# Aff – State Capacity

## 1AC

### 1AC – Plan

#### The United States should pay federal employees a living wage.

### 1AC – State Capacity

#### The advantage is State Capacity.

#### The federal staffing crisis will shatter state capacity. New responsibilities are dramatically outpacing the size of the workforce.

Panditharatne 23. Mekela Panditharatne, J.D., Senior Counsel @ Brennan Center’s Elections & Government Program. April 5, 2023. “Rebuilding Federal Agencies Hollowed Out by Trump and Congress.” Brennan Center for Justice. https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/rebuilding-federal-agencies-hollowed-out-trump-and-congress. TDI

During four years in public housing in Cairo, Illinois, Earlene Lyons lived with roach infestations and experienced three spontaneous kitchen fires due to faulty wiring. According to reporting by ProPublica, her neighbors suffered through “inoperable heat, leaky ceilings, broken windows, mold, mice, roaches, and frequently clogged toilets and sinks.” In the end, rather than fix the crumbling Illinois complex, the Department of Housing and Urban Development closed it, forcing residents to uproot themselves and their children. “It’s a betrayal, really,” Lyons told a reporter.

If what happened to Earlene Lyons was a betrayal, the fault goes beyond the administrators at the housing department. For years, U.S. federal agencies have operated under immense strain. Underfunding has starved them of the resources necessary for adequate staffing, modern technology, and effective service delivery. Hiring freezes have stunted recruitment, and three in ten federal workers are nearing retirement, leaving agencies dependent on an uncertain pipeline of incoming workers.

A Brennan Center analysis of federal data finds that employee numbers in key cabinet-level agencies such as the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Treasury, Interior, Energy, and Agriculture have dropped precipitously in the past decade. Employee numbers have also plunged at independent agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency and the Social Security Administration.

The results are being felt not only in public housing complexes in Illinois, but also on Nebraska farms, in communities abutting chemical plants in Louisiana, and in countless other locales across the country.

The Biden administration released its budget for fiscal year 2024 in March, signaling that it wants to substantially increase support to federal agencies, invest in recruitment, and add 82,000 employees to the federal workforce. But with the funding proposal facing instant pushback from Republicans, lawmakers in Congress are not on a path to redressing the hollowing out of core agencies and solving this underappreciated generational challenge.

A dozen years of attrition

In 2011, the Republican-led Congress and the Obama administration agreed to sweeping budget caps known as sequestration. The resulting hiring freezes and downsizing largely executed between 2013 and 2017 took a heavy toll on federal agencies.

During his 2016 campaign, Donald Trump pledged to shrink the federal executive branch and “cut so much your head will spin.” While some agencies focused on security and defense grew during Trump’s presidency, federal employee numbers tumbled further at most cabinet-level agencies, with particularly dramatic drops at the Departments of Interior, Labor, Justice, State, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services.

As a result of the sequestration and the Trump-era zeal for cuts, most cabinet agencies today have fewer federal employees than they did in 2010. Those drops are particularly stark at some key agencies, according to the Brennan Center’s analysis of data from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management between September 2010 and December 2022. Despite the centrality of food and farming to people and politics, the Department of Agriculture had 22,526 fewer federal employees at the end of 2022 than it did in 2010, according to the latest available data, a 21 percent drop in federal employee numbers over twelve years. The Interior Department, which oversees the bulk of the nation’s public lands, had 18,468 fewer federal employees than it did in 2010 — a 23 percent decline — and the Treasury Department, which manages the country’s finances, had 10,931 fewer federal employees, a 10 percent reduction from 2010.

While the Biden administration has taken steps to improve matters, many federal agencies continue to suffer from the squeeze. A steady drumbeat of across-the-board hiring freezes and periodic government shutdowns has reduced agencies’ efficiency and effectiveness.

