### Contention 1– Russia

#### Russian dominance in nuclear energy---vis-à-vis state-backed corporation “Rosatom”---uses leverage and capacity to fuel Putin’s war machine

Doggett 23 [Lloyd Doggett, member of the U.S. House of Representatives, "Russia’s Rosatom Fuels Putin’s War Machine," Foreign Policy, 3-20-2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/04/09/russia-rosatom-nuclear-uranium-sanctions-war-putin-ukraine/]

Western sanctions against Moscow have so far failed to effectively curb Russian President Vladimir Putin’s ability to wage his illegal war against Ukraine. Much of the weakness of the sanctions regime centers on energy. One still unsanctioned but critical target should be the network of companies associated with Rosatom, Russia’s state-owned nuclear corporation, which continues to expand its reach despite the ongoing war. U.S. operators of nuclear power plants purchase approximately $1 billion in nuclear fuel from Rosatom annually—or about 20 percent of U.S. demand for enriched uranium. That number would likely be even higher, were it not for a cap on U.S. uranium imports from Russia imposed in 2020. Many U.S. allies also rely at least partially on Russian fuel. Because of this continued dependence, Rosatom has so far been exempt from any attempts to sanction Russia. Moscow clearly believes that Rosatom will continue to get a free pass and is now using the company as a Trojan horse to circumvent Western sanctions. According to Rosatom Director-General Alexey Likhachev, the company’s military contracting has grown significantly. In January 2023, the Washington Post published information obtained by Ukrainian intelligence detailing Rosatom’s involvement in supplying the military industry with components, equipment, and raw materials, including aluminum oxide for rocket fuel, chemical compounds for aviation and rocketry, lithium-ion batteries for tanks and air defense systems, and 3D-printing technologies. Evidence strongly suggests that Rosatom is a full-fledged and growing partner of the Russian military machine. Rosatom is also expanding its reach into other sectors, which allows the Kremlin to tighten state control over companies that can help circumvent restrictions. For example, Rosatom recently acquired Fesco, one of Russia’s largest shipping companies, which accepts payments from customers in Chinese yuan in order to avoid sanctions affecting U.S. dollar and euro transactions. In November 2023, Putin signed a decree transferring state-owned shares of Fesco to Rosatom, granting the nuclear giant control over an extensive array of assets, including terminal complexes across the country—in Novosibirsk, Khabarovsk, Tomsk, and Vladivostok—as well as 37 ships, more than 170,000 shipping containers, and 11,000 platforms for container transportation. Rosatom’s expansion has become a hallmark of its activities in recent years, helping Moscow to reroute trade from sanctioned companies and goods. Renera, Rosatom’s energy storage subsidiary, has acquired the machinery to assemble high-quality lithium-ion batteries using cells and modules imported from a South Korean plant, despite a ban on the export of modules from South Korea. Under the umbrella of unsanctioned Rosatom entities, it is much easier for Russia to acquire the necessary technology to strengthen Rosatom’s dominance in the global market. The Ukrainian think tank DiXi Group has compiled open-source data on Rosatom’s new assets, including companies such as Security Code, one of Russia’s largest developers of hardware and software for certified information protection; Tomsk MPE Ilmenite, a major producer of titanium and zirconium; and Kirov-Energomash, a large Russian manufacturer of industrial equipment. As Rosatom and its subsidiaries continue to diversify into sectors beyond the nuclear industry, the company has become an unsanctioned funnel for high-tech products, not to mention for additional revenues, to strengthen Putin’s war machine. These activities are particularly intensive relating to the production of weapons, as they allow Russia to obtain, for example, microchips and other electronic components that go into missiles, aircraft, battlefield communications, and other things that it needs to keep fighting. Meanwhile, Rosatom’s core business continues to expand, with nearly 20 new agreements and memorandums of cooperation signed in 2023, primarily focusing on Asian and African countries interested in affordable nuclear technologies. All nuclear power plant construction projects initiated since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 are progressing successfully. Last month, media reported that the Akkuyu plant in Turkey is on schedule with its first unit over 90 percent ready; the extension of the Paks plant in Hungary has entered a new stage; another batch of equipment for the Kudankulam plant in India has been manufactured and shipped; and Rosatom has signed a contract to supply nuclear fuel components for a research facility in Egypt. All these relationships serve Russian strategic interests by maintaining its political influence and building dependencies in various parts of the globe. The further Rosatom intertwines itself with developing countries, the more it increases Russia’s international support, the easier it is for Moscow to bypass restrictions, and the harder it becomes for the United States and its allies to enact tougher, more comprehensive sanctions. What’s more, Rosatom is also working to advance its interests in key members of the sanctions coalition, France and Germany. The French company Framatome Advanced Nuclear Fuels still intends to use a Rosatom subsidiary’s license to globally produce nuclear fuel assemblies at a plant in Lingen, Germany. Nor should Washington ignore Rosatom’s cooperation with China and Iran to help develop their nuclear energy programs, where the extent to which Russian technology powers these countries’ nuclear weapons programs is unclear. By keeping silent as Russia circumvents sanctions and globally sources what it needs for its military, the United States and its partners are helping Moscow even as they support Kyiv. In Washington, congressional momentum is building for a ban on Russian uranium imports, which the House passed unanimously last year. Although there is general support for such a ban, the bill has been stalled in the U.S. Senate over an unrelated matter. While the Biden administration has imposed some sanctions on the Russian nuclear industry, the list of sanctioned entities includes only about 20 of the nearly 460 companies that make up the Rosatom conglomerate. Restraining Russia’s capabilities requires much more comprehensive action, such as automatic sanctions against all Rosatom assets acquired after Feb. 24, 2022; sanctions against Rosatom-linked research organizations in order to restrict Russia’s access to modern technologies; and working with the EU and G-7 to ensure that sanctions have the highest possible impact. Without further intervention, Rosatom’s dominance in the global market for nuclear power plants—where the company already supplies more than 70 percent of worldwide exports—will continue to provide Russia with an edge in funding its war and advancing its interests. U.S. President Joe Biden and Congress can also do much more to eliminate U.S. dependence on Russia for nuclear fuel. In 2022, the Inflation Reduction Act included $500 million for the Energy Department to advance uranium production in the United States to fuel a new generation of nuclear reactors. Last month, another $2.7 billion was allocated to fund U.S.-based uranium processing and enrichment. Sanctions are effective only if the United States, along with the G-7+ coalition, demonstrates unity, strength, and resilience. Closer trans-Atlantic cooperation can create opportunities to reduce dependence on Russia and increase pressure on Moscow. If Russia’s nuclear industry remains sanctions-free, it will not only undermine clear U.S. foreign-policy goals but also risk failure in U.S. efforts to support Ukraine’s essential fight for freedom.

#### Rosatom’s reach is global and dangerous – they empirically disregard safety and weaponize facilities

Sabadus 24 [Aura Sabadus, Dr. Aura Sabadus is a senior energy journalist who writes about Eastern Europe, Turkey, and Ukraine for Independent Commodity Intelligence Services (ICIS), a London-based global energy and petrochemicals news and market data provider. Europe’s Edge is CEPA’s online journal covering critical topics on the foreign policy docket across Europe and North America., "Russia’s Civil Nuclear Threat Must Be Crushed," CEPA, 3-11-2024, https://cepa.org/article/russias-civil-nuclear-threat-must-be-crushed/]

Russia’s nuclear industry has been expanding globally with little scrutiny since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. While Western nations have focused on hobbling Russia’s oil and gas revenues, Rosatom, its state-owned nuclear energy company, has been left to work unhindered. Western allies, after deepening their reliance on Rosatom over recent decades, have taken great care not to disrupt the flow of Russian atomic materials and services, even though the company is accused of complicity in war crimes, poses serious safety risks worldwide, and is fueling the war in Ukraine. Rosatom describes itself as a pioneer and leader in civil nuclear technology, but its outreach is much wider and more nefarious, as shown in a report published in February by DiXi Group, a Ukrainian energy think tank. This documents the company’s increased involvement in the provision of equipment for military purposes using a high-density core made from depleted uranium. Many of its activities might have gone under the radar if Rosatom had not unleashed international outrage by joining the Russian military effort at Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which it has used as a weapon to threaten Europe. Since occupying the plant — Europe’s largest — Rosatom has breached security protocols by allowing unauthorized personnel to operate it and turned a blind eye to irresponsible military behavior, such as placing landmines in restricted areas. It has also aided and abetted war crimes against Ukrainians by facilitating the transformation of a part of the facility into a torture chamber. But concerns about Rosatom’s disregard for nuclear safety extend much wider than Ukraine and have a long history. In the early 2000s, the company supplied a nuclear reactor with multiple safety deficiencies to Iran, and it is currently completing Turkey’s first atomic power plant in an area of high seismic risk, prompting the European Parliament to raise the alarm over the safety of the Mediterranean region. Equipment-related risks are aggravated by the fact that many of the power plants Rosatom is developing are located in countries with questionable safety standards. It is building 28 reactors with an installed capacity of 30 gigawatts in Africa, Asia and Latin America, boasting that it has $200bn in foreign orders for the next decade. With the exception of Hungary, which has recently signed an agreement with Rosatom for the expansion of its Paks nuclear power plant, European countries have been seeking to diversify away from the company since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Nevertheless, breaking Rosatom’s dominance is complex. The company and its subsidiaries control about 30% of the global market for enriched uranium, which is required to power commercial nuclear reactors, and around 20% of the 450 nuclear power plants around the world are Russian-designed. In the US alone, more than a fifth of the fuel used by its 93 nuclear reactors is supplied via enrichment contracts with Russian contractors, mainly Rosatom, while the EU has 18 reactors which until recently relied on Russian fuel. The February 2022 invasion caught Western countries unprepared. Many had relied on cheap supplies from Rosatom after high domestic production costs and low demand in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, which forced them to reduce or wind down their own enrichment operations.

