# 2NC

## T

### 2nc---overview

#### There are 441 federal agencies---assuming there’s cards for 10% of these, that’s *44 fed workers AFFs alone*!

AFP 25, Americans for Prosperity, “How many federal agencies are there? Not even Washington knows”, https://americansforprosperity.org/blog/how-many-federal-agencies-are-there-do-we-need-all-of-them/

While it’s difficult to imagine how big the federal government is, try wrapping your head around this: The Federal Register lists [441](https://www.federalregister.gov/agencies) agencies in the U.S. government. Whatever the precise number, most reasonable taxpayers would agree that the federal bureaucracy has run amok.

### 2nc---at: we meet

### 2nc---interp

#### We’re the only team reading cards about a ‘substantial’ number of workers.

Purvaja Yennamaneni 25, “A bet­ter deal on the anvil for gig work­ers in State”, https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-hindu-hyderabad-9WW7/20251025/281655376304577

This num­ber is pro­jec­ted to reach 23.5 mil­lion by 2029­, accord­ing to the Eco­nomic Sur­vey 2024. This growth rep­res­ents a sub­stan­tial por­tion of the total work­force, with gig work­ers constituting over 2% of the work­force and pro­jec­ted to reach 7% of the non­agri­cul­tural work­force by 2029­ accord­ing NITI Aayog.

#### The 2% threshold is the only thing that prevents ‘substantial’ from being meaningless.

Katherine E. David et al. 18, J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center, Editor of Family Foundation Advisor, “Foundations Must Remain Alert to Potential SelfDealing—Part I”, https://www.civicresearchinstitute.com/online/PDF/FFA-1704-03-Self-Dealing-I.pdf

A substantial contributor is any person who contributed or bequeathed an aggregate amount of more than $5,000 to the foundation, if the amount is more than 2% of the total contributions and bequests received by the foundation before the close of the taxable year of the foundation in which the contribution or bequest was received. 9

Looked at differently, under this definition, a person who contributes more than $5,000 is not automatically a substantial contributor: the contributions must be more than 2% of the total contributions and bequests received by the foundation by the close of its current taxable year. (A prior version of the legislation provided that a substantial contributor is anyone who contributed more than $5,000 in any one year, or who contributed more than anyone else in any one year, even if that was less than $5,000. Congress recognized that without the additional 2% requirement, many people would be characterized as substantial contributors even though their contributions had no real impact on the foundation. The 2% minimum was included to make the rules practical and enforceable. 10 ) Further, in the case of a very small orstart-up foundation, a person who contributes more than 2% of the total contributions and bequestsreceived is not a substantial contributor unless his total contributions are more than $5,000.

#### Anything less is not substantial.

US Code 2, “26 CFR § 1.513-4 - Certain sponsorship not unrelated trade or business”, https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/26/1.513-4

(ii) Certain benefits disregarded. For purposes of paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section, benefits are disregarded if the aggregate fair market value of all the benefits provided to the payor or persons designated by the payor in connection with the payment during the organization's taxable year is not more than 2% of the amount of the payment. If the aggregate fair market value of the benefits exceeds 2% of the amount of the payment, then (except as provided in paragraph (c)(2)(iv) of this section) the entire fair market value of such benefits, not merely the excess amount, is a substantial return benefit. Fair market value is determined as provided in paragraph (d)(1) of this section.

#### Intent to define.

Jarrod Lenne et al. 4, M.A. in Political Science from the University of Melbourne, “Employee Share Ownership Schemes in Australia: A Survey of Key Issues and Themes”, CELRL Working Paper No. 31, UNC Libraries

Australian Employee Ownership Association, Submission on Employee Share Ownership, 15 April 1999 (Submission No. 5), 5, cited in House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Workplace Relations, Shared Endeavours - an Inquiry into Employee Share Ownership in Australia (Majority Report) (2000), 25 [2.49]. “Substantial” refers to a plan with greater than 50 employee participants and/or holding more than 2% of the company’s capital. This data would seem to originate from the Remuneration Planning Corporation, The Employee Share Plan Handbook (1997), 21, cited in House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Workplace Relations, Shared Endeavours - an Inquiry into Employee Share Ownership in Australia (Majority Report) (2000), 24 [2.48].

#### “Substantial” must be at least 2%.

Words & Phrases 60

“Substantial" means "of real worth and importance; of considerable value; valuable." Bequest to charitable institution, making 1/48 of expenditures in state, held exempt from taxation; such expenditures constituting "substantial" part of its activities. Tax Commission of Ohio v. American Humane Education Soc., 181 N.E. 557, 42 Ohio App. 4.

### ---at: substantial modifies ‘strengthen CBR’

### 2nc---at: counter-interp

#### Supreme Court jurisprudence says ‘substantial’ must be quantitative and cannot be case-by-case when it’s followed by other words that modify *what* is substantial. Their interpretation doesn’t assume use in a sentence, just the term in isolation.

Clara N. Jiminez et al. 17, J.D. from Boston College Law School, “Infringement Under Section 271(f)(1): More than One Piece of the Puzzle Required”, https://www.finnegan.com/en/insights/articles/infringement-under-section-271-f-1-more-than-one-piece-of-the.html

Supreme Court: “Substantial” Is Quantitative

The sole question posed to the Supreme Court was whether “supplying a single, commodity component of a multicomponent invention from the United States is an infringing act under 35 U.S.C.A. § 271(f)(1).” In an opinion by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the court answered “no” to this question, thus reversing the Federal Circuit’s decision and remanding the case for further proceedings.2

The court held that the term “substantial portion” in Section 271(f)(1) has a quantitative, not a qualitative, meaning. More specifically, the court held that the phrase “substantial portion” in the statute does not cover the supply of a single component of a multicomponent invention.

After concluding that the U.S. Patent Act does not define the term “substantial,” the court began its statutory construction analysis by examining the term’s ordinary meaning. The court acknowledged that the term may, in isolation, refer to qualitative importance or quantitative size. But it said that a reading of the term in the context of the statute points to a quantitative meaning. The court noted that the terms “all” and “portion”—both used within the same sentence where “substantial” appears—refer to determinations of quantity, not quality. Furthermore, it noted that the phrase “substantial portion” is modified by the phrase “of the components of a patented invention.” The grammatical structure suggests that it is the supply of all or a substantial portion “of the components” of a patented intention that triggers liability for infringement, the court reasoned. According to the court, a qualitative reading would render the phrase “of the components” unnecessary the first time it is used in the section. Following canons of statutory construction, the court favored the quantitative reading, which provided meaning to each term in the statutory provision. Following canons of statutory construction, the court favored the quantitative reading, which provided meaning to each term in the statutory provision.

The court also declined to follow the “case specific” approach that Promega had advocated. By doing so, it refused to task juries with interpreting the meaning of the statute on a case-by-case basis to determine whether a single component is a “substantial portion.” Further, the court said Promega’s suggested case-specific approach may not necessarily help resolve close cases because, as the court explained, “few inventions … would function at all without any one of their components.” In light of that reality, the court asked, “How are courts—or, for that matter, market participants attempting to avoid liability—to determine the relative importance of the components of an invention?”

### 2NC---Precision

#### More evidence in the context of CBAs and workers’ rights.

Dr. Gary Rhoades 23, PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles, Professor of Higher Education, at the University of Arizona's Center for the Study of Higher Education, “Postdoc Identity, Jurisdictional Issues, Ideologies, and Unions: Considerations in Organizing Professionals”, Labor Studies Journal, 48(2), 101-120, doi: 10.1177/0160449X231155636

All the CBAs also provided general raises. For example, the levels were 3% at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (for postdocs whose salary was above the minimum), 2% at Rutgers, 3% at the University of Connecticut (for each reappointment), and 2.5% minimums at Columbia in the second and third contract years. All were substantial gains in postdocs’ rights.

#### AND---in the context of ‘strengthened CBR’.

Dr. Ödül Bozkurt et al. 24, PhD from UCLA, Professor of Work and Employment at University of Sussex Business School, “Consultation on creating a modern framework for industrial relations (2024): Response from High Pay Centre and academics”, https://highpaycentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/industrial-relations-consultationacademics-letter-3.pdf

Currently, the framework for trade unions focuses on rights to access and recognition for trade unions as well as establishing more efficient processes for industrial action. These are very welcome measures that should lead to more workers being able to make a free and informed choice about trade union membership. This in turn should result in more workers with stronger collective bargaining power and representation from a union who can address workplace issues on their behalf.

However, the potential of unions goes beyond pay negotiations and preventing exploitative working practices. As workers’ representatives who can speak freely and frankly to management without fear of recrimination, unions are well-placed to deliver all the benefits of worker voice: better organisational decision-making and performance; higher regard for worker interests, from the shopfloor to the boardroom; a greater sense of agency and control for workers.