A graph showing the amount of employees in the company

Description automatically generated

The problem is even worse than the raw numbers suggest — with staff attrition came lost expertise and experience. In 2019, the Trump administration abruptly moved two research agencies in the Department of Agriculture from Washington, DC, to Kansas City without adequate vetting or considering estimated staff attrition rates. The relocation gutted the department’s Economic Research Service and National Institute of Food and Agriculture: most employees left after the announcement of the move. Though the Biden administration has largely built up the agencies’ workforce, it is now made up of “mostly recent hires with significantly less experience than the previous workforce,” according to the Government Accountability Office. Diversity has also suffered. Following the poorly vetted relocation, the number of Black employees shrank by half from 2018 to 2021.

Federal data shows that the Biden administration has largely boosted employee numbers over the levels recorded in September 2020. But according to the Brennan Center’s analysis of federal personnel reports from December 2022, the administration failed to replenish employee numbers to pre–Trump administration levels in agencies including the Departments of Interior, Labor, Justice, Agriculture, and Transportation.

Vacancies in political positions also persist, creating leadership vacuums that make it harder to implement programs. There are 93 positions still without a Biden nominee, and 91 of his nominees are being considered by the Senate, according to a tracker by the Partnership for Public Service and the Washington Post. Biden has filled positions more quickly than Trump but more slowly than President Barack Obama. Partisan obstructionism and arcane Senate confirmation rules impede the process.

A hollow federal government in a time of rising challenges

Even as agencies grapple with less staff and diminished expertise, their responsibilities have expanded substantially. The U.S. population is more than twice what it was in 1950, while the size of the federal civilian workforce has remained relatively steady over the past half century. During that period, entirely new challenges — and problems that policymakers are newly attuned to — requiring government intervention emerged. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Departments of Energy, Agriculture, and Interior among others must help carry out Biden’s goal to halve greenhouse gas emissions this decade. The number of billion-dollar disasters in the United States has ticked steadily upward over the past 40 years. Numerous new federal assistance and grant programs in the Inflation Reduction Act and American Rescue Plan Act create more tasks for agencies that must administer them.

A review of individual agencies highlights how resource constraints prevent important government action. Within the next 18 months, the Environmental Protection Agency is being asked to write several major rules and regulations to outpace a possible change in administration or a new Congress. But a “traumatized” and overwhelmed staff — reeling from Trump’s governmental sledgehammer — has missed several self-imposed deadlines. The number of federal employees working for the agency has dropped by around 18 percent since 2010, before sequestration cuts took place, according to the Brennan Center’s analysis.

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The EPA’s enforcement office has suffered from chronic underfunding and stagnant income levels for a decade, contributing to a decades-long slump in enforcement. Last year, Biden’s EPA brought the lowest number of civil enforcement cases against polluters in the past two decades. This year, the agency received an added infusion of funds for enforcement and other tasks for the first time in years.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has also floundered in the face of losing many of its highest-skilled managers and experts. The department is in the grip of an internal staffing and resource emergency. It lost 18 percent of its federal employees between September 2010 and December 2022, even as the U.S. population grew by 24.5 million. The housing department inspector general last year found that employees and constituents “consistently described [the housing department] as being underfunded and understaffed, with inadequate infrastructure to address the growing mission, program responsibilities, and mandates of the agency.” At a Senate hearing in mid-2021, Housing Secretary Marcia Fudge said she would not “sugarcoat” the agency’s struggles. “Until we can start to build up our staff, and build up our capacity, we are at risk of not doing the things we should do.”

Labor leaders last year said persistent underfunding of the National Labor Relations Board had reached a crisis point, even as labor organizing efforts have skyrocketed. In November, the board’s leadership told Congress that it would be forced to furlough staff without more funds. For the first time since 2014, the agency received an increased injection of cash in this year’s spending bill to fund government agencies. Lawmakers’ persistent use of continuing resolutions — stopgap measures that fund the government at prior levels — can disrupt agencies’ plans and slow down hiring across the board.

