoc approach to technology transfer is simply not built to handle America's "[number one pacing challenge](#)," a titanic economy deeply intertwined with the U.S. market. As it stands, [adding an entity](#) to one of the U.S. government's [many blacklists](#) requires months of planning, and any proposed addition must pass a rigorous interagency process. [The misspelling](#) or omission of [any part of a company's name](#) can render the entire listing ineffective — assuming the designee does not just [change it](#). Due diligence and accountability are important, but these inefficiencies are a problem. Another problem for the U.S. export screening system is that the lines between military and civilian entities in China are becoming less clear. Many firms sell to the PLA but also to civilian companies. This is part of Chinese President Xi Jinping's emphasis on "[military-civil fusion](#)," or integrating the civilian and military technology industries. **As part of military-civil fusion, private companies that contribute to China's military modernization receive extensive research subsidies and tax breaks from the state.** Indeed, our research indicates that private companies are the PLA's main AI equipment suppliers, in contrast to the longstanding narrative that [China's defense industry is dominated by bloated, state-owned enterprises](#). More than 60 percent of the 273 contractors in our study are private companies. **The growing role of China's private sector poses a major challenge for U.S. regulators.** Within the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security, just [seven export control officers](#) are tasked with reviewing every application to sell equipment to individuals and organizations on its Entity List. BIS already processes [more than 30,000 export license applications](#) each year, and adding thousands or tens of thousands more Chinese companies to its watch list would expand its responsibility by orders of magnitude. As two analysts recently pointed out in these pages, with a [stagnant budget](#) and fixed billets, the Commerce Department already struggles to keep up. While it is still vital that U.S. regulators keep identifying and blacklisting specific entities, the sheer size of the challenge requires more adaptable approaches. One solution could be to screen transactions that deal with broad categories of technology, rather than investigate individual companies or people. But the U.S. government hasn't even established those categories: Regulators have yet to release the list of "[emerging and foundational technologies](#)" that Congress mandated in the Export Control Reform Act of 2018. And to empower U.S. agencies to screen more transactions, Congress must boost funding. As the old saying goes, "Show me your budget, and I'll tell you your strategy." With the help of publicly available documents, we've shed light not only on how much China is spending on military AI, but how it's already preparing for the future of warfare. We hope that our work will help policymakers turn an often abstract debate about China's pursuit of technological primacy into a real blueprint on how to address it.

4. T: Containment causes China lashout

Mueller 23 (JOHN MUELLER is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Ohio State University, a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute, and the author of The Stupidity of War. 21 September 2023, "The Case Against Containment" Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/case-against-containment> DOA: 7/14/24) LLO

In determining whether to apply something like containment to China, it's worth asking first if the country is anywhere near as menacing as the Soviet Union. China, now in second place in total GDP (although 78th in per capita GDP), does seem to be seeking a spot at center stage. As part of this quest, it is building up its military and has sought to gain influence by lending money through its Belt and Road Initiative to an array of other countries and by engaging in "Wolf Warrior diplomacy," using economic and military muscle to badger and bully. Meanwhile, the Chinese leader Xi Jinping has been adept at working his way into unchallenged one-man rule in China and at embedding himself at the center of a compliant echo chamber. **But China doesn't present the same kind of ideological challenge as the Soviet Union. It has sought to aid other authoritarian kleptocracies to better maintain their hold on power, but that is hardly the same thing as spreading an ideology.** Moreover, **China does not seem to have much in the way of territorial ambitions beyond reincorporating Taiwan at some point and settling disputes over parts of its border and over the seas around it. Most troubling for China, as it was for the Soviet Union, is its growing set of domestic difficulties. Most of them derive from Xi's determination to prioritize control by the antiquated and kleptocratic Chinese Communist Party over economic development. The list of resulting problems is nearly endless: endemic corruption,** environmental degradation, **slowing growth,** capricious shifts in government policies (including the abruptly canceled "zero COVID" policy), inefficient enterprises, fraudulent statistical reporting, **a rapidly aging population, enormous overproduction, huge youth unemployment, increasing debt, a housing bubble,** restive minorities, protectionist policies, the alienation of Western investors, and a clampdown on civil liberties. **There also seems to be something of a decline in confidence in, and in the credibility of, the Communist Party's dictates, a change that could have dire long-term consequences for the regime.** Moreover, China's efforts in recent years to be treated as a great power have been remarkably unproductive. **Rather than generating admiration or obedience from countries that once wished it well, resentment and wariness have soared** not only in the West but also in Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam, pushing some of these important neighbors further into the arms of the United States. **And the much-touted Belt and Road Initiative is wallowing in unpaid debt,** with loan outlays cut from \$75 billion in 2016 to \$4 billion in 2019. **Given China's many weaknesses, a policy of containment is scarcely called for. Indeed, it would likely fuel, not allay, the common motivating belief among Chinese leaders that Washington is out to stop their country's economic growth—something that many fear might cause them to lash out. Most of China's expansionist moves have nothing to do with force,** however. As the former U.S. diplomat Chas Freeman has put it, **"There is no military answer to a grand strategy built on a nonviolent expansion of commerce and navigation."**