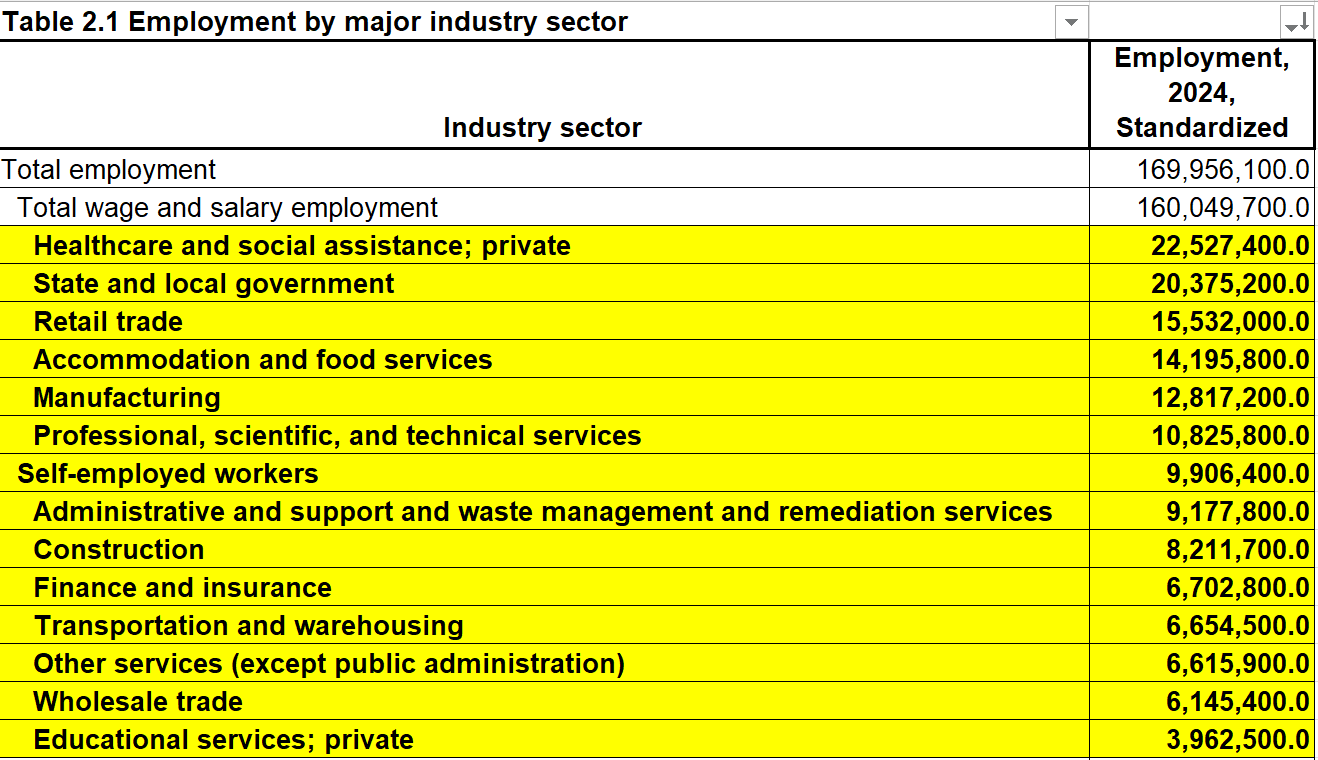
Currently, the Information and Consultation of Employees regulations are the most substantial mechanism for enabling worker voice in decision-making, giving employees the right to request that a consultation body be established if at least 2% of the workforce, or 15 people at organisations with fewer than 750 employees. However, uptake of this right has been low, with just 14% of workplaces having either a works council or some form of on-site consultation mechanism according to the 2017 Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices.[9] Research suggests that even where consultation mechanisms have been established, their impact has been highly varied. Even though they are not duty bound to accept the recommendations of workers on major decisions, many employers still fail to share key information important business issues. Consultation bodies often lack access to senior decision-makers and accountability over how views expressed during consultation processes have been acted upon.[10]

### 2nc---at: overlimiting/AFF ground

#### Here are all the industries that are still substantial under our interpretation---we’ll insert the chart here.

\*\*\*this data in its online form is hard to interpret, so it was was downloaded and cleaned in Excel. Since the table showed values in thousands, I multiplied each total employment figure by 1000, but otherwise didn’t change any values whatsoever. For ease-of-viewing, I sorted the data from largest to smallest, and cut off the industries at 3.5M, which is 2% of 170M. If you have questions, please contact me (Dan Bannister)\*\*\*

BLS 25, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Employment by major industry sector”, <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/employment-by-major-industry-sector.htm>,



#### AND---the ‘big’ fed workers AFF *is topical* because it’s 2%. You just can’t read subsets of it.

Zachary Amsel 25, Senior Director of Data Analytics at Consumer Edge, “Federal Government Shutdown Takes a Bite Out of Regional Spending”, https://www.consumeredge.com/resources/insights/federal-government-shutdown-takes-a-bite-out-of-regional-spending/

Given that federal workers make up just 2% of the total U.S. workforce, the direct national impact remains limited – total YoY spend growth was dragged down just ~10bps in October from the cohort. But the story changes sharply at the regional level.

### 2nc---at: PICs

### 2nc---at: functional limits

[AT: ‘One Strategy’]

[AT: ‘History’]

[AT: ‘It’s a joke’]

[AT: ‘Functional Limits’]

### 2nc---at: reasonability

### AT: Zissimopolous

#### No intent to define---just include self-employed workers

Dr. Julie M. Zissimopoulos 8, Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California, Los Angeles, Economist at the RAND Corporation, also with Lynn A. Karoly, “Labor-Force Dynamics at Older Ages”, Res Aging. 2008 Oct 3;31(1):89–111. doi: 10.1177/0164027508324642

Self-employment is an important phenomenon among workers nearing retirement. Among workers aged 51 years and older, just over 20% were self-employed during the interval from 1992 to 2002. Some of these individuals had been self-employed much or all of their working lives, whereas many older workers transition to self-employment after age 50 and, for some, as part of a transition to retirement. Indeed, using longitudinal data from the HRS, we document substantial changes in labor-force status and class of employment for older workers over a two-year time period. Approximately 2% of wage and salary workers became self-employed between the HRS waves. Among retired workers who returned to the labor force, about one third unretired into self-employment. Most unemployed or disabled workers who returned to the labor force did so to wage and salary work, although about one in five was self-employed. The multivariate analysis provides insight into the factors that affect these transitions and contributes to our understanding of the three issues highlighted above.

# 2NC

## Diplomacy

### OV---2NC

The turn outweighs---absent Japanese strategic autonomy, China will feel confident in launching an invasion in Taiwan. They’ll escalate quickly to deter US intervention---that guarantees extinction through nuclear war sparked by a first strike by either side. That’s Anderson.

That outweighs every AFF impact. The US and China have the largest arsenals.

2AC was pretty bad.

#### US draw in is guaranteed---that includes cyber warfare.

Caitlin Doornbos 12-24, Washington correspondent at the New York Post, 12-24-25, “China preparing to ‘win a war on Taiwan’ by 2027, new Pentagon report warns,” https://nypost.com/2025/12/24/us-news/china-preparing-to-win-a-war-on-taiwan-by-2027-new-pentagon-report-warns/

Cyber and space battlefields

Chinese cyber operations have targeted US infrastructure and military networks, while space systems are increasingly integrated into Beijing’s warfighting plans, the Pentagon said.

“In 2024, Chinese cyber-espionage campaigns such as Volt Typhoon burrowed into US critical infrastructure, demonstrating capabilities that could disrupt the US military in a conflict and harm American interests,” the report said.

Such operations have demonstrated that not only can the Chinese military’s cyber warriors carry out sophisticated attacks, but they can also do so without being detected in networks by using “advanced techniques,” according to the report.

China is likely to continue similar operations in the future — and is capable of building new cyber capabilities for future use in a war, “including for disrupting the US military’s ability to mobilize in conflict.”

“During the initial stages and throughout a conflict, China probably would seek to create disruptive and destructive effects — from denial-of-service attacks to physical disruptions of critical infrastructure — to shape decision making and disrupt military operations,” the report said.

#### Extinction.

Abdul M. Khan 25, Research Officer at the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS), Islamabad, “Cyberwarfare and New Pathways of Nuclear Escalation: Implications for South Asia”, https://ciss.org.pk/cyberwarfare-and-new-pathways-of-nuclear-escalation-implications-for-south-asia/

Offensive use of cyber capabilities against critical infrastructure of a state can increase the risks of nuclear escalation, especially in the absence of any norms of behaviour in the cyberspace. The advent of dangerous and undefined pathways of escalation, because of cyberweapons, can further increase the risk of inadvertent and accidental use of nuclear weapons. This paper attempts to explore how cyberattacks increase the risks of escalation in modern warfare?” The capability of cyberattacks to inflict damage in kinetic domain can have both escalatory and de-escalatory implications in a conflict. The rapid digital transformation and linking of critical infrastructure and communication systems with cyberspace have increased their vulnerability to cyberattacks and cyber coercion. Critical infrastructure ranges from health systems, electricity grid houses, and financial systems to conventional and nuclear military infrastructure. The integration of systems with cyberspace has blurred the lines of warfare and any attacks originating in the cyber domain can spill over into other domains of warfare including nuclear.

### Link---MSU

Fortifying US foreign policy dissuades Japan from conventional build-up. They have forwarded the premise that Trump is sending unreliable signals to allies, and that US credibility is broadly declining. Their solvency argument is that by reinstating civil servants to the NRC, nuclear leadership can broadly reassure our allies that the US is a credible partner who can come to their defense. Our evidence says that directly trades off with their pursuit of strategic autonomy, which is good.

Recall 1AC CX---they fell for the reverse pit of doom, and cannot go for no link.

Joanna said quote it increases credibility broadly because countries know that they can depend on the United States, and that spills over to US credibility broadly because it provide “leverage” and signaling.

No link is silly

Yes trade off

#### Plan A is a US alliance, but only if backed by a credible administration. Plan B is conventional rearmament---they’ll revert after the DOS assures them! That answers ‘rearmament inevitable,’ because decision making is carefully calibrated.

Comfort Ero 12-12, PhD from London School of Economics, Crisis Group’s President & CEO, With International Crisis Group Board of Trustees: the International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict, 12-12-25, “Embracing Arms: Securing Japan in a “New Era of Crisis,” Crisis Group Asia Report N°351, https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/351-japan-embracing-arms.pdf

Sticking with Plan A

Japanese analysts often describe Japan’s options in the face of geopolitical challenges, the shifting balance of power and its own limitations in terms of alphabetically designated “plans”. Thus, with minor variations, Plan A is a deeper alliance with the U.S., but a U.S. that is committed to maintaining a forward presence in Asia and defending the rules-based international order. Plan B would constitute pursuit of strategic autonomy to cope with U.S. retrenchment, including development of a nuclear arsenal. Plan C, which has few proponents, means acquiescing to Japan’s subordination in a regional order dominated by China.186 Some analysts call Japan’s current approach “Plan A+”, that is, maintaining the U.S. alliance to the extent possible, while also expanding defence partnerships and developing its own conventional defence capabilities. But they know that this course of action could not replace the U.S. role should Washington decide to scale it back.187

The second Trump administration is deepening worries among Japanese strategists about alignment of the two countries’ interests. While the U.S. has always tolerated double standards for its friends, and stretched international law for its own benefit, President Trump has gone further than any president since the Cold War in calling U.S. support for the international order into question. Trump’s treatment of allies, his disregard for international law (evident in his musings about the conquest of Greenland and parts of Panama) and his admiration for strongmen are all but irreconcilable with the principles underlying Japanese foreign policy since World War II. Many thus feel that U.S. assurances to Tokyo ring hollow.188

Two broad responses to this dawning reality are evident. The first is to stick with Plan A in view of the inadequacy of Japan’s own military and that of its partners to fill the void that would be left by the U.S. Inertia is a factor, but so, too, is cold calculation. As one analyst said, “This is the least expensive and most realistic option”.189 The second response is to contemplate strategic autonomy, which begins with a “psychological process” of recognising that Japan’s security is in the hands of a capricious ally.190 Another analyst said, “Japan needs to look at policy for after the U.S. has retrenched to Guam and Hawaii”.191 In September, an expert panel recommended that Japan “strengthen domestic production systems for essential equipment” and introduce “state-owned arsenals”, both steps toward greater independence.192

