## OFF

### T Exemptions---1NC

T Pre-Existing---

#### To “strengthen” means to make stronger that which already exists.

Hou 19 – Policy Analyst, Gov. of Canada. M.A., International Affairs, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva.

Angela Min Yi Hou, Julia Tops, Cindy Xinying Ou, “2018 Charlevoix G7 Final Compliance Report,” University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, 08-23-2019, https://g7.utoronto.ca/evaluations/2018compliance-final/17-2018-G7-final-compliance-energysec.pdf

The first part of the commitment specifies that energy security must be strengthened collectively through ongoing action. “Strengthen” is defined as “to make or become stronger,” which indicates that the G7 members must act to reinforce and enhance existing energy security-related measures. “Collective” reflects that this commitment binds G7 members to strengthen collective energy security through collaboration with other G7 members or international organizations. Examples of actions that count towards compliance for the first portion of the commitment include contributing to improving the global energy security framework, bilateral or multilateral energy security treaties; addressing energy security issues in the Global South; and increasing international energy transparency. Actions taken domestically or independently of other countries or international organizations do not count towards compliance. Moreover, the word “ongoing” reflects that the G7 member must act in a way that demonstrates consistent, continuous action or long-term consideration.

#### This means topical affirmatives must increase the ability of CBR to overcome opposing interests.

Schauer 82 – Distinguished Professor of Law, UVA Law, and Stanton Professor of the First Amendment, Kennedy School of Govt. at Harvard

Frederick F. Schauer, David and Mary Harrison Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Virginia School of Law and Frank Stanton Professor of the First Amendment at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, *Free Speech: A Philosophical Enquiry*,(New York: Cambridge UPress), 1982, at pp. 134-136

It would seem therefore relatively uncontroversial to assert that freedom of speech is not and cannot be an absolute right. This broad statement, however, must be tempered by two highly per- tinent qualifications. First, it is important to recognize not only the distinction but also the relationship between the strength of a right and the scope of a right. This terminology is but another way of expressing the distinction between coverage and protection that I discussed earlier, but the terms ‘strength’ and ‘scope’ are particularly illuminating here. The scope of a right is its range, the activities it reaches. Rights may be narrow or broad in scope. Defining the scope of free speech as freedom of self-expression is very broad, defining it as freedom of communication substantially narrower, and defining it as freedom of political communication narrower still. The strength of a right is its ability to overcome opposing interests (or values, or other rights) within its scope. This distinc- tion is nothing new, although it is often ignored in popular dialogue about freedom of speech. The point I wish to make here is that although the scope of a right and the strength of that right are not joined by a strict logical relationship, they most often occur in inverse proportion to each other. The broader the scope of the right, the more likely it is to be weaker, largely because widening the scope increases the likelihood of conflict with other interests, some of which may be equally or more important. Conversely, rights that are narrower in scope are more easily taken to be very strong within that narrow scope. It is much easier, for example, to say that there is a very strong, almost absolute, right to purely verbal political speech than it would be to say that a right to self- expression can be as strong. Any examination of rights must first recognize this interrelationship and then try to preserve someequilibrium between scope and strength. This is easiest but not necessarily best at the extremes. Meiklejohn, for example, definedfreedom of speech as freedom of political speech by those without profit motives. Within this narrow scope it was easier for him to define the right as absolute (which he did) than it would have been had he broadened the scope to include other forms of com- munication. Yet the more narrowly we define a right, the more likely we are to exclude from coverage those acts that may fall within the justification for recognizing the right. Freedom of speech as freedom of political deliberation gains simple absolutism at the cost of excluding much that a deep theory of the Free Speech Prin- ciple would argue for including.

Second, there is an important distinction between the absolute- ness of a political right and the absoluteness of a legal right. A strong but not absolute political right may still at the level of appli- cation be converted into an absolute legal right. The question con- cerns the level at which the weighing process will take place, and which people or institutions will be entrusted with the weighing process. In this respect the issues parallel the considerations involved in act-utilitarianism and rule-utilitarianism. We may balance the issues at the rule-making level, concluding that it is best to have an absolute right in order to preclude judges, juries, or (in the case of constitutional rules) legislatures from possibly giving insufficient weight to the Free Speech Principle in a parti- cularized balancing process. Or we may instead allow the balancing to take place at the level of application, thus permitting judges, for example, to determine in the individual case whether counter- vailing interests outweigh the strength of the Free Speech Princi- ple. It is commonly supposed that this type of ad hoc or particular- ized weighing results in an insufficiently strong principle of freedom of speech, that there is danger of freedom of speech being ‘balanced away’.\* This is probably true as an empirical observa- tion, but it is hardly a necessary truth. It is possible to create prin- ciples of insufficient strength at the rule-making level, and it is equally possible for a judge at the level of application to apply a principle in a way that gives it great power. A full analysis of any political principle must deal with the degree to which any insti- tution can protect that principle, and hence the problem of the strength of a principle is intertwined with the problem of design- ing institutions for the protection of political principles in general.

#### The plan violates: It grants CBR to workers which do not already have them.

#### Vote neg for limits and ground. Infinite expansion of rights to new categories is unpredictable and a disaster for neg fairness and research.

### CP---1NC

CBR PIC---

#### The United States Federal Government should:

[Plank 1]

#### adopt firing protections for federal workers, including by establishing a just-cause standard, ending Schedule F, Schedule Policy/Career, and Reductions-in-Force,

[Plank 2]

#### permit working-from-home

[Plank 3]

#### establish robust confidentiality protections for whistleblowers, enforced by independent inspector generals,

#### publicly announce whistleblowers will be exempt from investigation and prosecution

#### substantially increase financial rewards for whistleblowers, including through tax breaks

#### cover all expenses incurred by whistleblowers, including attorney’s fees,

[Plank 4]

#### restore all collective bargaining agreements in effect as of January 01, 2025 and permanently waive their expiration,

[Plank 5]

#### establish new workers councils for dispute resolution and conflict mediation,

[Plank 6]

#### prohibit automation of the federal workforce.

#### That solves the case without restoring the union form.

Oakley et al. 19 – Director of the Government Accountability Office, M.A. in Public Administration from the University of Pittsburgh.

Shelby S. Oakley, Kathy Larin, Brenda S. Farrell, James R. McTigue, Jr, and Michelle Sager, “Disclosing Wrongdoing: How to Improve Protections for Federal Whistleblowers,” GAO, 07-25-2019, https://www.gao.gov/blog/2019/07/25/disclosing-wrongdoing-how-to-improve-protections-for-federal-whistleblowers

In addition to protecting whistleblowers from retaliation, confidentiality can also encourage whistleblowers to come forward.

At DOD, whistleblowers can report to one of several Inspector General offices. We found that the IG offices have taken steps to protect confidentiality and safeguard whistleblower information in their IT systems and applications, such as by restricting access to case information through unique user permissions.

However, we found instances in which DOD IG offices hadn’t fully restricted access to sensitive whistleblower information to only those IG employees with a need to know. While some actions have been taken to address this issue, additional steps should be taken to ensure whistleblower confidentiality isn’t in jeopardy.

We made 12 recommendations to DOD to help protect whistleblowers and improve other aspects of IG investigations.

What’s in it for tax whistleblowers?

Whistleblowers who report people who don’t fully pay their taxes have helped IRS collect billions of dollars in unpaid taxes. In exchange, IRS pays qualifying whistleblowers 15-30% of the proceeds it collects as a result of their information.

However, until last year, IRS wasn’t required to reward whistleblowers for information that led to the collection of penalties against people who don’t report their offshore bank accounts and other violations.

After Congress began to require IRS to reward whistleblowers for this information in February 2018, both the IRS and whistleblowers saw an immediate and large uptick in payments. From February 9 to September 30 that year, IRS paid awards for $810 million in collections that previously would have been excluded—significantly more than had been collected in prior years for all tax code violations. The whistleblowers got their cut.

According to attorneys we spoke with for our report, whistleblowers are now more likely to come to IRS with valuable information.

#### **It prevents unjust firings.**

Herbert 22 – Distinguished lecturer and faculty associate, Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute, Hunter College. Executive director of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions.

William Herbert, “What Is “At-Will Employment,” and Why Does It Matter?” Jacobin, 12-22-2022, https://jacobin.com/2022/12/at-will-employment-just-cause-nyc-caban

The just-cause doctrine is the antithesis of at-will employment. Simply put, it mandates the core value of due process in the workplace. Under just cause, before an employer can take adverse action against an employee, employees must be given notice, an opportunity to be heard, and a fair investigation into the nature of the alleged misconduct. It also mandates progressive discipline, meaning that a penalty should match the severity of the alleged misconduct, and take into account an employee’s work record.

### DA---1NC

#### The United States federal government should enact comprehensive data privacy protections and sectoral regulations on generative AI and require associated oversight and enforcement.

#### No new privacy or AI regs are coming now. Bolstering unions means they’ll successfully lobby for them.

Paslaski 24 – M.A. in Comparative and International Social Policy from the University of York.

Sophia Paslaski, “Organized Labor Is Key to Governing Big Tech,” Lawfare, 11-18-2024, https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/organized-labor-is-key-to-governing-big-tech

Organized tech workers can be a powerful force for social good if empowered to advocate on the public’s behalf. Tech unions’ power can extend beyond the confines of the workplace and the collective bargaining agreement and effect much-needed digital social change in an era rife with misinformation and political upheaval. In fact, unionized workers at Big Tech companies may have the best shot at shaping the directions these companies take for the social and technological good.

Unions outside of the tech industry have already succeeded in establishing best practices with AI in other industries. Last year, after a historic months-long strike, the Writers Guild of America voted to approve a new MBA (minimum basic agreement, the entertainment-industry equivalent of the CBA) that included unprecedented terms governing the use of genAI by both employers and employees in written works. The agreement addressed writers’ concerns that employers may try to usurp their jobs with genAI or otherwise undervalue work created with genAI’s help, laying out terms to prevent either of these fates. It also took up the issue of copyright infringement in the development of genAI, reserving for the guild the right to assert that the use of writers’ works to train genAI systems is copyright infringement. Lawmakers, meanwhile, have largely left the regulation of genAI in creative industries untouched; the U.S. Copyright Office released the first part of a multipart report on genAI and copyright in July of this year, roughly 9 months after the WGA already settled terms on the issue.

Within the tech ecosystem, we have already seen what organized tech workers can do. Sam Altman and OpenAI aside, workers at Google parent company Alphabet have organized several times to influence their employer’s large-scale business decisions. Before unionizing as the Alphabet Workers Union (AWU) in 2021, workers at Google organized on several occasions to influence the company’s decision-making on ethical grounds, most notably in 2018 when they successfully petitioned the company not to renew a contract with the Department of Defense that would have forced workers to develop AI for use in warfare. Now organized with more than 1,400 members, AWU seeks more than pay raises and better benefits. A banner on the union’s website notes that “Google’s motto used to be ‘Don’t Be Evil,’” and AWU is “working to make sure they live up to that and more.”

AWU’s mission statement focuses on holding Alphabet accountable to its workforce not only in providing a safe and egalitarian workplace for all but also in respecting its workers’ human rights values and concerns as Alphabet navigates its role in a digital world. AWU workers are seeking a seat at the table not just when the discussion surrounds their own salaries and working conditions but also when it considers what projects Alphabet will take on, what governments Alphabet will work with, what products Alphabet will produce, and more.

Regulating Big Tech Through Big Tech Unions

In the age of deepfakes, generative AI, and large-scale data breaches and privacy violations, we need this kind of political power more than ever. While genAI offers exciting new tools for augmenting human work and creativity, its ability to mimic reality poses yet another threat to truth in American democracy. Recall the “liar’s dividend” and Trump’s fluid relationship with genAI, crowd sizes, and the truth. We also saw this play out with the fake Biden robocall incident during the New Hampshire primaries earlier this year, in which AI was used to impersonate Biden and discourage Democrats from voting.

While the EU has made swift strides to confront such political misinformation in the genAI age with its Regulation on the Transparency and Targeting of Political Advertising and its AI Act, the U.S. lacks such guardrails. In America, unlike the EU, there is no requirement that users be informed when content they encounter online is a political advertisement or when AI has been used for targeted advertising. Nor are American users protected from AI systems that use “subliminal techniques,” such as deepfakes or personalized advertising, to deceive them or to manipulate their behavior and decision-making—explicitly prohibited under the AI Act Article 5(1)(a). Without these guardrails, and with figures like Trump increasingly treating truth as relative, it hardly seemed a stretch to conclude that Big Tech’s unchecked development could leave American democracy vulnerable this election.

AWU and other tech worker unions could be the check on Big Tech’s AI avalanche that American lawmakers and regulators have struggled to create. In addition to influencing Big Tech to make changes like those outlined in the regulation on political advertising and the AI Act from the inside, tech workers can go a step further by influencing the technology itself. One approach to curtailing AI-driven misinformation is to add “watermarks” to the metadata of all AI-generated content so that users who encounter that content online will know off the bat that it’s not real or human-made. Metadata watermarks would have made it clear from the start that those “Swifties for Trump” images were AI generated; on the flip side, the lack of a metadata watermark on the photo of the Harris crowds would have proved its authenticity before Trump could even begin to cast doubt. In other words, metadata watermarks can thwart the liar’s dividend phenomenon.

For this approach to be successful, however, companies across Silicon Valley would have to work together to agree on common practices for implementing these watermarks across all genAI platforms. Tech unions are ideally positioned to lead this effort: Communicating and coordinating with workers across companies to establish industry best practices is precisely what unions are designed to do. In fact, it is what unions have excelled at doing for a century—the proof, again, is in OSHA, the FLSA, the FMLA, the NLRA, and beyond. We need the voices of tech workers if we’re going to address these dangers properly, and organized labor excels at getting workers’ voices at the table to effect large-scale change.

This tech is the bread and butter of the tech workers who make it. You’d be hard pressed to find a tech worker in the U.S. who hasn’t heard of the General Data Protection Regulation in some measure; all the major, and many of the minor, players in the industry must navigate the EU’s privacy laws if they want to stay in business. And while us common folk might have a general idea of what genAI is, it takes a techie to explain in even the simplest terms how it works and what threats it poses.

If users want comprehensive federal data privacy law, regulations on genAI, and accountability in Big Tech, then unionized tech workers are key. The NLRA gives workers a unique iota of influence over their employers. And when your employer is a Silicon Valley behemoth like Meta, Alphabet, or X, a little bit of influence can go a long way.

Working Within (and Without) the NLRA

There are challenges to achieving these goals through unionization, of course, but they are surmountable. Under the NLRA, employers have the right to refuse to bargain over most “permissive” subjects of bargaining—that is, topics that do not concern wages, hours, or terms and conditions of employment. Likely, Big Tech will decline attempts to bargain over data privacy, responsible genAI, and other controversial elements of tech as not mandatory subjects of bargaining under NLRA § 8(d). But the phrase “terms and conditions of employment” in that section can do a lot of work. Broadly, the Supreme Court says mandatory subjects of bargaining are those subjects that “settle an aspect of the relationship between the employer and employees” (Allied Chemical & Alkali Workers of America v. Pittsburgh Plate Glass). While the Act does not compel bargaining over decisions at the “core of entrepreneurial control,” as put by the court in Fibreboard v. NLRB in 1964, courts have enforced mandatory bargaining over issues as far afield as relocating jobs (Dubuque, a.k.a. United Food and Commercial Workers v. NLRB), pulling out of a contract with a particular client (First Nat’l Maintenance Corp v. NLRB), and even prices for cafeteria and vending machine food in the workplace (Ford Motor Co. v. NLRB).

So Meta workers, for example, may not be able to demand a complete data privacy revolution for all Facebook users establishing clear prohibitions on Facebook’s ability to mine and sell personal data to third parties; but likely, they can at least demand data privacy for themselves in the workplace. And if the Meta union has data privacy at work, then the Microsoft union will want data privacy at work. And if the Meta union and the Microsoft union have data privacy at work, then the Apple union will want data privacy at work, and so on—until data privacy for workers becomes a standard issue in tech union collective bargaining agreements, in other industry CBAs, in political and legislative discourse, and finally, one day, in data privacy laws.

Even if Big Tech refuses to talk about issues like data privacy and AI best practices at the bargaining table, unions can harness the knowledge (and the CBA terms) of their tech worker members to lobby Congress for change directly. Unions do this all the time, in fact; lobbying for policies that benefit both their members and the public is a key component of the vast portfolio of internal and external advocacy that unions do. A prime example from the tech world is the Communications Workers of America’s (CWA’s) nearly 20-year efforts to promote high-speed internet access for all through its Speed Matters campaign. CWA leaders have repeatedly testified before Congress on the need for widespread high-speed internet access in every home in the U.S., the poorest and most rural included. In February 2021, amid the coronavirus pandemic, then-CWA President Christopher Shelton testified before the House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology asking Congress to pass legislation investing $80 billion in infrastructure for high-speed internet access so that kids wouldn’t have to attend remote schooling from a Wi-Fi connection in a McDonald’s parking lot. In November 2021, Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal (aka the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), which allocated $65 billion for high-speed internet infrastructure, creating jobs for CWA members and expanding broadband to communities in need.

