## DA

### 2nc---overview

#### Oil dependence causes Middle East instability---EVs solve.

Nick Zamanov 23, director of business development at Cyber Switching, expert in the EV infrastructure space, formerly he founded and exited several E-commerce and SaaS startups, including Procolors, Amplefind, and Berry’s, “Electric Cars and National Security: How reducing dependence on foreign oil can enhance national security”, https://cyberswitching.com/electric-cars-and-national-security-how-reducing-dependence-on-foreign-oil-can-enhance-national-security/

Electric Cars and Energy Security

Electric cars can help enhance energy security by reducing dependence on foreign oil. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the transportation sector accounts for about 70% of U.S. oil consumption. By transitioning to electric cars, the demand for oil will decrease, which will lower global oil prices and reduce the risk of supply disruptions. Additionally, electric cars can provide a reliable source of energy, as they can be powered by domestically produced renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.

Electric Cars and Geopolitics

Electric cars have significant geopolitical implications. The U.S. currently imports around 40% of its oil from the Middle East, which has made the region strategically important for U.S. foreign policy. The adoption of electric cars could reduce the U.S.’s dependence on Middle Eastern oil and reduce tensions in the region. Additionally, electric cars could shift the balance of power in oil-producing regions, as countries that are currently dependent on oil exports will need to find alternative sources of revenue.

#### Goes nuclear and global---no checks.

Dr. Shehab Al Makahleh 24, senior advisor at Gulf State Analytics, President of the Political Studies of the Middle East Center, Founder of the Geostrategic and Media Center, his PhD is in marketing politics, holds two master’s degrees in media and international politics, “The Middle East tinderbox: Averting specter of nuclear catastrophe”, https://jordantimes.com/opinion/shehab-al-makahleh/middle-east-tinderbox-averting-specter-nuclear-catastrophe

In a chilling roundtable discussion attended by a diverse array of scholars, professors and experts from renowned universities, think tanks and policy institutes, the fragile state of global affairs took centre stage. With the esteemed Professor Joseph Nye of Harvard University present, the conversation gravitated towards the Middle East, a region that has the potential to ignite a catastrophic nuclear war.

The geopolitical landscape is increasingly defined by the rift between Russia and China, and their alliance, on one side, and the United States and NATO, on the other. This escalating tension is exacerbated by the mutual threats and saber-rattling across various flashpoints, from the Taiwan Strait to the Ukraine conflict, and from the Korean Peninsula to the volatile Middle East.

The rift between the Russia-China alliance and the US-NATO axis has intensified in recent years, with both sides engaging in a perilous game of geopolitical brinkmanship. In the Middle East, this tension manifests in the proxy conflicts and power struggles playing out, from the war in Syria to the turmoil in Libya and Yemen.

These regional conflicts have become entangled with the larger strategic competition between the great powers. Russia’s intervention in Syria, for example, was seen as an attempt to bolster its influence in the region and challenge the US-led order. Similarly, China’s growing economic and diplomatic ties with countries like Iran have raised concerns about its intentions in the Middle East.

The Middle East, a powder keg of political, religious and ideological divisions, stands as the most immediate and perilous threat to global stability. The delicate balance of power in this region, coupled with the proliferation of nuclear capabilities, has created a scenario where the potential for miscalculation and unintended escalation looms large.

### 2nc---link---emory

#### 2---The expertise internal link---they bolster it---that’s key to the effectiveness of regs, which obviously blocks de-reg! We’re yellow.

Kohei **1ac** Suzuki 25. Assistant professor of public administration at Leiden University, Ph.D. in public policy from Indiana University. "Government efficiency or administrative backsliding?: warning signs from global experience with administrative decline." *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, 47(2), 91-94.

The second Trump administration has initiated unprecedented reforms of the federal civil service system. On inauguration day, 20 January 2025, President Trump established the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), launching a dramatic transformation of federal workforce management. Within its first month, the administration has implemented a three-pronged strategy: a near-total hiring freeze, a deferred resignation programme, and widespread terminations without regard for individual performance or position criticality. The scale and speed of these reductions are without precedent in American administrative history (Schoop, 2025).1

The most controversial aspect of these reforms is the “Schedule Policy/Career” classification, a revised version of Schedule F that would create a new category of readily dismissible political appointees. This change could expand the number of political appointments more than tenfold, affecting approximately 50,000 federal employees. These reforms reflect Trump’s first-term experiences, where his policy agenda was reportedly impeded by what his allies termed the “deep state” - career civil servants resistant to his directives (Fukuyama, 2024). The administration’s clear aim is to replace career bureaucrats with officials more aligned with its agenda.

While such reforms might yield short-term efficiency gains and expenditure cuts, they raise serious concerns about the long-term consequences for bureaucratic autonomy and institutional capacity. The fundamental question is whether these changes will truly create an “efficient government” and “make America great again” or instead undermine the professional foundations of American public administration.

To address this question, we must consider why professional bureaucracies are essential to modern governance. Effective policy implementation requires both political direction and administrative expertise. While elected officials establish broad policy goals, they lack the specialised knowledge needed for the thousands of technical decisions that government operations demand daily. Career civil servants bridge this gap, providing the expertise and continuity necessary for effective public service delivery.

Career civil servants’ expertise becomes evident when we examine the complex tasks of modern governance. Daily operations include activities like collecting pension premiums, analysing economic data, implementing financial regulations, and managing defence procurement. These functions demand not just specialised knowledge but years of practical experience and institutional understanding – qualities that cannot be rapidly replaced or replicated.

The effective functioning of democratic governance thus depends on a careful balance: elected officials provide policy direction while professional bureaucrats handle technical implementation. Critical decisions – from monetary policy to drug safety certification – require deep technical expertise rather than political judgement (Fukuyama, 2024). When politicians overreach into these technical domains, their limited specialised knowledge and focus on short-term political gains often leads to suboptimal or even harmful outcomes.

While the need for professional bureaucracy is universal, countries vary considerably in how they balance political leadership and administrative expertise. A 2020 expert survey by the Quality of Government Institute at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, offers valuable insights into these differences, measuring how strongly countries adhere to merit-based principles in their personnel practices (Nistotskaya et al., 2021). Their survey data in Figure 1 reveals significant variation across OECD member and Asian countries and regions, with higher scores indicating stronger merit-based practices and correspondingly lower levels of political intervention in personnel decisions.

Under merit-based systems, civil service appointments primarily depend on educational background and professional experience rather than political connections. Countries like Norway, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden, and Japan have developed particularly robust merit-based practices. The American system stands out especially among developed nations for its relatively extensive use of political appointments higher degrees of political interference in personnel matters. The contrast becomes stark when comparing specific numbers: while Japan maintains only about 80 political appointments in its entire civil service, the United States replaces approximately 4,000 high-ranking positions through political appointments during administrative transitions (Kobayashi, 2024). Such high degree of political influence in personnel matters has long distinguished the U.S. federal bureaucracy from its counterparts in other advanced democracies.

The extensive use of political appointments in the U.S. federal bureaucracy reflects a broader phenomenon that public administration scholars term “politicisation” - the practice of basing civil service personnel decisions on political criteria such as party relationships, personal connections, or ideological alignment rather than merit criteria (Peters & Pierre, 2004). The current reforms under the second Trump administration would significantly expand this already distinctive feature of American public administration.