Staffers feel the mismatch between government size and mission acutely. Overall, just over 60 percent of federal agency employees reported having a reasonable workload last year. While engagement and satisfaction have grown for some agencies and agency offices in the past decade, others — such as the Social Security Administration and Justice Department — have seen engagement and satisfaction levels fall by more than ten points since 2010, according to scores by the Partnership for Public Service using the government’s viewpoint surveys.

Another source of stress for government agencies is the federal judiciary. The Supreme Court has dealt blows to the scope of agencies’ authority and could do so again. In an upcoming Supreme Court case, the justices will determine the constitutionality of the funding structure for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The outcome could hobble the agency and put others in similar jeopardy. Two recent decisions attacked the leadership structure of financial regulatory agencies. And the Court struck down several recent agency regulations that would have responded to contemporary crises, from the pandemic to climate change, using a novel doctrine that requires express congressional authority for agency regulation concerning issues of “vast” economic or political significance. In this landscape, it is critical that the executive and legislative branches build up agency capacity rather than aid attacks on administrative authority by undermining agencies’ ability to perform at their best.

As agencies navigate myriad challenges in the 21st century, they are faced with a significant predicament: they must provide the sophisticated service delivery and swift action that allow the public to witness their value, while struggling under massive workloads and resource gaps. Major changes to how agencies operate, including how they hire, train, and allocate responsibilities, have not been made in decades.

It is clear that agencies need more support to continue to deliver critical services, engage in evidence-based policymaking, and meet contemporary challenges. Increased congressional appropriations are essential to ensure that federal agencies have the personnel and resources to carry out their statutory missions. It is also vital that agencies be led by qualified, dedicated public servants. And building on several Biden administration initiatives, both the executive branch and Congress must establish safeguards against abuses of power that have damaged morale and driven experts out of government service. Federal agencies serve the public and address national crises — protecting agencies’ ability to fulfill their missions is crucial to a well-functioning democracy.

#### Withering state capacity imperils critical federal functions---readiness, pandemic response, and environmental regulations.

Noah Smith 23, professor at Stony Brook University, Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, 10/22/2023, "America needs a bigger, better bureaucracy," https://www.noahpinion.blog/p/america-needs-a-bigger-better-bureaucracy

This is a picture of Deirdre Beaubeirdre, a character from the comedy sci-fi movie Everything Everywhere All At Once — an IRS auditor who hounds the immigrant protagonists mercilessly. I loved that movie, but I also thought Deirdre’s character was emblematic of a common and unhelpful way that Americans tend to think about the civil service. Ronald Reagan famously said that “the nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the Government, and I'm here to help.” I think that antipathy toward government workers has filtered through to much of American society — not just to libertarians or conservatives, but to many progressives as well.

I believe that the U.S. suffers from a distinct lack of state capacity. We’ve outsourced many of our core government functions to nonprofits and consultants, resulting in cost bloat and the waste of taxpayer money. We’ve farmed out environmental regulation to the courts and to private citizens, resulting in paralysis for industry and infrastructure alike. And we’ve left ourselves critically vulnerable to threats like pandemics and — most importantly — war.

It’s time for us to bring back the bureaucrats.

Aggregate numbers give a decent general impression of how the United States’ civil service has withered over the decades. This process began in the 1970s, before Reagan ever took power, and has continued to this day. The percent of American workers employed by the government rose through 1975 and fell thereafter, interrupted only by recessions (in which government employees were less likely to be laid off):

It’s worth noting that much of this decline was at the federal level. State and local governments employ a lot of people in public education and policing, which are both harder to cut:

An even better way to see the decline might be to look at government spending on wages and salaries as a percent of total government spending. This represents the percent of government dollars that actually goes to pay government workers. It held steady until the mid-70s at around 34%, and then collapsed in the late 70s and early 80s to around 25%. It has since fallen to around 18% — about half of what it used to be.

If government spending isn’t going to pay government workers, it must be going to pay people who work in the private sector — nonprofits, for-profit contractors, consultants, and so on. In other words, state capacity is being outsourced. But this graph doesn’t actually capture the full scope of the decline, because it doesn’t include outsourcing via unfunded mandates — things that the government could do, but instead simply orders the private sector to do, without providing the funding.