Besides which, not all tech unions have to follow traditional NLRA rules; it’s high time those rules were updated for the modern workplace anyway. Recognizing this, the Alphabet Workers Union formed explicitly as a nontraditional union that has not sought, and does not intend to seek, official certification as a union under the NLRA. The downside of this is that AWU does not have a legal right to collective bargaining and, thus, will not be negotiating an enforceable CBA with Alphabet. The upside, however, is that AWU is free to organize and bargain on its own terms—beyond the confines of the NLRA and its mandatory and permissive subjects of bargaining—and effect much-needed change not just at Alphabet and Google, but on the internet writ large. AWU, unconstrained by the traditional scope of bargaining, could use its organizing power to influence its employer in ways lawmakers, regulators, and traditional unions cannot.

\*\*\*

Once the workers have included data privacy and responsible AI in agreements, the seed is planted. CBAs are public documents—anyone can find out what these hypothetical unionized tech workers manage to extract from their employers. Both formal and informal tech unions could use their victories to drive lobbying and policymaking at the national level—just as other unions have done for workers’ comp, OSHA, FLSA, FMLA, and the NLRA before.

#### That decimates AI innovation.

Huddleston 24 – Senior Fellow in Technology Policy at the CATO Institute, J.D. from the University of Alabama School of Law.

Jennifer Huddleston, “AI and Privacy Rules Meant for Big Tech Could Hurt Small Businesses Most,” CATO Institute, 05-20-2024, https://www.cato.org/commentary/ai-privacy-rules-meant-big-tech-could-hurt-small-businesses-most

As lawmakers and regulators in the U.S. consider policy born of their Big Tech concerns such as data privacy and artificial intelligence, they should carefully consider how such changes could end up trampling the small and midsize businesses that drive innovation and competition.

While policymakers may have Google and Facebook in mind, the actual policies could unintentionally create new regulatory burdens that could deter investment in smaller businesses and prevent new companies from emerging. For example, calls to end Section 230 — part of a 1996 law that protects internet companies from some lawsuits — portray it as a handout to Big Tech, when in practice it would mean new social media companies would face liability early on, making it more difficult to compete and discouraging them from carrying user-generated content that provides new opportunities or ways of connecting.

In this way, regulations that policymakers may think target Big Tech could ultimately serve the biggest companies by placing increasing burdens on potential competitors.

In the U.S., the government has generally taken a hands-off approach to the technology industry, keeping barriers to entry low and fostering entrepreneurship. Today’s leading companies were once small startups, and regulators’ light touch allowed them to flourish, creating benefits for consumers that could not have been predicted. The economy and consumers need this approach to continue so today’s startups have a chance as well.

We can see this theory play out in the real world. Europe has taken a significantly different approach to technology policy, which has stifled small businesses. For example, after a European privacy law, the General Data Protection Regulation, went into effect in 2018, investment in small and startup businesses decreased, largely out of concerns that small companies would struggle to comply with the new rules.

In the short run, such investment decreased by 36%, and large players gained market share in the advertising sector. One effect of the regulation, according to a National Bureau of Economic Research study, is a “lost generation” of innovation; smartphone app stores have added nearly one-third fewer applications.

To protect consumers from exploitation by Big Tech, some policymakers in the U.S. have been flirting with a more European approach. However, many proposed policy changes would increase compliance costs or liability burdens on newer and smaller players that might not be able to afford them. This includes state-level data privacy policy that risks creating a burdensome and costly patchwork as well as calls by senators to impose AI licensing.

Beyond issues that have compliance costs such as data privacy and AI, some critics of Big Tech have called for antitrust enforcement to protect small businesses from the “kill zone” — the window of time in which a growing startup is bought by a big company before it can become a rival to that company. These critics also call for changes that would potentially limit mergers or acquisitions.

But this approach creates a false dichotomy between “big” and “small” business that misunderstands the way the startup ecosystem works. This strategy could hurt small businesses in many ways. Some may want to grow into challengers, but others were created with the hope of being sold; investors in startups are often looking for the right moment for the company to be acquired so they can recoup their money. That’s valid too; this cycle leads to more investment and more innovation.

Blocking mergers and acquisitions could force small businesses to stay small, or, worse yet, it could push them out of business. Antitrust rules that are preoccupied with curbing Big Tech would end up hurting the industry, the economy and consumers.

We saw this play out recently when regulators blocked Amazon’s acquisition of IRobot. The result is most likely not renewed competition but that consumers will have fewer options as IRobot faces a dire financial situation and lays off workers. If further burdens to mergers and acquisitions and a shift away from the focus on consumers continue, this could become a more frequent phenomenon, to the detriment of both small businesses and consumers.

Small businesses and startups play an important role in the tech ecosystem and have flourished under the light touch of U.S. regulators. After decades of experience, allowing policy to be shaped by today’s enmity toward Big Tech would be a dangerous swerve and could have unintended consequences for startups and consumers.

#### U.S. AI lead prevents decisive Chinese military dominance. Extinction.

Aschenbrenner 24 – Research Affiliate at the Global Priorities Institute at Oxford University, Emergent Ventures Grantee at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.  
Leopold Aschenbrenner, “IIId. The Free World Must Prevail”, June 2024, Situational Awareness: The Decade Ahead, https://situational-awareness.ai/the-free-world-must-prevail/#Whoever\_leads\_on\_superintelligence\_will\_have\_a\_decisive\_military\_advantage

Superintelligence will be the most powerful technology—and most powerful weapon—mankind has ever developed. It will give a decisive military advantage, perhaps comparable only with nuclear weapons. Authoritarians could use superintelligence for world conquest, and to enforce total control internally. Rogue states could use it to threaten annihilation. And though many count them out, once the CCP wakes up to AGI it has a clear path to being competitive (at least until and unless we drastically improve US AI lab security).

Every month of lead will matter for safety too. We face the greatest risks if we are locked in a tight race, democratic allies and authoritarian competitors each racing through the already-precarious intelligence explosion at breakneck pace—forced to throw any caution by the wayside, fearing the other getting superintelligence first. Only if we preserve a healthy lead of democratic allies will we have the margin of error for navigating the extraordinarily volatile and dangerous period around the emergence of superintelligence. And only American leadership is a realistic path to developing a nonproliferation regime to avert the risks of self-destruction superintelligence will unfold.

Our generation too easily takes for granted that we live in peace and freedom. And those who herald the age of AGI in SF too often ignore the elephant in the room: superintelligence is a matter of national security, and the United States must win.

Whoever leads on superintelligence will have a decisive military advantage

Superintelligence is not just any other technology—hypersonic missiles, stealth, and so on—where US and liberal democracies’ leadership is highly desirable, but not strictly necessary. The military balance of power can be kept if the US falls behind on one or a couple such technologies; these technologies matter a great deal, but can be outweighed by advantages in other areas.

The advent of superintelligence will put us in a situation unseen since the advent of the atomic era: those who have it will wield complete dominance over those who don’t.

I’ve previously discussed the vast power of superintelligence. It’ll mean having billions of automated scientists and engineers and technicians, each much smarter than the smartest human scientists, furiously inventing new technologies, day and night. The acceleration in scientific and technological development will be extraordinary. As superintelligence is applied to R&D in military technology, we could quickly go through decades of military technological progress.

The Gulf War, or: What a few-decades-worth of technological lead implies for military power

The Gulf War provides a helpful illustration of how a 20-30 year lead in military technology can be decisive. At the time, Iraq commanded the fourth-largest army in the world. In terms of numbers (troops, tanks, artillery), the US-led coalition barely matched (or was outmatched) by the Iraqis, all while the Iraqis had had ample time to entrench their defenses (a situation that would normally require a 3:1, or 5:1, advantage in military manpower to dislocate).

But the US-led coalition obliterated the Iraqi army in a merely 100-hour ground war. Coalition dead numbered a mere 292, compared to 20k-50k Iraqi dead and hundreds of thousands of others wounded or captured. The Coalition lost a mere 31 tanks, compared to the destruction of over 3,000 Iraqi tanks.

The difference in technology wasn’t godlike or unfathomable, but it was utterly and completely decisive: guided and smart munitions, early versions of stealth, better sensors, better tank scopes (to see farther in the night and in dust storms), better fighter jets, an advantage in reconnaissance, and so on.

(For a more recent example, recall Iran launching a massive attack of 300 missiles at Israel, “99%” of which were intercepted by superior Israel, US, and allied missile defense.)

A lead of a year or two or three on superintelligence could mean as utterly decisive a military advantage as the US coalition had against Iraq in the Gulf War. A complete reshaping of the military balance of power will be on the line.

Imagine if we had gone through the military technological developments of the 20th century in less than a decade. We’d have gone from horses and rifles and trenches, to modern tank armies, in a couple years; to armadas of supersonic fighter planes and nuclear weapons and ICBMs a couple years after that; to stealth and precision that can knock out an enemy before they even know you’re there another couple years after that.

That is the situation we will face with the advent of superintelligence: the military technological advances of a century compressed to less than a decade. We’ll see superhuman hacking that can cripple much of an adversary’s military force, roboarmies and autonomous drone swarms, but more importantly completely new paradigms we can’t yet begin to imagine, and the inventions of new WMDs with thousandfold increases in destructive power (and new WMD defenses too, like impenetrable missile defense, that rapidly and repeatedly upend deterrence equilibria).

And it wouldn’t just be technological progress. As we solve robotics, labor will become fully automated, enabling a broader industrial and economic explosion, too. It is plausible growth rates could go into the 10s of percent a year; within at most a decade, the GDP of those with the lead would trounce those behind. Rapidly multiplying robot factories would mean not only a drastic technological edge, but also production capacity to dominate in pure materiel. Think millions of missile interceptors; billions of drones; and so on.

Of course, we don’t know the limits of science and the many frictions that could slow things down. But no godlike advances are necessary for a decisive military advantage. And a billion superintelligent scientists will be able to do a lot. It seems clear that within a matter of years, pre-superintelligence militaries would become hopelessly outclassed.

The military advantage would be decisive even against nuclear deterrents

To be even clearer: it seems likely the advantage conferred by superintelligence would be decisive enough even to preemptively take out an adversary’s nuclear deterrent. Improved sensor networks and analysis could locate even the quietest current nuclear submarines (similarly for mobile missile launchers). Millions or billions of mouse-sized autonomous drones, with advances in stealth, could infiltrate behind enemy lines and then surreptitiously locate, sabotage, and decapitate the adversary’s nuclear forces. Improved sensors, targeting, and so on could dramatically improve missile defense (similar to, say, the Iran vs. Israel example above); moreover, if there is an industrial explosion, robot factories could churn out thousands of interceptors for each opposing missile. And all of this is without even considering completely new scientific and technological paradigms (e.g., remotely deactivating all the nukes).

It would simply be no contest. And not just no contest in the nuclear sense of “we could mutually destroy each other,” but no contest in terms of being able to obliterate the military power of a rival without taking significant casualties. A couple years of lead on superintelligence would mean complete dominance.

If there is a rapid intelligence explosion, it’s plausible a lead of mere months could be decisive: months could mean the difference between roughly human-level AI systems and substantially superhuman AI systems. Perhaps possessing those initial superintelligences alone, even before being broadly deployed, would be enough for a decisive advantage, e.g. via superhuman hacking abilities that could shut down pre-superintelligence militaries, more limited drone swarms that threaten instant death for every opposing leader, official, and their families, and advanced bioweapons developed with AlphaFold-style simulation that could target specific ethnic groups, e.g. anybody but Han Chinese (or simply withhold the cure from the adversary).

China can be competitive

Many seem complacent about China and AGI. The chip export controls have neutered them, and the leading AI labs are in the US and the UK—so we don’t have much to worry about, right? Chinese LLMs are fine—they are definitely capable of training large models!—but they are at best comparable to the second tier of US labs. And even Chinese models are often mere ripoffs of American open source releases (for example, the Yi-34B architecture seems to have essentially the Llama2 architecture, with merely a few lines of code changed). Chinese deep learning used to be more important than it is today (for example Baidu published one of the first modern scaling law papers), and while China publishes more papers in AI than the US, they don’t seem to have driven any of the key breakthroughs in recent years.

That’s all merely a prelude, however. If and when the CCP wakes up to AGI, we should expect extraordinary efforts on the part of the CCP to compete. And I think there’s a pretty clear path for China to be in the game: outbuild the US and steal the algorithms.

1. Compute

1a. Chips: China now seems to have demonstrated the ability to manufacture 7nm chips. While going beyond 7nm will be difficult (requiring EUV), 7nm is enough! For reference, 7nm is what Nvidia A100s used. The indigenous Huawei Ascend 910B, based on the SMIC 7nm platform, seems to only be ~2-3x worse on performance/$ than an equivalent Nvidia chip would be.

The yield of SMIC’s 7nm production and the general maturity of Chinese abilities here is debated, and a critical open question is in what quantities they could produce these 7nm chips. Still, it seems like there’s at least a very reasonable chance they’ll be able to do this at large scale in a few years.

Most of the gains in AI chips have come from improved chip design adapting them for AI use cases (and China likely already steals Nvidia chip designs from the Taiwan supply chain). 7nm vs. 3nm or 2nm, and their general fab immaturity, probably makes things more expensive for China. But that seems by no means fatal; you can make very good AI chips on top of a 7nm process. I wouldn’t have high confidence by this point, for example, that they couldn’t just spend a bit more and get ample compute for the $100B+ and trillion-dollar training clusters in a few years.

1b. Outbuilding the US: The binding constraint on the largest training clusters won’t be chips, but industrial mobilization—perhaps most of all the 100GW of power for the trillion-dollar cluster. But if there’s one thing China can do better than the US it’s building stuff.

In the last decade, China has roughly built as much new electricity capacity as the entire US capacity (while US capacity has remained basically flat). In the US, these things get stuck in environmental review, permitting, and regulation for a decade first. It thus seems quite plausible that China will be able to simply outbuild the US on the largest training clusters.

2. Algorithms

As discussed extensively in Counting the OOMs, scaling compute is only part of the story: algorithmic advances probably contribute at least half of AI progress. We’re developing the key algorithmic breakthroughs for AGI right now (essentially the EUV of algorithms because of the data wall).

By default, I expect Western labs to be well ahead; they have much of the key talent, and in recent years have developed all of the key breakthroughs. The size of the advantage may well be equivalent to a 10x (or even 100x) bigger cluster in a few years; this would provide the United States with a reasonably comfortable lead.

And yet, on the current course, we will completely surrender this advantage: as discussed extensively in the security section, the current state of security essentially makes it trivial for China to infiltrate American labs. And so, unless we lock down the labs very soon, I expect China to be able to simply steal the key algorithmic ingredients for AGI, and match US capabilities.

(Even worse, if we don’t improve security, there’s an even more salient path for China to compete. They won’t even need to train their own AGI: they’ll just be able to steal the AGI weights directly. Once they’ve stolen a copy of the automated AI researcher, they’ll be off to the races, and can launch their own intelligence explosion. If they’re willing to apply less caution—both good caution, and unreasonable regulation and delay—than the US, they could race through the intelligence explosion more quickly, outrunning us to superintelligence.)

To date, US tech companies have made a much bigger bet on AI and scaling than any Chinese efforts; consequently, we are well ahead. But counting out China now is a bit like counting out Google in the AI race when ChatGPT came out in late 2022. Google hadn’t yet focused their efforts in an intense AI bet, and it looked as though OpenAI was far ahead—but once Google woke up, a year and half later, they are putting up a very serious fight. China, too, has a clear path to putting up a very serious fight. If and when the CCP mobilizes in the race to AGI, the picture could start looking very different.

Perhaps the Chinese government will be incompetent; perhaps they decide AI threatens the CCP and impose stifling regulation. But I wouldn’t count on it.

I, for one, think we need to operate under the assumption that we will face a full-throated Chinese AGI effort. As every year we get dramatic leaps in AI capability, as we start seeing early automation of software engineers, as AI revenue explodes and we start seeing $10T valuations and trillion-dollar cluster buildouts, as a broader consensus starts to form that we are on the cusp of AGI—the CCP will take note. Much as I expect these leaps to wake up the USG to AGI, I would expect it to wake up the CCP to AGI—and to wake up to what being behind on AGI would mean for their national power.