For some, strategic autonomy means developing nuclear weapons. Japan’s policy toward these weapons has been based since 1967 on the “three non-nuclear principles”: not to build or deploy nuclear weapons or introduce them into the country.193 Japan has periodically studied the option of acquiring nuclear weapons, only to dismiss it every time.194 Yet leaders and strategists are increasingly broaching the subject again, especially since Russia began using nuclear threats to intimidate NATO over Ukraine.195 Already in 2022, former Prime Minister Abe said, “Debate over the reality of how the world’s security is protected must not be considered a taboo” in reference to the prospect of the U.S. deploying nuclear weapons to Japan.196 While then-Prime Minister Kishida quashed the idea, reluctance to discuss nuclear weapons is eroding. Prime Minister Takaichi has indicated that her government may review the prohibition on introducing these weapons into Japan.197

Japanese analysts are largely sceptical of the wisdom of acquiring nuclear weapons, though it is well within the country’s technical capacity.198 The costs in money and personnel would be high, and conventional priorities would suffer.199 Japan lacks land mass and strategic depth. The entire country is exposed to attack, which militates against a nuclear posture due to increased vulnerability to a first strike and the risk of high civilian casualties; it would need new submarines as launch platforms, driving up the expense further. Were it to seek nuclear weapons, Tokyo would alarm its adversaries, exacerbating the security dilemma. Public opinion remains firmly opposed to nuclear weapons.200 If South Korea were to acquire nuclear weapons, analysts say, these impediments would diminish because Japan’s status as the only non-nuclear armed country in North East Asia could be destabilising, but short of the U.S. withdrawing its forces from Japan, Tokyo is likely to focus on developing conventional deterrence.201

#### Other allies fill in for additional warfighting reinforcements.

Comfort Ero 12-12, PhD from London School of Economics, Crisis Group’s President & CEO, With International Crisis Group Board of Trustees: the International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict, 12-12-25, “Embracing Arms: Securing Japan in a “New Era of Crisis,” Crisis Group Asia Report N°351, https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/351-japan-embracing-arms.pdf

Farther afield, Japan’s defence relationships with the EU, NATO and their member states are burgeoning. For Tokyo, the EU represents a collection of generally like-minded countries that, for the most part, are committed to what Japan and the bloc call a “free and open international order based on the rule of law”.155 In November 2024, the EU and Japan signed a Security and Defence Partnership agreement that, though largely aspirational, is symbolic of perceptions in Tokyo and European capitals of interdependence between Indo-Pacific and European security, as exemplified by cooperation among China, North Korea and Russia.156 Japan also sees an opportunity for arms exports as Europe ramps up spending.157

There are still other dimensions to Japan’s broadening partnerships in Europe. Japan is cooperating with the UK and Italy on the Global Combat Air Program, a next-generation fighter and the first such project for Tokyo with partners other than the U.S.158 Japan’s Reciprocal Access Agreement with the UK, signed in 2023, was its second after the accord with Australia. Kishida was the first Japanese prime minister to attend a NATO summit, in June 2022, and Tokyo appointed an ambassador to the alliance in January.159

In the face of deepening scepticism about the durability of the U.S. alliance, Tokyo’s network of partnerships may appear to be a hedge against abandonment. As an analyst put it, “If any contingency arises here we need to rely on partners, especially when the U.S. commitment is more doubtful than we’ve seen before”.160 To be sure, any significant payoff in greater strategic autonomy from the U.S. is a distant prospect.161 But investing in diversification could have over-the-horizon benefits; meanwhile, in the near term, Japan and its partners may benefit from working together on projects like defence production, especially of munitions, that would be crucial to success in a protracted war.162

#### \*Rearmament is deeply embedded in US strategic planning.

Jvan Ricciardella 12-30, PhD, Co-Founder, Global Military Consulting, 12-30-25,   
“Japan’s Rearmament: The Quiet End of a Postwar Illusion,” https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/japans-rearmament-quiet-end-postwar-illusion-jvan-ricciardella-wrfmf/

The American Factor: Autonomy or Delegated Escalation?

Japan’s rearmament is often framed as a move toward autonomy, yet it remains deeply embedded in U.S. strategic planning. Expanded Japanese capabilities serve not only Tokyo’s interests but Washington’s need to distribute military burdens across allies in an era of global overstretch. This creates a paradox: Japan becomes more militarily powerful while remaining strategically constrained, potentially drawn into conflicts not of its choosing.

In a crisis over Taiwan, the South China Sea, or the Korean Peninsula, Japan’s expanded role could transform it from a rear-area supporter into a frontline participant, making its territory and population legitimate targets in conflicts that exceed its direct control. Autonomy, in this context, risks becoming delegated escalation.

### U---Japan---Alliances---2NC

#### They’re doubting US credibility now---sour negotiations, hostility towards Ukraine, and China’s near parity with US nukes.

Comfort Ero 12-12, PhD from London School of Economics, Crisis Group’s President & CEO, With International Crisis Group Board of Trustees: the International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict, 12-12-25, “Embracing Arms: Securing Japan in a “New Era of Crisis,” Crisis Group Asia Report N°351, https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/351-japan-embracing-arms.pdf

Doubts about U.S. commitment

Since President Donald Trump’s return to the White House, the trust underpinning the U.S.-Japan alliance is coming under greater strain, with Tokyo receiving both positive and negative signals from Washington. Trump’s first summit with then-Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba in February went smoothly, and their joint statement hit upon familiar themes, including trilateral cooperation with allies and the Quad, as the grouping of Australia, India, Japan and the U.S. is known.123 U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth visited Japan in late March and offered reassurances about the U.S. commitment.124

But tensions soon surfaced. Trump criticised the alliance in March, alleging that it represents an “interesting deal” from which Japan makes “a fortune”.125 Trump’s undersecretary of defense for policy, Elbridge Colby, has repeatedly called upon Japan to increase its defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP, and reportedly privately pushed Tokyo for 3.5 per cent.126 The administration’s approach to Ukraine, especially President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s rough treatment by Trump at the White House in February, shocked decision-makers in Tokyo.127 Some analysts in Tokyo are concerned that the U.S. may seek a grand bargain with China over Taiwan, in which Trump signals indifference to Taiwan’s fate in exchange for economic benefits from China, that would leave Japan out in the cold.128 Noting U.S. naval deployments to the Red Sea and Middle East, a Japanese analyst concluded that the present team in the White House “doesn’t really care about Asia”.129

Trump’s threats of steep tariffs on Japan, announced on 2 April, and subsequent trade talks further strained ties. A deal was reached on 22 July, but the months of negotiations were bruising. Trump called Japan “spoiled”; Ishiba labelled the prospect of U.S. tariffs a “national crisis”.130 Liberal Democratic Party policy chief Itsunori Onodera said “these reciprocal tariffs are a problem that has shaken international economic affairs to their very foundation”, using the same language the National Security Strategy used to describe the blow to the international order dealt by Russia’s all-out invasion of Ukraine.131 In June, Tokyo took the extraordinary step of postponing ministerial-level security talks, scheduled for 1 July, reportedly after the U.S. asked Japan to raise defence spending.132 An April poll found that 77 per cent of respondents did not believe the U.S. would protect Japan in an emergency.133

Japan is increasingly concerned about the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence, or the “nuclear umbrella”, given events playing out in Europe and Asia, as well as in U.S. politics.134 Some analysts note the Pentagon projections that China will have 1,000 operational nuclear warheads by 2030, extrapolating from this number parity with the U.S. stockpile by 2035, which they say diminishes the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence.135 Other nuclear weapons experts describe assessments that China will be a “near peer” of the U.S. in the near future as a “gross exaggeration”.136 Nonetheless, the notion that it might be is stimulating discussions in Tokyo about the need to expand dialogue with Washington, including the possibility of introducing U.S. nuclear weapons into Japan, akin to NATO-style nuclear sharing, and of deploying them from Japanese aircraft or ships.137 There is also renewed discussion of the still-remote possibility of Japan developing its own nuclear deterrent (see Section V.B. below).

#### The relationship is strained, and threats are growing in the region.

Emma Chanlett-Avery 12-9, Director of Political-Security Affairs and Deputy Director, Washingon, D.C. Office, 12-9-25, “A Stress Test for Resilience: Risks & Opportunities for the U.S.-Japan Alliance,” https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/stress-test-resilience-risks-opportunities-us-japan-alliance

The return of Donald Trump to the White House has profoundly strained the U.S.-Japan relationship. After a promising start in early 2025, the imposition of harsh tariffs created fissures that threatened to derail security ties. Uncertainty over the feasibility of a trade deal lingers less than a year into the Trump administration. Simultaneously, threats are growing exponentially in Japan’s neighborhood, with China, North Korea, and Russia aligning strategic goals and deepening defense cooperation. In this challenging landscape, Japanese politics shuddered, delivering a new leader to rule a fragile, unstable coalition government.

With the rupture in alliance alignment under the second Trump administration, the partnership may get a necessary jolt for reinvention. It needs a new model to channel Japanese motivation and resources, embrace technological collaboration with like-minded nations, update the calcified formulas for burden sharing, and explore more realistic dialogue on extended deterrence. But the risks of a permanent break are rife if Trump’s transactional approach proves too oppressive or leaves Japan overly vulnerable to growing threats.

The reservoir of bilateral working-level trust and Japanese initiative are building blocks to a new approach. They are a testament to the strong links in the relationship that alliance coordination has continued throughout a period of deep diplomatic tension. Bilateral and multilateral exercises have continued, deepening interoperability and improving cooperation with other countries’ military forces. Japan has advanced its steady increase in defense spending and is on pace to reach its stated goal of 2% of GDP by 2027.1 Investments in both U.S.-made missiles and Japanese indigenous industry are accelerating. The opening of a joint command center further demonstrates Tokyo’s commitment to improving its internal military coordination as well as integrating decision-making with U.S. forces in the event of a crisis.

### Link--- MSU---AT: Inev---2NC

#### Trump is the catalyst for defense build-up, but they’re cautious about spending their limited resources.

Emma Chanlett-Avery 12-9, Director of Political-Security Affairs and Deputy Director, Washingon, D.C. Office, 12-9-25, “A Stress Test for Resilience: Risks & Opportunities for the U.S.-Japan Alliance,” https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/stress-test-resilience-risks-opportunities-us-japan-alliance

For those in Japan who have long argued that Japan should be more aggressive in providing for its own security, the gaiatsu (foreign pressure) from the Trump administration represents an opportunity for Tokyo. The demand to increase the percentage of GDP in the defense budget could serve as a catalyst for Japan to more seriously invest in its defense industry. Some observers in Japan note that other countries are better positioned than Japan to respond to U.S. requests.59 For example, South Korea already spends more than 2% of its GDP on defense and has pledged to raise that percentage to 3.5%. South Korea also has developed a thriving arms export market driven by its investment in an indigenous defense industry.60 Europeans, too, have responded to the U.S. demand, calculating that keeping the transatlantic alliance alive is worth the adjustments. To those pressing for Japan to be more proactive instead of passively responding to new demands, the forcefulness of Trump’s demands could provide a necessary jolt for Japan to step up.