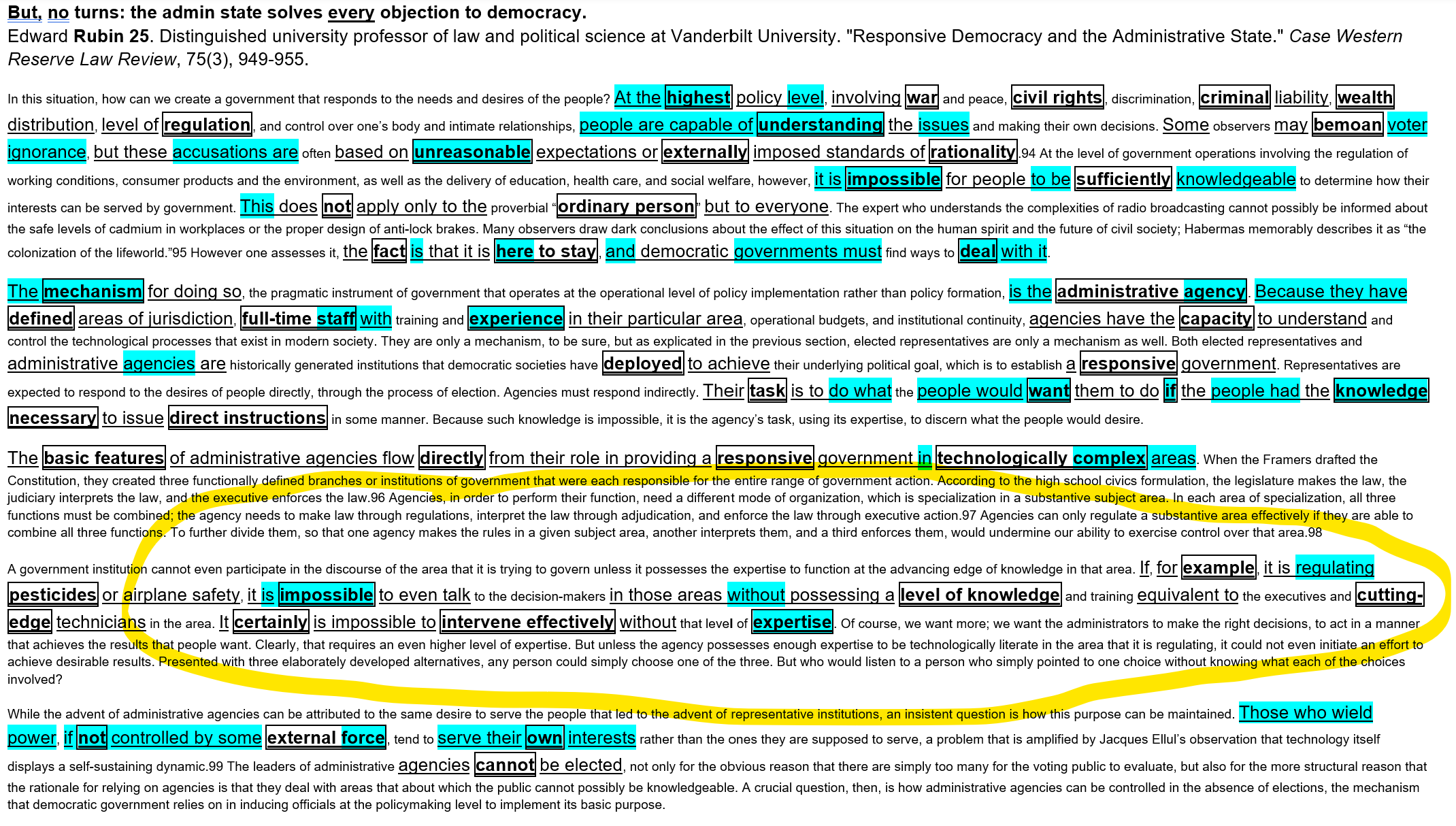
The consequences of such politicisation have been extensively studied. A robust body of research, drawing from diverse national contexts including both developed and developing countries, demonstrates that increasing political control over bureaucracy tends to undermine, rather than enhance, government performance. Empirical studies around the world have found strong correlations between excessive politicisation and increased corruption, decreased organisational performance, and reduced operational efficiency (Cornell, 2014; Dahlström & Lapuente, 2017; Lapuente & Suzuki, 2020; Lewis, 2011; Nistotskaya & Cingolani, 2016). In fact, our recent systematic review of over 1,000 peer-reviewed papers provides compelling evidence that merit-based systems yield significantly better outcomes than politicised ones, including reduced corruption, improved efficiency, increased public trust, and enhanced civil servant motivation (Oliveira et al., 2024).

In light of these empirical findings, the current reforms warrant examination within a broader global context. Public administration scholars have increasingly focused on how populist politics affects bureaucratic capacity and civil service performance (Michael W. Bauer et al., 2021). This research has identified a pattern that Michael W Bauer (2024) terms “administrative backsliding” - the systematic weakening of bureaucratic institutions in countries experiencing democratic decline.

The consequences of such reforms are well-documented. Brazil’s experience shows how political appointees lacking adequate expertise decreased administrative efficiency (Story et al., 2023). In Hungary, politically motivated personnel decisions demoralised civil servants and led to a critical loss of organisational expertise (Hajnal & Boda, 2021). In Turkey, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) governments intensified antibureaucratic discourse, framing the bureaucracy as an extension of a privileged elite. This rhetoric reinforced the populist dichotomy between the “pure nation” and the “enemy of the nation”, positioning the AKP as the true representative of the people while portraying the bureaucracy as a “servant of a specific elite group” and, consequently, an “enemy of the people” (Yılmaz Uçar, 2025). Similar patterns emerged during Trump’s first term, where expert staff were often viewed as “political resistance forces”, leading to a devaluation of expert judgement and loss of organisational expertise as experienced staff resigned (Kucinskas & Zylan, 2023).

Radical bureaucratic reforms, as exemplified by the Trump administration, can be understood as both a response to problems within existing bureaucratic systems and a reflection of public distrust in bureaucracy. However, excessive politicisation of bureaucratic systems compromises administrative expertise and autonomy, risking a long-term decline in policy implementation capabilities and public service quality. Achieving better quality of government requires operating bureaucratic systems under appropriate political control without excessively weakening them, while leveraging their expertise. American public administration and practitioners should now make use of the experiences of countries that have faced administrative decline and draw on insights from comparative research on quality of government.

#### Same thing in 1ac Rubin---they highlighted the words, quote, ‘regulating is impossible without expertise’! Insert the screenshot.



#### 3---Government functioning, broadly---they said they solve it, that’s the impact in Farrell---the reason why he thinks functioning government is good is because of regulation! Yellow.

Henry 1ac Farrell 25. Professor of international affairs at Johns Hopkins University, Ph.D. in government from Georgetown University. "When the polycrisis hits the omnishambles, what comes next?" Programmable Mutter. 2-21-2025. programmablemutter.com/p/when-the-polycrisis-hits-the-omnishambles

A couple of years ago, on my now deleted Twitter account, I had a brief joking dialogue with Adam Tooze, about the concept of polycrisis, which he didn’t invent but has popularized. Adam explains the polycrisis as a concatenation of big problems - e.g. climate change; the crisis of democracy; global migration - that not only hit simultaneously but plausibly make each other worse. I pointed to another neologism, the “omnishambles” (from Arnaldo Ianucci’s dark comedy, The Thick of It - Wikipedia definition), describing governmental situations in which no-one has any idea what is going on or what to do, and policy-making is utterly shambolic and fucked up. By construction, I suggested, there must be such things as the polyshambles and omnicrisis.

It wasn’t a very good joke, but I think that there is a useful intuition behind it, which is worth turning into an entirely unfunny diagnosis. We are in a world where our problems are getting bigger, and are feeding on each other. Those of us who live in the U.S. are at the beginning of a sudden and dramatic worsening of the quality of government policy making. In other words, we are about to see a collision between the polycrisis and the omnishambles. So how do we think about this collision usefully?

From this perspective, both Paul’s post, and our op-ed map specific pieces of a larger and more complex problem. And when I use the term ‘complex,’ I use it advisedly. The polycrisis is a simplified way of talking about the world as a complex system. In Scott Page’s description, a “complex system consists of diverse entities that interact in a network or contact structure.” In less academic language, it is a larger system composed of smaller sub-systems that interact with each other. Even when these sub-systems are relatively simple, the whole may be complex and unpredictable. And when they are themselves complex …

This way of thinking about the world helps clarify what the polycrisis involves. Complex interactions may give rise to positive feedback loops, in which different parts of the system reinforce each other so as to induce instability. To apply this to the polycrisis, think crudely of how climate change may increase the likelihood of large scale migration across borders, leading to crises of democracy and government legitimacy, which in turn makes governments less capable of regulating the economic activities that make climate change worse. But complex systems may also give rise to homeostasis, in which some parts of the system become adaptive, perhaps dampening down positive feedback loops and responding dynamically to unexpected changes in the environment.

One of Paul’s early books builds on these ideas (although he later became skeptical, since they are notably better at describing the phenomenon than predicting how it will unfold, let alone providing precise guidance on what to do about it). Indeed, the Minsky cycle is exactly an example of how government may act to limit the likelihood of positive feedback loops getting out of hand. Without regulation, irrational exuberance feeds upon itself and the behaviors it induces. The role of the Federal Reserve, famously, is to order “the punch bowl removed just when the party [is] really warming up.”

Behind Paul’s post - and our piece - lies a possible understanding of the larger situation we face. In good times, we have an environment in which the problems are not too big, or can be dealt with one by one, or, ideally, both things are true at once. We have a government that is capable of dealing with them, acting as a kind of homeostatic regulator, which dampens down the possible chaos without, and perhaps even takes advantage of the unexpected possibilities it provides (while avoiding eviscerating the dynamical aspects of the economy - one can absolutely have too much government).

We are not in those good times. Instead, we are in an increasingly unpredictable environment with multiple major problems reinforcing each other in complex ways (the polycrisis). At much the same time, the most significant government in the world is absolutely not acting as a homeostatic regulator. Instead, of dampening down the chaos, it is accelerating it, while ripping out large swathes of the administrative apparatus that potentially allow it to understand the environment and influence it.

Trump’s second term is going to be the apotheosis of the omnishambles. And it is potentially even grimmer than that. In an ideal world, there is at least a second order feedback loop such that bigger problems leads to better government and the expansion of capacity for government to deal with these problems in conjunction with other modes of problem solving (markets; democracy). In the world we are in right now, there seems to be just the opposite set of feedbacks. Bigger problems are not leading to better government in the U.S. and elsewhere, but to worse.