They will be a formidable adversary.

The authoritarian peril

A dictator who wields the power of superintelligence would command concentrated power unlike any we’ve ever seen. In addition to being able to impose their will on other countries, they could enshrine their rule internally. Millions of AI-controlled robotic law enforcement agents could police their populace; mass surveillance would be hypercharged; dictator-loyal AIs could individually assess every citizen for dissent, with advanced near-perfect lie detection rooting out any disloyalty.

Most importantly, the robotic military and police force could be wholly controlled by a single political leader, and programmed to be perfectly obedient—no more risk of coups or popular rebellions.

Whereas past dictatorships were never permanent, superintelligence could eliminate basically all historical threats to a dictator’s rule and lock in their power (cf value lock-in). If the CCP gets this power, they could enforce the Party’s conception of “truth” totally and completely.

To be clear, I don’t just worry about dictators getting superintelligence because “our values are better.” I believe in freedom and democracy, strongly, because I don’t know what the right values are. In the long arc of history, “time has upset many fighting faiths.” I believe we should place our faith in mechanisms of error correction, experimentation, competition, and adaption.

Superintelligence will give those who wield it the power to crush opposition, dissent, and lock in their grand plan for humanity. It will be difficult for anyone to resist the terrible temptation to use this power. I hope, dearly, that we can instead rely on the wisdom of the Framers—letting radically different values flourish, and preserving the raucous plurality that has defined the American experiment.

At stake in the AGI race will not just be the advantage in some far-flung proxy war, but whether freedom and democracy can survive for the next century and beyond. The course of human history is as brutal as it is clear. Twice in the 20th century tyranny threatened the globe; we must be under no delusion that this threat is banished forever. For many of my young friends, freedom and democracy feel like a given—but they are not. By far the most common political system in history is authoritarianism.

I genuinely do not know the intentions of the CCP and their authoritarian allies. But, as a reminder: the CCP is a regime founded on the continued worship of perhaps the greatest totalitarian mass-murderer in human history (“with estimates ranging from 40 to 80 million victims due to starvation, persecution, prison labor, and mass executions”); a regime that recently put a million Uyghurs in concentration camps and crushed a free Hong Kong; a regime that systematically practices mass surveillance for social control, both of the new-fangled (tracking phones, DNA databases, facial recognition, and so on) and the old-fangled (recruiting an army of citizens to report on their neighbors) kind; a regime that ensures all text messages passes through a censor, and that goes so far to repress dissent as to pull families into police stations when their child overseas attends a protest; a regime that has cemented Xi Jinping as dictator-for-life; a regime that touts its aims to militarily crush and “reeducate” a free neighboring nation; a regime that explicitly seeks a China-centric world order.

The free world must prevail over the authoritarian powers in this race. We owe our peace and freedom to American economic and military preeminence. Perhaps even empowered with superintelligence, the CCP will behave responsibly on the international stage, leaving each to their own. But the history of dictators of their ilk is not pretty. If America and her allies fail to win this race, we risk it all.

Maintaining a healthy lead will be decisive for safety

It is the cursed history of science and technology that as they have unfolded their wonders, they have also expanded the means of destruction: from sticks and stones, to swords and spears, rifles and cannons, machine guns and tanks, bombers and missiles, nuclear weapons. The “destruction/$” curve has consistently gone down as technology has advanced. We should expect the rapid technological progress post-superintelligence to follow this trend.

Perhaps dramatic advances in biology will yield extraordinary new bioweapons, ones that spread silently, swiftly, before killing with perfect lethality on command (and that can be made extraordinarily cheaply, affordable even for terrorist groups). Perhaps new kinds of nuclear weapons enable the size of nuclear arsenals to increase by orders of magnitude, with new delivery mechanisms that are undetectable. Perhaps mosquito-sized drones, each carrying a deadly poison, could be targeted to kill every member of an opposing nation. It’s hard to know what a century’s worth of technological progress would yield—but I am confident it would unfold appalling possibilities.

Humanity barely evaded self-destruction during the Cold War. On the historical view, the greatest existential risk posed by AGI is that it will enable us to develop extraordinary new means of mass death. This time, these means could even proliferate to become accessible to rogue actors or terrorists (especially if, as on the current course, the superintelligence weights aren’t sufficiently protected, and can be directly stolen by North Korea, Iran, and co.).

North Korea already has a concerted bioweapons program: the US assesses that “North Korea has a dedicated, national level offensive program” to develop and produce bioweapons. It seems plausible that their primary constraint is how far their small circle of top scientists has been able to push the limits of (synthetic) biology. What happens when that constraint is removed, when they can use millions of superintelligences to accelerate their bioweapons R&D? For example, the US assesses that North Korea currently has “limited ability” to genetically engineer biological products—what happens when that becomes unlimited? With what unholy new concoctions will they hold us hostage?

Moreover, as discussed in the superalignment section, there will be extreme safety risks around and during the intelligence explosion—we will be faced with novel technical challenges to ensure we can reliably trust and control superhuman AI systems. This very well may require us to slow down at some critical moments, say, delaying by 6 months in the middle of the intelligence explosion to get additional assurances on safety, or using a large fraction of compute on alignment research rather than capabilities progress.

Some hope for some sort of international treaty on safety. This seems fanciful to me. The world where both the CCP and USG are AGI-pilled enough to take safety risk seriously is also the world in which both realize that international economic and military predominance is at stake, that being months behind on AGI could mean being permanently left behind. If the race is tight, any arms control equilibrium, at least in the early phase around superintelligence, seems extremely unstable. In short, ”breakout” is too easy: the incentive (and the fear that others will act on this incentive) to race ahead with an intelligence explosion, to reach superintelligence and the decisive advantage, too great. At the very least, the odds we get something good-enough here seem slim. (How have those climate treaties gone? That seems like a dramatically easier problem compared to this.)

The main—perhaps the only—hope we have is that an alliance of democracies has a healthy lead over adversarial powers. The United States must lead, and use that lead to enforce safety norms on the rest of the world. That’s the path we took with nukes, offering assistance on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in exchange for an international nonproliferation regime (ultimately underwritten by American military power)—and it’s the only path that’s been shown to work.

Perhaps most importantly, a healthy lead gives us room to maneuver: the ability to “cash in” parts of the lead, if necessary, to get safety right, for example by devoting extra work to alignment during the intelligence explosion.

The safety challenges of superintelligence would become extremely difficult to manage if you are in a neck-and-neck arms race. A 2 year vs. a 2 month lead could easily make all the difference. If we have only a 2 month lead, we have no margin at all for safety. In fear of the CCP’s intelligence we’d almost certainly race, no holds barred, through our own intelligence explosion—barreling towards AI systems vastly smarter than humans in months explosion, , without any ability to slow down to get key decisions right, with all the risks of superintelligence going awry that implies. We’d face an extremely volatile situation, as we and the CCP rapidly developed extraordinary new military technology that repeatedly destabilized deterrence. If our secrets and weights aren’t locked down, it might even mean a range of other rogue states are close as well, each of them using superintelligence to furnish their own new arsenal of super-WMDs. Even if we barely managed to inch out ahead, it would likely be a pyrrhic victory; the existential struggle would have brought the world to the brink of total self-destruction.

Superintelligence looks very different if the democratic allies have a healthy lead, say 2 years. That buys us the time necessary to navigate the unprecedented series of challenges we’ll face around and after superintelligence, and to stabilize the situation.

If and when it becomes clear that the US will decisively win, that’s when we offer a deal to China and other adversaries. They’ll know they won’t win, and so they’ll know their only option is to come to the table; and we’d rather avoid a feverish standoff or last-ditch military attempts on their part to sabotage Western efforts. In exchange for guaranteeing noninterference in their affairs, and sharing the peaceful benefits of superintelligence, a regime of nonproliferation, safety norms, and a semblance of stability post-superintelligence can be born.

In any case, as we go deeper into this struggle, we must not forget the threat of self-destruction. That we made it through the Cold War in one piece involved too much luck—and the destruction could be a thousandfold more potent than what we faced then. A healthy lead by an American-led coalition of democracies—and a solemn exercise of this leadership to stabilize whatever volatile situation we find ourselves in—is probably the safest path to navigating past this precipice. But in the heat of the AGI race, we better not screw it up.

Superintelligence is a matter of national security

It is clear: AGI is an existential challenge for the national security of the United States. It’s time to start treating it as such.

### K---1NC

Restriction K---

#### Collective *bargaining* crystallized in a *contract*ual obligation is a shibboleth for the restricted, oligopolistic control of wealth in big employers, which is mutually exclusive with the general economy.

Thompson 97 – Senior Lecturer in Economics at the Open University, England.

Grahame Thompson, “Where goes economics and the economies?” *Economy and Society*, vol. 26, number 4. November 1997.

Absence of a single and stable equilibrium

The existence of possible multiple equilibrium or non—stable equilibrium leads to many important implications for economic analysis. It means that ‘history matters' for the new economics in a way that it does not for optimizing perfectly competitive and efficient market models. With the competitively efficient market story all information, for instance, is immediately embodied in economic variables and behaviours. Any new situation (itself ‘exogenously' generated) thus leads to a reoptimizing round, resulting in the rapid movement to a new unique equilibrium. Thus we have a world in which economic agents are assumed continually to re-contract according to changed circumstances, where bygones are always bygones (because past optimizing is ‘instantaneous' and complete), and where the new equilibrium is ‘quickly' established in the face of only the current information. The past does not matter here since it is already embodied in current behaviour, which is itself ‘in equilibrium'.

However, if each new situation requires a bargaining game to be undertaken, which in effect 'strikes a deal' between the parties involved that might be to the advantage of one and the disadvantage of the other, or that locks 'the system' into the wrong technology or wrong product-mix, then you are stuck with this and its consequences through time. The 'choice' of technology or product mix at any particular time has historical consequences that linger. The outcome is thus 'path dependent', dependent upon a series of choices that have been made in the past and that had nothing necessarily to do with the system optimizing or moving towards a well-defined equilibrium. 'Hysteresis' is the term (itself drawn from the 'new' quantum physics) used to characterize this process in economics.

This idea that the outcome of a bargain might lead to different trajectories for the economy has opened up a number of different approaches to thinking and modelling the economy, not all of which are directly linked to game theory models. However, it was the implications of these models, I would argue, that originally (re)stimulated these other approaches. For instance, the realms of complexity and chaos theory do not embody notions of equilibrium or optimization on the part of agents. Complex behaviour of variables is here a product of the endogenous dynamic of those variables themselves, not of an exogenous 'shock' or change in their circumstances. But that behaviour is also highly dependent upon from which values those variables began, again reinforcing the importance of the 'choices' with which the dynamic process originated. A further consequence of these considerations is that biological and evolutionary models now abound in economics. The 'old' mechanical analogies and metaphors that served economics so well (or ill) are rapidly being replaced by 'new' biological and evolutionary ones, which are now slowly threatening to take over the mainstream ground of standard economics. The emphasis is upon 'waves' of optimism and pessimism, leading to bandwagon effects, or herding and stampeding behaviours. The analysis of cycles and switch-points is in again, this time conducted in a non-deterministic world according to non-linear dynamics. Perhaps Keynes' 'animal spirits' could be said to rule once again?

The second set of consequences of the move towards oligopolistic modelling is that 'intervention' in the economy can be justified as a straightforward implication of these models. The usual way intervention is pressed upon the economy (and very reluctantly by economists) is because of 'market failure' issues (by which is meant perfectly competitive market failure, or the existence of 'imper- fections' in one way or another). But with oligopoly the market is 'imperfect' by definition, so the question of imperfections cannot arise in the same way. Oligopoly is the normal result of 'success', and it is to press that success that intervention can be justified. If there are economies of scale as a normal feature of firm or industry organization, and some firms or industries are not operating at their minimum efficient scale, then welfare can be increased by encouraging them to move down their long-run average cost curves towards that minimum. Thus 'protectionism' can in principle be justified by these models, or rather not ruled out by them. And this happens as a normal consequence of market operation, not because of some 'failure' on its part. This is the basis of the policy implications of the new-trade theory.

In connection with the new-growth theory, this stresses the endogenization of technological advance (i.e. explaining it rather than considering it as a consequence of an exogenous time trend), and the existence of external economies of scale (also something stressed by the new-economic geography). External economies of scale imply spillover effects from one decision to others, so that if, for instance, an investment by one firm stimulates economic activity in another then both improve their position. Thus again, in principle, this could justify a subsidy to investment. Such a subsidy can genuinely improve overall welfare if it stimulates external economies of scale to such an extent that these are greater than the cost of the subsidy. These kinds of considerations are now at the heart of economic analysis, not something confined to a marginalized corner of 'market failure'.

Thus there has been something of a sea-change in the nature of economic analysis over the last ten to fifteen years. This is not to say that these changes have completely swept the 'old' economics aside, nor that there has been no opposition to them. They have presented an uncomfortable and problematic challenge to the orthodoxy of neo-classical economics, but they still embody many of its most cherished shibboleths (a production function, for instance).

Econometrics and statistical testing

However, in addition to this, there is great uncertainty among economists over their empirical work. A lot of the developments in theory outlined above have profound implications for empirical verification techniques. Many, for instance, imply non-deterministic and non-linear patterns of economic processes. Such developments have potentially fatal cffects on the validity of normal economet- rics and statistical testing procedures. Economists (along with many others) used to think that they had 'tamed chance', but 'chance' in a stochastic sense is not necessarily the relevant category for biological and evolutionary models of this kind. Probabilistic econometrics is put on the defensive by these developments.

It is here also that the 'rhetorical turn' has taught us something substantial about economic argument, I would suggest. The first major problem for empiri- cal economic work arose in the context of the 'big debate' between Monetarism and Keynesianism that emerged in the 1970s. However much they tried, neither side in this debate could persuade the other side of the validity of their own pet theory. Whatever empirical work was done on these models was not robust enough to persuade the other side to accept its validity. Indeed, each side could more or less use the same empirical raw material, data sets and testing tech- niques to support its own position. This came as a shock to economists! As a result they began to lose confidence in the ability of any econometric work not only to sort out which theoretical position could be substantiated, but also to convince the proponents of a theoretical argument of their own position. Although this produced a flurry of new testing procedures, it undermined the robustness of econometrics generally and produced a new scepticism among economists. This provided an opportunity for those advancing the 'rhetorical' argument to point out, with effect, how all disputes of this type are not just about the 'protocols of science' but also, and often more importantly, about the protocols of a wider form of argumentation in which a range of techniques of persuasion are brought to bear. It also served to provide a much-needed cor- rective on what the actual nature and limits of statistical testing amounted to in economics.

Inasmuch as there has been a general reaction to these problems, I would suggest it can be summed up by the way that conceptions of modelling with 'ideograms' are giving way to conceptions based upon 'diagrams'. Economics has always been a diagrammatically rich discursive apparatus, but it is becoming more so in a newly multidimensional way. The new economics relies more on 'simulations' than does its predecessor. And with computer advances, such simu- lations are increasingly taking a diagrammatic form. Thus almost 'virtual worlds' are being produced within economics, to simulate the operation of markets as complex and chaotic systems for instance (particularly financial markets it must be added). Although these are not yet, so far as I can judge, a true 'virtual reality' - which requires or invites participants to somehow 'take a journey' through such virtual worlds - they are approaching it. As yet they are really used only as scenario-building and exploratory tools. But they are not econometric in form. They are simulatory and diagrammatic.

The new sociology of the economy

The second register in which I want to discuss the changing nature of economic analysis concerns what I designate 'the new sociology of the economy'. Perhaps rather paradoxically, at the same time that oligopoly and the celebration of the big firm is invading orthodox economics, it is the fragmentation of economies and the reappearance of the small and medium-sized firm as an object of study that have appeared in a new sociological approach to the analysis of the economy. The processes concentrated upon here are the horizontal and vertical disintegration (or quasi-disintegration) of the firm: into commodity chains, supply networks, value-added chains and network organizations in general. This has often been summed up in terms of the way 'mass-produc- tion' is giving way to various forms of 'flexible specialization' in production and distribution matters. There are a number of different takes on this process, which I shall discuss below, but it first remains to be said that this (potential) process is not something ignored in orthodox circles either - so it is not con- fined to the heterodox approach. And, second, a number of the techniques and modelling strategies discussed above in relationship to the orthodox approach are being deployed in connection to, or can just as well be used in connection to, the reappearance of these smaller-scale organizational arrangements (e.g. in the case of biological, chaotic and complex systemic behaviour). This point will be addressed below.