Japan may also be pressed to make hard decisions about how it spends its limited resources. Tokyo has already made politically difficult decisions to spend far more on its defense and particularly to develop “counterattack” capability, which is interpreted by some as acquiring offensive capability, which would be unconstitutional. Although sharp disagreements on how to pay for the additional assets remain, the public appears willing to accept a departure from Japan’s postwar constraints. Other efforts to devote more to defense may be harder to swallow: Will Japan continue to provide generous subsidies to communities that host U.S. bases?61 These payments have helped keep local base-town relations stable and sustainable but may prove too generous in the face of more pressing security demands. Japan could also reconsider its decades-long provision of international aid to the region—already unpopular in Japan—to pay for more hard power. If the security situation deteriorates considerably, and U.S. commitment appears diminished, Japan could deliberate the value of developing its own nuclear deterrent. This would be a divisive and fraught idea to pursue, given deep-seated aversion to nuclear weapons among the public, but it is no longer beyond the realm of possibility.

#### Build-out is uniquely reliant on US assurances.

Comfort Ero 12-12, PhD from London School of Economics, Crisis Group’s President & CEO, With International Crisis Group Board of Trustees: the International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict, 12-12-25, “Embracing Arms: Securing Japan in a “New Era of Crisis,” Crisis Group Asia Report N°351, https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/351-japan-embracing-arms.pdf

Japan’s sense of vulnerability is increasing, not only because of the growing belligerency and capabilities of its nuclear-armed neighbours, but also because the U.S. appears to be stepping back from its role as pillar of the rules-based international order of which Japan sees itself as both defender and beneficiary. Tokyo has embarked on a program of military modernisation, including the acquisition of a modest offensive capability in the form of long-range precision strike missiles, in part to demonstrate to Washington its readiness to assume greater burdens in establishing deterrence and maintaining a balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. Japan’s effort to build a network of defence partnerships with other U.S. allies and like-minded countries is likewise intended to complement the U.S. alliance and amplify Washington’s influence in Asia, while at the same time making Japan less dependent on the U.S.

#### It's underway and due by March of this year.

Mari Yamaguchi 12-26, Covers Japanese politics, security, nuclear energy and social issues for The Associated Press, 12-26-25, “Japan’s Cabinet OKs record defense budget that aims to deter China,” https://apnews.com/article/japan-defense-spending-china-missile-221b2cb5da0760d6e07f63ac01deba93

TOKYO (AP) — Japan’s Cabinet on Friday approved a record defense budget plan exceeding 9 trillion yen ($58 billion) for the coming year, aiming to fortify its strike-back capability and coastal defense with cruise missiles and unmanned arsenals as tensions rise in the region.

The draft budget for fiscal 2026, beginning April, is up 9.4% from 2025 and marks the fourth year of Japan’s ongoing five-year program to double annual arms spending to 2% of gross domestic product.

“It is the minimum needed as Japan faces the severest and most complex security environment in the postwar era,” Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said, stressing his country’s determination to pursue military buildup and protect its people.

“It does not change our path as a peace-loving nation,” he said.

The increase comes as Japan faces elevated tension from China. Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said in November that her country’s military could get involved if China were to take action against Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing says must come under its rule.

Takaichi’s government, under U.S. pressure for a military increase, pledged to achieve the 2% target by March, two years earlier than planned. Japan also plans to revise its ongoing security and defense policy by December 2026 to further strengthen its military.

Missiles and drones will add to southwestern island defense

Japan has been bolstering its offensive capability with long-range missiles to attack enemy targets from a distance, a major break from its post-World War II principle limiting the use of force to its own self-defense.

The current security strategy, adopted in 2022, names China as the country’s biggest strategic challenge and calls for a more offensive role for Japan’s Self-Defense Force under its security alliance with the U.S.

The new budget plan allocates more than 970 billion yen ($6.2 billion) to bolster Japan’s “standoff” missile capability. It includes a 177 billion-yen ($1.13 billion) purchase of domestically developed and upgraded Type-12 surface-to-ship missiles with a range of about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles).

The first batch of the Type-12 missiles will be deployed in Japan’s southwestern Kumamoto prefecture by March, a year earlier than planned, as Japan accelerates its missile buildup in the region.

In part due to Japan’s aging and declining population and its struggles with an understaffed military, the government believes unmanned weapons are essential.

To defend the coasts, Japan will spend 100 billion yen ($640 million) to deploy “massive” unmanned air, sea-surface and underwater drones for surveillance and defense under a system called “SHIELD” planned for March 2028, defense ministry officials said.

#### At that point, there’s parliamentary approval---but they’ll vote against post-plan!

Mari Yamaguchi 12-26, Covers Japanese politics, security, nuclear energy and social issues for The Associated Press, 12-26-25, “Japan’s Cabinet OKs record defense budget that aims to deter China,” https://apnews.com/article/japan-defense-spending-china-missile-221b2cb5da0760d6e07f63ac01deba93

Meeting targets but future funding uncertain

The budget plan requires parliamentary approval by March to be implemented as part of a 122.3 trillion yen ($784 billion) national budget bill.

The five-year defense buildup program would bring Japan’s annual spending to around 10 trillion yen ($64 billion), making it the world’s third-largest spender after the U.S. and China. Japan will clear the 2% target by March as promised, the Finance Ministry said.

Takaichi’s government plans to fund its growing military spending by raising corporate and tobacco taxes and recently adopted a plan for an income tax increase beginning 2027. Prospects for future growth at a higher percentage of GDP remain unclear.

#### Careful calibration is key. Rearmament is fragile.

Soumya Ranjan Gahir 25, PhD candidate at the Department of Political Science, Ravenshaw University, India, 11-12-25, “Takaichi Marks Japan’s Turn Toward Strategic Maturity,” https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2025/11/12/takaichi-marks-japans-turn-toward-strategic-maturity/

Power and Perception

Takaichi also recognizes that strength brings scrutiny. Historical memory still colors East Asia’s view of Japan’s rearmament, and even minor gestures can revive regional suspicion. Her administration therefore stresses transparency. The existing National Security Strategy, which her government is preparing to update for 2026, continues to describe Japan’s defense posture as “exclusively defense-oriented.” Framing deterrence within a wider concept of comprehensive security, covering supply chains, energy resilience, and advanced technology, has enabled Tokyo to expand capability without abandoning its pacifist narrative.

### AT public opinion

### Link---Beckley

#### The rest says that involves strengthen connections through diplomatic outreach.

Beckley 25 [Michael Beckley, Professor of Political Science at Tufts University, Nonresident Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, “The Strange Triumph of a Broken America,” Foreign Affairs, 1-7-2025, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/strange-triumph-broken-america-michael-beckley/]