Prefer a) China been winning for years and no lashout b) China's rise is premised on alliance building and economic clout - no warrant they risk it all c) their ev doesn't account for china's recent economic and demographic slowdowns

5. T: Without China led cooperation, AI escalates

Tim Hwang is a former director of the Harvard-MIT Ethics and Governance of AI Initiative and previously served as Google's global public policy lead for artificial intelligence, and Alex Pascal is a nonresident scholar in the Technology and International Affairs program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He served previously in senior U.S. foreign-policy

roles at the White House and the United Nations, *Foreign Policy*, 12-11-19, [“Artificial Intelligence Isn’t an Arms Race”, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/12/11/artificial-intelligence-ai-not-arms-race-china-united-states/>, 11-11-20] cdm

At the last Democratic presidential debate, the technologist candidate Andrew Yang emphatically declared that “we’re in the process of potentially losing the AI arms race to China right now.” As evidence, he cited Beijing’s access to vast amounts of data and its substantial investment in research and development for artificial intelligence. Yang and others—most notably the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence, which [released its interim report](#) to Congress last month—are right about China’s current strengths in developing AI and the serious concerns this should raise in the United States. But *framing advances in the field as an “arms race” is both wrong and counterproductive*. Instead, while being clear-eyed about China’s aggressive pursuit of AI for military use and human rights-abusing technological surveillance, *the United States and China must find their way to dialogue and cooperation on AI*. A practical, nuanced mix of competition and cooperation *would better serve U.S. interests* than an arms race approach. AI is one of the great collective Rorschach tests of our times. Like any topic that captures the popular imagination but is poorly understood, it soaks up the zeitgeist like a sponge. It’s no surprise, then, that as the idea of great-power competition has reengulfed the halls of power, AI has gotten caught up in the *“race” narrative*. China—Americans are *told*—is barreling ahead on AI, so much so that the United States will soon be *lagging* far behind. Like the fears that surrounded Japan’s economic rise in the 1980s or the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 1960s, *anxiety around technological dominance are really proxies for U.S. insecurity* about its own economic, military, and political prowess. Yet as technology, *AI does not naturally lend itself to this framework* and is not a strategic weapon. Despite *claims* that AI will change nearly everything about warfare, and notwithstanding its ultimate potential, for the foreseeable future AI *will likely only incrementally improve existing platforms*, unmanned systems such as drones, and battlefield awareness. Ensuring that the United States outpaces its rivals and adversaries in the military and intelligence applications of AI is important and worth the investment. But such applications are just *one element* of AI development and should not dominate the United States’ entire approach. *The arms race framework raises the question of what one is racing toward. Machine learning, the AI subfield of greatest recent promise, is a vast toolbox of capabilities and statistical methods—a bundle of technologies that do everything from recognizing objects in images to generating symphonies. It is far from clear what exactly would constitute “winning” in AI or even being “better” at a national level.* The National Security Commission is absolutely right that “developments in AI cannot be separated from the emerging strategic competition with China and developments in the broader geopolitical landscape.” U.S. leadership in AI is imperative. *Leading, however, does not mean winning*. Maintaining superiority in the field of AI is necessary but not sufficient. *True global leadership requires* proactively shaping the rules and norms for AI applications, ensuring that *the benefits of AI are distributed worldwide*—broadly and equitably—and *stabilizing great-power competition that could lead to catastrophic conflict*. That *requires U.S. cooperation with* friends and even rivals such as *China*. Here, we believe that important aspects of the National Security Commission on AI’s recent report have gotten too little attention. First, as the commission notes, official U.S. dialogue with China and Russia on the use of AI in nuclear command and control, AI’s military applications, and AI safety could enhance strategic stability, like arms control talks during the Cold War. Second, collaboration on AI applications by Chinese and American researchers, engineers, and companies, as well as bilateral dialogue on rules and standards for AI development, could help buffer the competitive elements of an *increasingly tense U.S.-Chinese relationship*. Finally, there is a much higher bar to sharing core AI inputs such as data and software and building AI for shared global challenges *if the United States sees AI as an arms race*. Although commercial and military applications for AI are increasing, *applications for societal good (addressing climate change, improving disaster response, boosting resilience, preventing the emergence of*