The economy of excess

The economy of excess approach is closely tied to the notion of 'post-modernism'. It is a term coined and used by Bataille, Baudrillard and Derrida, among others, to describe a 'general economy' as opposed to a 'restricted economy'. The restricted economy is the economy of utility, the sort of economy described up to now in this paper, concerned with welfare, the good (and 'goods'), happiness, productivity, profitability and so on. 'Utility' is not confined to its individualistic sense in this approach, but is a general category describing anything that celebrates the positively productive. Thus Marx, along with Weber, much of Durkheim and all of conventional economics, is included under this same title.

As opposed to this we have the general economy of excess. This economy concerns itself with the tragic, evil and abandon, with the destruction of wealth, unproductive expenditure, profitless exchange, with ritualistic, sacred and symbolic activity. While the restricted economy concentrates upon the price mechanism and market exchange, the general economy concentrates upon the gift and symbolic exchange. With the restricted economy, economic activity involves well-worked-out and specified contracts, whereas there are no contracts (or, at best, only implicit contracts) within the general economy.

It is in the notion of 'the gift' that the concerns of the general economy most closely abut those of conventional economics and the restricted economy, and the importance of this in the context of the new sociology of the economy is developed below.

#### Restrictions of the political economy preclude the useless expenditure of the general economy, which is necessary to avoid the build-up of social energy guaranteeing catastrophes in ethics through nuclear war and climate change.

Timofeeva 22 – Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the European University in St. Petersburg, Russia, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Oxana Timofeeva, “General Economy” in *Solar Politics*. 2022. Polity Press. ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-4964-1

General Economy

On a global scale, as Bataille says, there is no growth, “but only a luxurious squandering of energy in every form.”7 Restricted economies attempt to appropriate its flows and subordinate them to particular finite ends, from mere physical survival to the creation of new markets, but, after all, “beyond our immediate ends, man’s activity in fact pursues the useless and infinite fulfillment of the universe.”8 There is always a limit of growth, and an excess that must be spent this or that way. This excess is called “the accursed share.” The more we produce, the more we need to waste. If every surplus is invested in further growth of the system, like capital, a catastrophic outcome is just a matter of time. Warfare is an example of such an outcome: the prospect of nuclear war, in particular, was a matter of concern for Bataille and his contemporaries.

Be like the sun!

A superabundance of energy comes from the sun: “solar energy is the source of life’s exuberant development. The origin and essence of our wealth are given in the radiation of the sun, which dispenses energy – wealth – without any return. The sun gives without ever receiving.”9 Be like the sun! – this is basically Bataille’s motto for the possible future of the political economy adjusted to the planetary scale and balanced with the ecological whole. If we want our economies to be commensurate with our environments, we have to become solar. Bataille’s general economy is paradoxically rational: what it suggests is that we recognize the limits of growth and think through strategies of nonproductive expenditure as self-conscious activity. We should stop being greedy and stop striving for individual growth, which results in planetary energy restoring its balance in an uncontrolled and catastrophic way. Nonproductive expenditure must be taken seriously and organized as an economy of gifts without reciprocation – a glorious economy.

In The Accursed Share, Bataille tackles historical practices and traditions that represent different approaches to the problem of excess and the ways of dealing with it: sacrifices made by the Aztecs, potlach rituals, Islam, Lamaism, capitalism and bourgeois society, the Soviet system and the American initiative of the Marshall plan. Are there examples of the general economy in the sense that he implements when he connects it to the laws of the universe? Not really. There is always something wrong with the ways in which we interpret gifts. One would expect the last case analyzed by Bataille in his book – the Marshall plan – to be painted as a perspective solution, as it relates to the distribution of excessive American wealth among European countries devastated by World War Two. However, as Bataille emphasizes, even this is a Western political project, created in opposition to the Soviet Union, and considered by its proponents as an investment in the future of capitalism.

The general economy as self-conscious activity is something different, for what Bataille means by self-consciousness basically equates to sovereignty. It cannot be an investment, but only pure expenditure. Self-consciousness, in his interpretation, “has nothing as its object,”10 meaning that it does not want to increase its resources, does not strive to grow and prosper. Self-consciousness goes beyond the limits of the individual; its point of view is not that of the living organism seeking out where to get more stuff, but that of the planetary whole. The transition from consciousness of the individual, determined by needs and interests, to the generous self-consciousness is finally identified by Bataille as the last act of the transition “from animal to man.”11

This claim, which he immediately tries to detach from teleology (from the idea of the final goal of historical humanity, the achievement of which, according to Alexander Kojeve, would coincide with the end of history), today sounds obscenely anthropocentric, but let us take a closer look at it. Bataille’s generalization of all living organisms that behave in accordance with either their natural needs or their private interests as animals echoes Hegel’s description of economic estrangement and the division of labor given in the chapter of his Phenomenology of Spirit beautifully titled “The Spiritual Kingdom of Animals and Deception; or the Crux of the Matter (die Sache selbst),”12 where Hegel explains that individuals, indeed, do think that they are pursuing their private interests – for instance, when they sell commodities that they produce and try to cheat on each other – but this is only an illusion. In fact, without realizing it, these people contribute to the development of the overall economic structure. Bataille’s point, however, is different: yes, individuals pursue their interests, just like other animals that search for food when they are hungry, and entire national economic systems, too, can be compared to such egotistic individuals, but even if they think that they are struggling for universal prosperity, they actually contribute to overall planetary destruction.

This thesis finds endorsement in today’s ecological issues: technogenic catastrophes, air and water pollution, or the difficult problem of waste are nothing more than the effects of dizzying eco- nomic growth rates. In this sense, the transition from individual to human will be the change of perspective, taking the side of the general, solar, or cosmic, that is, paradoxically, of the nonhuman. The question rises though: where should we get the resources for such generosity? Bataille’s response would be that we are always already inherently solar. As planetary beings, we have our moments of “glory” – from something as kind and innocent as sharing, caring, and giving gifts, through arts, play, and self-abandonment of eroticism, to the most violent destructive acts of sacrifice or extermination. We rationalize these lavish acts (for instance, we make sacrifices in order to gain the favor of gods, or exterminate certain animal species for epidemiological reasons, for the sake of a healthier humanity), and thus try to inscribe them within the logic of restricted economies, but in fact we unconsciously follow general cosmic laws of excessively squandering energy and wealth.

Wombats and ethics

I do think, however, that Bataille’s account in The Accursed Share of animals as restricted individuals is not fully thought through: there are reasons for believing that the inherent solarity that he relates to self-consciousness is indeed animal, if we treat animals not as individuals but first and foremost as collective beings. From my perspective, animality is a way of existence beyond the individual; it is a form of primordial togetherness that can provide us with alternative models of the common. We are still not able to estimate the extent to which animals dance, sing, play; to give proper respect to their plasticity, enthusiasm, or wisdom.

Think of the wombats that, during the devastating Australian bushfire season in 2019–20, saved the lives of many other smaller animals by sheltering them in their large and complex burrows. There was a hell on Earth: more than a billion living creatures were wiped out by fire, but not the ones that managed to hide underneath the ground. When news about the incredible kindness of wombats rescuing other animals begun to circulate, scientists hurriedly came up with explanations that the wombats didn’t do so intentionally, but only by chance: these large mammals usually dig multiple spacious burrows, and while they are sleeping in just one of them, others may incidentally become hide-outs for the surrounding wildlife.13 Why was it so important, for natural scientists, to articulate the idea that the Australian wombats did not really exhibit altruism, solidarity, and care for neighboring species, but only instinctual behavior? Because solidarity and altruism fall within the domain of morality to which, according to our scientific policy, animals remain alien.

What if, however, opening their burrows up to other residents of the burning bush, wombats are expressing something that cannot be understood within the framework of Darwinian biology, which sees animals as primitive egoistic individuals struggling for survival? What if altruism and solidarity are precisely those forms of behavior that we cheaply label as instinctual? What if animals do not really need morals and other forms of mediation, because their relation to their territories is different from the private property with which human beings are so obsessed? As famous Russian anarchist Piotr Kropotkin demonstrated in his book Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution (1902), the struggle for survival is not the only one, and not even the main force of the development of life on Earth: various species survive because they cooperate, communicate, and help each other.14 Today’s ecological thinking discovers this new possible way of addressing nature. Thus, Timothy Morton’s call for solidarity with “nonhuman people” presumes that solidarity is not something specifically human, but “the default affective environment of the top layers of the Earth’s crust.”15 In Imre Szeman’s framing, solarity is “a form of solidarity that always already attends to the non-human and the Earth, to the lightness of limits and the depth of responsibility that comes when we tarry with the infinite.”16

Coming back to Bataille’s perspective, I suggest that the wombat-like generosity can be regarded as a kind of underdeveloped part of human animality, a properly solar, or cosmic, part repressed by our restricted economies that constitute us as Darwinian individuals greedy for resources, struggling for survival, and tending to grow. This greed is not so much real animal hunger, as it is projected onto animals that could equally be described in opposite terms, in the language of the general, or solar economy. Wombats do not need an ethical turn to share their living facilities with mice and lizards. Applying Bataille’s theory of animality as immanence, I suggest that, for the wombat, the act of sharing is not “good,” but rather indifferent, not unlike a wolf eating a calf. I am not sure though whether “indifferent” is the right word. I would say that an animal can be equally enthusiastic in a violent act of killing as in generosity of caring. What human animals do is make ethical judgments about which acts are good, and which are evil. In order to be like wombats, we need a complex mediation of self-consciousness that implies a radical ethical turn: “Changing from the perspectives of restrictive economy to those of general economy actually accomplishes a Copernican transformation: a reversal of thinking – and of ethics.”17

Elevated into a self-conscious human strategy, which takes the indifferent generosity of the sun as its model and transforms it into a new ethics with regard to the ecological whole, this economy becomes the economy of gift as opposed to one of exchange. It privileges consumption over production and expenditure over accumulation. Allan Stoekl, who explores Bataille’s theory for the twenty-first century, addresses the general economy as an ethical turn in the following way:

Not nuclear war, but the channeling of excess in ways that ensure survival so that more excess can be thrown off. And (one can continue along these lines) not generalized ecocide, but an affirmation of another energy, another religion, another waste, entailing not so much a steady state sustainability (with what stable referent? Man?) but instead a postsustainable state in which we labor in order to expend, not conserve.18

Importantly in this regard, Stoekl makes a distinction between destructive waste and nonproductive expenditure. Contemporary restrictive economies, based on the processes of burning fossil fuels, are in fact economies of waste, that have to be confronted by the general economy: it is time to learn to expend consciously instead of wasting blindly.

How to imagine such a nonrestrictive society? Bataille provides an example of extreme poverty in India contrasted to excessive wealth in the US: “General economy suggests, therefore, as a correct operation, a transfer of American wealth to India without reciprocation.”19 This sounds like a simple, but impossible, solution. Why? Because we are used to thinking about such matters in terms of restricted human economies. We consider social life as consisting of interactions between separate objects, individuals or groups, national states and other units that share their specific needs, interests, or functions; whereas the general economy only comprises the planetary whole and its equilibriums. The capitalist economy, which can only treat nature as a resource, is incompatible with the politics of generosity. Therefore, the reversal of ethics alone is not enough. According to Szeman, Bataille’s Copernican transformation of thinking and ethics from the restricted to the general “necessitates a politics of revolution rather than reform.”20 Bataille himself doesn’t really bring forward any explicit program or strategy for political change. His attitude is the one of an eccentric researcher, who does not have a project but suggests his radical hypothesis about the structure of the universe. I find this hypothesis decent enough to be introduced within our recent context.

#### The alternative is the general economy. Reject economic concentration in the individual that guarantees institutional deadlock and affirm socially nonproductive statecraft.

Nelson & Shelton 23 – Scott G. Nelson is an associate professor in the Department of Political Science. Joel T. Shelton is Associate Professor of Political Science & Policy Studies and Coordinator of the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) minor at Elon University.

“The Transgressive Economy” in *Statecraft and the Political Economy of Capitalism*. Springer Nature AG. 2023. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-15971-8

Social media is one of the most salient features of the emerging technological landscape, and as many commentators have noted, the implications for our understanding of human versus nonhuman are many and politically pressing (Bratton, 2016). Social media arouses cheers of an imminent liberation as well as cries of a looming technological doomsday in which new mechanisms of herding, crowd control, and coercion appear to be facilitating a worldwide turn to the far right (Kagan, 2019). Little if any social media activity is regulated by governments, and the firms providing these venues for social interaction do not appear interested (until quite recently) in monitoring and policing behaviors. All of this is now quite well known, and it may change as government regulators reckon with the new monopolistic companies and as concerns about the implications for public trust become more widely understood and, in democracies, get presented to lawmakers. Yet, what still appears unaccounted for is the fact that much of this activity is not designed for production in the classical sense. Considerable energy is given off in the generation of nonproductive expenditure in largely purposeless human and human-technological intercourse. Bataille’s chief concern was that the generation of social power would fall outside of any individual (not to mention government) purview, and the futures that societies would build would risk courting new forms of rule, control, oppression, and ultimately organized violence. For the craft of the state to succeed in countering these risks, it will have to come to terms with the forces and features of Bataille’s general economy, and introduce new vocabularies and analytics of rule capable of reckoning with heterogeneity and excess.

Governing in an Age of Excess

But with the subordination to increase, the being in question loses its autonomy; it subordinates itself to what it will be in the future, owing to the increase of its resources. In reality, the increase should be situated in relation to the moment in which it will resolve into a pure expenditure. (Bataille, 1991, p. 190)

Because so few of Bataille’s interpreters have been credentialed in Political Economy there has not been a systematic attempt to measure up the framework of the general economy in terms of the predominant assumptions held by thinkers in the field (certainly in North America). This is true even in the context of Economic Sociology and critical political economy, to say nothing of mainstream Economics. But there is growing evidence suggesting this situation could soon change. The limitations of the restrictive classical and neoclassical doctrines of political economy are now abundantly clear in light of contemporary dynamics (Stoekl, 2007). As researchers begin to direct their attention to the “sharing economy,” to the “gig economy,” the “algorithmic economy,” the “surveillance economy,” the “new energy and resource economy,” the “A-I and remote intelligence economy,” and the “sustainability economy,” a number of new questions are being placed on the agendas of theorists, educators, public policymakers, industry analysts, and even some political economists (Blythe, 2013). And while political, social, and even cultural aspects continue to be prioritized in analyses of new economic forces—related, for instance, to employment dynamics as economies speed their transition away from fossil fuels—too little attention is paid to the twin dynamics of transfiguration and transference in the context of governing, dynamics that are today so much in evidence as capitalism adapts to seismic technological shifts, as societies approach heretofore unrecognized limits of growth, as nationalist sentiments are aroused through propaganda, as citizens are galvanized in response to exacerbating inequalities and stagnating incomes, and as demands for higher quality education, health, child, and long-term care increase the pressure on existing social systems.

The climate crisis alone appears poised to challenge in fundamental ways the logic of market economics just as counter-globalization pressures re-emerge, producing institutional deadlock in the world’s most technologically advanced economies. It can safely be said that today “the economy” is infiltrating spheres of social life in ways not seen since the early 1970s. Capitalism is rapidly transfiguring politics along new lines within nations on the basis of cities and subnational regions (Moretti, 2013), and globally as energies are transferred into social movements and as new technologies are developed for the purposes of securing societies in the midst of new vulnerabilities. Not least among emerging political challenges are new subject and self-other relations (Brown, 2017) within the context of these spheres as well as poised to soon escape them, constituting wholly new life-processes that are founded on the basis of new efficiency standards required by the liberal creed (Polanyi, 2001). The ease with which these life-processes now expand outward in time and space should itself arouse anxiety and prompt more questioning.

Moreover, in recent years there has been considerable discussion in social and political theory about the de-politicization of many spheres of social, economic, and cultural life in a time of neoliberalism—from the family to the firm, from schools to civic organizations, and from sports to the media on to the suburbs and beyond. Such spheres of life are indeed opened up to new logics of political control once deemed nonor essentially un-political, bearing as they do on individual over collective pursuits, or reflecting proclivities to private capital or interests, or whatever whim of any number of far-fetched human activities (such as extreme sports, reality television, etc.). Bataille’s importance is evident in helping to account for the expansive, unnecessary (that is, non-useful) dynamics of expenditure that the field of Political Economy has yet to recognize as constitutive of politics and social life, and which dispose people to engage in nonproductive social and economic relations while finding some kind of religious inspiration projected out into the future in a growing number of everyday behaviors and actions (De Certeau, 2011). His point is not only that human activity constitutes expansive energy fields of nonproductive power, but that these activities are structured according to existing affirmations of the sacred and profane, the accepted and forbidden. These energy fields and their structured affirmations are properly the concern of statecraft.

### DA---1NC

Midterms DA---

#### Dems win now.

Smith 12/27 – Guardian's Washington DC bureau chief.