As noted already, complexity theory is much better at describing problems like this than at predicting how they will turn out, let alone solving them. But it at least provides a framework for seeing how the different sub-systems might interact together.

The crises we are likely to face in Trump’s second term are not simply going to be crises of financial regulation, or of tariffs, or of withdrawn security guarantees, or breakdowns of scientific knowledge, or loss of capacity to respond to emergencies. They are likely, instead to involve the interactions of two or more of these factors with each other, and with the pre-existing problems of the polycrisis. Mapping out - even crudely - the relationships between these different sub-systems will help us be better prepared for what happens, even if we cannot fully anticipate it.

#### Strong labor protections enable federal workers to stonewall Trump.

David Bernhardt 23, JD, former Secretary of the Interior, You Report to Me: Accountability for the Failing Administrative State, “Unaccountable Bureaucracy,” Ch. 2, ebook

Insulation of the Civil Service

The civil service reformers envisioned a merit-based, accountable civil service, but the protections against discriminatory firing give managers the impression (and at times the reality) that dismissing a poor-performing federal employee is very difficult, if not impossible. The Merit Systems Protection Board itself has long acknowledged that “many supervisors believe it is simply not worth the effort to attempt to remove federal employees who cannot or will not perform adequately.”8 An Office of Personnel Management study from 1999 concluded that only 8 percent of civil service managers with poor-performing employees even attempted to discipline or fire them. Of those who did, 78 percent reported that their efforts had no effect.9 A recent MSPB survey revealed that few supervisory staff (career or political) were confident they could remove a problem employee if they tried.10

In short, agencies rarely try to fire problematic employees. OPM data for 2020 show that agencies dismissed fewer than four thousand out of 1.6 million tenured civil service employees that year. The federal government now employs an insulated civil service lacking accountability. Federal employees know that dismissing them for all but the worst offenses is prohibitively difficult. One result is that career employees can often pursue their own policy goals without repercussions. The ability of career civil servants to advance their own agendas and frustrate policy initiatives they dislike has been well documented.11

The problem of employees choosing to follow their own policy objectives is exacerbated by the political leanings of the federal bureaucracy. Despite nonpartisan merit hiring, federal employees lean to the left overall, as numerous studies have shown. In 2021, for example, researchers at Northwestern University and the University of California at Berkeley found twice as many registered Democrats as registered Republicans in the civil service. In the Senior Executive Service—the most senior federal managers— registered Democrats outnumbered Republicans by nearly three to one.12 A more recent study by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Southern California showed that career federal employees gave political donations predominantly to left-leaning candidates.13

The upshot is that the federal bureaucracy is dominated by ideological liberals who their supervisors believe are almost impossible to fire. I personally believe that the vast majority of these liberal civil servants set aside their policy views to serve their country honorably. I know many career employees who did not agree with President Trump’s policies yet faithfully implemented them. But employees with less integrity could and did work to stymie policies they disagreed with. Simply put, intransigent career employees are a significant impediment to a Republican president’s ability to implement the agenda that he (or she) campaigned on.

#### ‘Collective bargaining’ is the mechanism behind worker obstruction.

Dr. Donald Devine 25, PhD political science, senior scholar at the Fund for American Studies, former director of the US Office of Personnel Management; Law & Liberty, “A Quiet Administrative Revolution,” https://lawliberty.org/a-quiet-administrative-revolution/

The ruling provision of the OPM guidance directly states that “covered agencies and subdivisions are no longer subject to [certain] collective-bargaining requirements.” As a result, executive agencies no longer must engage in collective bargaining with federal unions. Consequently, the original recognition of the relevant unions no longer applies, and unions lose their status as exclusively recognized labor organizations requiring agency facilitation in collecting union dues.

Agencies are further arguably allowed to proceed with personnel policies generally, including reductions in force. Units covered by the memorandum include the departments of Defense, State, Treasury, Veterans Affairs, Justice, and Homeland Security, and substantial parts of most other major federal agencies. All are directed “to return to the policies of Executive Order 13839” and are “accordingly required to, consistent with applicable law, return performance evaluations to 30 days, and administer discipline and unacceptable performance policies to those set in the first Trump administration and to separate employees for unacceptable performance in appropriate cases.” Union involvement in employee separations was invalidated, and government-paid union positions were eliminated.

A memorandum titled “Restoring Accountability for Career Senior Executives” revived performance management principles requiring actual plans from each top career senior executive to be evaluated by a political superior and reviewed by performance review boards managed by non-career executives. Failure to perform could lead to removal without an appeal to an administrative review. Similar procedures would again cover second-level career supervisors as in the original Carter legislation.

Together, these reforms change the nature of government administration. The union-related changes alone are fundamental. These weaken government unions and associations’ powers, agency fees, and costs, freeing willing career managers and executives to implement the decisions of presidentially appointed agency leaders. Even Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt opposed unionizing federal government employees.

President Trump’s reforms go well beyond what any other president has achieved in this area, although Reagan tried earlier with some success. Elon Musk provided the energy required at the beginning, as did those in the transition at OPM and in the other agencies. And all was based on serious analysis beforehand by conservative think tanks in Washington, some of which have been advocating many of these reforms for generations.

Major policy reform based upon serious intellectual analysis is rare in government. Moving the bureaucracy from being under significant control by unions, management associations, ideological “experts,” media leakers, outside staff, consultants, and contractors to being controlled by officials appointed by an elected president is historic.

There are two major theories of today’s public administration. The dominant recent view has been the progressive one associated with Woodrow Wilson in his classic The Study of Administration, emphasizing rule by national government experts acting as the leading force in shaping public policy. The second, a view that goes back to the Constitution, stresses administrative control by national and local political leaders. It was put into modern form by Vincent Ostrom in his classic The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration, stressing the role of separate power sources based on pluralism and responsible elected officials.

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 was a bipartisan attempt by a political academic to place more power in the hands of political appointees rather than career managers. It was modified administratively over the years to increase labor and career management power. Today’s reforms are actually a step back into history and the original intent of the Act, and now provide a serious opportunity for elected leaders to actually manage the government.

### ---at: all the dereg already happened

#### There’s a lot to undo! Deregulation doesn’t happen overnight.

Jack Hatzimemos 25, J.D. Candidate at the Georgetown University Law Center, “The Single Most Impactful Day of Deregulation in EPA History”, https://www.law.georgetown.edu/environmental-law-review/blog/the-single-most-impactful-day-of-deregulation-in-epa-history/

While the EPA and Zeldin’s announcement does not explicitly claim that the agency will eliminate every regulation they discuss, there is a fear that the new administration aims to substantially cut back on decades of prior EPA regulation. It is hard to ignore this concern, as Zeldin himself claims the agency is, “driving a dagger through the heart of climate-change religion and ushering in America’s golden age.”[10] Multiple Democratic politicians have condemned the words of Zeldin and have accused the agency of “abandoning the EPA’s responsibility to protect the environment.”[11] Strikingly, a former Obama Administration EPA administrator called Zeldin’s rollbacks the “most disastrous day in EPA history.”[12] Worth noting, however, the New York Times emphasizes that the announcements do not carry the weight of law and that the EPA would have to carry out a long process, including public comments, to fully enact the changes.[13]

### Not a Monolith

### AT:

### 2nc---at: cowen

#### Link turns assume Biden’s EV policies were working---which is totally wrong. Government EV programs fail. Red tape impedes EV adoption---deregulating solves.

Tom Troxell 25, Technical Sales Manager at Nayax, President of TXLEV, former Director of Fleet Electrification at Aero Corporation, holds a degree from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, “Keep the EV Tax Credit. Cut the Red Tape”, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/keep-ev-tax-credit-cut-red-tape-tom-troxell-z5ere/

As the United States continues its push toward electrifying transportation, policymakers face growing pressure to trim spending. If cuts must be made, let’s focus on what’s bloated, ineffective, and often counterproductive; federal programs like NEVI (National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure); and protect what’s actually working: the federal tax credits for new and used electric vehicles.

Let’s start with the elephant in the room. Programs like NEVI, while well-intentioned, have become emblematic of government inefficiency. The red tape involved in deploying publicly funded EV infrastructure is staggering. A project that might take six months to plan and deploy in the private sector can take two to three years or more under NEVI due to the layers of compliance and bureaucracy involved. Requirements such as B.A.B.A equipment compliance, prevailing wage, apprenticeship mandates, mandatory features and capabilities of equipment, site selection constraints, design and layout constraints, the general bureaucratic chokeholds, and limited competitive access for eligible developers. Some of these might sound good on paper but often significantly delay timelines, wildly inflate costs, and restrict competition to a small club of insiders.

This creates a bloated and ineffective program. To date 57 NEVI sites have been deployed in the 4 years since the inception of the program at an average cost of $192,000 per port installed. Contrast that with Tesla’s privately developed supercharging sites which average $30,000 per port installed. Even the most adamant EV supporters have a hard time arguing that NEVI is an effective use of tax dollars.