I’m far from the first person to sound the alarm about this. John DiIulio wrote a book in 2014 called Bring Back the Bureaucrats: Why More Federal Workers Will Lead to Better (and Smaller!) Government, which is the basis for many of the ideas in this post and others. More recently, Brink Lindsey of the Niskanen Center put out a great report in 2021 called “State Capacity: What Is It, How We Lost It, And How to Get It Back”. A few excerpts from the executive summary:

A series of calamities during the 21st century—the Iraq War, Hurricane Katrina, the financial crisis, and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic—have made it painfully clear that American state capacity is not what it once was…On the right, healthy suspicion of rapid government expansion has given way to a toxic contempt for government and public service per se. On the left, efforts to expand “citizen voice” in government as a check on abusive power have produced a sclerotic “vetocracy” that makes effective governance all but impossible…

[The Niskanen Center is] taking on five new issues that we see as critical arenas for the struggle to rebuild state capacity: (1) expanding and upgrading the federal workforce, (2) improving tax collection and closing the tax gap, (3) overhauling how the federal government acquires and uses information technology, (4) streamlining environmental review to reduce delays and cost overruns in infrastructure projects, and (5) revitalizing the country’s sclerotic public health institutions to better prepare for the next pandemic.

This is in concert with Tyler Cowen’s concept of “state capacity libertarianism”, which he outlined in January 2020 as an alternative to traditional libertarianism or classical liberalism.

Meanwhile, on the progressive side of the aisle, writers like Ezra Klein have begun to focus on low state capacity as a reason why it’s hard for progressives to accomplish their objectives. Don Moynihan has also written a bunch of good stuff on the topic, including this post:

[Post omitted]

A bunch of people across the ideological spectrum are thus homing in the same conclusion: America needs a better bureaucracy. Here are just a few of the reasons why.

Bureaucrats vs. NEPA

Maybe this is just my personal experience, but I find that when Americans say the word “bureaucracy”, they tend to mean “a bunch of regulations and red tape”, rather than “the civil service”. This sets up an implicit dichotomy between private-sector individuals and companies that just want to do their thing, and civil servants who work tirelessly to enforce rules that prevent them from doing their thing.

For example, this is the depiction of environmental regulation in the movie Ghostbusters (another of my favorites). Our heroes have set up a private business trapping and imprisoning dangerous ghosts. Then Walter Peck, a bureaucrat from the Environmental Protection Agency, shows up and tells them that the rules forbid them from doing this, eventually managing to shut them down (which causes a citywide catastrophe).

This is also the depiction of environmental regulation in The Simpsons Movie, in which the EPA tries to stop pollution by sending an army to take over Springfield and encasing it in a giant dome.

But in fact, this is not actually how the most cumbersome environmental regulation works in America! Instead, we have laws like NEPA and its stronger state-level equivalents like CEQA, which farm out the job of environmental regulation to citizens and the courts. The way it works is this: A developer starts work on a project, like a solar plant or an apartment complex. Then private citizens who don’t want that project in their backyards — because of concern over scenic views, or property values, or “neighborhood character”, or whatever — sue the developer in court. Even if the project satisfies all relevant environmental laws from day 1, citizens can sue the developer under NEPA or CEQA to force it to stop the project and complete a cumbersome environmental review — basically, a ton of paperwork. This often delays the project for years, and drives up costs immensely — which of course discourages many developers from even trying to build anything in the first place.

Enforcing environmental regulation via judicialized procedural review has had devastating consequences on America’s ability to build the thing we need. Housing projects are routinely held up by NIMBYs using environmental review laws to sue developers, often under the most ridiculous of pretexts (such as labeling human noise from apartment complexes a form of pollution). The solar plants and battery factories and transmission lines that we need to decarbonize our economy aren’t getting built nearly as fast as they should, because they’re getting held up by these review laws. And remember that most of these projects aren’t violating any environmental review laws in the first place — the NIMBYs have the right to sue and hold up development regardless of whether any regulation is actually being violated!