David Smith, December 27 2025, “Dragged down by an unpopular president, Republicans are bracing for a midterm trouncing,” The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/news/ng-interactive/2025/dec/27/trump-republicans-midterm-elections-approval-rating

But as 2025 draws to a close with Trump struggling to stay awake at meetings, the prevailing image is of a driver asleep at the wheel. Opinion polls suggest that Americans are turning against him. Republicans are heading for the exit ahead of congressional contests next November that look bleak for the president’s party.

“He came into office and, like a blitzkrieg, was violating laws and the constitution,” said Larry Jacobs, director of the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota. “The American political process is slow-moving and so he was able to do things that were extraordinary. “But this is a guy whose legacy may well be the political collapse of Republicans in this era. Put another way, rather than asking who is going to be the inheritor of the Trump mantle and the so-called Maga movement, we may be talking in a year or so about which candidates can escape the odious distinction of having been connected with Trump.” Emboldened by his political comeback in the 2024 election, Trump hit the ground running. On his first day in office he pardoned nearly everyone involved in the January 6 insurrection at the US Capitol and launched a radical expansion of executive power, a systematic retribution campaign against perceived adversaries, and a sweeping overhaul of domestic and foreign policy. A government-wide restructuring under the “department of government efficiency” (Doge) was led by the billionaire Elon Musk and resulted in mass federal layoffs and the dismantling of agencies such as USAID. But Trump and Musk fell out and Doge burned itself out. The president’s domestic agenda included a hardline immigration crackdown featuring mass deportations and the deployment of the national guard and other federal forces to US cities, often against the wishes of local authorities. The 1798 Alien Enemies Act was invoked to deport Venezuelans to a mega-jail in El Salvador. Wendy Schiller, a political scientist at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, said: “He promised to secure the border but the deportations have gone too far. City after city, community after community has expressed frustration and dismay at the tactics.” Trump had also promised to fix the economy but his signature legislation, the “one big, beautiful bill” – rebranded as the Working Families Tax Cut Act – will, critics say, transfer wealth from the poor to the rich and strips healthcare from millions of people. Meanwhile the president’s disruptive policy centred on aggressive tariffs that caused market volatility and fuelled higher prices for consumers. Schiller added: “The greatest self-inflicted wound that the president has brought on himself and the Republicans are the tariffs. In the first administration, they were primarily directed at China and you can make an argument about that. “In this administration they are so much broader and more sweeping and it’s showing in supply chains, in consumer purchasing, in pricing, in every corner of people’s lives. Whether it’s a supermarket or it’s holiday gifting or whatever it is, they’re feeling it.” Trump’s appointment of Robert F Kennedy Jr helped fan anti-vaccine sentiment, leading to a resurgence of preventable diseases and a politicisation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He withdrew the US from the Paris agreement and systematically dismantled climate science infrastructure. At his political zenith, Trump’s embrace of authoritarianism appeared unstoppable. He quickly fired 17 independent inspectors general in apparent violation of federal law. He ordered the justice department to investigate perceived enemies including James Comey, the former director of the FBI, and Letitia James, the New York attorney general. This administration has been governing in a way that is on a collision course with the constitution Skye Perryman of Democracy Forward The administration targeted law firms that represented adversaries, stripping contracts and security clearances to extract multimillion-dollar settlements. Billions in federal funding were frozen for universities including Harvard and Columbia, leveraging antisemitism and DEI policies to force changes in curricula and leadership. Trump also pursued an aggressive campaign against mainstream media, suing news organisations such as CBS/Paramount, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times, pushing the Federal Communications Commission to revoke broadcast licences and restricting access for some outlets while promoting “Maga media”. In 11 months he signed 225 executive orders, 56 memorandums and 114 proclamations. Many mirror proposals from the conservative Project 2025 policy document and have been met with significant legal challenges, with numerous actions deemed illegal and unconstitutional by federal judges. Skye Perryman, president and chief executive of Democracy Forward, a national-legal organisation that has filed numerous lawsuits against the administration, said: “This administration has been ruthlessly breaking the law, disregarding the protections that are provided through American law for people and communities. It has been governing in a way that is on a collision course with the constitution.” She gave examples including infringement of free speech, disregard for due process, an effort to replace civil servants with political loyalists, and a federal funding freeze that threatened food and nutritional assistance for 42 million Americans. But Perryman also finds hope in the way that people have responded. “The American people have been pushing back. There have been nearly 500 lawsuits filed in federal court over the course of these first 11 months of the administration. The administration is losing in court before judges that were appointed by Republicans, Democrats and President Trump himself.” One of the most unexpected developments of Trump’s second term is how much political time and capital he has invested in foreign policy. His relationships in the Middle East and cryptocurrency ventures prompted ethical concerns. His intention to accept a $400m luxury jet from Qatar for use as Air Force One drew rare bipartisan criticism as a “bribe”. Trump brokered a ceasefire and hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas but gave the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, an Oval Office shakedown while rolling out a red carpet for Russia’s Vladimir Putin in Alaska. He ordered military strikes on alleged drug-trafficking boats in the Caribbean, leading to allegations of potential war crimes. Henry Olsen, a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center thinktank in Washington, said: “The focus on foreign affairs has surprised me. It’s not just the ongoing question of Ukraine. This has been a first year that has been much more defined by what he’s doing overseas than what he’s doing at home and I did not expect that. “I also expected more of what we saw during the campaign, which was a Trump that didn’t use social media in an explosive way on a regular basis, and instead we’ve returned significantly to the first term, where the language and the surprising use of social media is a defining feature of his presidency. People didn’t like it in term one and then they seem not to like it in term two.” For months Trump appeared unassailable as the opposition Democratic party struggled to find its feet and protests appeared muted compared with his first term. But a demonstration known as No Kings staged in June to coincide with Trump’s 79th birthday and a rare military parade in Washington attracted 5 million people. This was followed by another No Kings protest in October, where the turnout of 7 million was said to be the biggest civic action in the US for more than half a century.

Democrats also appeared to regain their mojo. Against the backdrop of the longest government shutdown in history, the party stormed to victory after victory in elections for governor of New Jersey and Virginia, mayor of New York, and other offices. The central theme of their campaign was affordability as millions of Americans struggle to make ends meet.

Like Joe Biden before them, Republicans’ insistence that the economy is strong does not tally with many people’s daily experience at the supermarket. The president’s efforts to dismiss affordability as a “con job”, “hoax” and “scam” by the Democrats have rung hollow as he plans a $400m ballroom at the White House.

With the Jeffrey Epstein files also casting a long shadow, Trump appears increasingly out of touch. For years he travelled the country drawing big crowds to rollicking campaign rallies where he would meet local officials. This year he has held only seven rallies, focusing his travel instead on overseas trips and his own luxury golf courses. The Atlantic magazine described him as “the bubble-wrapped president”.

I would place the odds at 70% that Democrats are going to recapture the House in a massive tsunami

Patrick Gaspard of the Center for American Progress

Last month a poll by Gallup showed Trump’s job approval rating down to 36%, the lowest of his second term, while disapproval had risen to 60% (his all-time low was 34% in 2021, at the end of his first term after the January 6 attack on the US Capitol). Notably his approval rating was underwater on crime (43%), foreign affairs (41%), foreign trade (39%) and immigration (37%).

The polls suggest that groups who moved towards Trump in 2024 – including young voters and Latino voters – are now deserting him and returning to the Democratic fold, animated by jobs, inflation and healthcare.

Schiller of Brown University said: “This is getting into territory that is Biden numbers and the question is why. The president and his team have taken the signals from the voters on particular issues – for example, immigration and bringing manufacturing home where voters said, yes, we want a change in our policies – but they took it to the extreme. They overreached.

“America, at the end of the day, is not an extremist country. If you go too far left, voters are unhappy; if you go too far right, voters are unhappy. This has been true for quite some time so what we’re seeing is voters expressing a sense of frustration, trying to send a signal, at least to the Republican party if not to the president: we’re not happy with the direction you’re taking us.”

The omens for November 2026 are grim. History shows the party that holds the White House always tends to suffer losses in midterm elections. Democrats appear galvanised and determined to curb Trump’s power. Some Republicans are already deserting what they may fear is a sinking ship.

#### Major labor policy flips the midterms.

Gibson 24 – Politics reporter. Former POLITICO Fellow.

Brittany Gibson, Meredith Lee Hill, and Adam Cancryn, “‘Union Joe,’ Harris and Trump all made gains with unions — but not enough,” POLITICO, 11-01-2024, https://www.politico.com/news/2024/11/01/harris-trump-unions-elections-00186873

Ask union members, and there’s some caution about the future.

“Change is weird for everyone, and we have change coming upon us,” said Ray Marini, a leader of the local sprinkler fitters union hosting a packed event with Biden in northern Philadelphia on Friday, acknowledging some of the “nervous energy” that coursed through the labor movement after Harris took over the top of the ticket.

But Biden has made a hard push for his vice president, and Marini said he and many other union leaders in this crucial swing state have prioritized making the economic case in favor of Harris to their members. The rank-and-file attending Friday’s event pledged to vote for Harris, even if driven largely by their faith in Biden’s judgment.

Wayne Miller, the head of the sprinkler fitters union, was even more bullish: “She’s going to be absolutely fantastic, and she’s going to surprise a lot of people,” he said of Harris. “We win in Philadelphia. And we win because of the union.”

Still, union members in both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia question Harris, Trump and Biden’s labor records and commitment to them.

Despite Biden’s pro-labor appointments to the National Labor Relations Board, which oversees disputes between workers and employers, and his signing into law a bill that helped bailout distressed union pensions, some members weren’t convinced he was as pro-labor in office as he claimed. Harris was viewed with even more skepticism as a comparatively new party leader.

“I don’t think anyone is pro-union,” Karen, a 65-year-old retired teacher who did not want her last name used, told POLITICO after a retired electrician knocked on her door recently in the Penn Hills neighborhood of Pittsburgh. “It’s up to us. The workers have to make our voices heard.”

Harris, meanwhile, missed out on the endorsement of three unions that all endorsed Biden in 2020, and polling shows a continuation of working class voters trending toward Trump. Some Harris aides are livid over some of the union non-endorsements, privately saying they feel betrayed by key union leaders who didn’t have the “courage” to press their rank-and-file to support the candidate with the pro-labor record.

Harris’ recent campaign focus on courting Republicans and fundraising with wealthy donors has only brought more skepticism from some in the organized labor movement.

“All Democrats and all Republicans are not monolithic, right? There are people you can work with. There’s others that you know, they do one thing for you, and 40 years later, they’re still, you know, expecting to get a pat on the back for it, and that’s not how things operate,” said Kara Deniz, spokeswoman for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which opted to not endorse either presidential candidate.

Part of the Teamsters’ reason for not endorsing was a lack of commitments from Harris about supporting striking workers in an interview at the IBT office as well as rank-and-filing polling that favored Trump, Deniz said.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, who oversees about 60 unions and 13 million members, is running a door knocking program that aims to reach 5 million people in battleground states. Union members represent about 20 percent of voters in the blue wall states, she said, and at a recent press call she shared that of canvassed members, about 64 percent of members are backing Harris compared to 19 percent for Trump.

The United Auto Workers, which is also running a door knocking program to reach almost 300,000 workers and retirees, put its stats at 62 percent for Harris and 33 percent for Trump, according to a recent press release.

But a perceived lack of organized labor support from both presidential candidates also kept some unions on the sidelines this campaign, with them opting to not endorse anyone.

In addition to the Teamsters, the International Association of Fire Fighters and the International Longshoremen’s Association also held back endorsements. The longshoremen’s president, Harold Daggett, criticized Biden’s commitment to unions in a video interview ahead of his own union’s strike this October, which ended after about two days with a new tentative agreement.

“Where’s the president of the United States? He’s not fighting for us. He told in LA, he told the union, hurry up and get a contract. That’s the mentality they have,” Daggett said, referencing the West Coast’s contract strike in 2023.

Daggett and the firefighters union declined interview requests.

Despite the longtime union membership of Harris’ running mate, Tim Walz, he’s struggled to influence key union support — especially among the male-dominated industrial unions. Surprisingly, Harris campaign officials even have argued Walz wasn’t intimately involved in negotiations over key union endorsements after they fell apart. He’s also drawn backlash by publicly attacking some union leaders as overtly political operators.

But even some union members who back Harris have privately admitted that their colleagues’ concerns about her track record are valid, especially on border policy and sky-rocketing everyday costs.

One senior union official, who recounted an internal fight among members about whether to endorse Harris, said fellow members brought up what they argued were Harris’ failures on immigration and inflation as reasons not to back her.

“Some of these things may have happened on her watch. Maybe some things in hindsight might have [been] done different,” said the union official, who was granted anonymity to discuss the private conversations. “But also, a lot of really good things have happened under the Biden-Harris administration.”

“You can’t hang that shit around her neck without giving her the accolades for where this country has turned around,” the union official added.

A Harris official, however, said there’s really no comparison between the vice president’s record and Trump’s and mentioned the former president appointing “union busters” to the National Labor Relations Board, among other things.

“Biden and Harris saved billions in Teamsters union pensions, and Trump threatened to withhold emergency funds for union firefighters risking their lives in wildfires,” the official said.

But other Harris supporters in the rank-and-file have concerns about the Biden-Harris administration’s record.

“When [Biden] first got in, he disappointed me with the pipeline,” said Mark Provenza, a retired letter carrier, referring to the Keystone XL Pipeline. “You’re supposed to be the pro-union guy.”

Provenza, who is voting for Harris, also said he was “disappointed” that Biden didn’t support the railway workers who tried to go on strike in 2022 but were prevented by the Railway Labor Act. He expects Harris will approach labor the same way as Biden.

The White House did not respond to requests for comment.

Union members on canvases in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia tried to make the case that Harris, like Biden, would protect member benefits and keep unions strong. But undecided voters from union households weren’t immediately convinced. Some said they wouldn’t be voting at all.

“We know that unions are basically on the line,” Shuler said in an interview at the Allegheny-Fayette County Central Labor Council office ahead of one canvas. “[It’s] whether there’s a future with unions where workers can collectively bargain and fight for better wages or, as we know, in Project 2025 the elimination of public sector unions and things like overtime and safety and health protections.”

The Trump campaign rejected the affiliation with Project 2025 and said no policy is official unless it comes directly from Trump.

“American laborers and unions support President Trump because they have paid the price for Kamala’s failed economic policies over the past four years,” Karoline Leavitt, the Trump campaign’s national press secretary, said in a statement.

Dino Guastella, a Teamster from Philadelphia whose local has endorsed Harris, believes Harris should talk more about successes from the Biden Administration to make her case to union members and working class voters.

“I think it’s a mistake. She should be taking credit for the infrastructure bill, the CHIPS Act, the Inflation Reduction Act,” Guastella said while tabling for Harris outside of the UPS Warehouse. “Those all brought good blue collar jobs.” He also mentioned that when I-95 collapsed, Biden’s bills helped fix it in record time.

But in his view, it’s also hard to sway any voters weeks from Election Day — even when talking about policy.

#### Democratic win constrains nuclear testing.

Park et al. 25 – Senior Scientist at the Global Security Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, PhD in Geological Sciences  
Sulgiye Park; Jennifer Knox, Research and Policy Analyst with the Global Security Program at UCS; Dylan Spaulding, “Why it would be a bad idea for the Trump administration to conduct a "rapid" nuclear test,” February 18th, 2025, https://thebulletin.org/2025/02/why-it-would-be-a-bad-idea-for-the-trump-administration-to-conduct-a-rapid-nuclear-test/

If Trump initiated this two-to-three-year process at the beginning of his term, he would be lucky to see that process concluded without Congress intervening to stop it. Right now, Republicans hold a majority in the House and the Senate, but the margins are razor-thin. While most Republicans are likely to support the president’s agenda, others may be wary of public backlash. Nuclear testing is especially unpopular in Nevada, a swing state that Trump narrowly won in 2024. Recent polling in Nevada shows that a majority of Democrat, Republican, and unaffiliated voters oppose a resumption of testing.[1]

Even if Trump manages to keep his party in line, he has two years before the midterm elections, in which the president’s party historically loses seats. This would give Democrats the opportunity to disrupt testing preparations, such as when they introduced an amendment to the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act to block funding for any explosive nuclear testing.

#### That causes extinction.

UCS 24 – Union of Concerned Scientists  
“What is Nuclear Testing?,” July 11th, 2023, https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/what-nuclear-testing

A resumption of nuclear testing would increase the risk of nuclear war.

Nuclear testing raises the perceived importance of nuclear weapons to security, increases the risk of conflict between countries with nuclear weapons, and allows countries to develop new types of nuclear weapons. Nuclear testing would also damage already fragile international nuclear arms control efforts, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. If these international agreements fail, more countries might seek nuclear weapons for themselves.