The structure of American power thus creates competing pressures for detachment and engagement. The result is a hollow form of internationalism that has sometimes resulted in disastrous failures of deterrence. In the 1920s, for instance, the United States opposed German and Japanese expansion but outsourced enforcement to treaties such as the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which outlawed war, and the League of Nations, which Washington then refused to join. The United States withdrew its forces from Europe while demanding debt payments from allies, who passed the costs on to Germany, worsening its financial turmoil and hastening its slide into Nazism. At the same time, in Asia, the United States abandoned plans for naval modernization and regional fortification but imposed increasingly severe sanctions on Japan, intensifying Tokyo’s perception of Washington as both hostile and vulnerable—thereby paving the road to the attack on Pearl Harbor. A similar pattern played out in the 1990s and the early years of this century. While nearly doubling NATO’s membership to include 12 new countries, the United States halved its troop presence in Europe and shifted NATO’s focus to counterterrorism operations in the Middle East. In 2008, the United States suggested that Georgia and Ukraine might eventually join the alliance but offered no concrete path to membership, thus provoking Russia without effectively deterring it. In other cases, hollow internationalism led the United States to neglect deterrence entirely. On several occasions, it convinced itself and its adversaries that it had little interest in a region, only to respond massively to aggression there, with catastrophic consequences. In 1949, for instance, the United States excluded the Korean Peninsula from its defense perimeter and withdrew its troops. Yet when North Korea invaded South Korea, the United States intervened forcefully, pushing up to the Chinese border and provoking a ferocious Chinese counterattack. This shock heightened Cold War fears of communist expansion and solidified the domino theory: the idea that if one state falls to communism, its neighbors will, too. This notion in turn propelled Washington’s disastrous involvement in Vietnam. Similarly, in 1990, the United States made no serious effort to deter Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait but then took up arms to repel the attack after the fact. The result was the Gulf War and a prolonged U.S. military presence in the Middle East, which in turn mobilized jihadi groups such as al Qaeda—an outcome that culminated in the 9/11 attacks and the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The world now faces converging threats: China is carrying out the largest peacetime military buildup since Nazi Germany’s, producing warships, combat aircraft, and missiles five to six times as fast as the United States can. Russia is waging Europe’s biggest war since World War II. Iran is trading blows with Israel, and North Korea is sending thousands of troops to fight for Russia in Ukraine while preparing for war with South Korea and developing nuclear missiles that can reach the U.S. mainland. Despite treating these regimes as enemies, the United States spends only 2.7 percent of GDP on defense, a level comparable to that of the post–Cold War 1990s and the isolationist 1930s and well below the Cold War range of six to ten percent. A military recruitment crisis compounds the shortfall, with 77 percent of young Americans ineligible for service because of obesity, drug use, or health issues and just nine percent expressing an interest in enlisting. In a potential conflict with China, U.S. forces would blow through their munitions inventory in a matter of weeks, and it would take years for the U.S. defense industrial base to produce replacements. Rising personnel costs, along with an endless array of peacetime missions, are stretching U.S. forces thin. By pairing diplomatic hostility with military unreadiness, the United States is once again sending the world a mixed signal, a yellow traffic light. Yellow lights, of course, often prompt aggressive drivers to speed up. American ambiguity won’t matter—until it does, when China, Iran, North Korea, or Russia decides it’s time to take what it has long claimed by force.https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/strange-triumph-broken-america-michael-beckley] THE DANGERS OF DECLINISM Since the Soviet Union’s collapse, experts have urged policymakers to prepare for multipolarity, expecting the United States to be challenged or overtaken by rising powers. But reality has taken a different course. The United States remains economically dominant while other contenders—both adversaries and allies—are slipping into long-term decline. Shrinking populations and stagnant productivity are eroding the strength of once dominant Eurasian powers. Meanwhile, populous countries such as India and Nigeria struggle to ascend global value chains because of poor infrastructure, corruption, and weak education systems. Automation and the commodification of manufacturing are shutting off traditional growth paths, leaving many developing countries mired in debt, youth unemployment, and political instability. Rather than triggering a rise of the rest, current trends are solidifying a unipolar world with the United States as the sole superpower, surrounded by declining great powers and a periphery of middle powers, developing countries, and failing states. In the long run, a world without rising powers could foster stability by reducing the risk of hegemonic wars. Over the past 250 years, the Industrial Revolution caused economies, populations, and militaries to double or more in size within a generation, sparking intense competition for resources and territory. But that era is winding down. Shrinking populations, stagnant economies, and the concentration of wealth in the United States make the rise of new great powers unlikely. Some analysts characterize China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia as an “axis,” but the world is unlikely to see a repeat of 1942, when Germany, Japan, and Italy seized half of the world’s productive capacity. Today’s fading challengers lack the strength to overrun Eurasia quickly, and once a great power falters, it no longer has the population growth to rebound, as Germany did between the world wars and the Soviet Union did after World War II. It’s hard to imagine Russia, for example, rising from the ashes of Ukraine to conquer large swaths of Europe. As rising powers fade, the world may become more stable. But right now, several threats loom. Declining powers may resort to desperate wars of irredentism to reclaim what they believe are “lost” territories and avoid slipping permanently into second-tier status. Russia has already done this in Ukraine, and China might take similar actions in Taiwan or against the Philippines in the South China Sea. Although these conflicts may not match World War II’s scale, they could still be ghastly, involving nuclear threats and attacks on critical infrastructure. China, North Korea, and Russia face economic and demographic decline, but so do their most likely targets—South Korea, Taiwan, and the Baltic states—ensuring that Eurasia’s military balances will remain hotly contested. Even without sparking massive wars, China and Russia could gradually transform into gigantic North Koreas, relying increasingly on totalitarianism and military extortion to undermine an international order they can no longer hope to dominate. Another threat is rampant state failure, particularly in debt-ridden countries with rapidly growing populations. Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, is expected to add one billion people by 2050, yet most of its economies are already in fiscal crisis. Manufacturing no longer provides mass employment, and governments are slashing social spending to pay foreign loan interest. According to the United Nations, an estimated 3.3 billion people live in countries where interest payments exceed investments in either education or health care. The stagnation of major economies is worsening the situation. A slowing China, for instance, has halted most of its foreign lending while reducing its imports from poor countries and flooding their markets with subsidized exports, delivering a triple blow to their economies. A spiral of state failure could magnify a third threat: the continued rise of anti-liberalism in democratic countries. Many democracies are already struggling with demographic decline, sluggish economic growth, soaring debt, and ascendant extremist parties. A surge of refugees from failing states could further strengthen these antidemocratic movements. After the Syrian civil war sent more than a million refugees to Europe, for example, authoritarian parties made substantial gains across the continent. Liberal democracy has flourished in times of economic expansion, population growth, and social cohesion, but it’s uncertain whether it can survive an era of stagnation and mass migration. The United States must contain these threats while continuing to harness its geographic, demographic, and institutional advantages. A crucial first step is rejecting the misperception that the country is doomed to decline. Nearly four decades ago, the political scientist Samuel Huntington argued in these pages that Americans must fear decline to avoid it. But fear risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. An exaggerated sense of decay is already starting to destabilize democracy, as some Americans lose faith in the system and turn to antiliberal solutions. Some are rallying behind white nationalism, propelled by fears of demographic shifts and “great replacement” conspiracy theories, which falsely claim that political elites encourage mass immigration to replace white Americans with minorities. Others are stoking minority grievances to mobilize voters along ethnic lines. Such cynical strategies have fostered harmful policies, such as defunding the police or mass deportations, eroding trust in democracy and potentially enabling demagogues to dismantle the republic’s checks and balances. Fearing decline, the United States might lean toward protectionism and xenophobia, walling itself off rather than competing internationally, which would undermine its core strengths. The country has thrived on the free flow of goods, people, and ideas, soaking up foreign talent and capital like a sponge and building a global commercial order that attracts allies. But if the United States embraces a false narrative of decline, it risks becoming a rogue superpower, a mercantilist behemoth determined to squeeze every ounce of wealth and power from the rest of the world. Tariffs, sanctions, and military threats could replace diplomacy and trade, alliances might become protection rackets, and immigration could be sharply restricted. This nativist turn might yield short-term gains for Americans, but it would ultimately hurt them by making the world they inhabit poorer and less secure. Trade and security networks could collapse, sparking resource-driven conflicts and killing off any possibility for cooperation on nuclear nonproliferation, climate change, pandemics, and other global challenges—accelerating a descent into anarchy. The most immediate danger is that the United States will convince itself—and its adversaries—that it lacks the will or the capacity to counter large-scale aggression. To avoid asserting its interests without backing them up (thereby provoking aggressors without deterring them) or prematurely withdrawing from regions (forcing a rushed and costly reentry), the United States must rigorously reassess its core interests and determine where containing aggression is essential. The U.S. national security establishment believes this means preventing China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia from destroying their neighbors. This conviction—that powerful revisionist tyrannies should be contained—is as straightforward as it is hard learned. After World War I, the United States withdrew from Eurasia, a decision that contributed to the outbreak of World War II. In contrast, after World War II, the United States maintained peacetime alliances in Eurasia, ultimately defeating Soviet communism without triggering World War III, and providing the security foundation for an unprecedented surge in global prosperity and democracy. The key to success, then as now, is blending strength with diplomacy: building a credible military presence to deter aggression while offering revisionist powers a path to reintegration with the West if they renounce military conquest. During the Cold War, the United States contained the Soviet Union until internal weaknesses forced Moscow to retreat. A similar strategy could work today. China’s economy is stagnating, and its population is shrinking. Russia is bogged down in Ukraine, and Iran has been battered by Israel. Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei are aging heads of state whose reigns will likely end within the next decade or two. The United States doesn’t need to contain their regimes indefinitely—perhaps just long enough for current trends to play out. As their power declines, their imperial dreams may seem increasingly unattainable, potentially prompting successors to chart a new course. In the meantime, Washington should sap their strength by welcoming their brightest people to the United States through immigration and by strengthening connections with their societies through student visas, diplomatic exchanges, and nonstrategic trade. China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia, however, are unlikely to mellow overnight. The United States’ struggle against these countries may not last forever, but Washington must prepare for a contest that could last years. In this competition, domestic unity will be essential. Investing in jobs, infrastructure, housing, and education in neglected areas—and rekindling a spirit of civic duty—will be crucial not only to mend national fissures but also to fortify the United States against foreign threats. Calling on Americans to stand up to autocratic aggression doesn’t mean rushing into war; it means creating a future in which peace is secured through sustained investments in military strength and diplomatic outreach. It means rallying a nation to recognize its immense power and accept the responsibility to wield it, not in frenzied reaction but before the storm—with purpose and prudence.

### Transition---Japan---China

### !---AT: Defense---2NC

#### US China confrontation guarantees extinction---outweighs on magnitude; adaptation solves other risks.

Mark Lynas 25, science advisor with the Climate Vulnerable Forum and policy lead with WePlanet, a pro-science environmental advocacy network active in over 20 countries, interviewed by Yascha Mounk, “Mark Lynas on Nuclear War”, https://www.persuasion.community/p/mark-lynas-on-nuclear-war

So perhaps we can start to dig a little bit into that. What would it look like if we had a global nuclear war anytime soon? Say there’s a nuclear confrontation between the United States and China that somehow also draws in other nuclear powers—a worst-case scenario. Is that the end of humanity? Is that the end of our technological civilization? What would that mean for the planet and for humans?

Lynas: I’m a student of mass extinctions. I’ve covered them a lot in my book—the “big five” geological mass extinctions that have happened since the Cambrian, over the last half-billion years. There’s a 100% probability of climate change happening, because it’s already happening. Whereas nuclear war may never happen. So it’s a different thing altogether. The "kill mechanisms"—to use the mass extinction terminology—aren’t really there for climate change. There are many more ways to adapt to slow-onset events, which are the kinds of impacts most likely to result from climate change.

Whereas with nuclear war, the kill mechanisms are very obvious. It’s not just the explosions, the blasts, and the burning. It’s the nuclear winter. That’s really the central kill mechanism—one that could certainly destroy civilization, possibly destroy humans as a species, and almost certainly destroy the majority of life in the biosphere.

#### Their evidence is misplaced optimism.

Michael Beckley 24, associate professor of political science at Tufts University; and Hal **Brands**, professor of global affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, 2/4/24, “How Primed for War Is China?,” https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/04/china-war-military-taiwan-us-asia-xi-escalation-crisis/

How likely is China to start a war? This may be the single-most important question in international affairs today. If China uses military force against Taiwan or another target in the Western Pacific, the result could be war with the United States—a fight between two nuclear-armed giants brawling for hegemony in that region and the wider world. If China attacked amid ongoing wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, the world would be consumed by interlocking conflicts across Eurasia’s key regions, a global conflagration unlike anything since World War II.

How worried should we be?

Notwithstanding the recent flurry of high-level diplomacy between Washington and Beijing, the warning signs are certainly there. Under Chinese President Xi Jinping, Beijing is amassing ships, planes, and missiles as part of the largest military buildup by any country in decades. Notwithstanding some recent efforts to lure back skittish foreign investment, China is stockpiling fuel and food and trying to reduce the vulnerability of its economy to sanctions—steps one might take as conflict nears. Xi has said China must prepare for “worst-case and extreme scenarios” and be ready to withstand “high winds, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms.” All of this comes as Beijing has become increasingly coercive (and occasionally violent) in dealings with its neighbors, including the Philippines, Japan, and India—and as it periodically advertises its ability to batter, blockade, and perhaps invade Taiwan.

Many U.S. officials believe the risk of war is rising. CIA Director William Burns has said Xi seeks the capability to take Taiwan by 2027. And as China’s economy struggles, some observers—including, reportedly, U.S. intelligence analysts—are looking for signs that a peaking China might turn aggressive in order to distract attention from internal problems or to lock in gains while it still can.

Other analysts think the risk of Chinese aggression is overblown. Some scholars say the danger likely can be managed provided Washington doesn’t provoke Beijing—an echo of a longer-standing argument that China won’t upend a status quo that has served it well. Others point out that China has not started a war since its invasion of Vietnam in 1979. Still others dismiss the prospect that China might fight in response to a slowing economy and other domestic problems, claiming that the country has no history of diversionary war. What links these arguments is a belief in the basic continuity of Chinese conduct: the idea that a country that hasn’t launched a disastrous war in more than four decades is unlikely to do so now.