#### And, domestic nuclear production is key to reduce Russian influence

Lorenzini 3-7 [Marina, 3-7-25, “The US can reduce Russia’s nuclear energy—and geopolitical—influence”, Atlantic Council, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/energysource/the-us-can-reduce-russias-nuclear-energy-and-geopolitical-influence/]

As the second Donald Trump administration settles in, at least one energy priority will remain consistent: bipartisan efforts to position the US nuclear energy industry for a greater share in the global marketplace. In early February, Secretary Chris Wright emphasized Trump’s priority for the United States: to “lead the commercialization of affordable and abundant nuclear energy” amid surging global energy demand. This opportunity will lead not only to economic growth and improved energy security in the United States, but also the chance to reduce Russian influence on nuclear energy markets in Europe—and the geopolitical leverage it affords. For the past two decades, Russia has wielded its nuclear energy technologies—through its state-owned conglomerate Rosatom—as a strategic export to exert geopolitical leverage. Rosatom has been a dependable, cost-effective, and technically competent partner for stakeholders around the world, enabling its dominant market position. Substantial up-front project finance and loans have contributed to Rosatom’s international success. Bangladesh, Belarus, Egypt, Hungary, and Turkey have benefitted from multibillion-dollar loans from Russia’s State Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs (Vnesheconombank). State sponsorship allows Rosatom to offer favorable loan terms—such as a 3 percent interest rate—that competitors cannot match. Meanwhile, any analogous form of concessional loans for infrastructure projects has not been a part of the development strategy among Rosatom’s competitors. However, some countries that previously embraced the vision of energy integration with Russia continue to shift investments away from Russian partners. Countries tied to Rosatom for their nuclear supplies are keen to diversify—if not extract themselves entirely—from energy dependence on Russia. Additionally, Vnesheconombank‘s SWIFT ban and US sanctions designation increases risks for loan recipients. The United States—and allies with nuclear industries such as France and South Korea—could further convert the commercial interest for non-Russian products into strategic wins by focusing on countries with Soviet-era reactors. Countries and utilities often cite project finance as the primary barrier for building, but the new political momentum in the United States could galvanize both sufficient funds and new models across the public and private sectors. Bulgaria seeks two new reactors at Soviet-era site Bulgaria’s Kozloduy nuclear power plant operates two Soviet-era VVER-1000 reactors which supply one third of the country’s electricity. But in February 2024, Bulgaria signed an intergovernmental agreement with the United States to contribute to Bulgaria’s civil nuclear program, including the design, construction, and commissioning of two Westinghouse AP-1000 reactors at Kozloduy at a cost of $14 billion. Bulgaria’s energy minister said that the two reactors will be built entirely with public funds: either the Bulgarian treasury or the state plant owner will finance up to 30 percent of the project costs, and a loan will cover the remaining costs. In early February, the Bulgarian energy minister met with officials from the US Export-Import Bank (EXIM) to advance a $8.6 billion (more than 60 percent of the estimated cost) letter of interest for the two new reactors. For the remaining amount, the Bulgarian treasury or Kozloduy’s owner has several options. Bulgaria may also have access to debt or equity financing from the world’s largest multilateral development lender, the European Investment Bank. Additionally, as the World Bank considers how to incorporate nuclear power into their offerings, any steps toward engagement would encourage other lenders to do the same. If further capital is required, Bulgaria—with its relatively healthy domestic economy—could issue dollar-denominated bonds to raise funds, or the Kozloduy owner could issue green bonds similar to Canada’s Bruce Power. Bulgaria’s ability—and that of any potential lenders—to overcome financing hurdles will determine the success of such agreements. But if the agreement leads to new nuclear power generation, it bodes well for similar economies to undertake new reactor builds. Soviet reactor reaches end of life in Armenia Russia dominates Armenia’s energy system, but Armenian foreign policy has shifted dramatically away from Moscow in the past year, in part due to the lack of Russian military assistance to Armenia when Azerbaijan seized Nagorno-Karabakh. The policy change will not immediately impact Armenia’s Soviet-era VVER-440 nuclear reactor at Metsamor, which has received several upgrades and lifetime extensions—the latest, with Rosatom’s support, will sustain the remaining operational reactor until 2036. However, preparations must be made in the coming years to: extend the operational lifetime (a highly unlikely outcome due to the reactor’s age); build new light-water reactors (whether from China, Russia, South Korea, or the United States); or invest in small modular reactors (SMRs). Armenia may seek to build an SMR rather than a traditional reactor due to limited financing options and low power consumption. To build a new reactor, Armenia might want to follow Romania’s blended model for financing its SMR deal with NuScale. The EXIM and US International Development Finance Corporation offered Romania tentative financial support totaling $4 billion. Public and private partners then formed a coalition of stakeholders from Japan, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States to finance the SMR project up to $275 million. If further capital is needed, private financial institutions have also recently announced their plans to support the nuclear industry. Whether and when construction begins for the reactor in Romania will demonstrate feasibility, but so far, the financial structure has shown promise. A great nuclear power balance In partnership with allies, the United States should advance financial and commercial solutions to help countries dependent on Russian nuclear energy diversify their domestic power programs. The United States is well positioned to do so. Trump, and Biden before him, have supported nuclear energy domestically, which, in turn, can result in the export of US technologies and expertise. Strong bipartisan appropriations from multiple administrations will reinforce Trump’s vision and the domestic nuclear energy industry. In 2019, during Trump’s first administration, the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act became law, paving the way for a streamlined advanced reactor licensing process. Under the Biden administration, the multibillion-dollar appropriations from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act bolstered the US nuclear energy industry. Further, the 2023 Nuclear Fuel Security Act and the 2024 ADVANCE Act enjoyed bipartisan support on Capitol Hill. Building on these domestic advances, Trump’s embrace of financial vehicles, such as the EXIM Bank or DFC, that bridge public and private sectors, will facilitate investments in multi-billion dollar infrastructure projects outside of the United States and bolster US energy-related exports, including from its domestic nuclear energy industry. These factors bode well for the United States to substantially weaken Russia’s share of global nuclear markets and its geopolitical influence.

#### And this domestic investment would be enough to undermine Russia’s efforts

Stricker & Ruggiero 23 [Andrea Stricker [Nonproliferation and Biodefense Program Deputy Director And Research Fellow] and Anthony Ruggiero [Nonproliferation And Biodefense Program Senior Adjunct Fellow], "Ending Global Reliance On Russia’S Nuclear Energy Sector," FDD, 2-3-2023, https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2023/02/03/ending-global-reliance-on-russias-nuclear-energy-sector]

Several countries could readily provide the mined and milled uranium that Russia supplies today: Australia, Canada, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Niger, Tanzania, Uzbekistan, and eventually the United States. For converted uranium, France, Canada, and Japan could begin to serve as suppliers and ramp up production over the course of a few years to replace Russian supplies. Eventually, the United States could as well. In addition, France, Urenco, Urenco USA, and soon other services in the United States could, over the course of several years, supply the enriched uranium fuel that Rosatom provides today. To meet more immediate HALEU needs, the United States is considering down-blending, or making available in a lower purity, its large stock of atomic weapons-grade uranium for HALEU production until enrichment services can meet this demand. Washington and Europe would need to assist the International Atomic Energy Agency’s international low-enriched uranium fuel bank in Kazakhstan, which relies in great part on Russian fuel, to mitigate shortages through supply from alternative sources. The imposition of sanctions on Rosatom will necessitate new sources for this fuel bank. The United States should also resist the urge to rely on Chinese supplies, as this would mean replacing one problem with another. To encourage new suppliers to enter the marketplace, Washington and its allies will have to make clear they seek a permanent decoupling from the Russian nuclear industry. A study by Columbia University’s Center on Global Energy Policy underscored the positive effect of market guidance for the nuclear fuel sector: “mining, conversion, and enrichment suppliers in the West will be looking to national governments to provide clear policies before they invest money in new facilities and capabilities. Their worry will be that in a year or two — perhaps less — Russian uranium products will be allowed back into national markets and will undercut them, causing them to lose out on their investments.”69