#### They can’t access offense from blocking Trump’s EV policies---those will inevitably get blocked in court.

Lee Hedgepeth et al. 25, Inside Climate News, holds master’s degrees in community journalism and political development from the University of Alabama and Tulane University, “Trump Has Thrown a Wrench into a National EV Charging Program. Can He Make It Disappear?”, https://insideclimatenews.org/news/13022025/trump-national-ev-charging-program/

Despite the announcement by the Trump administration, however, legal experts and those familiar with the electric charging program at issue say the president does not have the power to permanently nix the NEVI program.

“NEVI funding was appropriated by Congress as part of the bipartisan infrastructure law, and it cannot be canceled by the executive branch,” said Elizabeth Turnbull, director of policy and regulatory affairs at the Alliance for Transportation Electrification, a trade group for the electric vehicle industry. “It’s not clear that the secretary of transportation has the authority to revoke states’ NEVI plans, and it’s quite clear that the executive branch lacks the authority to withhold the funding for any sustained period. So, we expect recent executive branch actions to be successfully challenged in court.”

Even under the most aggressive arguments for a strong executive branch, the Supreme Court has stated clearly that the Constitution gives Congress the sole authority to appropriate and legislate.

Lawmakers, too, have weighed in on the legality of the Trump administration’s NEVI directive, saying officials acted with “blatant disregard for the law.”

### Warming---Defense---1NC

### 2nc---at: renewables alone solve oil

#### Renewables are for electricity; oil is for cars. Duh.

Dr. Trevor Larkum 15, PhD in Mechanical Engineering from UCL, Managing Director at Fuel Included Ltd., former Chairman of General Robotics, “Seven Reasons Cheap Oil Can’t Stop Renewables Now”, https://fuelincluded.com/2015/03/seven-reasons-cheap-oil-cant-stop-renewables-now/

The Sun Doesn’t Compete With Oil

Oil is for cars; renewables are for electricity. The two don’t really compete. Oil is just too expensive to power the grid, even with prices well below $50 a barrel.

Instead, solar competes with coal, natural gas, hydro, and nuclear power. Solar, the newest to the mix, makes up less than 1 percent of the electricity market today but will be the world’s biggest single source by 2050, according to the International Energy Agency. Demand is so strong that the biggest limit to installations this year may be the availability of panels.

#### No existential climate impacts, adaptation solves, AND war turns it.

Dr. Harry DeAngelo & Dr. Judith A. Curry 25, PhD, Chair Emeritus, Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California; PhD, Professor Emeritus, School of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, Georgia Institute of Technology, "A Critique of the Apocalyptic Climate Narrative," SSRN, 02/19/2025, pg. 1-4. [italics in original]

Hypothesized damaging consequences of global warming include (i) loss of life from greater intensity and frequency of heat waves, hurricanes, floods, droughts, and wildfires and (ii) economic losses from such extreme-weather events and from sea-level rise due to melting polar ice caps. Assessments of the impact from human-caused warming are complicated by the difficulty of determining the extent to which observed temperature increases are caused by natural climate variability – a difficulty that adds to the uncertainty in estimates of how much human-caused warming to expect over the 21st century.

*Warming over the past 120 years*

The question of whether global warming is dangerous (whatever its cause) can be addressed by examining the behavior of the climate since before the time human activity generated large amounts of greenhousegas emissions. Human-caused global warming is typically measured with reference to pre-industrial times; for practical reasons in terms of the availability of data, the usual approach employs a baseline period in the late 19th century. Since the late 19th century, Earth’s average temperature has increased by about 1.3o C (2.3o F). During the same period, average global sea level has risen 8-9 inches, and there has been little or no detectable change in most types of extreme weather events when measured against the background of natural weather and climate variability.

Since the late 19th century, with 1.3o C of global warming, humanity has seen unprecedented increases in prosperity and well-being. Global population has increased from about 1.6 billion in 1900 to 8.2 billion people in 2024. In 1900, the global average lifespan was 34 years; in 2024 the global average lifespan more than doubled to 73 years. From 1961 to 2020, global agricultural output nearly quadrupled, with a 53% increase in per capita output despite a 2.6-fold increase in global population.

Since the early 1900s, per capita mortality from hurricanes, floods, droughts, and wildfires has decreased by almost 98% (Koonin (2021, page 170)). These favorable trends in weather- and climate-related mortality rates reveal that the world is now much better at preventing deaths from extreme weather and climate events than it was a century ago. The sharp reduction in death rates has been accomplished through greater wealth (driven by energy derived from fossil fuels), which provides better infrastructure, superior advance-warning technologies, and greater capacity to recover from weather-related disasters.

Although the role of higher temperatures and atmospheric CO2 concentrations in these favorable changes in mortality rates is open to debate, two aspects of the increases are unambiguously beneficial. First, satellite observations since the 1980s indicate widespread greening of the planet. The satellite data show that, over the last two decades, Earth has increased its green leaf area by approximately 5%. This greening reflects increased CO2 fertilization, warmer temperatures, and more rainfall (Chen et al. (2024)).

The second aspect relates to heat and cold extremes. An unambiguous consequence of global warming is more frequent heat extremes, coupled with less frequent cold extremes. It is well known that mortality is substantially greater (almost a factor of 10) for extreme cold than for extreme heat (Zhao et al. (2021). Consequently, rising temperatures are associated with a *net saving of lives* owing to the reduction of mortality from extreme cold events. Heat-related mortality is also declining over time (O’Neill et al. (2021)), owing to general improvements in health care systems, increasing prevalence of residential air conditioning, and behavioral changes – factors that have dominated any impact of a warmer planet on the risk of heat-related death.

Although the dollar value of damages from extreme weather events is now greater than it was many decades ago, this increase is the result of increasing vulnerability and exposure associated with greater population and concentration of wealth in coastal and other disaster-prone regions. A recent analysis summarizing many studies finds no evidence to support claims that any part of the overall increase in global economic losses from weather and climate disasters can be attributed to global warming (Pielke (2020, 2023)).

*Prospective warming over the 21st century*

What about warming over the rest of the 21st century? Is there reason to expect dire consequences for humanity going forward in time?

The Apocalyptic climate narrative and the most extreme impacts are driven by extreme emissions scenarios, with 4-5o C of warming by 2100 (above a baseline in the late 19th century). However, since 2021, the UN’s climate negotiators have abandoned extreme emissions scenarios as unrealistic for two reasons. First, they make unrealistic assumptions, especially about coal use. Second, actual emissions have been tracking well below their most extreme emission scenario, and indeed slightly below their medium emissions scenario. The UN is now working with an estimated year 2100 warming of 2.5°C (UNFCCC (2022)), while the IEA Roadmap to NetZero projects 2.4°C of warming by 2100 (IEA (2023)). When plausible scenarios of natural climate variability and values of climate sensitivity on the lower end of the UN’s IPCC likely range are considered, the expected warming could be significantly lower (Lee et al. (2021)).

If we work with 2.5°C projected warming by 2100, more than half (1.3°C) of the predicted increase in temperature has already occurred. There are good reasons to expect continued advances in prosperity and well-being over the remainder of the 21st century – and ample reasons such as AI to expect such advances to accelerate. Moreover, the so-called threshold of danger of 2°C warming since pre-industrial times is not an objective threshold of danger. Rather, 2°C is a politically negotiated target designed to motivate broad-based actions to reduce emissions (Curry (2023, page 9)).

Importantly, there is no credible case that missing the 2°C target would pose an existential risk to humanity. Humans have adapted to (and thrived in) climates extremes far worse than in the pessimistic extreme scenario, as summertime residents of Phoenix and wintertime residents of Minneapolis demonstrate every year.

Two other risk-related points are relevant here. First, a basic assumption in the socioeconomic scenarios used in formulating the UN climate-assessment reports is that vulnerability to weather and climate extremes decreases with greater wealth and economic development, as adaptive capacity increases. All of the Shared Socioeconomic Pathways (SSPs) scenarios constructed for the most recent UN climate assessment entail dramatic growth, with global GDP in 2100 between four and ten times larger than in 2010 (Dellink et al. (2017)). These scenarios do not imply any futures for humanity that are worse than today.

Second, risks from human-caused global warming are difficult to separate credibly from natural weather and climate variability and the risks are dominated by the vulnerabilities of less-developed countries and poorer populations generally. Increasing wealth and productivity will continue to reduce humanity’s vulnerability to weather- and climate-related risks.

*Tipping points and surprises*

Uncertainty about the impact on humans of continued use of fossil fuels is dominated by the difficulties of estimating the likelihood of catastrophic outcomes from climate tipping points that could cause severe and possibly irreversible damage.

Climate tipping points are defined as abrupt or nonlinear transitions to a different climate state, which are hypothesized to occur once some threshold has been crossed, with regional or global consequences that are largely uncontrollable and beyond our management. In other words, tipping points are points of no return, at least on the century timescale. In recent geologic history, abrupt climate change has been caused by changes in ocean circulation patterns and ice-sheet dynamics, including (i) the Younger Dryas (12,900- 11,700 years ago) when global temperatures dropped by up to 15o C in some regions, (ii) an unnamed sudden cooling event that occurred around 8,200 years ago and that lasted about 150 years, and (iii) the Dansgaard-Oeschger Events (115,000-11,500 years ago) with a series of abrupt warmings and cooling during the last Ice Age with temperature shifts of 5-10o C occurring within decades.