We believe this confidence is dangerously misplaced. A country’s behavior is profoundly shaped by its circumstances, no less than its strategic tradition, and China’s circumstances are changing in explosive ways. Political scientists and historians have identified a range of factors that make great powers more or less inclined to fight. When one considers four such factors, it becomes clear that many of the conditions that once enabled a peaceful rise may now be encouraging a violent descent.

First, the territorial disputes and other issues China is contesting are becoming less susceptible to compromise or peaceful resolution than they once were, making foreign policy a zero-sum game. Second, the military balance in Asia is shifting in ways that could make Beijing perilously optimistic about the outcome of war. Third, as China’s short-term military prospects improve, its long-term strategic and economic outlook is darkening—a combination that has often made revisionist powers more violent in the past. Fourth, Xi has turned China into a personalist dictatorship of the sort especially prone to disastrous miscalculations and costly wars.

This isn’t to say China will invade Taiwan in a particular week, month, or year. It is impossible to predict when, exactly, a conflict might occur because the trigger is often an unforeseen crisis. We now know that Europe was primed for war in 1914, but World War I would likely not have happened then had the driver of the car carrying Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand not taken one of history’s most fateful wrong turns. Wars are more like earthquakes: We can’t know precisely when they will happen, but we can recognize factors that lead to higher or lower degrees of risk. Today, China’s risk indicators are blinking red.

### Transition---Broad---AT: Heg Good

#### US credibility with allies is declining now---short-term decoupling is necessary to avoid long term security failures. That includes Japan, South Korea, Europe, and NATO.

Nicholas Creel 25, PhD, Professor of business law at Georgia College & State University, 2-18-25, “Our Allies Must Abandon America, For Their Own Good,” https://www.newsweek.com/our-allies-must-abandon-america-their-own-good-opinion-2032930

The writing has been on the wall for some time, but our allies have been reluctant to read it. The United States, long the guarantor of the post-World War II liberal international order, has become an unreliable and even a potentially dangerous partner. For their own survival and prosperity, America's traditional allies must begin the difficult but necessary process of decoupling from U.S. global leadership.

The latest demands from Washington to its allies read like a protection racket rather than diplomacy between friends. Denmark continues to face pressure to sell Greenland to the U.S., a sovereign territory whose residents overwhelmingly do not want to be under America's thumb. Mexico and Canada, our only two neighbors, have endured repeated threats of punitive tariffs that they have only delayed thus far by agreeing to what were largely symbolic concessions that will do little to actually stem the supply of illegal immigrants or drugs into our nation. Most egregiously, Ukraine, while fighting for its very existence, was just asked to surrender half its mineral wealth to the U.S. in exchange for continued military support against Russian aggression.

To be clear, this is about more than just President Donald Trump; it's about who Americans have shown themselves to be as a people. Our nation's electorate has demonstrated a repeated willingness to embrace a leader who views international relationships through the lens of extractive transactions rather than mutual benefit. Hence, our allies cannot simply wait this out in the hope that the next administration will be be a return to normal.

The path forward for allies is clear, if uncomfortable. Militarily, European nations must dramatically increase their spending and accelerate their defense integration in order to establish credible deterrence independent of American guarantees. This is precisely why Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky recently called for a European army, as he recognizes that they "can't rule out that America might say 'no' to Europe on issues that might threaten it." Similarly, Asian allies like Japan and South Korea must build new security frameworks that don't rely on increasingly unreliable U.S. commitments.

This necessity for military independence explicitly extends to the need to no longer expect cover from the American nuclear umbrella. Our allies must endeavor on a quest of nuclear proliferation, particularly for the likes of Japan as it faces the reality that it will likely need to contend with China on its own. In Europe, the nuclear arsenals of France and the United Kingdom will need to be expanded, as should their investments in means that ensure a second-strike capability.

So too must the economic partnerships of our allies be diversified. Doing so will reduce their vulnerability to America's ability to exert economic coercion. Moreover, with its commitment to fiscal profligacy not looking to abate any time soon, the world would do well to abandon ship now before an inevitable reckoning comes due. The most critical step for our allies here is the abandonment of the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency. To effectuate this, their central banks must begin to dramatically reduce their dollar holdings, shifting reserves to a basket of alternative currencies, while developing new multilateral payment systems that don't depend on American-controlled financial infrastructure.

The sooner our allies accept that America can no longer be trusted with global leadership, the better prepared they'll be for the turbulent times ahead. While decoupling from U.S. leadership will be painful in the short-term, remaining tethered to an increasingly unstable and predatory superpower poses far greater dangers. The post-war order built on American leadership is over and in its wake our allies must now build something new without us.

#### Trump has accelerated a distrust spiral among allies.

Damien Cave 25, Leads The Times’s new bureau in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, covering shifts in power across Asia and the wider world, 3-31-25, "How Trump Supercharged Distrust, Driving U.S. Allies Away," New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/31/world/trump-foreign-policy-trust.html

The F-35, a fifth-generation fighter, was developed in partnership with eight countries, making it a model of international cooperation. When President Trump introduced a sixth-generation aircraft, the F-47, he praised its strengths — and said the version sold to allies would be deliberately downgraded.

That made sense, Mr. Trump said last week, “because someday, maybe they’re not our allies.”

For many countries wedded to the United States, his remark confirmed a related conclusion: that America can no longer be trusted. Even nations not yet directly affected can see where things are heading, as Mr. Trump threatens allies’ economies, their defense partnerships and even their sovereignty.

For now, they are negotiating to minimize the pain from blow after blow, including a broad round of tariffs expected in April. But at the same time, they are pulling back. Preparing for intimidation to be a lasting feature of U.S. relations, they are trying to go their own way.

A few examples:

Canada made a $4.2 billion deal with Australia this month to develop cutting-edge radar and announced that it was in talks to take part in the European Union’s military buildup.

Portugal and other NATO nations are reconsidering plans to buy F-35s, fearing American control over parts and software.

Negotiations over a free trade and technology deal between the European Union and India have suddenly accelerated after years of delays.

Brazil is not only increasing trade with China, it’s doing it in China’s currency, sidelining the dollar.

In several countries, including Poland, South Korea and Australia, discussions about whether to build or secure access to nuclear weapons are now commonplace.

Some degree of distancing from the United States had already been in motion as other countries became wealthier, more capable and less convinced that American centrality would be permanent. But the past few months of Trump 2.0 have supercharged the process.

History and psychology help explain why. Few forces have such a powerful, long-lasting impact on geopolitics as distrust, according to social scientists who study international relations. It has repeatedly poisoned negotiations in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It kept Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union burning for decades.

So-called realists — who see international relations as an amoral contest between self-interested states — argue that trust should always be assessed with skepticism, because believing in good intentions is risky.

But Mr. Trump has sparked more than cautious suspicion. His own distrust of allies, evident in his zero-sum belief that gains for others are losses for America, has been reciprocated. What it’s created is familiar — a distrust spiral. If you think the other person (or country) is not trustworthy, you’re more likely to break rules and contracts without shame, studies show, reinforcing a partner’s own distrust, leading to more aggression or reduced interaction.

“Trust is fragile,” Paul Slovic, a psychologist at the University of Oregon, wrote in a seminal 1993 study on risk, trust and democracy. “It is typically created rather slowly, but it can be destroyed in an instant — by a single mishap or mistake.”

In Mr. Trump’s case, allies point to a sustained assault.

His tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada, which ignored the North American free trade deal that he signed during his first term, stunned America’s neighbors.

His threats to make Canada an American state and send the U.S. military into Mexico to go after drug cartels were brash intrusions on sovereignty, not unlike his demands for Greenland and the Panama Canal. His blaming of Ukraine for the war that Russia started further alienated allies, forcing them to ask: Is the United States a defender of dictators or democracy?

#### De-Americanization and the pursuit strategic defense are already underway with allies.

Damien Cave 25, Leads The Times’s new bureau in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, covering shifts in power across Asia and the wider world, 3-31-25, "How Trump Supercharged Distrust, Driving U.S. Allies Away," New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/31/world/trump-foreign-policy-trust.html

Europe is further ahead in this process. After the U.S. election, the European Union finalized a trade deal with South American countries to create one of the world’s largest trade zones, and it has worked toward closer trade ties with India, South Africa, South Korea and Mexico.

Japan, America’s largest ally in Asia, has also been prioritizing new markets in the global south, where fast-growing economies like Vietnam’s offer new customers.

“There has been the emerging perception in Japan that we definitely have to change the portfolio of our investments,” said Ken Jimbo, a professor of international politics and security at Keio University in Tokyo. For the current administration and those that follow, he added, “we have to adjust our expectations of the American alliance.”

On the defense front, what some call “de-Americanization” is more challenging. This is especially true in Asia, where there is no NATO equivalent, and reliance on American support has somewhat stunted the militaries of countries that the United States has promised to defend (Japan, South Korea and the Philippines).

On Friday, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth was in Manila, promising to “truly prioritize and shift to this region.” But many of America’s partners are now working together without the United States, signing reciprocal access agreements for each other’s troops and building new coalitions to deter China as much as they can.

Europe, too, is years away from being able to fully defend itself without the help of U.S. weaponry and technology. Yet in response to the Trump administration’s tariffs, threats and general disdain — as in the leaked Signal chat in which Mr. Hegseth called Europe “pathetic” — the European Union recently announced plans to ramp up military spending. That includes a 150 billion euro loan program to finance defense investment.

The 27-nation European Union is also increasingly collaborating with two nonmembers, Britain and Norway, on defending Ukraine and on other strategic defense priorities.

For some countries, none of this is quite enough. Poland’s prime minister, Donald Tusk, told Parliament in early March that Poland would explore gaining access to nuclear weapons, fearing that Mr. Trump could not be trusted to defend a fellow NATO nation fully.

“This is a race for security,” Mr. Tusk said.

In February, South Korea’s foreign minister, Cho Tae-yul, told the National Assembly that building nuclear weapons was “not on the table, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that it is off the table either.” By some estimates, both South Korea and Japan have the technical know-how to develop nuclear weapons in less than two months.

Bilihari Kausikan, a former Singaporean diplomat, said that a little mistrust can lead to healthy caution, noting that Asia has been skeptical of America since the Vietnam War. He said the end result of the Trump era could be “a more diversified world, with more maneuvering space” and a less dominant United States.

But for now, distrust is spreading. Experts said it would take years and a slew of costly trust-building efforts to bring America together with allies, new or old, for anything long-term.