pandemics, managing armed conflict, and assisting in human development) are lagging. These would benefit from multilateral collaboration and investment, led by the United States and China. The AI “arms race” narrative makes for great headlines, but the unbridled U.S.-Chinese competition it implies risks pushing the United States and the world down a dangerous path.

Washington and Beijing should recognize the fallacy of a generalized AI arms race in which there are no winners. Instead, both should lead by leveraging the technology to spur dialogue between them and foster practical collaboration to counter the many forces driving them apart—benefiting the whole world in the process.

o/w scope – unchecked AI creates far more flashpoints

shortcircuits – diplomatic agreements ensure there won’t be use

6. T: Deficit

Alexander and Sanders 12 (Ryan Alexander served as president of Taxpayers for Common Sense from 2006 through 2019, after serving on the board for more than seven years. She has testified on Congress on a wide range of topics relating to federal spending, subsidies, and fiscal policy, and her comments have been featured in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, The Wall Street Journal, and on CNN, Fox News, CBS News, ABC News, and NPR, among other outlets. Over the past two decades, Ryan has served as a litigating attorney, funder, small business owner, and nonprofit executive. Ryan co-founded Appalachian Mountain Advocates, which she continues to chair, and sits on the boards of directors of the Fund for Constitutional Government, Project on Government Oversight, and R Street Institute. Ryan received a B.A. with honors from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, a law degree from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and was awarded a National Association for Public Interest Law Equal Justice Fellowship. Senator Bernie Sanders from Vermont.

8/26/12,”Stop the nuclear-industry welfare program “, Grist,

<https://grist.org/nuclear/stop-the-nuclear-industry-welfare-program/> // DOA: 4/3/25)JDE

With this nation facing a \$15 trillion national debt, there is no shortage of opinions about how to move toward deficit reduction in the federal budget. One topic you will not hear discussed very often on Capitol Hill is the idea of ending one of the oldest American welfare programs — **the extraordinary amount of corporate welfare going to the nuclear energy industry.**

Many in Congress talk of getting “big government off the backs of private industry.” Here’s an industry we’d like to get off the backs of the taxpayers. As a senator who is the longest-serving independent in Congress, and as the president of an independent and nonpartisan budget watchdog organization, we do not necessarily agree on everything when it comes to energy and budget policy in the United States. But one thing we strongly agree on is the need to end wasteful subsidies that prop up the nuclear industry. **After 60 years, this industry should**

not require continued and massive corporate welfare. It is time for the nuclear power industry to

stand on its own two feet. Nuclear welfare started with research and development. According to the

nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, since 1948 the federal government has spent more than \$95 billion (in 2011 dollars) on nuclear energy R&D. That is more than four times the amount spent on solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, biofuels, and hydropower combined. But

federal R&D was not enough; the industry also wanted federal liability insurance too, which it got back in