#### And, Rosatom is key to Russian power projection

Siddi & Silvan 24 [Marco Siddi [University of Cagliari, Department of Political and Social Science, Via Sant’Ignazio. Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Arkadiankatu 23B, 00101 Helsinki, Finland] & Kristiina Silvan [Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Arkadiankatu 23B, 00101 Helsinki, Finland], “Nuclear energy and international relations: the external strategy of Russia’s Rosatom,” International Politics https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-024-00618-0, Oct 9, 2024]

As a leading actor in the global nuclear sector, Russia’s state company Rosatom offers a highly relevant case study to analyse dependencies in civilian nuclear power and the evolving nature of the international nuclear sector. Rosatom is a vertically integrated corporation controlling either directly or via subsidiaries the full cycle of competences in the Russian nuclear industry, from uranium mining to the construction and operation of nuclear power plants, including processing and storage of spent fuel.2 Following its establishment in 2007, Rosatom has enjoyed a unique revival and expansion thanks to domestic political choices and economic support, a growing number of international clients and decreasing competition from the Western nuclear industry. Financial and diplomatic support from the Russian state, together with flexible and comprehensive business offers to customers, have enabled the company to acquire a large foreign portfolio (Szulecki and Overland 2023). The institutional set-up of Rosatom and the strong financial support it has received from the state thus far make it a textbook case of the realist understanding of energy politics. The Russian state retains control of the strategic nuclear sector and can potentially exploit its international ramifications to pursue foreign policy goals. Rosatom’s foreign activities receive full support by the Russian government, including during bilateral meetings between representatives of the partner country and the Russian president or senior members of government. Cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy is included in the agenda of such meetings, mentioned in public speeches and sometimes codified in memoranda of understanding. When cooperation is at an advanced stage, the Russian president or senior Russian government members attend official ceremonies with their foreign counterparts and celebrate landmarks in the construction of new projects (Schepers 2019, 4–5). Moreover, Rosatom plays an important role for Russia’s international prestige and status, notably its claim to be a great power, beyond the domains of military force and fossil fuel geopolitics. Nuclear technology is one of the few high-tech sectors, where Russia is a world leader. Rosatom is investing in the development of new reactor technologies, most notably safe plants using fast neutron reactors, MOX (a blend of oxides of plutonium and uranium) and a closed fuel cycle, which would allow eliminating the production of radioactive waste from power generation. Currently, Russia is the main viable commercial supplier of high-assay, low-enriched uranium (with 5–20% concentration of the isotope U-235, instead of the 3–5% concentration that fuels the existing feet of light water reactors), which will be needed to power the new generation of advanced reactors (Lorenzini and Giovannini 2022). Besides Russia, only China has the infrastructure to produce HALEU at scale, whereas in the United States production started with a pilot project in November 2023 (US Department of Energy 2023). Hence, following a realist approach, Rosatom is an important element of Russia’s great power status and international influence. Considerations concerning financial profits seem to play a secondary role in its functioning, as highlighted by the fact that the company receives considerable state subsidies. Moreover, plans to increase electricity generation from nuclear massively—as specified in Russia’s Energy Strategy to 2035—are unlikely to be achieved without substantial government intervention (IAEA 2021; Mitrova and Yermakov 2019, 37).3 At the same time, keeping to a realist reading, the Russian nuclear sector has an important vulnerability: it needs to import . natural uranium from abroadRussia uses approximately 5,500 tons of natural uranium per year, but its domestic production has oscillated between 2870 and 3560 tons since 2004 (World Nuclear Association 2021). Moreover, domestic production is only a fifth of Rosatom’s needs if its requirements to fulfill export contracts of enriched uranium are considered (Meyer 2023, 5). While, Russia has substantial resources of natural uranium, extraction from remote locations make imports from abroad cheaper. Therefore, Rosatom has chosen to import part of its requirements from abroad, mostly from Kazakhstan, where its subsidiary Uranium One set up joint ventures with or acquired stakes from its Kazakh counterparts (Siddi and Silvan 2023). If Russia were to act fully in accordance with a realist script, it would prioritise domestic sourcing of natural uranium despite higher costs in order to avoid vulnerability to external supply shocks. Russian imports of Kazakh uranium show that Russia is in the position of leading global supplier only in two of the three identified main stages of the nuclear supply chain, namely uranium enrichment (and conversion) and the export of reactors and related services. We now turn to these two stages more in detail to assess whether and how Rosatom’s actorness reflects realist or liberal paradigms.

#### Russian expansionism ensures extinction from great power war, poverty, disease, and environmental destruction.

Harari 22 [Dr. Yuval Noah PhD from the University of Oxford, Professor in the Department of History in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, “The End of the New Peace”, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/12/putin-russian-ukraine-war-global-peace/672385/]

If Putin’s gamble **succeeds**, the result will be the **final collapse of the global order** and of the New Peace. **Autocrats around the world** will learn that **wars of conquest** are again possible, and **democracies**, too, will be **forced to** **militarize** themselves for protection. We’ve already seen Russian aggression prompt countries such as Germany to sharply increase their defense budget overnight, and countries such as Sweden to reinstate conscription. The money that should go to teachers, nurses, and social workers will instead go to tanks, missiles, and cyberweapons. At 18, young people all over the world will do their mandatory military service. **The** **whole world will look like Russia**—a country with an oversize army and understaffed hospitals. A new era of **war**, **poverty**, and **disease** will result. **Alternatively**, if Putin is **stopped** **and punished**, the global order **won’t be broken** by what he did—it will be **strengthened**. Anyone who needed a **reminder** would rediscover that **you just cannot do these things.** Which of these two scenarios will materialize? Luckily for everyone, despite his military preparations, Putin was disastrously unprepared for one crucial thing: the courage of the Ukrainian people. The Ukrainians have pushed back the Russians in a series of stunning victories near Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson. But Putin has so far refused to acknowledge his mistake, and he reacts to defeat with increased brutality. Seeing that his army cannot overcome the Ukrainian soldiers on the front line, Putin is now trying to freeze the Ukrainian civilians to death in their homes. Predicting how the war will end is impossible, as is the fate of the New Peace. History is never deterministic. After the end of the Cold War, many people thought that peace was inevitable, and that it would continue even if we neglected the global order. After Russia invaded Ukraine, some swung to the opposite view. They claimed that peace had always been just an illusion, that war was an ungovernable force of nature, and that the only choice humans had was whether they wanted to be prey or predator. Both positions are wrong. War and peace are decisions, not inevitabilities. Wars are made by people, not by a law of nature. And just as humans make wars, humans can also make peace. But to make peace is not a one-off decision. It’s a long-term effort to protect universal norms and values, and to build cooperative institutions. Rebuilding the global order doesn’t mean going back to the system that disintegrated in the 2010s. A new and better global order should give more important roles to non-Western powers that are willing to be part of it. It should also recognize the salience of national loyalties. The global order disintegrated above all because of the assault of populist forces, which argued that patriotic loyalties contradict global cooperation. Populist politicians preached that if you are a patriot, you must oppose global institutions and global cooperation. But there is no inherent contradiction between patriotism and globalism, because patriotism isn’t about hating foreigners. Patriotism is about loving your compatriots. And in the 21st century, **if you want to protect** **your compatriots** from **war**, **pandemic**, and **ecological collapse**, the best way to do that is by **cooperating** with foreigners.