“Trust is difficult to create and easy to lose,” said Deborah Welch Larson, a political scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles who wrote a book about mistrust’s Cold War role. She added, “Mistrust of the United States’ intentions and motives is growing day by day.”

#### Public opinion proves.

Erin Doherty 12-23, Polling and campaigns reporter at POLITICO, 12-23-25, “Poll: Major allies see US as unreliable and destabilizing,” https://www.politico.com/news/2025/12/23/us-allies-trump-trust-poll-00702908

Unreliable. Creating more problems than solving them. A negative force on the world stage. This is how large shares of America’s closest allies view the U.S., according to new polling, as President Donald Trump pursues a sweeping foreign policy overhaul.

Pluralities in Germany and France — and a majority of Canadians — say the U.S. is a negative force globally, according to new international POLITICO-Public First polling. Views are more mixed in the United Kingdom, but more than a third of respondents there share that dim assessment.

[Chart Omitted]

Near-majorities in all four countries also say the U.S. tends to create problems for other countries rather than solve them.

[Chart Omitted]

The findings offer a snapshot of how Trump’s reshaping of U.S. foreign policy — including through an expansive trade agenda, sharp rhetoric toward longtime allies and reoriented military posture — is resonating across some of Washington’s closest allies.

When asked whether the U.S. supports its allies around the world or challenges them, a majority of Canadians say the latter, as well as just under half of respondents in Germany and France. In the U.K., roughly 4 in 10 say the U.S. challenges, rather than supports, its allies, more than a third say it cannot be depended on in a crisis, nearly half say it creates problems for other countries, and 35 percent say the U.S. is a negative force overall.

[Chart Omitted]

Trump has blurred traditional lines of global alliances during his first year back in office, particularly in Canada and Europe. He called Europe a “decaying” group of nations led by “weak” people in a recent POLITICO interview and his sweeping National Security Strategy argued that the continent has lost its “national identities and self-confidence.”

By contrast, the strategy reserved less scathing language for Russia — even as U.S. allies in Europe gear up for what leaders have called a “hybrid war” with Moscow.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio defended the administration’s approach when asked about European criticisms, saying the transatlantic alliance remains rooted in shared “civilizational” values. “I do think that at the core of these special relationships we have is the fact that we have shared history, shared values, shared civilizational principles that we should be unapologetic about,” Rubio said at a briefing last week.

But as Trump disrupts long-standing relationships, skepticism among allied leaders may be seeping into public sentiment, said Matthew Kroenig, vice president and senior director of the Atlantic Council’s Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security.

“Public opinion in democracies often reflects elite opinion,” he said. “What you’re probably seeing there is that you do have politicians in these countries expressing skepticism about the United States and about the Trump administration, and that’s being reflected in the public opinion polling.”

#### War is not inevitable---but the US denial of Chinese regional influence *makes it so*.

Dr. Stephen M. Walt 25, the Robert and Renee Belfer Professor of international relations at the Harvard Kennedy School, M.A. and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley, “Hedging on Hegemony: The Realist Debate over How to Respond to China”, International Security, Volume 49, Number 4, Spring 2025, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec\_a\_00508

Are the United States and China “destined for war,” as some scholars maintain, or is a future conflict between them a catastrophe that can be avoided?1 No one knows for certain, but the intensity of their rivalry and the likelihood of a direct military confrontation will depend in large part on how leaders in both countries define their security requirements and on what they believe must be done to preserve them.

If there is a war, it is likely to arise from China’s efforts to establish an unchallenged position in East Asia and a U.S.-led effort to prevent it from achieving this goal. Although the specific issue that might eventually trigger a clash (over Taiwan, the South China Sea, the Korean Peninsula, etc.) is impossible to predict, the taproot would be the two states’ incompatible approaches to this increasingly important arena. The crux of the problem, in short, is regional hegemony in Asia: China would like to have it, and the United States wants to keep Beijing from getting it.

## 2

### Middle East---2NC

#### No Middle East war.

Kabir Taneja 25, MA, Deputy Director & Middle East Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, "Can A ‘New’ Middle East Survive The ‘Old’?" Foreign Policy, 01/29/2025, https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/01/29/progress-middle-east-israel-hamas-hezbollah-gaza/.

Today, the news from the region is more grim than it has been for years. A broader Israel-Iran conflict has taken center stage, Gaza’s civilians are returning to decimated neighborhoods amid a tenuous Israel-Hamas cease-fire agreement, and the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria has exacerbated regional tensions.

The recent killing, by unconfirmed perpetrators, of Zvi Kogan, a 28-year-old Israeli Moldovan rabbi and emissary for Chabad Lubavitch in Abu Dhabi, has been classified as a terrorist attack by Israel. For Israelis, the Kogan murder case challenged a view of Dubai as an oasis of stability and security for everyone, including Jews. This underscores how the Israel-Hamas war has derailed the Israeli Arab rapprochement that characterized the heady days after the Abraham Accords, when Israeli tourists flocked to Dubai as if it were a European capital.

For a country like the United Arab Emirates—which has promoted pluralism and intra-religious harmony by way of inaugurating both a synagogue and Hindu temple on its soil—protecting sociopolitical gains is critical.

But did the very idea of a “new” Middle East—glimpses of which can be seen in the skyscrapers of Dubai and the blueprints of Neom, the futuristic city envisioned by the Saudis—die on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas conducted its audacious terror strike against Israel?

For a long time, the meteoric economic rise of countries like the UAE occurred largely because of their own government’s individual policies. However, regional progress today may well demand a rethink in Arab capitals regarding the importance of resolving the Palestine question once and for all.

Many scholars, intellectuals, and politicians believe that confronting aspects of the “old” Middle East that were ignored, like the status of the Palestinian territories and the political rights of Palestinians, is now central to any cohesive forward movement for the Arab world, Israel, and Iran alike. There are also those, such as scholar Marwan Kabalan, who believe that Oct. 7 was partly, if not entirely, designed to derail the progress being made, such as a potential Saudi-Israel normalization and the success of bigger geoeconomic ideas, such as the envisioned India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) announced on the sidelines of a G-20 summit in 2023.

The latest war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, as well as its extension into Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, has also rapidly reoriented the regional policies of the Arab states. The chain reaction of events—ranging from the China-brokered detente between Riyadh and Tehran to a rapid disintegration of the Assad family’s control of Syria after more than 50 years of iron-fisted rule—have once again placed the Palestinian cause front and center. The Palestinians have often been used as a crisis of convenience for management of regional politics, including by Arab states. But this is now bound to change with Palestinian self-determination once again finding a global audience.

The Abraham Accords, signed in 2020 by a cluster of Arab states led by the UAE and Israel, sought to normalize political and diplomatic relations and set out a path toward a new regional order. Prosperity, economic progress, developmental integration—in other words, money—is the mantra today.

Regional powers such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia are hedging their bets on allies and pursuing strategic autonomy. In addition to close ties with the United States, they are expanding trade and political outreach with both China and Russia. In July, the air forces of the UAE and China held their second annual joint exercise in the restive Chinese region of Xinjiang, where Beijing has committed itself to systematic and violent repression of its Uyghur Muslim population.

Satellite images that captured these exercises show that the UAE flew its predominantly Western military equipment, including French-made Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft and U.S.-made C-17 Globemaster heavy transport aircraft, deep into Chinese territories. In former U.S. President Joe Biden’s framing of international relations—of an unfolding “democracy verses autocracy” contestation—Arab monarchies have found a sweet spot to thrive in.

The Middle East’s regional disorder has a different and older rulebook to it, where long-standing Western interference in both good and bad faith—led by a wish to reshape regional politics as per the requirements of Washington, London, or Paris—has failed to create outcomes leading to sustainable progress.

The recurring issue of establishing a sovereign Palestinian state is a prime example of the old rulebook’s return.

Iran, as part of its two long-term strategies of supporting an Axis of Resistance along with maintaining a “forward defense” posture, has used the Palestinian cause for its own ends—backing both Hamas and Hezbollah.

Israel’s assassinations of top Hamas and Hezbollah officials in recent months has dealt serious blows to Iran’s regional strategy, but Iran has had some victories away from the battlefield. Its normalization with Saudi Arabia is a merger of the old with the new. For the moment, the Saudis have stepped away from the idea of normalizing ties with Israel, and in return, Saudi oil facilities—which were attacked by Iran’s Houthi allies in Yemen in 2019—have been spared since.

While this does not mean the fundamentals of Saudi-Iran rivalry have been resolved, Riyadh has pushed itself toward neutrality, rather than overt confrontation, to protect its own ongoing economic, political, and ideological diversification.

Amid all these interplays, the return of U.S. President Donald Trump is the proverbial joker in the deck. While it is true that Trump’s own preference for personality over policy may see him push all parties, including Israel, for de-escalation and long-term cease-fires, he is not expected to return U.S. intervention to the era of boots on the ground or even put promotion of democracy at the forefront.

But Trump is also what is known in Persian as a bazaari, meaning one who is always looking for a good deal. The Arabs, Israelis, and Iran alike are cognizant of this trait. In part, this may be a reason why Iran could remain content as a threshold nuclear state to try and box Trump in his own self-aggrandizing narrative as a president who did not start any wars.

The end of the current Israel-Hamas war and a push for a two-state solution is once again emerging as a consensus in the region. The old wisdom of a two-state design has triumphed globally, as it remains the only workable outcome on paper—primarily because no other viable options have been presented for decades.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, an advisor and close confidant of Trump, has said that the best insurance policy against Hamas is “not an Israeli reoccupation of Gaza but a reform in the Palestinian society” and that only the Arab states can achieve that. But not many leaders within the Arab states seem eager to take up unilateral ownership of such a task, even as they reap the benefits of Israeli military action to dismantle both Hamas and Hezbollah.

Despite more than a year of war, large projects ranging from connectivity to energy security continue to be envisioned. What will be expected from the region is to take ownership of its own regional security, critical for furthering its own economic aims. For this, conflict management, rather than conflict resolution, is the way forward.

An appetite for a new Middle East order may well provide enough motivation to resolve the obstacles created by the resurgence of the old one. The developing cease-fire between Israel and Hamas marks a moment of respite from war and an opening for the Arab states to address Palestinians’ role in the region moving forward. Saudi-Iran normalization can also be a catalyst, and Arab powers, specifically after the Abraham Accords, hold enough political influence across Israel, Iran, and the Palestinian territories to drive a new era of dialogue, compromise, and resolution.