The IPCC Assessment Reports have considered a number of potential tipping points associated with global warming, including ice-sheet collapse, collapse of the Atlantic Overturning Circulation, carbon release from permafrost thawing, and destruction of the Amazon rainforest and coral reefs. There are some preliminary climate model simulations for some of these conjectured tipping points. However, climate models do not include the appropriate physical, chemical, and biological processes to adequately simulate such events. Hence, these hypothesized climate tipping points have been based largely upon the consideration of imperfect analogues from the geologic past, process models, and physically based storylines.

The likelihood of any of the above types of hypothesized tipping points occurring in the 21st century under the medium emissions scenario is generally regarded as low, although there is also low confidence in any conclusions surrounding possible tipping points owing to deep (Knightian) uncertainties in our understanding of the complex climate system.

Could something genuinely catastrophic happen to the climate on the timescale of the 21st century? Yes, although continued use of fossil fuels is not the only possible cause. For example, a climate catastrophe could also be caused by nuclear war, a series of explosive volcanic eruptions, natural shifts in ocean circulation patterns, and/or shifts in ice-sheet dynamics driven by geologic processes.

It is impossible to remove all sources of climate-related risk, and it would be unwise to attempt to try to avert low probability climate catastrophes with policy actions that would themselves surely impose massive near-term costs on humanity. There is no doubt that aggressive near-term suppression of fossil-fuel use would impose significant costs on humans until such time as viable replacements for fossil fuels were found for the roles they play in the production of food, steel, cement, and plastics.

The critical implication: In terms of rational risk management, there is no case for policies that would suppress fossil-fuel use aggressively simply because something bad might happen. For such suppression to be rational, we should have good reason to think that the low probability climate catastrophe we would avoid would be far worse than the catastrophe we would surely induce by moving aggressively to net zero. We have yet to see anyone provide credible support for the latter argument.

#### The newest, conclusive study concurs.

Roger A. Pielke 24, Nonresident Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a professor in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder, 11/13/24, “Global Existential Risks,” https://rogerpielkejr.substack.com/p/global-existential-risks

In 2022, on a bipartisan basis, the U.S. Congress passed the Global Catastrophic Risk Management Act of 2022 requiring the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate an expert assessment of global catastrophic and existential risks. The Department of Homeland Security published the first Global Catastrophic Risk Assessment two weeks ago, and reached some important — and one surprising — conclusions.1

The legislation provided key definitions:

The term ‘‘existential risk’’ means the potential for an outcome that would result in human extinction.

The term ‘‘global catastrophic risk’’ means the risk of events or incidents consequential enough to significantly harm or set back human civilization

at the global scale.

The term ‘‘global catastrophic and existential threats’’ means threats that with varying likelihood may produce consequences severe enough to result in systemic failure or destruction of critical infrastructure or significant harm to human civilization.

Congress requested that the assessment focus on six areas of risk:2

the use and development of artificial intelligence (AI);

asteroid and comet impacts;

sudden and severe changes to Earth’s climate;

nuclear war;

severe pandemics, whether resulting from naturally occurring events or from synthetic biology;

supervolcanoes;

Using the key definitions across these six categories, the table below summarizes my reading of the report.

A close-up of a chart

Description automatically generated

Below is the full summary table from the report, within which, each chapter goes into extensive detail on each of the six risk categories.

A list of informational text

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

The report is well done, and each of the six risk areas are worth their own focused post here at THB.3 In the remainder of this post, I highlight what the report says about climate change — which the report does not identify as an existential risk.

The assessment recognizes that changes in climate have many significant consequences for people and ecosystems, but the corresponding risks are local and regional, not global:

“An important dynamic of climate change effects is that any one mechanism by which climate change creates risk, such as those listed above, although potentially devastating on a local to regional scale, might not rise to the level of a global catastrophe or an existential risk.”4

The report acknowledges diplomatically that activists often characterize climate change as an existential risk, which reflects “subjective values and worldviews” rather than scientific judgments of real-world risks:5

“A strong, international activist movement now exists that engages in advocacy for addressing climate change. That movement emphasizes the urgency of climate change; sponsors civic engagement efforts, including protest and civil disobedience, particularly among youths around the globe; and argues that climate change is a potential existential risk. . . although social movements reflect a genuine and legitimate concern about climate change’s potential risks to society, they are not necessarily grounded in objective assessment of those risks.”

The report acknowledges some of the extreme claims found in the scientific literature from those in the catastrophist planetary boundaries community as well as some of the outlier work in climate econometrics. However, the assessment largely rejects these outliers and is very clear in its conclusion that climate change does not present a catastrophic health risk — even over the course of a century:

“Although there is no accepted determination of what would constitute a global catastrophic health risk from climate change, authors of at least one report defined it as a mass-mortality event taking the equivalent of 25 percent of the population. For the United States, based on the 2020 population (330 million), percent would mean approximately 80 million people, or 2 billion for the estimated global population in 2022 of 8 billion. . . Mortality of this magnitude would effectively be ten times that of the 1918 influenza pandemic. These values suggest a very high bar for catastrophic risk. . . No published study has suggested the possibility of a singular mass-mortality event of this magnitude, nor is there evidence of an indirect mechanism, such as collapse of global food supplies or climate-mediated pathogenesis, that would result in such high rates of mortality. Even with cumulative losses over a century, mortality would not meet these thresholds.”

The bottom line: Climate change is important and poses significant risks that will require continued policy development and implementation in mitigation and adaptation — but climate change is not an existential risk. The world does indeed face existential risks and we should take care that concern over climate does not overshadow these other risks.

Last night I had the chance to give a talk to a wonderful group of thoughtful and informed normal folks in downtown Denver. After the event a women came up to me and asked if I was afraid of climate change. I responded that I was not, for the simple reason that despite the very real risks of changes in climate, we are focused on those risks. I told her that I worry much more about the things that we are not paying attention to, noting that the COVID-19 pandemic arose following a long period where there was little attention or concern about pandemics among most scientists or policy makers.

In a paper I wrote almost a decade ago, I warned that the catastrophes of the 21st century may — like COVID-19 — come from places not at the center of our attention:

I suggest three types of catastrophes lie ahead. The familiar – hazards that we have come to expect based on experience and knowledge, such as earthquakes and typhoons. The emergent – hazards that are the product of a complex, interconnected world, such as financial meltdowns, supply chain disruption and epidemics. The extraordinary -- hazards that may or may not be foreseen or foreseeable, but for which we are wholly unprepared, such as an asteroid impact, massive solar storm, or even fantastic scenarios found only in fiction, such as the consequences of contact with alien life. I will argue that our collective attention and expertise is, perhaps understandably, disproportionately focused on the familiar. The consequence, however, is a sort of intellectual myopia. We know more than we think about the familiar and less than we should about the emergent and the extraordinary. Yet our ability to deal with the hazards of the future likely depends much more on our ability to prepare for the emergent and the extraordinary.

The first Global Catastrophic Risk assessment by the U.S. government is an excellent starting point for a continuing discussion about catastrophic risks and how we might better prepare for them. It tells us that where our focus lies may not be where we find the greatest risks.

### 2nc---at: impact defense

#### Oil dependence structurally locks in a *self-licking ice cream cone* of insecurity, price increases, and intervention---a litany of flashpoints could escalate.

Dr. Olivia Rosane 24, PhD from the University of Cambridge, MA in Art and Politics from Goldsmiths, University of London, editor at Common Dreams, “The Vicious Loop of Blood and Oil”, https://atmos.earth/the-vicious-loop-of-blood-and-oil/

On Friday, January 12 in Yemen, before the sun crested the horizon at dawn, the United States and United Kingdom launched airstrikes against the Houthis—the militia group that controls the western part of Yemen, including its capital, Sanaa.

The U.S. and U.K. said they acted to stop the Houthis’ attacks on the “freedom of navigation,” targeting the military equipment the group used to attack vessels traveling through the Red Sea. The Houthis, meanwhile, claimed they are only targeting Israel’s ships or ships bound for Israel until it stops its bombardment and invasion of Gaza and allows for humanitarian aid.

The roughly 70 airstrikes on January 12 which killed at least five people, the militia group said, would “not go unanswered or unpunished.”

Later that day, as escalation became more likely, the price of oil rose by 1% as a growing number of oil tankers changed course, turning around rather than risking the Red Sea. Rather than pass through the Suez Canal, through which 10% to 15% of the world’s oil traffic passes, tankers have been taking the long route around South Africa, extending their voyage by over a week. That has increased shipping costs, which will likely increase prices, especially in Europe, according to The Washington Post.