### Contention 2– Climate Leadership

#### Paris withdrawal puts climate leadership up for grabs

Gibson 25 [Kalina Gibson, dual degrees in economics and environmental science and policy from the University of Maryland. 1-21-25, The Trump Administration’s Retreat From Global Climate Leadership, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-trump-administrations-retreat-from-global-climate-leadership/]

As climate disasters grow in frequency and intensity, from devastating wildfires to relentless hurricanes to record-breaking heat waves, the Trump administration has once again taken a step that threatens to deepen the climate crisis: formally announcing the United States’ withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. In the midst of an escalating climate crisis that’s upending livelihoods and lives, this decision raises urgent questions about the future of national and global progress. Namely, what does it mean for the international climate effort to combat climate change when the world’s largest historical emitter steps away from the table? And what are the implications for Americans already grappling with the mounting costs of a warming planet? Since its adoption in 2015, the Paris Agreement has represented a historic act of global solidarity and a framework for collective accountability in addressing the climate crisis. Nearly 200 nations committed to curbing greenhouse gas emissions, bending the global emissions curve, and striving to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. While progress has been uneven and insufficient, the agreement underscores the power of collective action. At the same time, it fosters transparency and accountability, enabling nations to measure their ambition and progress against one another. This dynamic has not only spurred innovation but also inspired nations to vie for leadership in the global clean energy economy, proving that addressing climate change is both a shared responsibility and a pathway to prosperity. President Donald Trump’s decision to again withdraw does not reflect a failure of the Paris Agreement, but rather signals a profound abdication of leadership. The United States now joins Iran, Libya, and Yemen as the only countries in the entire world not party to the agreement. Other countries have already reaffirmed their commitments to the agreement by announcing their updated nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in an effort to uphold the agreement’s goal despite America’s retreat. Yet the withdrawal sends a troubling message: The United States is an unreliable partner. This is not just about one nation stepping back; it is a deliberate weakening of the multilateral system at a time when global unity has never been more critical to combat the climate crisis. In addition, it will serve to amplify the voice of China, the world’s largest greenhouse gas emitter still at the table. The question now is whether global momentum can overcome the absence of U.S. federal leadership—and what role subnational actors, international partners, and everyday citizens can play in ensuring climate progress continues, even as the clock ticks ever louder.

#### And, investment in nuclear energy is the only way to restore leadership

Pazzanese 25 [Christina Pazzanese, Master of Arts in Regional Studies, News writer at Harvard University, 1-7-25, “Nuclear has changed. Will the U.S. change with it?,” https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2025/01/nuclear-has-changed-will-the-u-s-change-with-it/]

Fueled by artificial intelligence, cloud service providers, and ambitious new climate regulations, U.S. demand for carbon-free electricity is on the rise. In response, analysts and lawmakers are taking a fresh look at a controversial energy source: nuclear power. Two new reactors in Georgia are the first in consecutive years in the U.S. since 1990. In June, Congress overwhelmingly passed the ADVANCE Act, a bipartisan bill that boosts the number of reactors coming on line. Late last year, tech giants Google, Amazon, and Microsoft all pledged to invest in small reactors to help meet their future energy needs. In this edited conversation with the Gazette, Daniel Poneman, a senior fellow at the Belfer Center, discusses the growing momentum behind nuclear power plants. Poneman served as deputy secretary of energy and chief operating officer at the U.S. Department of Energy from 2009 to 2014. From 2015 through 2023 he was CEO of Centrus Energy, a supplier of nuclear fuel to power plants around the world. Is nuclear power making a comeback? I believe the answer is yes, because we have new factors present and they’re all converging to add momentum to nuclear. For a long time, a lot of people have been worried about climate change and reducing carbon emissions. The only source of clean power that’s been proven to work — day or night, season in, season out, in any geographic location, and successfully operating at large scale — that’s nuclear. It’s just shy of 20 percent of our total electricity production and nearly half of our carbon-free electricity. On top of that is this vertiginous increase in electricity demand that’s driven by 1) the AI revolution and 2) the effort to decarbonize not only power generation, which is about one-quarter of total emissions, but also transportation and industrial processes. If you have electric vehicles and you get the power for the vehicles from coal plants, you haven’t solved the emissions problem. The last factor is the hyper scalers, which have the wherewithal and frankly the balance sheets to support these very substantial investments in nuclear. So, you have all of those market-driven factors and strong recognition by the government of the importance of nuclear. I don’t think there’s any issue that has broader or deeper bipartisan support than this one. All of these things are converging to add new momentum to American nuclear energy. Historically, opposition to nuclear power has been linked to safety and environmental concerns — including waste — and on the business side, to high costs and low profits. What’s different — is today’s nuclear power safer, cleaner, more cost-effective? In terms of security, when people were concerned after 9/11, changes were undertaken. And obviously, a lot of lessons were drawn after Fukushima. There has been a continuous set of improvements over the years. When you ask what’s different: There is a whole new generation called advanced reactors. One of the problems over the years is that large reactors got larger and larger, and each one became a bespoke project. There were too many change orders within a single reactor project, and that just kills you on budget. One thing is to go to factory-built, small reactors that can be standardized, punched out like a cookie cutter, the same design over and over. The more of these things you punch out, the cheaper it gets, and the more practice you have installing them, the cheaper it gets. If you do things like that, you can improve on safety and budget. The waste issue depends on the specific reactor technology. Some advanced reactors are based on existing Gen III designs, so their waste would be the same but with smaller quantities because the reactors are smaller. Gen IV reactors use fast neutrons, which allow a more efficient use of fuel and therefore a reduction of total volumes. Some Gen IV reactors can burn used fuel that has already been irradiated, which would have the effect of both burning out some of the minor actinides and turning what is now considered “waste” into a source of more energy. At the end of the day, all nuclear waste, whether from current generation or advanced reactors, will need to be disposed in deep geologic formations; this is a safe process with well-known technology. The Biden administration late last year announced several new U.S. nuclear benchmarks at the United Nations Climate Change Conference. Are those goals realistic? They’re ambitious, but I think they’re necessary if we’re going to reach our targets. At the Belfer Center, I’m working on a project on how to get 200 gigawatts of new nuclear built in the United States by 2050. A bunch of things have to happen right for that to be achievable. But I have great confidence that when there’s something that’s truly important, and people in the United States put their minds to it, we can do great things. But it’s going to take smart government policies. We’re going to have to have lean and effective regulations. We’ve got to figure out a way to spread the cost and risk sufficiently, so you induce people to act sooner rather than later. Government loan guarantees that reduce the cost of capital can both defray first-mover risks and also give confidence to the private sector to co-invest. If we concentrate our efforts, we have a chance to restore U.S. global leadership. What factors will determine whether those goals are reached or derailed? Government is going to have to be there in terms of smart tax policy, in terms of providing things like cost-overrun insurance. The government also can be an important source of demand, especially for small and micro reactors that have potential applications such as supporting micro grids for things that can’t afford to go dark — military bases, things of that character. If there’s a cyber threat from an enemy or from some natural event, I would recommend the government buy a bunch of these small reactors to help them get over that first-of-a-kind challenge that is so hard to overcome for private entrepreneurs who can’t wait decades for an adequate return on investment. Private capital can then take the confidence that comes from having strong co-investment and commitments from the federal side. You’re going to have to have the engineering, procurement, and construction contractors who got rusty over the last few decades get back into the game and execute well. And we’re going to have to have the talent pool grow and training programs at the university level, but also in the trades and organized labor. Many thousands and, ultimately, hundreds of thousands of jobs are needed. You’re going to need well-trained people in the supply chain manufacturing these very precise components and parts. It’s going to take a group effort. And to maintain the social license to do this, we have to bring all of civil society along with us. So far, in recent years, you see a lot of very positive movement in that direction.

#### It's specifically key to climate leadership

Baker et al 20 [James Baker III (Law degree from the university of Texas), George Schultz (PhD in industrial economics from MIT), and Ted Halstead (Masters degree from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government), May/June 2020, The Strategic Case for U.S. Climate Leadership How Americans Can Win with a Pro-Market Solution, <https://clcouncil.org/reports/Foreign-Affairs.pdf>]

Although the United States and its trading partners have a long way to go in reducing emissions, a fundamental paradigm shift is occurring. Climate action and economic growth, far from being mutually exclusive, are not only compatible but also increasingly interdependent. The U.S. economy has prospered in recent decades because the U.S. public and private sectors were the frst to embrace the communications and information technology revolutions. The transition to clean energy promises equally far-reaching economic advantages. Nextgeneration renewables and nuclear energy could substantially drive down the per unit cost of electricity, just as the digital revolution drove down costs in recent decades. That is why China is investing so heavily in these sectors. And that is why the United States could be putting its global economic leadership position at risk if it continues to ignore this transformation.

#### Ceding climate leadership opens the door to Chinese soft power in the Asia-Pacific---it collapses our alliances.

Goodman ’18 [Sherri Goodman (degrees from Harvard Law School and Harvard Kennedy School; 2x DOD medal for Distinguished Public Service); October 17; Senior Advisor for International Security at the Center for Climate and Security and a Senior Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center and CNA, former President and CEO of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership; Iris-France, “How Climate change challenges the US Department of Defense?” https://www.iris-france.org/121024-how-climate-change-challenges-the-us-department-of-defense/]

Your article on China mentions that Japan is worried that diminished US leadership in climate change can also impact on US’s influence in Asia and might also give more space for China to rise. Can you please explain this?  
  