Which raises an obvious question: How can we know if no environmental regulation is being violated, other than waiting for a lawsuit and a multi-year environmental review? The answer is: bureaucrats. The answer is that you have a bunch of government workers examine the project and make sure it checks all the relevant regulatory boxes, and then if it does, you simply allow the project to go ahead, without lawsuits or multi-year studies. This is called “ministerial approval” or “ministerial review”. This is how Japan does things, which is why they’ve been able to build enough housing to keep rent affordable.

NIMBYs are absolutely terrified of ministerial review. I strongly encourage you to read this thread by Jordan Grimes, detailing the dismay of a NIMBY pressure group at a raft of new pro-housing laws in California. The most terrifying prospect, for the opponents of new housing, turns out to be “as-of-right” development, which means a bureaucrat gets to decide whether to allow a housing project rather than a lawsuit and a judge.

In other words, environmental regulation doesn’t threaten America’s economy via a sea of red tape enforced by an army of punctilious bureaucrats. It threatens America’s economy via a plague of lawsuits and pointless paperwork that we implemented as an alternative to hiring an army of punctilious bureaucrats. If we scrapped this legalistic permitting regime and replaced it with an army of bureaucrats, we would still be able to protect the environment just fine, but we would be able to do it without causing insane multi-year delays and driving costs to the moon.

The nine most terrifying words in the English language are not “I’m from the Government and I’m here to help”. Nine far more terrifying words are: “Please spend four years completing your Environmental Impact Statement.”

Bureaucrats vs. nonprofits and consultants

Even as environmental regulation has been outsourced to the courts, a huge variety of other government functions have been outsourced to nonprofits. In a post back in May, I argued that this represented a toxic compromise between anti-government conservatives who wanted to shrink the state and progressives who wanted to increase community input into policymaking:

[Post omitted]

Some excerpts from that post:

We do know that about a third of nonprofit funding comes from government purchases and grants, and that nonprofit revenue rose by about 70% in inflation-adjusted terms from 1998 to 2016. A rough back-of-the-envelope calculation — $2.62 trillion in nonprofit revenue in 2016, 32.3% from government — says that this would equate to around $850 billion in government spending on nonprofits in the U.S.

That’s about 13% of all government spending, including state and local, spent via nonprofits. Compare that to about 18.4% of government spending spent on actual government workers as of 2022. We’ve outsourced a significant amount of our government to nonprofits. Here’s a brief overview of some of the ways this work is outsourced. Of course the number includes things like public university funding (universities are also nonprofits). But a lot of it is just paying organizations to administer government spending.

Outsourcing government functions to nonprofits — which is definitely a form of privatization, even if no one is officially making a profit — has a number of problems. First there’s the obvious danger of corruption, in which nonprofits line their pockets by using taxpayer money to help elect leaders who give them more taxpayer money. Of course this money is paid out in executive salaries rather than “profit”, but it amounts to the same thing.

But even more important is what economists call an “agency problem”. Nonprofits would rather get the government to give them as much money as possible; they would love to rip the government off. And if all the expertise involved in building housing or providing social services resides in the nonprofits instead of the government itself, the government doesn’t have the ability to judge whether it’s getting ripped off. Here’s how I put it in my earlier post:

When the government controls the purse strings but only the contractors know how much things should really cost, you get the worst of both worlds — a government that doesn’t know how to save taxpayer money, paying contractors who don’t want to save taxpayer money.