“This case reflects the very close links between conflict and fossil fuels,” said Jatin Dua, a sociocultural anthropologist at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

As military conflict rages on in Ukraine, Gaza, and now the Red Sea, scholars and activists are increasingly calling out how oil and gas interests motivate war and fund its perpetrators.

“The control of oil and gas resources has been a key factor in many conflicts and geopolitical imperialism, either by providing part of the motivation for an invasion or by helping countries fund their militaries,” said Farhana Sultana, a professor at Syracuse University, in an email.

“Conflict, in turn, feeds production by driving up oil and gas prices,” she added, especially when it kicks off in a major oil-producing region like the Middle East.

It’s a feedback loop, where the quest for oil and gas fuels global conflict, which in turn stimulates more oil and gas extraction. But now, there’s a growing call to break the cycle, as peace and climate justice movements have united in a collective cry against war and fossil fuels.

Dua, whose research focuses on maritime piracy in the Indian Ocean, said the ability to connect the Mediterranean and Red Seas had been a priority for empires beginning with the Portuguese in the 15th century. The U.S., U.K., and EU see themselves as the contemporary protectors of this connection.

“Part of the current U.S.-U.K. focus is tied to their self-appointed role in keeping this chokepoint open given the extensive oil and geopolitical interests for both governments,” Dua said.

Yet when it comes to safeguarding the movement of fossil fuels, the air strikes may have backfired. The Houthis have continued their maritime attacks, and Qatar announced that it was pausing the shipping of liquified natural gas (LNG) through the Suez Canal. Now, the entire global LNG fleet appears to have abandoned the route, which Dua said could raise global LNG prices. Meanwhile, Shell has suspended all its Red Sea shipments.

The world risks teetering toward the more dire scenarios outlined in an October 2023 report from the World Bank, which warned that a regional escalation of Israel’s war on Gaza could raise oil prices from 3% to 75% depending on the severity of the disruption.

“If things deteriorate, certainly, commodity markets will be affected,” said report coauthor John Baffes, senior agricultural economist at the World Bank.

This includes oil. And, as with any commodity, an increase in price leads to an increase in production.

Fellow report author Valerie Mercer-Blackman, a lead economist at the World Bank’s Prospects Group, said that an increase in global oil prices could incentivize OPEC in particular to boost its production, which it has been limiting to prop up plummeting prices.

Speaking as the news broke of the strikes in Yemen, Baffes maintained that the probability of severe disruption as outlined in the World Bank report remained low.

“But still, they are out there,” he said.

These developments come as the burning of fossil fuels has pushed 2023 to be the hottest year on record. Scientists warn that the global economy can only burn oil, gas, and coal at current levels for six more years and still limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. By expanding the hells of present-day conflict, do world leaders risk locking in future ones?

This question was already raised by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the energy crisis that followed, which incentivized record U.S. oil production last year and gave the fossil fuel industry an argument for expanding LNG export infrastructure. Already, there are deals in place to supply LNG to China and the EU at least until 2050. Anne-Sophie Corbeau, a global research scholar with the Center on Global Energy Policy, noted that a significant amount of LNG infrastructure was built or started before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 sent Europe scrambling for alternatives to Russian gas. Of the roughly 280 billion cubic meters per year (bcm/y) of LNG infrastructure currently under construction, she said, around 180 had commenced before 2022. The remaining 100 bcm/y—80 of which are based in the U.S.—moved forward in 2022 and 2023. “You can argue that they were facilitated/accelerated by the war in Ukraine,” Corbeau said in an email.

The projects that made the U.S. the world’s leading natural gas exporter in 2023 all started operations before the war. “You can only argue that operators were very motivated to run their plants to the maximum,” Corbeau added.   
But on top of these existing plants, the industry is now seeking approval for more than 20 new export terminals along the U.S. Gulf Coast. If the LNG buildout goes according to plan, the new exports will account for more annual greenhouse gas emissions than the entire EU, climate campaigners say. Activists further argue that Europe’s initial post-invasion needs have already been met.

“Europe is awash in gas,” 350.org and Third Act cofounder Bill McKibben, who is one of the activists organizing a sit-in in Washington, D.C. next month to stop the buildout, told Atmos in an email. “They’re trying to use this excuse for the next round of LNG facilities, and it’s absurd. It’s actually going to go to Asia.”

Collin Rees, U.S. program manager at Oil Change International, said the Ukraine war “gave the oil and gas industry an extremely convenient excuse to do what it was already planning to do, which was recklessly expand fossil fuel production that deepens climate and environmental injustice.”

At the same time, Rees argued the Russian invasion “had a nuanced impact on the energy transition.”

“It initially slowed momentum for a phaseout of fossil fuel production and sparked a major oil and gas industry-led push for expanded extraction and export, but it also led to a significant increase in renewables buildout and a decrease in gas demand across Europe,” he said.

It has also led to a “major uptick in awareness of the connections between fossil fuels and conflict,” Rees added.

When Russia first attacked, Ukrainian climate scientist and IPCC contributor Svitlana Krakovska called it a “fossil fuel war” because Russia was funding its military by selling oil and gas. Krakovska told Atmos she stands by this assessment “even more” today.

“It was for me evident that stopping [the use of] fossil fuels will help [the] climate system to combat climate change and for us to combat Russian aggression,” she said.

Krakovska added that it was a “powerful message for many climate activists” because they felt chastened in the immediate aftermath of the invasion from speaking out on climate when people were being killed. With Krakovska’s framing, instead of remaining silent, “they were encouraged to speak more” on both issues. The Ukrainian civil society group Razom We Stand, for example, has called for both the liberation of Ukraine and a green energy transition.

It’s not as if these connections had never been made before: The slogan “No Blood for Oil” was marshaled against the Vietnam War as well as the Iraq War. But the timing of the Ukraine invasion, coming amidst a global movement to phase out fossil fuels, “supercharged the conversation,” Rees said.

The newly galvanized cause was aided by the internet and the increasingly global connectedness of youth movements. This awareness was maintained in the wake of Hamas’s October 7 attack on Israel and Israel’s bombardment and invasion of Gaza, which has killed more people per day than any other twenty-first century conflict and prompted charges of genocide.

As Atmos reported in November, some Palestinian rights advocates believe Israel’s onslaught and its support from the West is motivated partly by the desire to access the oil and gas that lie beneath Palestinian land or off its shores.

Sultana agreed it was fair to say the invasion of Gaza was motivated partly by the offshore gas reserves, within the context of Israel’s larger settler-colonial project in Palestine. She said gas may even provide a link between the Russia-Ukraine and Middle Eastern conflicts.

“Natural gas reserves off the coast of Gaza and the West Bank have been identified, and given its profitability and alternative source demands for gas given Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, it is unsurprising [that] Israel has moved to capture such a resource,” Sultana said.

Several prominent climate groups and activists including Greta Thunberg have expressed solidarity with Palestine and joined the call for a ceasefire.

“Our movements for climate justice and anti-war are increasingly working together, especially as young people are making the connection between fossil fuels and conflict more clearly than ever,” Rees said.

Israel’s attack on Gaza, and indeed the U.S. and U.K. strikes against the Houthis, may be interpreted as transactions of blood for oil, while Russia’s use of petrodollars to fund its invasion of Ukraine may be a case of oil for blood—but all have revealed the entanglements between militarism and fossil fuels.

“There is absolutely a feedback loop between fossil fuels and conflict,” Rees said.

As the world gears up for the next U.N. climate negotiations at COP29, the Russia-Ukraine war in particular presents a conflict of interest for its host—Azerbaijan—which has both promised to double gas exports to the EU by 2027 and helped fund Russia’s invasion. Russian oil company Lukoil holds nearly 20% of the country’s Shah Deniz field, a report from Global Witness recently noted.

“We all want a more peaceful world, and unfortunately, whilst we are locked into fossil fuels, conflict is more likely as nations and companies compete for finite resources. Azerbaijan benefits directly from the world’s continuing use of fossil fuels and the high prices driven by conflicts such as those in Ukraine and the Red Sea,” Dominic Eagleton, a senior campaigner at Global Witness, told Atmos.

#### AND---increases the propensity for interstate conflict initiation.

Dr. Aliaksandr Novikau 23, PhD, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the International University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Energy Security in Security Studies: A Systematic Review of Twenty Years of Literature”, Central European Journal of International and Security Studies, Volume 17, Issue 3, 2023, pp. 34-64

There are several pathways through which concerns about energy security can result in conflicts. First, vulnerable energy supplies make states’ militaries vulnerable; when states already have incentives for conflict, oil vulnerability can influence the assessment of adversaries’ military capabilities and, therefore, provoke an interstate conflict. Second, energy reserves, or perceived energy reserves, increase the value of territory and encourage countries to engage in territorial conquests since the payoffs of such resource wars are perceived as being higher than the risks associated with them (Glaser 2013).