I deeply worry about the vacuum created by the absence of climate leadership in the US right now at the highest levels of the government. There is a lot of good work going on in the defense and military departments at the working levels. But when the President declared that he is going to pull the US from the Paris agreement, President Xi Jinping of China said “we are going to be climate leaders” and now they are using that soft power to enhance their global influence, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. I think we have to be very concerned about that. China, by virtue of its position in Tibet, controls most of the headwaters of the major rivers in Asia and is in a position to monopolize that water. It has worked cooperatively with many others in the region, thus I will not say it will not continue to cooperate. However, it will cooperate from the position of strength.  
In the US we talk about utilizing all elements of national power and that includes our military forces, diplomacy, economic tools and trade. In the current era, it also includes climate leadership and diplomacy, as well as clean energy and resilience building, particularly in the Asia Pacific region where you have so many nations and people who are completely vulnerable to the effects of rising sea level and increasing extreme weather events. We should not be in a position where China is the only country that can come to rescue. We need to have a combined allied presence that we had across the Asia Pacific region for decades since World War II. Japan is our very strong ally as well as Australia. The French and the Americans have a strong partnership. Today this is a region where I think we should continue to show leadership and presence.

#### That’s needed more than ever before to prevent a nuclear South Asian water conflict.

Godara ’24 [Hari; Jyoti Pathania; Gaurav Kumar; September 1; Doctoral candidate at Jindal School of International Affairs; Professor at the School of International Affairs, O.P. Jindal Global University; Graduate Student at O.P. Jindal Global University; Sage Journals, Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs, “Hydro-Political Dynamics Between China–India–Pakistan: Dams and Transboundary River Governance Amidst Geopolitical Contestations,” vol. 11]