This problem is especially acute in San Francisco, which makes it extremely difficult to hire workers for the civil service, and has taken nonprofit-outsourcing to an extreme. (In fact, if you want to read a fun satire about nonprofit-outsourcing in SF in the late 60s and 70s, check out Tom Wolfe’s essay “Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers”.) Investigations have shown that oversight of SF nonprofits has been extremely poor — in part because the city got rid of the bureaucrats who could have done that monitoring effectively. Massive inefficiencies are allowed to fester for years, only coming to light after elected officials discover the problems and raise the alarm. The most recent blowup I’ve seen is over an addiction treatment nonprofit:

A San Francisco supervisor is calling for an audit of the city’s largest addiction treatment nonprofit after word leaked that a staffing shortage forced the organization’s detox program to pause intakes last week…

HealthRight 360 is the largest drug treatment provider in San Francisco and is slated to receive more than $200 million from the city this fiscal year, according to a city database.

“This is not to cast aspersions on anyone, but I am truly concerned that we are paying for a service that they’re not able to provide,” Stefani said at Tuesday’s hearing.

Of course this doesn’t mean that bureaucrats always have the right incentives. With the wrong funding incentives, civil service agencies can fall into a trap in which they try to maximize the amount they spend each year in order to increase their budgets for future years. An efficient bureaucracy requires avoiding perverse incentives like that. But when the funds are being spent via nonprofits instead of government workers, the incentives are much harder to get right, because the government lacks most of the levers of control that it has over its own workforce.

Of course, the agency problems doesn’t just apply to nonprofits, but to any government contractors. And when it comes to transportation planning, a huge problem is the amount that governments have come to rely on consultants. The Transit Cost Project has been looking into the question of why it costs so much more to build each mile of train in the U.S. than in other rich countries (most of which have stronger unions). Their big report, released earlier this year, found that state and local governments’ excessive reliance on outside consultants rather than in-house bureaucratic expertise was a huge driver of excess cost. Here are some excerpts from a great writeup by Henry Grabar:

[M]any of the [transit cost] problems can be traced to a larger philosophy: outsourcing government expertise to a retainer of consultants…

For example, when the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority got to work on the Green Line Extension, the agency only had a half-dozen full-time employees managing the largest capital project the MBTA had ever undertaken. On New York’s Second Avenue subway, the most expensive mile of subway ever built, consultant contracts were more than 20 percent of construction costs—more than double what’s standard in France or Italy. By 2011, the MTA had trimmed its in-house capital projects management group of 1,600 full-time employees (circa 1990) to just 124, tasked with steering $20 billion in investment. Perhaps the most notorious case in this business is the debacle of the California High-Speed Rail project, which in its early years had a tiny full-time staff managing hundreds of millions of dollars in consulting contracts…

It’s that lack of institutional know-how, of which consultants are both a symptom and a cause, that really hampers projects…It means staff are overwhelmed by change orders as projects evolve. In the case of New York’s Second Avenue subway, the lack of a powerful, effective team of civil servants may also explain some inexplicable conflicts and mistakes: misunderstandings and feuds with local agencies, hugely overbuilt stations, and so little standardization that the escalators in the three new stops were built by three different companies.

Would replacing some of these consultants with government bureaucrats really lower costs? A recent paper by Zachary Liscow, William Nober, and Cailin Slattery suggests that it would:

[W]e find evidence that state capacity correlates inversely with costs in a several ways. States with (perceived) higher quality DOT employees have lower costs. A state with a neutral rating has almost 30% higher costs per mile than one that rates the DOT employees as “moderately high quality”, all else equal. Consistent with the capacity hypothesis, states that flag concerns about consultant costs have higher costs. States where contractors and procurement officials expect more change orders have significantly higher costs. Frequent change orders could directly lead to higher costs through delays and costly renegotiation; they could also be a downstream symptom of poor administrative capacity at a state DOT—many contractors reference poor-quality project plans made by third-party consultants. Moreover, when we measure capacity using external data we show that states with higher DOT capacity have lower infrastructure costs. A one standard deviation increase in capacity is correlated with 16% lower costs.

And a recent paper by Maggie Shi finds that when the government monitors Medicare spending more closely, it reduces waste by a huge amount:

Every dollar Medicare spent on monitoring generated $24–29 in government savings. The majority of savings stem from the deterrence of future care, rather than reclaimed payments from prior care. I do not find evidence that the health of the marginal patient is harmed, indicating that monitoring primarily deters low-value care. Monitoring does increase provider administrative costs, but these costs are mostly incurred upfront and include investments in technology to assess the medical necessity of care.