Renewed nuclear testing would also be a moral injustice to frontline communities that are still fighting to clean contaminated land and get compensation for the ongoing health consequences of radiation exposure. People are still dying because of nuclear tests conducted decades ago.

Future nuclear tests would almost certainly be conducted at underground test sites, which present less risk of public exposure because they are designed to contain radioactive material rather than release it freely into the atmosphere. However, underground tests can and have resulted in contamination of land and underground water. Occasionally, underground tests have also resulted in local and even widespread contamination through the accidental leakage of radionuclides into the air from the surrounding rock.

## Advantage 1

### Things Fine Now---1NC

#### 1. CBR’s irrelevant. Minimal impact on the federal workforce.

Fowler 25 – Reporter, NPR.

Stephen Fowler, Shannon Bond, and Jenna McLaughlin, “Federal agencies are rehiring workers and spending more after DOGE’s push to cut,” OPB, 10-01-2025, https://www.opb.org/article/2025/10/01/doge-cuts-to-federal-government-staffing-and-spending-are-being-undone/

The so-called Department of Government Efficiency effort has failed to deliver on its outsized promises to cut costs and increase efficiency, NPR’s latest analysis of federal data finds.

Agencies ordered to drastically slash their workforces over the last eight months are now hiring back hundreds of workers, as they struggle to perform basic operations or carry out some of President Trump’s top policy priorities.

Despite DOGE’s promise that canceling contracts and terminating leases would help reverse the trend of the government spending more money than it brings in, the most recent Treasury data shows an increase in expenditures by hundreds of billions of dollars more than the year before. The bulk of that spending goes to debt service, national defense and entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare.

[Figure omitted]

When it first launched this year, NPR found DOGE’s savings and efficiency tracker to be riddled with factual errors, overstatements and unverifiable claims. As a new fiscal year begins, that remains true today.

White House assistant press secretary Liz Huston said in a statement to NPR that Trump has been “given a clear mandate to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse across the federal government, and he is delivering on that commitment.”

“President Trump’s policies, moreover, have made the federal government more efficiently work for the American people again — deporting illegal alien criminals, predicting natural disasters, reducing health outbreaks, and restoring law and order in our cities,” Huston added.

The White House declined to answer NPR’s questions about rehiring workers, increasing federal spending and DOGE data errors.

The ad-hoc DOGE initiative’s controversial and often haphazard insertion into the federal government is now further complicated by a government shutdown that began Wednesday.

The White House has floated using the budget impasse as an opportunity to enact more widespread job cuts that would circumvent Congress’ role in appropriations — and used taxpayer funds to send partisan messages to federal workers ahead of the shutdown.

After deep cuts, some agencies are rehiring — sort of

The Office of Personnel Management estimates the federal government could see about 1 in 8 civilian workers gone by the end of the year, or about 300,000 employees out of 2.4 million — most of them voluntary. More than 150,000 took the Trump administration’s “Fork in the Road” buyout offer.

By comparison, the federal government has typically shed 6% to 8% of its total workforce annually in recent years.

A more precise accounting of how many federal workers have already left through voluntary buyouts, retirements and job cuts is difficult because the government’s own data is compiled and published on a several-month delay.

But amid those departures, some agencies have sought to bring people back — a pattern that has picked up in recent weeks ahead of the end of the fiscal year.

Hundreds of employees whose jobs had been cut or who had taken the “Fork” deferred resignation deal, which sent them home from work but kept them on the federal payroll through the end of the fiscal year, are now being offered their jobs back, according to multiple federal workers who requested anonymity because they fear reprisal from the Trump administration for speaking publicly.

#### Union density was only 25%.

AFGE 24 – Federal union.

AFGE, “Union Membership in Federal Sector Went Up in 2023,” 01-29-2024, https://www.afge.org/article/union-membership-in-federal-sector-went-up-in-2023/

According to new numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), more federal workers joined unions last year. Federal density in 2023 was 25.1%, up from 24.4% in 2022.

The number of union members in the federal sector also went up 61,000 – from 970,000 in 2022 to 1,032,000 in 2023, which is up net by 60,000 since 2019.

Total federal employment was up 127,000 the last year, meaning about one of every two new federal employees is joining a union.

### No Solve---1NC

#### 3. Aff starts at zero.

#### Fed workers can’t negotiate over pay, benefits, hiring, or firing. Those are set by statute.

AFGE 25 – American Federation of Government Employees.

“AFGE Will Challenge Trump’s Illegal Directive Outlawing Federal Unions,” AFGE, 03-31-2025, https://www.afge.org/article/afge-will-challenge-trumps-illegal-directive-outlawing-federal-unions/

Federal unions cannot negotiate over pay, benefits, or hiring/firing decisions. Unlike private-sector unions, federal unions are limited to bargaining over conditions of employment – not wages, benefits, or classifications, which are set by law and Congress.

#### They’re legally barred from striking, so they’ve got zero leverage to extract concessions.

D’Agostino 19 – Founding Partner, Federal Practice Group. More than a decade of experience in employment law and has represented clients in matters before the EEOC, MSPB, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal and D.C. and 4th Circuits and the U.S. Court of Federal Claims

Debra D’Agostino, “Why Feds Don’t Strike,” Government Executive, 01-25-2019, https://www.govexec.com/management/2019/01/why-feds-dont-strike/154438/

It’s the law. Specifically, 5 U.S.C. §7311, specifies that federal employees may not participate in a strike, assert the right to strike, or even belong to a union that “asserts the right to strike against the government of the United States.” Driving the point home, 18 U.S.C. §1918 makes it a felony to strike against the United States or belong to a union that asserts the right to strike against the United States. What’s more, the Office of Personnel Management can declare an individual who participates in a strike unsuitable for federal employment. Forever.

Most famously, almost 40 years ago in 1981, about 13,000 air-traffic controllers went on strike after negotiations over pay and schedules broke down between the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization and the Federal Aviation Administration. President Reagan declared the strike a “peril to national safety” and ordered the air-traffic controllers back to work. In the end, President Reagan fired 11,000 controllers and barred them from ever working for the federal government again. Almost 40 years later, most federal employees are still familiar with how that strike played out, which is one reason Border Patrol Agents, Customs and Border Protection Officers, Secret Service Agents, TSA Officers, and others reported for duty, many working grueling overtime shifts, without pay.

#### It’s too late. Everyone’s left DC, taken private sector jobs, buyouts, or retirements.

Kornfield 25 – Staff writer, Washington Post. Two-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

Meryl Kornfield and Hannah Natanson, “Historic wave of retirements is putting huge strains on the government,” The Washington Post, 10-13-2025, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/10/13/retirements-buyouts-federal-government-trump/

A historic wave of retirements and other departures has swept through the federal workforce in recent months, putting enormous strain on agencies as they cope with a new government shutdown and administration layoffs.

This mass exodus — unprecedented in its scale — includes 154,000 federal employees who accepted buyout offers and were largely removed from the payroll as of the end of last month. Some of those are among nearly 105,000 employees who took regular retirement during the fiscal year that ended in September, an 18 percent surge from the previous year.

Tens of thousands of the cases are still awaiting processing, creating a crisis for already understaffed human resources offices across the government and the Office of Personnel Management.

With a significantly reduced workforce of its own, OPM has a growing backlog and worsening wait times, raising alarms about the government’s ability to smoothly handle this unprecedented personnel shift, according to documents and interviews with HR representatives and departed federal workers.

Complicating the efforts, the government shutdown that began on Oct. 1 has furloughed some workers who handle paperwork and payroll, meaning the departing employees who would be receiving their documentation and final annuity payments around this time are experiencing further delays, according to documents and workers.

OPM Director Scott Kupor said in an interview with The Washington Post that he remains optimistic about his agency’s ability to get through the backlog. He said that OPM is in touch with other agencies about how to streamline the process and that HR workers at other agencies will be detailed to his office to help with the workload.

“I’m excited about the work we’re doing, but the reality is, as you know, is there is a big volume that’s coming in a short period of time, and so we’re going to have to do everything we can to make sure that we continue to invest in those efforts that are going to significantly improve the efficiency of the process,” Kupor said.

The agency said it is processing more than 35,000 retirements. In the last fiscal year, OPM processed 104,800 immediate retirement cases, compared with 88,608 the year prior.

#### RIFs swamp and the plan doesn't reverse past firing!

Alms 25 – Senior Correspondent, NextGov.

Natalie Alms, “How Trump’s OPM director wants to attract tech talent after months of workforce cuts,” NextGov, 10-07-2025, https://www.nextgov.com/people/2025/10/how-trumps-opm-director-wants-attract-tech-talent-after-months-workforce-cuts/408658/

A federal judge has since found that the OPM illegally required mass firing of probationary federal employees, although they didn’t require the government to give fired feds their jobs back.

#### Regulation and funding cuts make workers irrelevant.

Pozen and Chertoff 25 – Betts Professor of Law and Director of the Center for Constitutional Governance at Columbia Law School, former Attorney Advisor at the Department of Justice, J.D. from Yale Law School, MPhil from the University of Cambridge; Professor of Law at Georgetown University, J.D. from Yale Law School.

Jessica Bulman-Pozen and Emily Chertoff, “The Administrative State’s Two Faces,” Lawfare, 02-24-2025, https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/the-administrative-state-s-two-faces

In many ways, the first month of the second Trump administration has been shocking. The President has quickly and emphatically demonstrated his contempt for the Constitution, for Congress and the courts, and for federal workers and foreign allies alike. But if some of the particulars have come as surprises, the basic outlines of the administration’s plan to decimate the regulatory and service-providing portions of government while consolidating and building executive enforcement capacity were long evident—and long preceded Trump’s presidency.

Shortly after his election, Trump announced that Elon Musk would “pave the way for my Administration to dismantle Government Bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures, and restructure Federal Agencies.” The America First Policy Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and Project 2025 joined the call for “dismantling the administrative state.” Over the last month, Musk and his acolytes have indeed rampaged through many federal agencies, firing employees and slashing domestic spending and foreign aid. Trump’s own flood of executive orders targets independent agencies and civil servants, among others.

At the same time as it strikes at regulatory agencies, the Trump administration has been arrogating agency resources for a mass deportation plan that Stephen Miller calls “an undertaking every bit as . . . ambitious as building the Panama Canal.” Even as it attempts to purge FBI agents seen as insufficiently loyal, the administration has detailed FBI and DEA officers and U.S. Marshals to interior enforcement work. It has used military planes for removals and the Guantanamo military base for immigration detention, and it is actively “ramping up plans to detain undocumented immigrants at military sites across the United States.” As they look on, the very same actors calling to tame the administrative state argue for expanding U.S. military capacity, increasing the number and authority of ICE officers, and devolving power to law enforcement field offices.

Recent Supreme Court decisions have greased the wheels of this agenda, undermining agency regulation while championing executive enforcement. This past summer, the Court overruled Chevron. It limited the reach of agency adjudication. It eased challenges to agency rules based on cherry-picked comments in the record and allowed suits many years after a rule’s promulgation. The Court has also been developing an appointment and removal doctrine that insists on presidential control, and it has begun to question long-standing principles concerning congressional delegation of authority to agencies. Despite this anti-administrative turn, however, many agencies have grown more powerful, and less constrained, than ever. Law enforcement, corrections, and intelligence agencies’ work has gone untouched by both the Supreme Court’s holdings and political calls to dismantle the administrative state.

#### Courts outweigh.

Trujillo and Dichio 25 – Research Director of the Wason Center for Civic Leadership at Christopher Newport University, PhD and M.A. in Political Science from Michigan State University; Professor of Political Science at the University of Utah, PhD in Government from Cornell University.

Rebecca Bromley-Trujillo and Michael Dichio, “The State of American Federalism 2024–2025: Resisting and Reinforcing the Rise of the Transactional Presidency,” Publius, 07-22-2025, https://academic.oup.com/publius/article/55/3/415/8211977

Some of the Court’s rulings this past term had more indirect effects on federalism while also having profound consequences for the administrative presidency. In particular, the Supreme Court’s challenge of the administrative state might undermine the administrative presidency by limiting the scope of bureaucratic agency autonomy, as in the case of Loper Bright. Since Trump seeks to weaken and dismantle the administrative state, Loper Bright and the Court’s challenge to the administrative state has actually aligned with Trump’s bureaucratic retrenchment efforts, at least for now. Loper Bright overturned the judicial deference provided to bureaucratic agencies; it held that judges no longer must defer to agency officials when interpreting ambiguous federal statutes, overturning the “Chevron deference” doctrine. In this way, Loper Bright shifts power from the executive branch to the judicial branch, as presented in last year’s Annual Review. Thus, with a Supreme Court supportive of executive power (but skeptical of the administrative state) coupled with the rise of a more transactional presidency, American intergovernmental relations remain in an uncertain transition. With these changes, states can potentially deepen their divergence as they challenge federal administrative regulations in a Supreme Court more open to questioning the administrative state.

Other administrative state rulings this term may also weaken federal agency power. For example, Corner Post, Inc. v. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System held that federal rules and regulations are open to challenge under the Administrative Procedure Act, expanding the time frame to sue federal agencies. Indeed, the dissenting opinion from Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson claimed that combined with the Court’s decision in Loper-Brown, Corner Post would create a “tsunami of lawsuits,” which could “devastate the function of the federal government” (Howe 2024). Moreover, the Court concluded that Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) civil enforcement proceedings must proceed in an Article III court before a jury in SEC v. Jarkesy. The 6-3 win for the regulated parties suggests that the environment is favorable for plaintiffs challenging agency rulemaking and adjudication in general.

#### Unions will be pro-Trump.

Kagan 25 – Author of The Fall and Rise and Fall of NYC’s TWU Local 100, 1975–2009

Marc Kagan, “What Trump’s Decertification of Federal Employee Unions Means,” Jacobin, 08.14.2025, https://jacobin.com/2025/08/trump-decertification-federal-employee-unions

Talk, but No Walk, From Unions

Across the labor movement, some major unions were completely silent about Trump’s declaration; others issued statements claiming that they were upset but managed to avoid using the word “Trump,” presumably to give them the leeway to kiss the ring later. The most common response was to complain, even to use the word “fight,” but then suggest either no action whatsoever or the tamest ones imaginable — like the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) did in suggesting people call Congress.

### Science Dead---1NC

#### U.S. scientific expertise is permanently dead. Brain drain’s irreversible.

Newton 25 – Journalist at The Debrief, Founder of VOCAB Communications.

Chrissy Newton, “Brain Drain: How Trump’s Second Term Is Reshaping the Future of U.S. Science,” The Debrief, 04-17-2025, https://thedebrief.org/brain-drain-how-trumps-second-term-is-reshaping-the-future-of-u-s-science/

“The U.S. was a beacon of light for science research, attracting the best students from all over the world for their science education and funding the best research labs in many fields,” the research fellow said. “The recent political changes are gutting the present and future of scientific research in the US in every field. Building a career in science research in the US was always challenging, but it now seems pretty impossible for early career researchers.”

The postdoctoral researcher explained how this could affect the U.S. scientific future, citing the “gut-wrenching funding cuts to universities, research funding agencies, and general ideological attacks on universities trying to bring them down and force them to close shop.”

“The damage from the past three months alone will take decades to recover for science in the US, and no early career researcher can afford to wait a decade to start their career,” they said. “The US is losing a generation of scientists who either have to flee abroad to keep doing their research, or have to give up altogether on science.”

With many scientists considering leaving the U.S., the resulting “brain drain” could potentially also evolve into a national security concern.

America’s Looming “Brain Drain”

“While I fully appreciate the need for safeguarding technologies, the reported potential 75% scientist exodus is both a scientific catastrophe and a critical national security threat,” said Daniel Ragsdale, Ph.D., former Deputy Assistant Director for Workforce and Education within the White House Office of the National Cyber Director (ONCD) and now Chief Technology Officer at Full Spectrum Cyber Solutions, in an email to The Debrief.

### CBAs Cancelled---1NC

#### The HHS already terminated it’s contracts. No snapback.

Freidman 25 – Reporter, FNN.

Drew Freidman, “Here are the agencies that have canceled collective bargaining so far,” Federal News Network, 08-21-2025, https://federalnewsnetwork.com/unions/2025/08/draft-here-are-the-agencies-that-have-canceled-collective-bargaining-so-far/

Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services terminated its contracts with federal unions on Aug. 22, and canceled employees’ eligibility for representation. The agency’s move impacts about half a dozen HHS components, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration.

### CDC Fails---1NC

#### CDC is structurally doomed.

Miller and Mills 23 – Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University; Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Brian Miller and M. Anthony Mills, “Why the CDC Failed Its Covid-19 Test,” National Review, 11-05-2023, https://www.nationalreview.com/2023/11/why-the-cdc-failed-its-covid-19-test/.