Introduction The South Asian region, a vital hub for some of the world’s most significant transboundary rivers, finds itself at a critical juncture characterised by mounting geopolitical tensions and severe environmental concerns. This intricate interplay has propelled the issue of water security to the forefront of strategic considerations for the states bordering the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) range. At the heart of this complex discourse lie ambitious plans to establish an extensive network of hydroelectric dams, a development characterised as an unprecedented ‘water grab’. India, with plans for nearly 292 dams in the Indian Himalayas, envisions a future in which the region’s dam density would surpass that of any other in the world. It is also important to highlight that this study involves states that have been engaged in active military conflicts on various occasions and very frequent minor border skirmishes with claims/counterclaims on one another’s territories. Varady et al. (2023) explain this dynamic, pragmatic and ever-changing transboundary relations through Kautilya’s Mandala concept: ‘one’s neighbour is one’s enemy and neighbour’s neighbour naturally becomes one’s ally’. While the New Water Justice Movements (NWJM)1 and approaches such as political ecology can provide a substantial theoretical paradigm for this study, its scope falls short in the unique cartography represented at the confluence of China, India and Pakistan, with their powerful attempt to delegitimise current hydro-political borders and to exert influence through all means available. When Foucault et al. (2008, p. 313) defined hydro-social re-patterning attempt as a coercive act by powerful water actors led by legal, economic and military compulsion backed by the government (sovereign power), no extension or application was informed about the potential use of water as a hydro-political extension for geopolitical significance among different states. Concurrently, China, already a significant player in dam construction, intends to add another hundred dams to this landscape. These concurrent efforts transcend economic endeavours, intricately intertwining with strategic imperatives that possess the potential to reshape regional power dynamics. However, this surge in dam development does not occur without consequences. While these projects yield economic advantages and bolster hydropower capacity, they necessitate a re-evaluation of geopolitical realities. China’s dominance as the ‘upstream hegemon’ in the HKH region and its substantial control over water outflow underscore the strategic leverage that water resources confer. These consequences ripple downstream, impacting states dependent on these river systems where geopolitical ally Pakistan, whose agrarian economy heavily relies on the Indus River, is centred vis-à-vis adversary India, who happens to be an upper riparian of Pakistan. Figure 1 illustrates how both Pakistan (with Chinese support) and India have intensified their bid to erect more dams and, very recently, the completion of the Shahpurkandi barrage on the Ravi River (i.e., one of the five rivers of Panjab under the Indus Water Treaty [IWT]) has stopped the flow of its water. It has brought a strong reaction from Pakistan, with it being called ‘water terrorism’, but the point of contestation remains that the Ravi River, as per the IWT, falls under Indian purview for developmental or any other use. The timing, however, brings forward a different narrative that has basically morphed this arrangement into a strong act of hydro-politics that is being viewed with Indian PM Modi’s dictum that ‘Water and blood cannot flow together’ (ET Online, 2024). The collapse of the Nova Kakhovka Dam during the Russia-Ukraine war further imposes a strong warning for many, as the possibility of military conflict or any act of terrorism targeting such structures and overwhelming destruction can certainly be guaranteed, which again can be cited on multiple instances as back or even before WWII as well. <<Figure 1 Omitted>> In this context, the governance of transboundary rivers becomes paramount, with legal frameworks such as the IWT seeking to establish an equitable distribution system. However, these legal arrangements operate under pressure within a complex geopolitical landscape where governments grapple with issues of sovereignty, territorial integrity and strategic interests. As governments navigate the notion of shared resources, the very concept of sovereignty within the context of transboundary aquifers and rivers becomes a subject of debate. The qualitative structure of this article starts with the existing frameworks governing hydro-diplomatic2 measures as well as structures, which then explains how the cleavages of these structures give way to hydro-politics and have the potential to emerge as a significant irritant for perceived state security. This article aims to dissect the multifaceted dimensions of geopolitical hydro-diplomacy, unveil the strategic imperatives underpinning the surge in dam construction, and evaluate the repercussions for regional stability and security. Contemporary Water Governance and Cooperation Structure in South Asia South and Southeast Asia’s water security heavily relies upon ‘non-binding MOUs, expert-level mechanisms, exchange of hydrological information, etc’. However, China’s dominant position as an ‘upstream hegemon’ with unsymmetrical dependence on its sovereign control over 40% of the outflow of water with just 1% inflow interacts consistently with geopolitical rivals such as India (Ho, 2020, p. 31). According to Rogers and Hall (2002), water governance encompasses ‘the variety of political, social, economic, and administrative frameworks established to advance and oversee water resource development, as well as the provision of water services, across various societal tiers’. Araral and Wang (2013), while highlighting the structural ambiguity of such a definition, point out changes inculcated in future evolvements (UNDP, 2013); however, it does not express the geopolitical configuration of regions of South and Southeast Asia with water scare developing states that operate as per ‘hegemonic theory of cooperation’ (Lowi, 1993, p. 8). In the absence of a structured basin-level transboundary governance system, China uses its unrestricted manoeuvrability to decide unstructured and loose bilateral relationships that resound more with geopolitical needs than a mere quest for governability. <<TEXT CONDENSED NONE OMITTED>> Legal scholarship extensively addresses the allocation of transboundary rivers as resources, delineating two principal categories. The Doctrine of Territorial Sovereignty first asserts a state’s sovereign right over water within its territorial boundaries. The second, the Doctrine of Natural Water Flow, designates transboundary water as a shared common resource among all riparian states (Swain, 2015, p. 446). Based upon the Roman maxim aqua currit, et debet curerer, ut solebat es juienaturae, which roughly translates to ‘let the flow of water remain in its natural state of constant flow’ (Cole, 1989). The Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses in its structure presents two major substantial principles: (a) equitable and reasonable utilisation and participation and (b) obligation not to cause significant harm principle, which translates in specific details presently in a limited scope of harm caused by riparian state’s activity (Water Convention, 1997). These two principles again have different positions in relation to each other when an inquiry is made about which one should be the preceding principle. Whether it is the principle of equitable and reasonable utilisation where informed developmental projects and projects of capacity enhancement can be undertaken by the upper riparian states with prior notification and approval. The other part is the ultimate precedence of the obligation to cause no harm, which is considered to reflect the lower riparian position, where the flow of harm is deemed to flow from the upper riparian only. Salman (2010) describes this situation where lower riparian states have unquestionable rights over development, which originates from their position while creating a case of future foreclosure for upper riparian states. Any simple observation will reflect the weak position of the lower riparian state in relation to the upper riparian state, which consolidates their support for the no-harm principle. However, in alignment with this perspective, Professor Stephen McCaffrey (2007) presented the following inquiry: ‘Should a downstream State advance its water resource development to the degree that it precludes otherwise reasonable future utilisation of the watercourse by an upstream state, could this be deemed as causing “significant harm” to the latter?’ Additionally, does the downstream state have any procedural duties towards the upstream state regarding its prospective projects? It roughly translates to the position where ‘social and economic growth of Upper Riparian newcomer’ will be heavily regulated in relation to the case of early development of lower riparian capabilities, which forecloses any future use of equitable and reasonable use for the upper riparian state (Caflisch, 1998). In realist interpretation, the ambiguity of international law, where a neutral term ‘watercourse state’ aims at inclusivity, will fluctuate and reflect the temporal position of relative capability, where a capable lower riparian state will push forward for the precedence of no harm principle and vice versa. International legal instruments such as the Water Convention have huge prerequisites as well as basic presumptions in its language of neutrality, and they are deeply embedded in the rationality of state leaders and interact incompatibly with the Law of Transboundary Aquifers through its reiteration in subsequent UNGA meetings of the acceptance of the state’s sovereignty over a territorial portion of aquifers. McCaffrey (2011) argues that the potential dangers of such acts as The article’s overlap with the 1997 United Nations Watercourses Convention, which contains an even more serious flaw: they introduce the novel and potentially dangerous concept that a state has sovereignty over the portion of a transboundary aquifer located within its territory. These legal proceedings become essential aspects of any given bilateral or multilateral transboundary governance system as they form or are supposed to be the theoretical basis of any given relationship, which is also valid for South Asia. McCaffrey (2011) builds a case against state sovereignty as the bifurcation of ‘confined groundwater’ against the backdrop of surface water of the Transboundary River curtails its scope massively. McCaffrey (2011) again cites the notion as stated: A state simply cannot have the exclusive ownership that sovereignty implies in something that is shared with another state. In fact, as discussed elsewhere, the entire concept of ‘sovereignty’ in international relations is highly questionable and tends to be used as a fig leaf to cover up ill-advised, improper, or unlawful conduct. (McCaffrey & Neville, 2010; Henkin, 1994) It is almost a paradox that if this treaty is to be bilaterally or even multilaterally decided, it will be entrenched in political issues, defeating the critical aspects and avenues of newer avenues (McCaffrey, 2011). Interstate relations are bound by a geopolitical reality where, through the realist paradigm, neighbouring states consider the relationship in its actual and relative impact as part of a zero-sum game, making it hard to cooperate in certain avenues reflected through a considerable number of regional border conflicts. The interstate relationship requires a nuanced approach to understanding significant irritants and the scope of cooperation. Marshall (2021) states in his seminal book Prisoners of Geography that China’s aim to control Tibet was fuelled by ‘Geopolitics of Fear’, where if left as it is, India would have China’s Achilles heel in its constant reach. The first is the benefit of higher ground in case of a conflict that becomes a challenging situation to deal with, and the second is the fear of losing control over three major Chinese rivers originating from Tibet: Yangtze, Mekong and Yellow River. The other aspect is that water is a scarce resource that needs to be economised for its proper allocation and protection, as reverberated in China’s Water Law, 2002, as well as the Swajaldhara scheme of India announced in 1999. This aspect aims towards negating irresponsible use of shared natural resources, which has been explained, nevertheless not without academic criticism, by what has been termed the Tragedy of Commons. However, it fails to consider geopolitical realities, especially in the case of transboundary rivers. Therefore, analysis of water scarcity follows various approaches, albeit with adequate academic criticism due to the lack of a universal framework that also accounts for what has been termed ‘Societal Adaptive Capability’ by Ohlsson (1998, 1999) in his analysis of Falkenmark’s indicator, that is, ‘Social Water Stress Index’. One other approach by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) categorises two stages of water scarcity, that is, physical and economic scarcity indicators, except in India and China (Rijsberman, 2006; Seckler et al., 1998). The two thresholds or categories, except for India and China, are (a) future adaptive capacity (b) increase in irrigation efficiency, which are self-explanatory. Amidst all these analyses, frameworks and indexes, the critical aspects can be explained through Figure 2, which highlights how adaptive capacity reacts as new hotspots of hydro-political stress. Only those states that are unable to meet water demands after the period of consideration for future adaptive capacity will be termed ‘physically water scarce’, and the states that have abundant water resources but lack the infrastructure or technological aspects fall into the category of ‘economically water scarce’. For the analysis of National Water Resource, this analysis stands accurate, accounting for multifaceted aspects and implications; however, that does not seem to be the case for transboundary water resources. China’s adaptive capacity building can be explained better with three significant projects whose transboundary or ecological impact has far-reaching consequences; however, China’s self-assumed leadership through adaptive capacity building exercises in Global South states needs further in-depth explanation with more than 380 large hydropower projects in 70 states, primarily in the Global South (Siciliano et al., 2019). The first can be called ‘virtual water’ import, where water-intensive crops can be imported rather than utilising one’s available water resources while aiming at producing water-intensive commodities (Allan, 1999; Hoekstra, 2003; Yu et al., 2016). The water import of China stood at 276.64 billion m3 in 2013 in retrospect compared to 68.55 billion m3 in 2001, and further results in the research point out at almost 11.03 billion m3 from India and heavy reliance from Pakistan as well (Yu et al., 2016). Yu et al. (2016) have categorised the states into four major types: (a) Mutual Benefit Countries, (b) Unilateral Benefit Countries, (c) Supported Countries and (d) Double Pressure Countries. India and Pakistan have been categorised as double-pressure countries under immense water scarcity pressure. The second involves projects such as the Mekong River Project with large cascade and reservoir dams that have a significant transboundary impact on the entire lower riparian ecologies. The third is China’s river interlinking projects, such as the ‘South-North Water Transfer’ project, which has a plethora of academic scholarship on its negative and positive implications. These water linkage