### Russia War---2NC

#### No Russia war.

Dr. Hanna Notte 25, PhD, Director, Eurasia Nonproliferation Program, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. Nonresident Senior Associate, Europe, Russia, & Eurasia Program, Center for Strategic & International Studies, "How Big Is Russia’s Appetite for Upheaval?" Foreign Affairs, 02/27/2025, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russia/how-big-russias-appetite-upheaval.

But even in a relatively permissive environment, Russia’s appetite for global upheaval has limits. New bursts of conflict will not necessarily work in its favor. Given its finite resources and its preoccupation with Ukraine, Moscow’s ability to shape outcomes to its advantage in other parts of the world is highly constrained. As violence has recently spread across the Middle East, for instance, Russia at first was optimistic that the hostilities would harm its adversaries, but that conflict ended up weakening Moscow’s position because it exposed the vulnerability of one Russian partner, Iran, and culminated in the downfall of another, the regime in Syria. Russia’s reliance on partners other than China, Iran, and North Korea has also restricted its troublemaking. Its need to keep stable relations with India and Saudi Arabia in particular has softened its aggressive impulses, and Moscow’s desire to avoid upsetting countries in the global South has compelled it to navigate multilateral diplomatic forums, such as BRICS and the United Nations, with some caution.

These constraints will be strongest while Russia continues to wage war in Ukraine, but they will persist in some form after a potential settlement, too. Where it can control the consequences of its meddling, Moscow will likely determine that the benefits outweigh the risks. But where its interference could escalate into a full-blown conflict that demands Russia’s military engagement, Moscow may exercise more restraint. In practice, this means that Russia will almost certainly step up its disinformation campaigns and acts of sabotage (such as cyberattacks and vandalism of infrastructure) in Europe, sensing in the United States’ apparent desire to retreat from the continent an opportunity to further erode NATO cohesion. But Russia’s aversion to military entanglement should inhibit it from causing upheaval on the Korean Peninsula, in the Middle East, and even in the African countries where it maintains a security presence. After facing some opposition to its revisionist agenda in multilateral forums, Moscow may also reassess its diplomatic strategy, based in part on how much havoc the United States itself will wreak in those institutions.

Russia is playing a long game, and it knows it needs to pick its battles, especially if the unexpected tailwind from the White House turns out to be temporary or tempestuous. If the countries still committed to countering Russian disruption are to do so effectively in this new, uncertain era, they, too, will need to assess carefully where and when to enter the fray—starting with the increasingly imperiled European front.

### Energy War---2NC

#### Resource wars are fake

Emily Meierding 16, assistant professor at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., 5-19-2016, "Oil wars: Why nations aren’t battling over resources," Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/05/19/oil-wars-why-nations-arent-battling-over-petroleum-resources/?utm\_term=.b334c10dbcbd

The confrontation died down, but a critical question remains: Do countries fight over oil resources? The question isn’t just pertinent to the South China Sea. The Arctic, Caspian, East China Sea and eastern Mediterranean have all been identified as potential “hot spots” for international oil conflicts. Numerous conflicts, including Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, Japan’s invasion of the Dutch East Indies in World War II, Germany’s attacks against the Russian Caucasus in the same war, the Iran-Iraq War, the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay, and even the Falklands War, have been described as international “oil wars.” However, contrary to the conventional wisdom, the risk of international oil wars is slim. Although oil is an exceptionally valuable strategic and economic resource, fighting for it does not pay. The belief that countries fight for oil rests on a flawed foundational assumption: Countries reap the same benefits from foreign oil resources as from domestic oil resources. In reality, profiting from oil wars is hard. Countries face at least four sets of obstacles that discourage them from fighting for oil: invasion costs, occupation costs, international costs and investment costs. Invasion costs are the damage that wars inflict on oil fields and infrastructure. Occupation costs arise from local resistance to foreign occupation, which can target oil industry infrastructure and personnel. International costs are imposed by the international community, which can respond to oil grabs with economic sanctions and military interventions. Investment costs are the challenges of attracting foreign capital and technical expertise to occupied oil fields. Collectively, these four sets of costs dramatically reduce the payoffs of fighting for oil and the appeal of oil wars. When the many other costs of war, including manpower and materiel, are taken into account, fighting for oil becomes even less attractive. From a purely rational standpoint, countries shouldn’t launch oil wars. But, countries don’t always act rationally. To test the oil war hypothesis, we have to take another look at historical so-called oil wars. Closer examination shows that oil has not been the fundamental cause of any international wars. The Falklands War in 1982 was triggered by national pride and Argentine officials’ fear that their window of opportunity for retaking the islands was closing. Rather than fight over oil, Britain and Argentina tried to use it as a catalyst for cooperation. In the 1970s and 1990s, they tried to jointly develop the Falklands’ oil resources. The Iran-Iraq War, from 1980 to 1988, was also not an oil war. Iraq initially aimed only to gain control over the Shatt al-Arab waterway and 130 square miles of contested territory. In the early stages of the war, Iraq repeatedly offered to withdraw from Iran, if Tehran would accept those demands. However, Iranian officials accused the Iraqis of fighting for oil in order to discredit them internationally. The Chaco War, from 1932 to 1935, was also launched for other reasons. Bolivia and Paraguay knew that oil discoveries in the Chaco region were unlikely. They fought because of national pride and to avoid further territorial dismemberment, after major losses in the 19th century. The oil explanation didn’t appear until the war bogged down, when leaders tried to transfer responsibility for the devastating conflict onto international oil companies. On three occasions, countries have launched major military campaigns targeting oil resources. However, these were fundamentally wars for survival, not for oil. In World War II, Japan invaded the Dutch East Indies and Germany attacked the Russian Caucasus because leaders realized that, without more oil, their regimes would collapse. Japan would have to withdraw from China, which was “tantamount to telling us to commit suicide,” as Japanese Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori put it. Hitler was even more succinct: “Unless we get the Baku oil,” he stated, “the war is lost.” Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was a war for survival. Contrary to popular beliefs, Saddam Hussein was not attempting to greedily grab more oil resources. Instead, he was afraid that the United States was trying to overthrow his regime. The United States had supported the Kurds’ rebellion in the 1970s, perpetrated the Iran-Contra scandal in the 1980s, and by 1990, seemed to be squeezing Iraq economically. According to Hussein, the United States was driving down oil prices by directing Kuwait to exceed its OPEC production quota. Hussein believed that seizing Kuwait offered the only means of eluding the United States’ hostile designs. By controlling his neighbor, Hussein could raise oil prices, escape his economic crisis and regain domestic support. He knew that the maneuver was a long shot. Regime records show that Hussein expected the United States would try to force him out of Kuwait. Still, it was either that or regime collapse. As Hussein’s deputy, Tariq Aziz, said after the war, “You will either be hit inside your house and destroyed, economically and militarily. Or you go outside and attack…” Japanese, German and Iraqi leaders believed that they were fighting wars for survival. Participants in other so-called oil wars were fighting for additional reasons, like national pride. None of the conflicts were driven by oil ambitions. This is good news for contemporary international relations. Oil competition in areas like the South China Sea is not a serious threat to international security. Countries may engage in minor oil spats, like China and Vietnam’s rig confrontation, to reinforce their resource claims. However, these incidents will not escalate into international wars. There is also little risk of oil imperialism. Countries like China will not satisfy their oil needs by seizing foreign oil fields. Historically, leaders have only initiated oil grabs when they believed that their survival depended on it. This condition is exceedingly rare, even in wartime. And, it’s unrelated to the price of oil. The United States considered grabbing Middle Eastern oil in 1975, after the first energy crisis drove up prices. However, the Ford administration refrained, because the costs of aggression were too high. Lastly, oil won’t inspire great power wars. The United States and China may eventually come to blows. Some of their military campaigns may target oil resources, if controlling them seems necessary for regime survival. However, oil will not be the fundamental cause of a Sino-American conflict. It’s not worth fighting for.

### FNPP---2NC

#### Russia and China are safe.

Richard S. Tierney et al. 20, Former Director for Nonproliferation Policy, U.S. National Security Council; “Revitalizing Nonproliferation Cooperation With Russia and China,” Arms Control Today, November 2020, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-11/features/revitalizing-nonproliferation-cooperation-russia-and-china, ---nws

Russia and China continue to share Washington’s interest in a peaceful, nuclear weapons-free Korean Peninsula, an outcome that would have the benefit, from their perspective, of reducing Washington’s need to respond to North Korean capabilities in a way they would regard as threatening, such as a major buildup of U.S. missile defenses. Finding common ground on a negotiated solution will require the three countries, especially the United States and China, to modify their current positions. For Washington, that means accepting that denuclearization is a long-term, step-by-step process; that Pyongyang will have to be provided meaningful incentives at each step of the way; and that the first step will be a partial measure with no reliable guarantee that the goal of complete denuclearization will eventually be realized.

For Beijing, it means recognizing that it will have to lean heavily on North Korea to get it to accept strict and verifiable measures and that, even if an agreement can be reached that reduces the North Korean threat, the United States and its allies will continue to reinforce their capabilities to deter the North. Russia will need to add its weight to Chinese efforts to encourage more flexible North Korean negotiating behavior. It will also need to work bilaterally with Washington, given their unique arms control experience, to demonstrate to Pyongyang that effective verification measures can be implemented without compromising national security interests.

Revitalizing nuclear security and nuclear energy cooperation. Nuclear security is the most promising area for resuming U.S. cooperation with Russia and China largely because the three countries have a genuine common interest in preventing terrorists from getting their hands on the materials needed to make nuclear weapons or dirty bombs. Moreover, U.S.-Russian reengagement would be facilitated by the long history of cooperation in this area, by the close personal and institutional ties that developed during that long history, and by the apparent desire of technical experts on both sides to resume cooperation. The United States and China do not have the extensive record of nuclear security cooperation shared by Washington and Moscow, but neither do they have the accumulated resentments and internal opposition toward such cooperation that came to bedevil U.S.-Russian nuclear security programs. If U.S.-Russian nuclear security cooperation is to be resurrected, it will have to abandon the past donor-recipient relationship and become a more equal partnership, with both sides sharing best practices rather than Russia simply adopting U.S. practices and with each side able to derive the benefits it seeks.

That means not only pursuing the nuclear security agenda favored by the United States, but also cooperating in the fields of nuclear science and nuclear energy that the Russian nuclear establishment seeks. Furthermore, it would be useful to recognize if not welcome that Russia’s interest in cooperative projects will often depend on its calculation of commercial gain. A study by prominent U.S.- and Russian-based think tanks has recommended an extensive menu of possible future cooperation that includes developing the next generation of safe and reliable nuclear reactors, creating proliferation-resistant nuclear fuels, improving the safety of nuclear power plants, improving nuclear security and accounting technologies, and enhancing nuclear security in other countries embarking on nuclear energy programs.

### NoKo

### AI