#### Oil implicates everything about grand strategy and is inextricably linked with great power competition.

Phillip Murray 21, Captain in the US Army, graduate student of history at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C, holds a graduate certificate in international security from the University of Arizona, served with the 4th Infantry Division, Intelligence and Security Command, and United States Army Pacific, “Pivot Out of the Pacific: Oil and the Creation of a Chinese Empire in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/China-Reader-Special-Edition-September-2021/Murray-Oil-Chinese-Empire/

Oil stands alone as a resource of tremendous strategic value for modern nation-states. Difficult to find, expensive to extract, and often geographically concentrated in remote hinterlands, the quest for oil incites geopolitical anxieties among global powers. Events of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries demonstrate that access to, and possession of, oil resources often greatly enhance the chances of economic and military success. For this reason, the location, volume, and access to oil resources generate great intrigue among global actors. Oil enables military maneuvers, sustains industrial and agricultural output, and fuels domestic transportation networks. As such, oil is a powerful strategic source of strength and vulnerability. National security and energy strategies are often written separately, but in the age of petroleum, they are inextricably linked. Within the field of grand strategy, oil represents the unassailable cornerstone of “means” by which all “ways” and “ends” are accomplished.

## DA---Debt

### DA---2NC

## K---Anarchism

### K---2NC

### 2NC---Conditionality Good

## Civil Servant PIC

### 2NC

## Bureaucracy

### Catastrophic Risks---2NC

#### No polycrisis impact. Answers the premise of coalescing risks.

Noah Smith 22, American blogger, journalist, and commentator on economics and current events, and former assistant professor of Behavioral Finance at Stony Brook University, 11/13/2022, “Against "polycrisis": We have lots of problems, but they're not mutually self-reinforcing,” https://www.noahpinion.blog/p/against-polycrisis

When crises aren’t really strongly coupled, they can act as low-correlation assets in a diversified financial portfolio — when one problem is getting worse, another problem somewhere else is likely to be getting better.

In fact, though, I think there’s an even more important reason to be skeptical of “polycrisis”: buffer mechanisms. The global economy and political system are full of mechanisms that push back against shocks. Supply-and-demand is a great example — when supply falls, elastic demand cushions the short-term impact on prices (this is a little like Lenz’s Law in physics). Political backlashes are another mechanism — people don’t like it when you try to deny elections or invade your neighbors, and they get mad and push back. Policy responses are a third buffer — when central banks see inflation, they restrain it with higher interest rates. And so on.

The reason this makes a polycrisis less likely is that the buffer mechanisms often push back against problems in addition to the ones they were designed to push back against. There are plenty of historical examples of this. The New Deal didn’t just fight the Depression; it finally implemented a long-needed social insurance system that has served us well to this day. The victory over the Axis in WW2 also prompted decolonization and the creation of a global economic system that has allowed most of the world to flourish in the century since. More recently, the 2008 financial crisis led to needed infrastructure spending, Obamacare, and the intellectual revival of industrial policy.

In other words, sometimes instead of a polycrisis we get a polysolution.

### Terror---2NC

#### No existential terror.

Zachary **Kallenborn and** Gary **Ackerman 23**, Kallenborn is an adjunct fellow with CSIS and a research affiliate with the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Ackerman is an Associate Professor with the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity at SUNY and Special Projects Director at START, 2023, “Existential Terrorism: Can Terrorists Destroy Humanity?,” European Journal of Risk Regulation, 14(4), pp. 760-778, DOI: 10.1017/err.2023.48

Overall, **we conclude** that several plausible pathways exist for terrorists to destroy human civilisation, although the likelihood at present of any of them is very low. Within the bounds of feasibility (sometimes barely so), terrorists could conceivably develop genetically engineered microbes, catalyse nuclear war or, in the future, utilise novel technologies like ASIs and nanorobotics to carry out existential attacks. However, in the near to medium term, this is likely to require significant amounts of technical and **scientific** expertise and resources, far beyond a typical (or even state-sponsored) terrorist organisation. Of course, future technological advances – artificial intelligence and rapid prototyping are noteworthy examples – and other factors may lower the barriers considerably. Alternatively, and far more concerning, is the potential for terrorists to spoil existential risk-mitigation measures, such as disrupting planetary defence missions. However, the effectiveness of such attempts would be dependent on an impending existential harm manifesting through other means and is thus **highly** contingent on extraneous conditions. The contingency dependence is again high for causing systemic harm that undermines the ability to deal with other existential risks. Like high capability thresholds, high contingency thresholds also imply lower likelihood overall.

### Trump---Lashout---2NC

#### Erraticism is wrong.

The Economist 1-7, 1-7-26, “The radical honesty of Donald Trump,” https://www.economist.com/united-states/2026/01/07/the-radical-honesty-of-donald-trump

Mr Trump’s forthrightness about his interest in Venezuela is of a piece with this politics and worldview. He is not intent on regime change, let alone on spreading democracy. In fact, he seems content with regime stabilisation, as long as the regime recognises America is “in charge”, because what he wants most is the oil. “We’re going to be taking out a tremendous amount of wealth out of the ground,” Mr Trump said after American forces snatched the country’s despotic leader, Nicolás Maduro.

Because gaps between a politician’s stated principles and his actions supply the easiest targets for his critics, Mr Trump’s unabashed cynicism lends him a shield. Some may whinge that Mr Trump is violating his “America First” standards, but on this point he is no hypocrite. To him, the slogan does not imply isolationism. It licenses American aggression in pursuit of naked self-interest.

Other objections to Mr Trump’s lightning strike seem even less likely to gain purchase. Democrats may keep complaining he violated the constitution by assuming Congress’s authority to declare war, but so what? Presidents have been doing that for well over a century. A Congress that could not bestir itself to restrain Mr Trump from executing anonymous suspected drug-runners, without producing any evidence, is not likely to impeach him for going to such lengths to bring an indicted cocaine lord to justice (however at odds those tactics may be—and even though Mr Trump had previously pardoned a convicted drug lord, the former president of Honduras, for smuggling cocaine from Venezuela).

Appeals to international law seem even more pathetic. Yes, the United Nations charter rules out violating another nation’s sovereignty by force, unless approved by the Security Council. But there’s a carve-out for actions in self-defence—the very argument, as it happens, the Trump administration is making, absurdly. More important, who can hope to enforce such law against America?

At home and abroad, longtime critics of American foreign policy may even take some satisfaction from Mr Trump’s bluntness. America has not been “so innocent” in dozens of interventions in Latin America during the cold war, waiving concern for human rights or democracy when American commerce and control were actually, or also, at stake. Such critics may console themselves—as so many of this president’s supporters have for so long—that Mr Trump, though coarse, is telling it as it is.

### Trump---Diplomacy---2NC

#### The DOS has been bureaucratic insular and bloated for decades. Reorganization improves diplomacy and conflict readiness.

Scott B. Winton 9-23, Senior Labor Advisor at the U.S. Department of State, Chair of the Ben Franklin Fellowship Working Group on Recruitment, “A State Department for the Golden Age,” https://americanmind.org/salvo/a-state-department-for-the-golden-age/

The U.S. Department of State is too bureaucratic, insular, and disconnected from the American people to meet today’s global challenges. For those reasons, Secretary Rubio announced a reduction in force and a broader reorganization of the department in July. These reforms should inspire hope in those wishing to enter a career in diplomacy and international relations. Above all, they need to be worthy of the American people’s trust and confidence. One hopes this is just the beginning of reforms that will create a State Department that is prepared for conflict around the world, agile in crisis, deliberate in strategy, and effective in delivering results for the American people.

Secretary Rubio’s reforms reflect the spirit of Harry S. Truman, namesake of the State Department’s headquarters. The last U.S. president without a college degree, Truman was born in the rural Missouri Ozarks in the small town of Lamar and raised outside Kansas City, Missouri. From humble beginnings, he learned the value of grit, service, and earning one’s keep—a reflection of Midwestern values.

Truman is remembered for the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the creation of NATO, recognizing Israel, and helping to found the United Nations—policies and actions that helped shape the Cold War order that is now giving way to a new era. Like many from his background, he harbored a deep dislike for Washington, D.C., often feeling unwelcome despite years of service, professional success, and lasting friendships. I maintain a similar love-hate relationship with our nation’s capital.

The irony is unmistakable: the State Department’s headquarters bears the name of a man whose kind it has long resisted serving, defending, or hiring. Today, however, we face a rare moment—driven by global urgency—that offers an opportunity to finally change this paradigm.

That is why Secretary Rubio’s reforms must be expanded across the entire department. By embracing Professionalism, Excellence, Accountability, Community, and Empowerment (PEACE) and elevating the builders within State, internal resistance can be overcome, credibility can be restored, and America’s ability to lead in an era of global conflict can be strengthened.

Status Quo by Design

For decades the State Department has been experiencing bureaucratic resistance, which takes many forms. As outlined by organizations like DemocracyAID, tactics include quiet quitting, withholding or limiting information sharing, excluding certain personnel from key meetings, stonewalling paper clearances, and conflict avoidance, including brushing off individuals who are perceived to be unaligned with specific political imperatives. These are not simply ideological acts of opposition—though politics plays a role—but are symptoms of a much deeper problem: decades of poor management, a lack of accountability, and a culture that prioritizes equal outcomes over equal opportunity and merit-based advancement.