The Covid-19 pandemic was a disaster. Over a million Americans died — many in isolation in hospitals and nursing homes, far from their friends and family — and millions more became seriously sick, lost their jobs, or felt the effects of widespread economic and social disruption. Students suffered irreversible learning losses, with many exiting the public-school system altogether. Patients delayed or were denied health care unrelated to Covid-19, from cancer treatment to routine vaccination. Mental-health issues and domestic abuse spiked.

Federal, state, and local authorities frequently made confusing or contradictory policy decisions, leaving Americans bewildered and frustrated. In many places, churches and schools shuttered while bars and liquor stores remained open. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was among the most prominent federal institutions at the center of this maelstrom. One of the agency’s key functions during the pandemic — and a source of much controversy — was to provide public-health guidance: advice to institutions and individuals about how to behave in response to the threat of a novel coronavirus.

CDC guidance itself isn’t new — the agency has been issuing public-health guidelines and warnings for years — but it took on a new and outsized role during the pandemic. Americans learned the hard way that the CDC is not just a public-health agency; it is part of the administrative state, embedded in a powerful federal bureaucracy with considerable influence over economic and social life. Yet the CDC’s policy guidance is peculiar, neither strictly regulatory nor simply advisory. And the processes and evidence the CDC uses to make such consequential decisions are, compared with those of other administrative agencies, unusually opaque.

Recent survey data from the American Enterprise Institute’s Survey Center on American Life show a dramatic decline in public trust in scientific and medical expertise from before the pandemic to today. It may take years for the public-health community — and the CDC, in particular — to recover. As a first step toward regaining its legitimacy, the CDC should consider reforming its public-health guidance — not only to help it make better decisions, but also to increase the transparency and accountability of its decision-making process.

To be trustworthy, an institution must be capable of reliably delivering the services the public demands from it. Moreover, the process by which public demand is met must be recognized as legitimate — the institution must carry out its functions in ways that are perceived as fair and reasonable. In the case of the CDC, that means not only promoting information and policies that protect public health, but also making policy decisions in accordance with agreed upon and publicly recognizable procedures, with the possibility of recourse when things go awry.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the CDC often failed on both counts, hampering its own ability to implement effective policies and contributing to the erosion of public trust in scientific and medical expertise.

Where, exactly, did the CDC go astray? In some cases, especially very early in the pandemic, the CDC — like all public authorities — simply had to make judgment calls under conditions of radical uncertainty with no good options. In other instances, the agency made fateful mistakes — such as its botched rollout of diagnostic tests — which hampered our initial pandemic response. In still other cases, the agency arguably exceeded its statutory authority, as when it unilaterally issued an eviction-moratorium order after Congress failed to reach an agreement on the issue. (The order was later struck down by the Supreme Court.)

Many of the CDC’s most controversial decisions concerned the agency’s public-health guidelines. Making policy recommendations to protect public health is a core part of the CDC’s mission. During the pandemic, such recommendations — concerning whether and how to reopen schools or when to vaccinate which groups against Covid-19 — became a central feature of our public and private lives. Too often, these guidelines were ambiguous, confusing, or altogether wrong-headed.

Criticism came from various quarters. For instance, experts now agree that the CDC was far too slow in accepting the role of aerosols in transmitting the virus. And of course there was the infamous flip-flopping on masks, not to mention the obfuscatory justifications that followed. During the Omicron wave, critics from the left accused the agency of caving to practical and political pressures to return to business as usual when it abruptly halved isolation and quarantine times. More recently, congressional Republicans have charged that CDC guidance on school re-openings was unduly influenced by teachers’ unions.

These mistakes weren’t all equally misguided, but they contributed to the public perception that the CDC’s decision-making process was in some way unreliable, ineffective, or improper — in other words, influenced by non-scientific factors. In the extreme, the CDC stands accused of issuing diktats without the input of a broad enough array of stakeholders or public accountability. This is a problem of legitimacy, not just policy.

Yet it is a peculiar kind of legitimacy crisis. On one level, CDC guidelines are just that: guidelines, which institutions or individuals are encouraged but not required to follow. In principle, this allows for flexibility and adaptation — virtues when it comes to translating rapidly changing policy advice into action in such a large and diverse country as ours. It also means that the CDC is not entrusted with coercive power over the vast array of issues its guidance touches on.

Indeed, many controversial pandemic policies, such as school closures and mask mandates, were implemented by state, local, and municipal authorities — not the CDC. The fact that CDC guidelines are technically voluntary is partly why there was so much variation in whether, when, and how they were adopted. It is also why the CDC’s defenders are not entirely wrong when they remind its critics on Capitol Hill that school closures, for instance, were in the hands of state and local authorities. At the same time, to characterize CDC public-health guidance during the pandemic as mere advice is highly misleading.

Unlike a lot of expert advice given to government authorities, CDC guidelines are public-facing but not obviously publicly accountable. Especially under pandemic conditions, the recommendations are — and are meant to be — considered and adopted, frequently without modification or even second thought, by a wide array of local, national, public, and private institutions, from Army bases and Amazon warehouses to your local school board and youth swim team. During the pandemic, CDC guidelines also came to shape and constrain individual behavior in a way and to a degree that most regulatory agencies could only dream of, influencing everything from whether to wear what kind of masks under what circumstances to how many feet to stand apart from strangers to how long to isolate at home after infection or exposure.

In effect, the CDC’s policy recommendations — though they do not carry the force of law — were often treated as binding in practice. To flout them in certain circles was almost tantamount to transgression — the violation of a taboo. The nebulous but nevertheless real effect of the CDC’s guidance is a reminder that political power is not always reducible to the coercive power of the law. What does democratic accountability mean under such circumstances?

### Pandemic Response Dead---1NC

#### RFK, Jr.’s cancellation of mRNA vaccines terminally thumps pandemics impact AND proves that fed unions won’t translate to good agency decisions.

Stein 25 – Senior Editor at NPR’s Science Desk, former Science Editor at The Washington Post.

Rob Stein, “Public health experts dismayed by RFK Jr.'s defunding of mRNA vaccine research,” 08-06-2025, https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2025/08/06/nx-s1-5493544/rfk-defunding-mrna-vaccine-research

The Trump administration is canceling almost $500 million in contracts to develop mRNA vaccines to protect the U.S. against future viral threats. The move thrilled critics of the technology but horrified many public health and biosecurity experts.

The federal Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), which oversees the nation's defenses against biological attacks, is terminating 22 contracts with university researchers and private companies to develop new uses for the mRNA technology, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced Tuesday.

The mRNA technology was used by the first Trump administration to create the most commonly used COVID-19 vaccines, which are widely considered a medical triumph that safely and effectively saved millions of lives. But vaccine mandates during the pandemic sowed fierce antipathy toward the technology, leading to widespread public opposition.

"Let me be absolutely clear: HHS supports safe, effective vaccines for every American who wants them," Kennedy said in a video explaining the decision. "That's why we're moving beyond the limitations of mRNA vaccines for respiratory viruses and investing in better solutions."

The announcement dismayed many who study infectious disease.

"This may be the most dangerous public health judgment that I've seen in my 50 years in this business," says Michael Osterholm, who runs the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota. "It is baseless, and we will pay a tremendous price in terms of illnesses and deaths. I'm extremely worried about it."

But the decision was welcomed by vaccine critics like the group Children's Health Defense, which Kennedy himself founded.

"While we believe the mRNA vaccines should be taken off the market, the announcement is a positive move towards protecting public health," said Mary Holland, the group's president and CEO, in a statement.

Jennifer Nuzzo strongly disagrees. She runs the Brown University School of Public Health's Pandemic Center and says the move could erode preparedness for future pandemics.

"This is a profoundly disappointing development," she says. "When there's the next pandemic, we're going to be caught flat-footed. It absolutely leaves the country vulnerable."

### !D---Fungal Pathogens---1NC

#### No fungal pathogens impact.

Pappas and Vrioni 24 – Ph.D., M.D., Head, Institute of Continuing Medical Education of Ioannina; Ph.D., M.D., Professor, Department of Microbiology, Medical School, University of Athens.

Georgios Pappas and Georgia Vrioni, “The Last of Us and the Question of a Fungal Pandemic in Real Life,” Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal, Volume 30, No. 3, March 2024, https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/30/3/23-0684\_article

Fortunately, fungi are relatively slow mutators. The process of species-jumping and host adaptation, such as in the case of Ophiocordyceps unilateralis (the prototype for the pathogen in The Last of Us), which adapted from beetle-infecting species to ant fungal pathogen (14), is time consuming and would not be expected to occur over just a few years.

Cordyceps species are ubiquitous: >100 have been described, they are species-specific, and >35 of them perform “mind control” in their hosts. The Cordyceps name is derived both from Ancient Greek and Latin: κορδύλη means truncheon and ceps means head. O. unilateralis, upon infecting an ant, modifies the host’s behavior, leading the ant to move to a specific tree-branch height before it dies; the fungus then destroys the host body and sheds fungal spores (from an ideal height) for further fungal dissemination in the environment.

No vertebrate Cordyceps hosts exist, and an evolutionary path leading there would probably require tens of thousands of years. Other brain-modifying or brain-occupying pathogens do exist, however, such as rabies virus, perhaps the most typical. Human behavior can be modified by pathogens to enable their spread in simpler ways: common cold viruses induce coughing and sneezing, essentially enhancing their own transmission, and similarly, gastrointestinal pathogens change human bowel habits and enable them to spread through diarrhea (15). Further focusing on neural involvement, primary amoebic meningoencephalitis, caused by Naegleria fowleri, might be a more accurate example of a brain-eating pathogen. Bornavirus has in the past been considered a cause of psychiatric disorders (an outcome of brain modification), and the role of toxoplasmosis in the future development of schizophrenia has also been evaluated. Numerous other pathogens can manifest through chronic central nervous system involvement and neuropsychiatric symptomatology, including the fungi Cryptococcus neoformans.

The extraordinary success of The Last of Us has implications, because all depictions of epidemics and infection in film and television can affect public perceptions of infectious diseases and outbreaks (16,17). The video game itself was partly successful because it described a critical dystopia (18) but one that included utopian foci that signify hope and resistance (in contrast to classical dystopias) and act as a pathway to catharsis, an escape from the doom, for the player and, subsequently, the viewer. In addition, the game was scripted with valid scientific details and an openness to moral issues (19): the enemies were not only the infected persons who had become zombies. The Federal Disaster Response Agency was also an enemy, because it represented a totalitarian force that had little to do with public health and protection (admittedly, this is a television show betting on horror and serves as a worst-case scenario and pessimistic study in social psychology). But surviving humans also, at times, became enemies out of desperation or vile evolution (e.g., the Raiders, survivor gangs attacking other uninfected humans for food and supplies). Even the Fireflies, the citizen group fighting the totalitarian state, could be considered an enemy because their mission includes killing the immune child to use her brain to prepare a vaccine. As Erik English recently stated (20), sacrificing a child for the greater societal good represents a broken social contract.

The series is ambitious in its scientific statements to the extent that they align with a compelling narrative. Thus, whereas major scientific issues such as global warming, pandemics, and accelerated mutation and adaptation of pathogens are discussed (things that many viewers with a casual understanding of science will recognize as potential threats even if they do not understand the pathology of fungi), certain details might succumb to the needs of the narrative. The series begins with a televised expert panel discussion in the late 1960s; an expert explains that although humanity has been at constant war with epidemic- and pandemic-causing viruses and bacteria, that war is, eventually, always won, despite casualties and lost battles. However, the same would not be certain if a fungal enemy emerged because of climate change, the expert warns.

Fast forward to the opening of the second episode, which narrates the initial outbreak in Indonesia, describing how the epidemic started in a grain/flour factory, initially infecting persons in contact with infected products but then rapidly disseminating through person-to-person transmission worldwide. This point is where the need of the show runners to impress the viewer diverts from scientific reasoning: apart from the improbably fast dissemination of the nonairborne pathogen worldwide, the series presents an expert Indonesian mycologist who states, when asked what should be done about the outbreak, “Bomb Jakarta,” an awe-inducing statement. Bombing was implied as a means of outbreak containment in the 1995 film Outbreak, considered to be one of the most accurate on-screen depictions of an outbreak (16), but in that scenario, at least, the army proposed it, whereas here it is a scientist’s proposal. One could argue that if Jakarta were bombed in this hypothetical scenario, humanity could have been spared from the apocalypse. However, this statement immediately renders the scientific community useless, possibly indirectly weakening the public’s trust in science itself (or reflecting public worries about the ability of science to respond adequately). Similarly, the fact that the human response to the pandemic eventually led to a totalitarian state (complete with quarantine zones and death penalties) might reflect the audience’s actual fears, particularly in the context of an actual pandemic, in which necessary initial lifesaving measures (e.g., lockdowns) have been vilified by merchants of disinformation. (One could counter-argue that certain approaches to viral containment in China were, or have been presented in the world media as, dystopic). The choice of Jakarta as the origin of the pandemic might feed inaccurate stereotypes that link emerging infectious diseases specifically with the developing world, but southeast Asia has no relevant outbreak history of emerging fungal infections and would not be considered a fungal hot spot. Jakarta could be considered a megacity, however, and as such could contain areas with hygienic challenges that could favor early infection dissemination.

The Last of Us is not the first work of art depicting a postapocalyptic world caused by a Cordyceps species adapted to humans. The 2016 film The Girl With All The Gifts, based on the Mike Carey book of the same title, imagines a world where the pathogen achieves equilibrium with its hosts, resulting in a society that breeds intelligent zombie children (“They had to live with the pathogen, endemicity was unavoidable” echoes the excuses used for our actual pandemic response fatigue). The initial depiction of a human-infecting Cordyceps outbreak, though, was in 2011, in the Fox television series Fringe, in an episode titled Alone in the World. In that episode, a variant of the fungus with the capacity for hyper-accelerated growth and nutrition absorption formed an extended neural network and was eventually contained with a specifically developed toxin (after initial partially successful ultraviolet light attempts).

Eventually, is a fungal pandemic a plausible scenario? Fungi are not included in the World Health Organization prioritization criteria for potential biologic weapon development and use, and other prioritization scores for biologic weapons (21) would yield a low score for fungi. There is no history of rogue research on fungal weaponization; in addition, a narrow spectrum of the population would be vulnerable to such a pathogen, and person-to-person transmission would be limited (we do inhale fungal spores, but we do not exhale them). On the other hand, a fungal pandemic would find humanity ill-prepared. Our diagnostic capacity for fungal pathogens remains extremely limited, no vaccines are available (although preliminary research has been conducted on a Coccidioides vaccine, and a Candida vaccine has been tested in a phase 2 clinical trial of vulvovaginal candidiasis) (22,23), and our therapeutic interventions are limited, costly, and have major side effects. Yet there would be space for preventive use of interventions: would rapid dissemination of antifungal medication be feasible in such a case? And how rapidly would antifungal resistance emerge?

### !D---Diplomacy---1NC

#### Diplomacy doesn’t solve war.

Hassan 24 – Associate Professor at the University of Gujrat, Chair of the Department of Political Science and IR

M. Hassan, Bilawal Marri, Feroz Khatran, M. Umair, Maqsood Baloch, “Is Diplomacy Failing to Resolve Global Conflicts?” University of Gujrat, November 2024, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/386171284\_Is\_Diplomacy\_Failing\_to\_Resolve\_Global\_Conflicts

The international community's failure to agree on a ceasefire is costing thousands of lives, says Save the Children, as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) prepares to meet tomorrow to discuss the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel.

Since 1945, the UNSC have been unable to reach consensus on the protection of civilians in Israel and Palestine 36 times through 36 draft resolutions. More than four weeks ago, following four previous failures, the UN passed a resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian truce between warring parties, and demanding aid access. Meanwhile, children and families in Gaza have been left without protection and have been denied what they need to survive.

At least 6,000 children have been killed in Gaza since the start of the escalation, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza. With challenges in collecting and verifying casualty figures since 11 November due to the collapse of communications and services in hospitals in Gaza, the reality is likely higher. A further 4,400 children are reported missing likely buried under the rubble. 58 children have been killed in the West Bank and 33 in Israel, with at least 36 children estimated to be among the hostages held in Gaza, according to Israeli media.

While the current pause in fighting has allowed agencies to bring some aid and fuel into the south of Gaza, not enough aid is reaching the north, with civilians remaining cut off from electricity, food and water supplies, whilst all hospitals are out of service.

While Member States have continued to prioritise politics over people, four out of five people in Gaza have been made homeless, over 60% of Gaza's buildings have been damaged, health facilities have become battlegrounds, children have continued to wake up as hostages, and water and food supplies have been all but entirely cut. No child in Gaza has gone to school since 7 October and no one knows what the future holds.