projects are estimated to account for 25% of water withdrawal worldwide, and China aims to develop 4.48 × 10 billion cubic meters of water from the Yangtze River to water-scarce regions of North and North-West China (Yan et al., 2023). Water, being a finite resource, can be attributed to a zero-sum game while analysing the potential utilisation and management, especially as a transboundary resource. If media reports are to be retrospectively analysed in conjecture with China’s attempts at future adaptive capacity building, then the project aimed at transferring water from Tibet’s Yarlung Tsangpo River to Xinjiang’s Taklimakan Desert through 1,000-km-long tunnels appears very problematic to lower riparian states (Chen & Chen, 2017; FP Staff, 2022; GCR Staff, 2017). <<Figure 2 Omitted>> These aspects necessitate an in-depth analysis of how China regulates or views its natural resources through basin-level treaties and municipal law. The critical aspect of China’s Water Law, 2002, is that Article 26 showcases a renewed spirit towards the economisation of water through dams: the cascade and reservoir dams in a planned manner to extract hydro energy as well as hold back water. However it can be argued that Article 76 of this document supplements a realist necessity yet moral irritant. The article reads as Article 78 Where any international treaty or agreement relating to international or border rivers or lakes, concluded or acceded to by the People’s Republic of China, contains provisions differing from those in the laws of the People’s Republic of China, the provisions of the international treaty or agreement shall apply, unless the provisions are ones on which the People’s Republic of China has declared reservation. China is not a party to the Water Convention, 1997; however, neither is India nor Pakistan. This position, however, results in an uneven impact as Pakistan’s declaration on monopolising the Indus River’s water is grossly incomparable with a similar announcement by India or, in the worst-case scenario, China, based upon Hegemonic Theory of Cooperation or any other realistic explanation for an idealistic goal set by a set of principles that warrants selfless collaboration due to a lack of temporal power exuding global agency. Article 8 (1) of the Water Convention reads as follows: Watercourse States shall cooperate on the basis of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, mutual benefit and good faith in order to attain optimal utilisation and adequate protection of an international watercourse. Conca et al. (2006) argue that political and financial inequity-induced unequal distribution of resources and capabilities weaken these institutions, making them grossly ineffective. Weinthal (2002, p. 35) argues that hegemons, that is, hydrohegemons, have sufficient structural capability to coerce unsymmetric cooperation. This spirit is reflected in the entire legal scholarship in the case of international water aw, as the significant point of contestation about structural inequality, albeit natural, is masked under a language of neutrality through the use of the ‘watercourse state’ word, which is unresponsive to upper and lower riparian predicament (Salman, 2010). In continuation of previous arguments, poorly defined and overlapping laws with jurisdictional ambiguity make transboundary governance a nightmare regarding conflict resolution. Ironically, no major war has been fought on or for water; however, that does not account for continuous strains on states with huge populations, such as those in South Asia or Southeast Asia, where China is heavily invested in hydropower projects, as shown in Figure 2. China’s proposed projects on the Lancang River4 have different impacts on each Mekong River Basin (MRB) state, with ecological, social and economic impacts, among others (Ogden, 2022). The presence of about 100 ethnic groups scattered across all these states, who depend economically on the Mekong’s ecosystem, makes it difficult to maintain life, as they have known when artificial draughts threaten to uproot their balance. Ogden (2022) claims that the Chinese government has been able to project itself as an economically and technologically capable ‘preference multiplier’ of their ‘shared preferences’. The question remains whether the public or the actual stakeholder also perceives China in such an image. In 2020, what started as a meme war quickly escalated into a youth-led online movement titled ‘Milk-Tea Alliance’, a very vocal and critical stance of the younger population against China and their regimes (Godara, 2021). It must also be noted that due to Chinese projects, the Mekong River witnessed the lowest level of water, an almost draught-like situation from 2019 to 2021 in the last 60 years (Ogden, 2022). These social movements fall short of providing a clear, comprehensive picture; however, they assist greatly with what has been explained in the scientific literature and have a visible impact on a significant number of lives through such behemoth projects. Middleton and Allouche (2016) write about how MRC’s legal inadequacy with China’s unilateral control over projects on Lancang and Mekong has potential for ‘Transboundary hydropower cascade coordination’ and, more importantly, ‘Flood and Draught Hydro diplomacy’. The dam storage capacity on the Lancang-Mekong River has been estimated to increase 15-fold, from 2% in 2008 to 30% in 2030, which already has a significant impact on the ‘food pulse’ of millions of people dependent on the riverine ecosystem (Kummu et al., 2010; MRC, 2010). MRC (2010) State of the Basin Report put a number as high as 40 million people, that is, roughly two-thirds of the entire Lower Mekong Basin population, at risk due to a significant impact on their ‘food pulse’. Chinese hydro-political as well as hydro-diplomatic stances reaffirm how water has now become an extension in the pursuit of diplomacy. Both the Lancang Mekong Commission and China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson stress the importance of these ‘water facilities’ in combatting drought and flood after releasing water at Vietnam’s request. However, records show that even without official records and requests, water can be released, which is again detrimental to unsuspecting people in the Lower Basin area (Biba, 2013; Global Times, 2016; Reuters, 2016; Wangkiat, 2016). Upon analysis of China’s transboundary governance structures with its riparian neighbours based upon the Basin at Risk (BAR) event intensity scale, Ho (2020) argues that China cooperates better with some than other riparian neighbours (Wolf et al., 2003). When China chose to become a dialogue partner of the Mekong River Commission in 1988, two aspects can be deconstructed from this step: (a) To avoid legal responsibility through MRC’s strict aquatic environmental standards as well as dam building, (b) to reiterate its sole sovereign control over almost 50% of the Mekong River (known as Lancang in China). The analysis further on the BAR scale shows that China cooperates with Kazakhstan, a central Asian state adjacent to the Xinjiang region and considered (potential for future) base for rebelling Uyghur Muslims, and records a positive 5–6 and for Lower Mekong Region 1–5 (Ho, 2020). On this scale, 0 is neutral, positive 7 marks voluntary unification into one nation and negative 7 indicates war. Positive 6 falls under the scope of a major bilateral or multilateral strategic alliance; however, this same scale marks China’s interruption of blocking India’s request for a loan from the Asian Development Bank at negative 3, which translates to diplomatic-economic hostile action. Water scarcity is considered a growing limitation to ensuring food security and promoting sustainable agricultural development in Northern China (Wang, 2012). However, the same applies to India and Pakistan, which have a growing population under erratic climate conditions. China’s Geopolitical Utilisation of Transboundary Rivers: Strategic Imperatives and Implications for the Region The impact or potential impact of any such hydrological projects, rather than being superficially different from the implementation perspective, also varies in its structural coherence and consideration through language of specificity. The principles of the Water Convention,6 1997, appear to provide a generic structure that aims not to hinder existing treaties or structures of governance; however, as per Professor Lucius Caflisch, it expects a ‘harmonising’ assimilation with its ‘basic principles’ (McCaffrey, 1998). Apart from structural incoherence in these ‘basic principles’, as mentioned in the previous section, inferences from data highlight that some regions have achieved better governance through carefully drafted basin-level agreements. Pacific Institute’s Water Conflict Chronology (WCC) highlights that only 10 significant conflicts (mostly related to local resistance, especially in France) occurred in Western Europe post-1999 in comparison to 287 in South Asia with actual terrorist or state-led attacks on water infrastructure during the same period (Water Conflict Chronology, 2024). Even at the European level, we can highlight considerable disparities in the overall conflicts, which have broadly been categorised into (a) casualty, (b) trigger and (c) weapon, as Eastern Europe stands at 81 conflicts, which even includes an attack on Nova Kakhovka as well as other direct attacks on water infrastructures (category weapon and casualty) (Shumilova et al., 2023). The significant categorical difference can be explained by the need to balance sustainable means of energy generation in the EU, which led to a considerable developmental boom of dams in Southeast Europe (Danube river tributaries), with 80% of its 35,000-km-long network of rivers not facing anthropomorphic transformations, which resulted in more detailed and specific guiding principles/policy recommendations (Huđek et al., 2020). The document, named Sustainable Hydropower Development in Danube Basin, 2013, has more than a functional level of assimilation with the Danube River Protection Convention, 1994, without failing to be more reflective of ground realities as well as national policies. It must also be stressed equally that most operational dams in this region are 636, and it includes 42 large-scale (>10 MW), 72 medium-scale (1–10 MW) and 522 small-scale (<1 MW) dams, which pales in comparison to some of the operational dams such as Baglihar Dam (900 MW) or even planned projects such as Pakul Dul (1,000 MW) in India. Even the decades-long Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros Dams issue between Hungary and the Slovak Republic reached an amicable end, with Hungary choosing to abandon the Nagymaros dam project in favour of the EU 2030 Biodiversity strategy aiming at the removal of blockading structures on watercourses (Gabčíkovo–Nagymaros Project (Hungary/Slovakia), 2017). <<PARAGRAPH BREAKS CONTINUE>> As per the ancient Chinese proverb, ‘Two Tigers cannot hide in the same mountain’, and this proverb, apart from being present in Indian or even Pakistani fables, resounds closely with the intense geopolitical contestation to have a strong position in the region or beyond. China intensified its bid at the start of the year 2000 through military, political, cultural and economic tools to consolidate its position while strengthening its weaker aspects, ranging from Xinjiang Tibet to its access to sea routes (Kumar, 2019). Chinese Water Grab, with its bid to not only build dams but also projects such as the South-North Water Diversion Project and West-East Power Transfer Project, is also facilitating hydrological capability building elsewhere with sketchy contracts that reflect it being an extension of Chinese foreign policy (Donnellon-May, 2023; Ho, 2017). Donnellon-May (2023) further explains through scholarship how Indian capability building (Figure 1) can restrict Pakistan’s potential, thus strengthening its energy security, and simultaneously, Indian geopolitical analyst Brahma Chellaney explains how India also faces a challenging situation vis-à-vis China as almost half of Indian transboundary water comes from China, which further percolates to Bangladesh’s apprehension towards Indian projects (Vidal, 2013). It is also worth mentioning that these projects carry an inherent risk of being undermined due to the massive impact of ecological imbalances, as they impacted negative 15.9% hydroelectric output for China and negative 6.2 for India, directly increasing fossil fuel utilisation during these periods in early 2016 (Desk, 2023). The erratic monsoon pattern, increasing global temperature and increase in demand for fresh water under rising population might prove a more significant hurdle with the justification of these behemoth projects as a dual-edged sword. However, states bordering Asia’s HKH range—Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Pakistan—are collectively in the process of initiating over 500 new hydroelectric dams in the HKH region. Some describe this development as the most extensive ‘water grab’ in recorded history. According to various studies, India has ambitious plans to erect 292 dams across the Indian Himalayas in the next few decades. Should this endeavour be realised, it would result in dams being situated in 28 out of the 32 major river valleys, effectively doubling India’s existing hydropower capacity. Consequently, this would confer upon the Indian Himalayas the distinction of possessing ‘one of the highest average dam densities in the world, with one dam for every 32 km of river channel’ (Adeel & Wirsing, 2016, p. 10; Grumbine & Pandit, 2013; Vidal, 2013). China, already responsible for approximately 20% of the world’s extensive dam projects, is also poised to construct about 100 dams within the HKH region (Adeel & Wirsing, 2016). It is also essential to understand that such massive infrastructure projects are planned based on a practical estimate of the minimum water flow required for the production of hydro facilities as well as electricity. Jaitly (2008) and Ballabh (2008) argue that the water crisis can no longer be categorised as a potential threat as it has materialised when per capita water availability fell from 6,000 cubic metres to projected 1,500 cubic metres in 2025, which again is not reflective of concentration of water scarcity in specific regions or communities. Even with all the perceived sovereign control over water resources, China’s two-thirds of farmlands and almost half of its population are situated in the arid northern part of mainland China with access to only 20% of its total water resources (Araral & Wang, 2013). Even the Yellow River is considered unusable for human needs due to extensive pollution and mismanagement. Construction of dams to exploit one’s hydrological resources is constantly pursued in favour of one’s strategic allies, while, as explained earlier, constructing large dams for national use is also pursued in a very intense manner regardless of the increasing strain of water scarcity in such a volatile surrounding. Three of the four riparian states in South Asia are big military powers armed with very exclusive nuclear weapons, along with a history of various actual wars (India’s four wars with Pakistan and one with China) and the constant threat of aggravation of conflict through constant border skirmishes. Zawahri and Michel (2020) argue that water sharing in such a volatile neighbourhood can be used as a paradigm to understand some long-standing territorial disputes, such as all western tributaries majorly earmarked for Pakistan under the IWT meander through India-controlled Jammu and Kashmir. Thus, the Indus River issue is highly intertwined with the geopolitical scope of a territorial dispute that is being supervised by a bilateral treaty, suffering from timeless rigidity intensified by complex conflict resolution mechanisms.