Long before the Biden-Harris Administration’s short-sighted, politicized approach to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the department had already grown insular, disconnected, and unrepresentative of the citizens it serves. Persistent derogatory attitudes toward Republicans, working-class Americans, people of faith (including Christians), rural communities, and those without a college degree have harmed employees from these backgrounds and eroded State’s ability to represent the broader American public and our national interests. This includes Main Street’s interests—not just those of Hollywood, Wall Street, Silicon Valley, and the Ivory Tower. Many colleagues, peers, and even mentors from these groups came to believe this hostility was meant to drive them out. They were likely right.

This culture has taken a heavy toll on morale and execution. Even under the previous administration, senior Biden officials quietly questioned whether the State Department was truly capable of conducting modern diplomacy. It was not uncommon for colleagues at the White House to ask without irony, “Does State do diplomacy?” The department was viewed as bloated, unresponsive, and incapable of fulfilling its core constitutional responsibilities. While officials may deny this publicly—federal employees remain a core political constituency—many would privately acknowledge deep dysfunction and a need for reform.

#### Distrust spiral inevitable.

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?

## Lochner

### Judicial Activism---2NC

#### Court is restrained AND unbiased.

Robert Blackburn 25, Writer, The Battalion, "The Supreme Court Is Underrated," The Battalion, 07/19/2025, https://thebatt.com/opinion/opinion-the-supreme-court-is-underrated.

In a political atmosphere that feels ever more divisive and partisan, one branch of the federal government stands out as a beacon of success. Despite existing in the age of the internet, the Supreme Court of the United States has not succumbed to the outside pressures of rampant tribalism.

This is due to several factors. One reason is that the nation’s highest courts’ continued success is the nature of their application process. Justices must be nominated by the president, then confirmed by the Senate. This strenuous process eliminates less qualified candidates which prevents them from negatively impacting the court’s reputation.

Additionally, justices are allowed to serve until their death or retirement, which ensures the nine-member panel is protected from outside political pressure. While this may frustrate decision makers or the public, it does allow for the jurists to vote as they see fit.

Finally, neither political party has attempted to push unqualified candidates into the court. Of the current nine justices, eight attended either Harvard or Yale for law school. The only exception is Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett, who graduated first in her class from Notre Dame. The panel’s impressive qualifications do not end here. Eight of the nine were jurists at the circuit court level before being nominated for the Supreme Court. Associate Justice Elena Kagan, who is the outlier, served as Solicitor General and as the Dean of Harvard Law School.

This lack of partisanship and incredible qualifications has not stopped the court from being viewed divisively. As it stands currently, six conservatives make up the majority, while three liberals represent the minority.

In the past, these two opposing ideologies have resulted in the most contentious cases being settled six to three, with the panel split along ideological lines. The most famous example of this was Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, which overturned national abortion rights established in Roe v. Wade. In this case, all six conservative justices ruled that the Constitution did not guarantee abortion rights, while the three liberals dissented and claimed that the Constitution did guarantee the right to choice.

As a result, the court’s conservative majority drew the ire of pro-choice individuals. While the case’s decision is a strong example of the ideological divide in the court, similar cases represent a small portion of the court’s workload. More frequently than not, the members of the court agree on issues, resulting in unanimous or near-unanimous rulings.

This sentiment is backed up by the numbers. During the 2023-24 term, three members of the court, Chief Justice John Roberts as well as Associate Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Barrett, ruled as part of the majority over 90% of the time. The same cannot be said for the rest of the so-called conservative super majority. Justices Samuel Alito (80%), Clarence Thomas (78%) and Neil Gorsuch (83%) were less likely to be in the majority. The liberal members on the court all found themselves on the ruling side of a case around 70% of the time.

Although every liberal is significantly less likely to be involved in the majority opinion than any conservative, it is remarkable that the justices agree as often as they do. Ideological divisions are to be expected among any group of people. Despite several high-profile cases being decided along these lines, this divide does not characterize the overall body of work of this version of the Supreme Court.

Recently, examples of both types of decisions have occurred. In Catholic Charities Bureau, Inc. v. WILIRC, all nine justices combined forces to overturn a Wisconsin Supreme Court decision that infringed on religious rights protected by the First Amendment.

However, this is not the most interesting aspect of the decision. The majority opinion, written by the ideologically-liberal Justice Sonia Sotomayor, dismantled the ruling from the liberal majority of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, who were all elected onto the panel. This demonstrates the key difference between polarized national politics and the institution that is the Supreme Court.

In Mahmoud v. Taylor, Justice Alito wrote for the court’s conservative wing, establishing the ability for parents to opt their children out of the curriculum if they find it religiously problematic. All three liberals dissented from this ruling. Despite the courts’ inherent similarity, cases like this demonstrate the different philosophies of the jurists.

Earlier this year, conservatives Kavanaugh and Roberts worked with the three liberal justices to make it easier for individuals to access federal civil rights claims in Williams v. Reed. This ruling provides the most recent example of a minority of the courts’ conservatives ruling with the liberals to achieve a majority. Cases like this are not uncommon and illustrate another important aspect of the court: each justice acts independently of the others

Despite there being a conservative majority on the bench, the members of the panel rely on their jurisprudence rather than the beliefs of their party or ideological group. While holding similar views, the conservative majority is not the republican party. Rather, it is a collection of the six highly talented individuals who hold overlapping beliefs. The same thing can be said about the three liberals on the bench.

This phenomenon has enabled the court to remain a highly-respected body whose rulings serve as the law of the land. Similarly, it has, for the most part, stopped outside influences from attempting to meddle with the affairs of the court. Legally, if the current situation changes, the legislature could move to impeach a jurist from their post, or Congress could expand the court, potentially diluting the importance of each member.

Both of these Pandora’s boxes have remained shut. This should be the case as every member of the court has demonstrated a remarkable ability to rule in an unbiased manner. As long as it continues, the Supreme Court of the United States will remain a sacred institution and the envy of our peers abroad. Entities like the Supreme Court are what make America truly special. It is in all of our best interests to keep this the case. Despite how appealing it may seem, citizens and elected officials should not attempt to interfere with the affairs of the nation’s highest court.

### Tech Defense---2NC

#### It’s science fiction. Trust humans!

Janna Anderson & Lee Rainie 23, investigating expert opinions, former professor of communications and Director of the Imagining the Internet Center at Elon University, the former director of internet and technology research at Pew Research Center. Under his leadership, the Center has issued more than 800 reports based on its surveys and data-science analyses that examine people’s online activities and the internet’s role in their lives, February 24, 2023, "4. Themes from those who expect tech will be designed to allow humans to control key decision-making," Pew Research Center, https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2023/02/24/themes-from-those-who-expect-tech-will-be-designed-to-allow-humans-to-control-key-decision-making/

Mark Henderson, professor emeritus of engineering at Arizona State University, wrote, “Science fiction has predicted that technology will surreptitiously take charge of decisions. I see that as a fear-based prediction. I have confidence in human intelligence and humane anticipatory prevention of takeover by either technology or those who want to cause harm. I think most humans would be very troubled by the prospect of machines making decisions over vital human interests such as how health care or other societal goods are allocated. There will undoubtedly be pressure to grant greater decision-making responsibility to machines under the theory that machines are more objective, accurate and efficient. I hope that humans can resist this pressure from commercial and other sources, so that privacy, autonomy and other values are not eroded or supplanted.”

#### Society is self-learning.

Daron Acemoglu & Todd Lensman 24, Nobel Prize in Economics, Institute Professor at MIT, Faculty Co-Director of the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Center on Inequality and Shaping the Future of Work, assistant professor in the Entrepreneurial Management Unit at Harvard Business School, “Regulating Transformative Technologies,” Insights 2024, 6(3): 359–376, https://doi.org/10.1257/aeri.20230353

Title: Regulating Transformative Technologies

Advances in generative AI technologies, such as large language models, have intensified both hopes of more rapid economic growth and concerns about their potential negative consequences. Despite a robust public discussion on AI, there are currently no economic models of the regulation of transformative technologies. This paper has taken a first step in building such a model to provide novel insights for this debate.

We consider the adoption decision of a new, transformative technology that can increase productivity growth across all sectors of the economy but also raises risks of misuse, which we model as the stochastic arrival of a “disaster.” If a disaster occurs, some of the sectors using the new technology may be unable to switch back to the old, safe technology. Whether a disaster will occur is unknown, and society gradually learns about it over time. Consequently, adoption should be gradual and typically follow a convex path, initially growing slowly before accelerating later. Most surprisingly, a faster growth rate of the new technology should lead to slower adoption when potential damages are large. Although the planner is risk neutral, she has a precautionary motive as irreversible damages imply that it is better to wait and learn about the likelihood of a disaster. These irreversible damages are greater when the new technology has a higher growth rate, strengthening the precautionary motive. Finally, if private firms internalize only part of the social damages from transformative technologies, equilibrium adoption is too fast and necessitates regulatory policies.