"If the UNSC cannot uphold its mandate to promote peace, security and respect for human rights and international law, then the system is failing. With or without a resolution, children have the right to humanitarian access and protection. When the UNSC calls for these rights to be respected, and still nothing happens, then the global rules-based order is failing those children" says Save the Children Country Director in the occupied Palestinian territory, Jason Lee.

3. Ukraine Crises

The invasion of Ukraine followed a series of failed diplomatic efforts.

In December 2021, Biden met virtually with Putin in what the White House described as a "moment of crisis." European leaders, including France's Emmanuel Macron, also met with Putin in an effort to defuse tensions. In February 2022, Biden spoke directly with Putin again in an hourlong call, during which the U.S. leader warned of a decisive response to an invasion, that nonetheless resulted in no "fundamental change," according to a senior administration official. Days later, the Kremlin claimed to be pulling troops back from the border regions in eastern Ukraine, even as the U.S. insisted that Russian troop strength in those areas was actually building significantly and that an invasion was imminent. Along with the president, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken repeatedly warned that invasion could come "at any time."

However, early on in the diplomatic effort, Biden staked the U.S. position that Washington would not go to war directly with Russia in Ukraine and instead would "rally the world and oppose its aggression."

"The United States and our allies and partners around the world are ready to impose powerful sanctions and export controls," he said

The president also warned Americans to leave Ukraine, saying he wouldn't be sending troops to rescue them in Ukraine. While the "steep consequences" that the White House promised failed to deter Putin from the invasion, the Biden administration hopes they will succeed at punishing him for his actions. Meanwhile, the European Union blacklisted Russian lawmakers and officials, banned EU investors from trading in Russian state bonds and moved to economically isolate Donbas separatist entities.

Complicating diplomatic efforts is that a third of Europe's natural gas supply comes from Russia, a fact that threatened to blunt a unified response. EU member Germany nonetheless agreed to shut down the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project with Russia, a huge potential revenue source for the Kremlin.

It is hardly deniable that diplomacy failed in the lead-up to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Diplomacy failed, the argument may go, because Americans and Europeans did not take Putin’s threats seriously; or because they did not propose to the President of the Russian Federation solutions that would have prevented the so-called special military operation. Looking more backwards, one could maintain that diplomacy failed because it was not capable (or willing) to involve more and better the Russian Federation in defining a shared post-cold war security architecture in Europe.

Equally, it could be argued that diplomacy has failed because, after two year of war, it is still unable to look for a credible path to a cessation of hostilities, or to identify the conditions for an agreement between the aggressor and the aggressed. But here, again, the counterargument may be that the search for a dialogue has so far met with the systematic practice of “fait accompli” by the Russian Federation. This has been demonstrated numerous times: from the occupation by Russian troops of parts of Ukrainian territory, and even more so the annexation to the Russian Federation of the Ukrainian territories not only of the whole Donbass, but also of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia; to Russia’s consistent determination to set clearly unacceptable conditions, such as the request that Kyiv gives up all the territories occupied by Russian troops and renounces to its sovereignty over almost 20 per cent of its territory.

## Advantage 2

### Court Inev Side with Trump---1NC

#### The court won’t stand up to Trump.

Commander 1/3 – Deputy news editor at Newsweek; quoting former U.S. attorney for Alabama with JD from University of Virginia School of Law

Anna Commander, with quotes from Joyce Vance, “Majority of Supreme Court Justices Have Failed to Show Up: Legal Analyst,” Newsweek, last updated 1-3-2026, https://www.newsweek.com/majority-of-supreme-court-justices-have-failed-to-show-up-legal-analyst-11300945

The majority of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court have failed in rising to the occasion during a critical period in America when their voices are "desperately needed," former federal prosecutor Joyce Vance wrote in her Substack Civil Discourse about Chief Justice John Roberts' year-end report on Friday.

Why It Matters

The 2025 report from Roberts comes at a time when the highest court in the land is under heightened scrutiny due to political pressures from President Donald Trump’s second administration, ongoing concerns about judicial independence and intensified public skepticism toward the court.

What To Know

The 13-page report touched on the history and principles behind judicial independence, including life tenure and salary protections for judges, but avoided direct discussion of contemporary political conflicts involving the federal judiciary. Roberts noted President Calvin Coolidge’s call to “turn for solace” to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution “amid all the welter of partisan politics.”

Roberts briefly referenced historical events, including the attempted impeachment of Justice Samuel Chase in 1805, which set a precedent for judicial independence free from political retribution. However, direct mention of recent events—like Trump’s public criticisms of lower court rulings and his calls for the impeachment of federal judges—was notably absent.

Vance called out Roberts in her Substack over a picture chosen for the report, which showed an empty room.

"The past decade has made it clear that our institutions are only as strong as the people in them. That makes this photo a startling choice for a report about the judiciary, albeit likely unintentional," Vance said. "But it’s a marker for what has become increasingly clear: that the majority on this Court has failed to show up in a moment when their institutional voice is desperately needed. The Court has been either unwilling or incapable of meeting the challenge to democracy that Donald Trump poses."

### No Solvency---1NC

### !D---Warming---1NC

#### Zero internal link. Cross-border restrictions are key which the case doesn’t solve.

Babić 23 [Milan Babić, Associate Professor of Political Economy at the Political Science Department and the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research at the University of Amsterdam, Principal Investigator of the DECARB project, co-founder and organizer of the Geoeconomics Network at the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics, PhD University of Amsterdam, “Consequences: Covid-19, geoeconomics and climate change,” Chapter 6, *The Rise of State Capital: Transforming Markets and International Politics*, Agenda Publishing, 2023, ISBN 978-1-78821-572-5, p.118-131] \*[language modifications in brackets]

On the other side, more controlling strategies do not display similar levels of liquidity and flexibility. Competing states with a controlling strategy usually invest their capital in majority stakes of cross-border-owned firms. This means that on average they hold large and quite inflexible positions in these firms, which are often also direct subsidiaries of domestic SOEs. To divest from these assets would hence mean giving up on either large and expensive acquisitions or reducing the number of subsidiaries cross-border. This is a fundamentally different situation from that of financialized strategies: as I have argued, controlling strategies are often motivated by cross-border asset capture, the acquisition of specific know-how or the control of vital nodes of global value chains and infrastructures. This type of investment often targets particular firms and industries that help in realizing those goals. This means that it is not primarily the profitability of these investments that drives cross-border investment, but specific types of assets and industries. Consequently, controlling strategies are much less flexible in simply switching from carbon-intensive to low-carbon investment alternatives. Many of the controlling strategies even aim at controlling cross-border carbon capital, as is the case for the Russian or Gulf states’ strategies.

### !D---Supply Chains---1NC

#### Supply chains are resilient.

Morales 25 – Economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, PhD and MA in Economics at the University of Michigan.   
Nicolas Morales, “Supply Chain Resilience and the Effects of Economic Shocks”, January 2025, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Economic Brief Number 25-02, https://www.richmondfed.org/publications/research/economic\_brief/2025/eb\_25-02

Supply chains have long been integral to the U.S. economy, allowing firms to capitalize on specialization and efficiency. However, recent developments like the COVID-19 pandemic, global geopolitical tensions and increasing climate risk have revealed their vulnerabilities as well as their abilities to propagate and amplify economic shocks. In response, firms and policymakers are increasingly focusing on strategies to bolster supply chain resilience. This article explores how economic shocks can propagate through the supply chain, the trade-offs associated with resilience investments, and policy responses aimed at strengthening the stability of U.S. supply chains.

Supply Chains Transmitting Shocks

Economic research has extensively analyzed how disruptions such as natural disasters cascade through supply chain networks, affecting not only firms but also their customers and suppliers. When a firm faces such a disaster, its immediate operations are disrupted, often due to physical damage that halts production temporarily.

However, the shock rarely stops there. Downstream firms — those that rely on inputs from the affected firm — experience indirect disruptions. Without access to critical supplies, these firms may face production delays or even a complete halt. Similarly, upstream firms — those supplying the disrupted firm — also feel the impact. With affected firms unable to purchase goods, suppliers face reduced sales until operations resume.

A 2016 study provides empirical insights into these dynamics, focusing on U.S. firms affected by natural disasters.1 Its findings highlight significant amplification effects: For every $1 sales the impacted firm loses, customer firms lose an average of $2.40 in sales. These effects were most pronounced when the disrupted firm produced differentiated or research-intensive goods (that is, inputs that are challenging to replace quickly).

A 2021 paper extended this analysis to the Great East Japan earthquake of 2011, tracing the shock's ripple effects across the supply chain.2 This paper found that half of the total economic impact stemmed from propagation to firms up to four degrees separated from those directly affected. These findings underscore how interconnected supply chains magnify localized disruptions, spreading their economic consequences far beyond the epicenter of the shock.

The Role of Supply Networks After the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic reignited concerns about the vulnerabilities of globalization and the resilience of supply chains. In the U.S., economic shocks were magnified by disruptions in international supply chain linkages, emphasizing the interconnected nature of global trade. One tool for monitoring these dynamics is the Global Supply Chain Pressure Index, developed by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. This index provides a composite measure of supply chain disruptions, capturing metrics such as shipping delays, order backlogs and inventory buildups.

As shown in Figure 1, supply chain pressures surged dramatically in early 2020 as global lockdowns halted production and disrupted logistics networks. By late 2020, as production resumed worldwide, pressures began to ease slightly but remained elevated. Supply chain bottlenecks then intensified again and peaked in December 2021, with this surge driven by rebounding demand and lingering disruptions in production and transportation. This pattern underscores the fragility of supply chains during periods of global economic upheaval and the challenges of adapting to sudden shifts in supply and demand.

The pandemic triggered significant disruptions to global supply chains, with international shocks affecting economic activity in the U.S. In early 2020, as lockdowns were implemented worldwide, production stalled, and goods delivery faced substantial delays. A 2021 paper quantifies the extent to which GDP declines at the onset of the pandemic stemmed from domestic versus international factors.3 The authors' analysis combines data on lockdown stringency with information on production and trade across countries and industries, revealing that about 30 percent of the U.S. GDP decline during the early pandemic was attributable to foreign lockdowns restricting imports. The remaining 70 percent was driven by domestic disruptions.

The researchers also examined whether international supply chains mitigated or amplified the economic impact of lockdowns in the U.S. While international trade could, in theory, buffer domestic lockdown effects by enabling imports from less-affected regions, this was not the case for the U.S. Lockdowns abroad were more severe than domestic ones, which ended up amplifying the negative impact on U.S. GDP. In contrast, countries with stringent lockdowns such as Peru and Argentina benefitted from international trade, mitigating their domestic shocks by importing goods from less-affected regions.

As global lockdowns eased in 2020, inflation surged worldwide, driven partly by a rebound in aggregate demand that strained production networks. A 2024 report analyzed the sources of inflation in the U.S. and found that international factors — such as supply chain bottlenecks and foreign demand — accounted for roughly 2 percentage points (pp) of the inflation observed in 2021 and 2022, about a quarter of the total inflation during that period.4 In Europe, where production depends more heavily on foreign inputs, international channels contributed up to 4 pp to inflation.

Firm-level dynamics also played a critical role in navigating supply chain disruptions. My 2022 working paper "Supply Chain Resilience: Evidence From Indian Firms" — co-authored with Gaurav Khanna and Nitya Pandalai-Nayar — examined characteristics of firms that proved resilient to COVID-19 lockdown shocks. Firms relying on highly differentiated inputs — products with fewer substitute suppliers — demonstrated greater resilience. These firms experienced fewer supplier separations, secured new suppliers more quickly and sustained production more effectively compared to firms sourcing more generic inputs. Interestingly, while such firms would have a greater amplification effect when receiving supply chain disruptions, their preparedness likely mitigated the broader economic consequences for the broader network.

Increasing Investments in Supply Chain Resilience

The pandemic highlighted the critical role of supply chains in the propagation and amplification of economic shocks. While the pandemic was an unexpected and temporary disruption, other shocks (such as climate disasters and geopolitical conflicts) are anticipated to occur more frequently and could lead to significant production disruptions if firms are unprepared. Policymakers and businesses are increasingly prioritizing investments in supply chain resilience to mitigate the effects of such shocks.

Firms are adopting a variety of strategies to enhance supply chain resilience. A 2022 survey of global supply chain leaders found that:

* About 81 percent of respondents planned to increase dual sourcing of raw materials.
* About 80 percent aimed to boost inventory holdings.
* About 44 percent sought to shift their sourcing strategies toward regional labor markets, often referred to as "re-shoring" production.

My 2024 working paper "Weathering the Storm: Supply Chains and Climate Risk" — also co-authored with Khanna and Pandalai-Nayar as well as Juanma Castro-Vincenzi — argues that firms are likely to source products from multiple suppliers to reduce risks, such as climate-related disasters affecting suppliers.

However, this approach entails a trade-off between efficiency and resilience. While regions with higher risks may offer lower production costs, disruptions in these areas can lead to costly supply chain interruptions. To mitigate these risks, firms are increasingly willing to pay a premium to source inputs from multiple, less-risky regions.

The trend toward regionalization is also evident in response to specific shocks. For example, my aforementioned 2022 working paper finds that, following the COVID-19 lockdowns and subsequent supply chain disruptions, firms became more likely to source inputs from geographically closer suppliers and larger firms. This shift reflects a broader effort to minimize vulnerabilities and ensure production continuity.

From a policy perspective, governments are supporting efforts to secure critical inputs through re-shoring and "friend-shoring" production. Geopolitical developments — such as the war in Ukraine and concerns over China's dominance in manufacturing — have prompted the U.S. and other nations to favor domestic production or trade relationships with "friendly" countries, such as Canada, Mexico and Vietnam. Policies such as the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 — which provides $52.7 billion to boost the U.S. semiconductor industry — exemplify these efforts. Similarly, tariffs introduced in 2018 (particularly those targeting China) remain in place and have shifted some market share away from Chinese imports. A 2023 working paper estimates that these tariffs reduced China's share of U.S. imports by 4 pp between 2017 and 2022, with Vietnam, Taiwan, India and Canada gaining market share among U.S. imports.5 However, the authors caution that this reallocation does not represent a complete shift away from reliance on China, as many of these new suppliers increased their dependence on Chinese inputs for intermediate goods during the same period.

Conclusion

The push for resilient supply chains reflects a trade-off between stability and cost. While resilience investments protect against future disruptions, they may raise input prices and inflation in the short term. Given the likelihood of increased climate events and geopolitical tensions, resilience is expected to remain a key priority for firms and policymakers alike. However, resilience-focused policies such as re-shoring, tariffs and incentives for domestic production may place upward pressure on costs, which could have lasting impacts on inflation and productivity.

### !D---Trade---AT: War---1NC

#### Trade impact is zero, if not backwards. Prefer meta-analysis over cherry-picking. Contextualizes their results and proves there’s equally as likely to be a null or even negative relationship as for their cherry-picked result to be correct, so you should treat it as pure white noise.

Brooks 8/1 – Professor of Government, Dartmouth College

Stephen Brooks, also a Guest Professor at Stockholm University, “The Trade Truce?,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 103, No. 6 (July/August 2024), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/trade-truce-stephen-brooks

After the Cold War, academics began conducting significant empirical research into economics and peace. By far the most prominent perspective that emerged from this literature was capitalist peace theory. The concept’s lead proponent, Erik Gartzke, argued that free markets, free trade, and the free movement of global capital were all beneficial for peace.

For a quarter century after the Cold War ended, U.S. policy toward China matched this optimistic perspective. American officials, treating commerce with China as unambiguously good for security, eliminated tariffs on Chinese products and encouraged U.S. companies to set up shop in the country. But over the last ten years, the dominant view in Washington has shifted to the exact opposite: that pursuing economic engagement with China had been a mistake and had harmed U.S. security. Policymakers seem to believe there is a relationship between commerce and conflict. They just cannot settle on what it is.

KNOWN UNKNOWNS

There is a good reason for such confusion: on close inspection, the relationship between global economics and global stability turns out to be extremely multifaceted. Although there have been notable individual studies supporting the optimistic view that commerce promotes peace, they are just that — individual studies. A systematic examination of all the empirical research on commerce and conflict shows that the connection is far more complex.

Consider trade. In a forthcoming book, I have identified 57 empirical studies published since 2000 that examined the influence of trade on war and peace. Just 16 of the studies supported the optimistic perspective that trade universally promotes peace. One found that it promotes conflict, and nine found no effect. The remaining 31 concluded that trade has a mixed effect on the likelihood of war — sometimes preventing it, sometimes promoting it.