#### Extinction.

Asokan ’22 [Asha; Ira Helfand; Bachelor’s degree in law from M. G. University, India, a master’s in international human rights law from CUSAT, India, and a master’s in policy from Duke University; MD, is a member of the International Steering Group of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the recipient of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize; July 11; T&F Online, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, “Climate change and water scarcity will increase risk of nuclear catastrophe in South Asia,” vol. 78]

ABSTRACT Climate change poses grave challenges to global peace and stability. Nowhere is the relation between the climate crisis and the increased threat of nuclear war clearer than in South Asia, where approximately 700 million people in India, Pakistan, China, and Bangladesh depend on the shared waters of the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra river basins. These river systems, fed by Himalayan glaciers, are diminishing markedly due to climate change. As geopolitical tensions in the region intensify, it becomes even more crucial to address and eliminate the two intertwined existential threats of water scarcity (caused by climate change) and the risk of nuclear war. This paper analyses the Indus River conflict and the Brahmaputra conflict in turn and offers effective strategies and recommendations for dealing with the threats. In the last few years, tensions between the three nuclear-weapon states of India, China, and Pakistan have intensified, partly due to water and border issues (Johnson Citation2019). These tensions will only get worse due to two existential threats: the climate crisis, and the danger posed by nuclear weapons. This is not a new situation; the water crisis and the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have ranked in the top five of the World Economic Forum’s Global Risks by Impact list nearly every year since 2012. What is new is the growing realization that these threats are intertwined. Climate-triggered water scarcity is escalating the tensions between countries, especially in Asia, and consequently increasing the threat of nuclear war (Albinia Citation2020). At the same time, research over the past 10 years shows that even a so-called “limited” nuclear war involving less than 0.5 percent of the world’s nuclear weapons would cause catastrophic global climate disruption and a worldwide famine, putting up to 2 billion people at risk (Helfand Citation2013). According to the most recent research, the climatic effects of the smoke produced by an India-Pakistan nuclear war would not be confined to the subcontinent or even to Asia (Robock et al. Citation2019). These global effects are in addition to the immediate death of 50 million to 125 million people in South Asia, depending on the weapons’ yield.

#### And now is key because Beijing’s is decreasing climate commitment – so its our last chance to reverse the status quo

Moore ’23 [Scott; Erin Sikorsky; March 30; Director of the Penn Global China Program at the University of Pennsylvania; Director of the Center for Climate and Security, an institute of the Council on Strategic Risks; Foreign Policy, “The U.S. Can Steal China’s Climate Leadership Crown,” https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/30/us-china-climate-finance-negotiations-cop-emissions-loss-damage/]

For decades, China was a leader in international climate negotiations. But that changed at the latest United Nations climate change conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. At the November 2022 summit, known as COP27, China became the target of criticism for failing to do enough to address climate change. The disapproval came not just from other big greenhouse gas emitters but also from other developing countries: Gaston Browne, the prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda and chair of the influential Alliance of Small Island States, called China a “major polluter” that could no longer expect a “free pass” on contributing to climate finance. This shift underscores an inconvenient truth for Beijing: Given its status as the world’s largest emitter and second-largest economy, China’s climate commitments increasingly look insufficient, and even its former allies in climate negotiations want Beijing to do more. This creates major geopolitical vulnerabilities for China—and opportunities for the United States and its allies. In short, Beijing’s leadership loss on climate is Washington’s gain. China has played an essential role in climate talks since the 1990s. Beijing took part in the original negotiations that led to the main global climate agreement, the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, which then-Premier Li Peng signed in 1992. As China became the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gasses in the early 2000s, it began to play a more prominent role in international climate policy, underscored by a 2014 U.S.-China joint announcement in which Beijing, for the first time, promised to take steps to reduce its emissions alongside similar steps pledged by Washington. In 2020, when the United States had stepped back from its climate commitments under the Trump administration, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2060. Despite this increasingly prominent role, the bedrock of China’s climate policy has remained the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”—the idea that while all countries should do their part to fight climate change, wealthy industrialized nations that contributed the bulk of emissions over time should bear most of the effort and expense. This principle helps hold together the Group of 77, or G-77, a caucus of developing countries at the United Nations. Beijing has long been influential in the G-77—so much so that it is technically called the Group of 77 and China—and has coordinated its role in U.N.-sponsored climate negotiations largely through the coalition. Yet it has become increasingly difficult for China to draw a clear line between itself and the industrialized nations it argues should bear the brunt of costs in responding to climate change. When the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015, China was able to secure its status as a developing country in the world’s climate regime. But every year since then, China has been the world’s largest emitter. Though China was responsible for about 12 percent of cumulative global emissions since the start of the Industrial Revolution to 2017—compared to 25 percent for the United States and 22 percent for the European Union and United Kingdom—China now emits about a third of the world’s greenhouse gasses each year, well ahead of any other economy. Analysis suggests China could surpass the United States’ cumulative emissions around 2050. The difficulty of Beijing’s balancing act became fully apparent at COP27 when it was effectively abandoned by other developing countries as they fought to secure “loss and damage” compensation for countries heavily affected by climate change. A key sticking point in the negotiations was the United States’ and European Union’s insistence that China be ineligible to receive compensation from the fund. Initially, the G-77, leading negotiations on behalf of the developing world, balked at any effort to exclude China. Eventually, however, the coalition agreed that the landmark loss and damage fund would focus on the most vulnerable countries rather than China and other rising economies. China, for its part, conceded to the agreement, but refused to rule outpursuing future claims to compensation. Beijing’s growing isolation in international climate talks bodes ill for its overall geopolitical standing for three main reasons. First, China will be even more vulnerable to criticism for its growing environmental footprint abroad, especially in small island developing states, as its Belt and Road Initiative-linked projects damage and disrupt local ecosystems. In 2019, for example, Papua New Guinea ordered a Chinese-owned factory to close after it breached environmental laws, while a Chinese tourism development project in Antigua and Barbuda was criticized for destroying mangroves that help prevent climate-linked storm surges. This criticism may eventually make it harder for China to expand its influence and market access across the developing world. Second, Beijing’s reputation as a difficult partner in managing resources shared between countries that are threatened by climate change, such as fisheries and transboundary rivers, will only worsen. Already, dams built and financed by Chinese firms have attracted growing scrutiny for disrupting the flow of major rivers, such as the Mekong, that are shared with several neighboring countries. As the costs of climate change mount, China is likely to become a larger target for countries experiencing growing disruption to key natural resources, and it may lose out on access to those same resources. Third, China’s growing isolation in climate talks dulls Beijing’s narrative of steadily expanding global influence. Climate action is arguably the area in which Beijing has been most successful in acquiring soft power, which has helped bolster its overall standing on the world stage. Due to the sheer size of its economy and emissions, China has been treated as an equal by other major powers in climate policy, especially the United States and the European Union, since at least the 2009 U.N. climate summit in Copenhagen, in which China played a decisive role. Since then, Beijing has trumpeted its involvement in climate talks as an example of its global leadership, but that will be harder to do as fewer countries want to take China’s lead. To be sure, China’s isolation on this issue is not inevitable, and Beijing may well make an ambitious commitment to climate finance akin to its pledge to decarbonize by 2060. But a serious pledge would probably require Beijing to abandon its longstanding insistence that it has no obligation to contribute to adaptation funds due to its limited historical contribution to climate change—an unlikely scenario since China rarely makes abrupt changes in long-held diplomatic positions. Given these constraints, China will likely become increasingly politically vulnerable due to its position on climate action. If the Biden administration steps up, Beijing’s loss can be Washington’s gain. The United States should do at least three things to seize this opportunity to enhance its leadership on climate.