1957 with the Price-Anderson Act. This federal liability insurance program for nuclear plants was meant to be temporary, but Congress repeatedly extended it, most recently through 2025. Price-Anderson puts taxpayers on the hook for losses that **exceed \$12.6 billion** if there is a nuclear plant disaster. **Government estimates show the cost for such a disaster could reach \$720 billion in property**

damage alone, so that’s one sweetheart deal for the nuclear industry! R&D and Price-Anderson insurance are still

just the tip of the iceberg. **From tax breaks for uranium mining and loan guarantees for uranium enrichment to**

special depreciation benefits and lucrative federal tax breaks for every kilowatt-hour from new plants,

nuclear is heavily subsidized at every phase. The industry also bilks taxpayers when plants close down with tax breaks for

decommissioning plants. Further, **it is estimated that the federal costs for the disposal of radioactive nuclear waste could be as much as \$100 billion.** **Even with all of those subsidies, the private sector still will not agree to finance a new nuclear plant, so wealthy nuclear corporations recently secured access to \$18.5 billion in taxpayer-backed loan guarantees.** Maybe the Wall Street banks agree with the Congressional Budget Office, which estimated the **risk of default on nuclear loans at above 50 percent.** The nuclear industry's financial troubles are not new. In the 1960s and '70s, 100 reactors were cancelled due to cost overruns. Things were so bad that [Forbes called it](#) "the largest managerial disaster in business history." Despite this history, **some want to dramatically increase federal loan guarantees for nuclear plants. It is shocking that the nuclear industry continues to receive so much federal support at a time of record debt.** Of course, nuclear subsidies benefit some of the wealthiest and most powerful energy corporations in America, which may explain the persistence of nuclear welfare. For example, Exelon, which takes in \$33 billion in revenue annually, is the leading operator/owner of nuclear reactors in the United States. Entergy, with revenues of more than \$11 billion annually, is the second largest. Together, these two companies own or operate almost one-third of U.S. reactors, and based on their revenue they are doing pretty well. Why do they need federal welfare year after year after year? Will it ever end? Well, as Secretary of Energy Steven Chu confirmed at a recent Senate hearing, **without federal liability insurance and loan guarantees, no one would ever build a new nuclear plant. Whether you support nuclear energy or not, we should all be able to agree that with record debt, we cannot afford to continue to subsidize this mature industry and its multi-billion-dollar corporations.** If the nuclear industry believes so fervently in its technology, then nuclear companies and Wall Street investors can put their money where the mouth is. Let them finance, insure, and pay for nuclear plants themselves.

Deficits diminish defense spending eventually, risks credibility

Skold 20 (Martin Skold served as a senior adviser and campaign manager to former Massachusetts Governor Bill Weld's 2020 Republican presidential primary campaign, and a foreign policy assistant to Rep. Paul Ryan in 2011. He holds a PhD in international relations from the University of St. Andrews, where his dissertation focused on the strategy of great power competition. 4/2/20, "The Superpower Remover", American Interest,

<https://www.the-american-interest.com/2020/04/02/the-superpower-remover/> // DOA: 4/3/25)JDE

"Facing this much economic damage, the United States also faces a threat to its power and security, and the world order on which its security depends. Even as it looks to its citizens' welfare at home, the United States must be cognizant of the national security challenge that the pandemic and recession pose. On this point, it is important to recall that **American global hegemony rests on its unparalleled ability to project force abroad. That ability is sure to be tested going forward. The U.S. defense budget will have to end up on the chopping block**—if not now, then in the coming years **when deficits really start to soar.** At the moment, the United States is spending about **\$686 billion** on defense annually, and **\$375 billion** to service the national debt. The second is already **projected** to overtake the first. **COVID-19 will no doubt accelerate this trend. The entire U.S. alliance network, by which the United States has historically led the world, depends on the perceived ability of the United States to respond militarily if an ally gets in trouble. A blow to U.S. credibility in this area can bring the entire system down.** If a NATO ally is attacked and the United States does not respond, NATO ceases to be credible and probably falls apart (and takes the EU with it). Similarly, if any of the countries along the First Island Chain—Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, or the Philippines—are attacked, and the United States does not respond, those states will quickly make their peace with China. If credible doubts about the United States' ability to do any of the above emerge, serious strategic realignments could well break out across the world. It is unclear where the breaking point is, but the numbers have not been moving in the United States's favor. The U.S. Navy has been planning to deploy 355 ships as a (probably inadequate) measure to counter China's growing fleet; as a popular naval blogger recently **noted**, a fraction of that number now looks optimistic. Similar statements could be made about efforts to **modernize the Air Force** or to **retool the Army**. In any case, **the incentives are there for China, and perhaps even Russia, to test the boundaries of America's already-wavering resolve and to undermine the credibility of U.S. security guarantees. We should expect more provocations if the United States visibly weakens."**

LI: no cred means alliances fracture and china gains superiority