And guess who’s responsible for monitoring Medicare spending? Bureaucrats. So that’s at least a 2300% return on investment in bureaucracy!

In sum, the years since the 1970s have been a massive experiment in whether a government, by outsourcing core functions to private actors like nonprofits and consultants, can increase the efficiency with which public funds are spent. That experiment has failed, and it needs to be reversed.

Preparing for the next threat

I became painfully aware of the problems of a weak bureaucracy during the early days of the Covid pandemic. I started a group to help encourage state public health agencies to improve contact tracing — an approach that ultimately proved futile due to hyper-infectious mutations. But back when the virus was less contagious and we still thought contact tracing might work, my partners and I had some meetings with government workers at the CDC. It was clear that they had absolutely no resources to commit to our project, and that they were overwhelmed with other demands.

Perhaps that’s to be expected in the middle of a massive pandemic. But it was also clear that the CDC workers we talked to didn’t know a lot of basic facts about how their organization worked; there was lots of data that they had no idea how to find, or even who was responsible for collecting it, and they had little concept of who was responsible for contact tracing at the state level. Those are things they should have known long before the pandemic even started.

In fact, the pathetic crisis performance of the CDC — which before the pandemic was often believed to be one of our most competent government agencies — is now the stuff of legend. Most damningly, the agency was unable to collect even the most basic data on the spread of the virus — data that private individuals were forced to collect in its stead. In addition, it made numerous bad recommendations that were later reversed, issued confusing guidance, and failed to develop Covid tests in the early days of the pandemic. The agency is now being reformed, but it’s not yet clear how deep the reforms go.

But what I’m most afraid of is not another pandemic; it’s a major war. In a widely-read post last week, I warned that a war with China over Taiwan is a lot more likely than most Americans seem to realize, and that we need to be preparing for that grim possibility right now. China’s state apparatus is famously effective in building large amounts of stuff very quickly — in the space of just a few years, while the U.S. was failing to build even a small amount of high-speed rail, China built a high-speed rail network that dwarfed American transit advocates’ wildest dreams. In a war situation, China’s massive production advantage means that the U.S. will be at a dramatic disadvantage in a protracted conflict. We do not have the equivalent of the effective bureaucracies that we created in the runup to World War 2.

But even beyond military production, the U.S. needs to do lots of preparation for the possibility of a China conflict. Private companies need to audit their supply chains to make sure they can sustain production in the event of a war. The U.S. government needs to ensure that critical minerals can be accessed without reliance on Chinese processing facilities. And the government needs to revive the defense-industrial base, so we don’t see bottlenecks of the kind we encountered when we tried to produce Covid masks, tests, and ventilators in the early days of the pandemic.

All of this requires a large, competent, well-funded bureaucracy. Yet I worry that neither progressives nor conservatives understand this need. Progressives still seem wedded to the idea of defending NEPA, while conservatives still seem wedded to the idea of slashing and burning any government agency they can. It’s a toxic equilibrium in which one side wants to drown the government in a bathtub and the other wants to outsource it to every NIMBY and nonprofit in the country.

To reestablish U.S. state capacity, we have to sail between the rocks of both of these disastrous approaches. We have to rebuild the civil service, with sufficient long-term funding guarantees, talent, and size. For all our sake, we need to bring back the bureaucrats.

#### Effective federal functions mitigate vulnerabilities that culminate in extinction.

Collier ’21 [Dr. Stephen J. Collier, Professor of City & Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, PhD in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley, November 2021, “The Government of Emergency: Vital Systems, Expertise, and the Politics of Security,” p. xi-19, Princeton University Press]

The evidence is clear: we live in an increasingly vulnerable world. Maps with isometric lines indicating flood zones tell us about the ever-growing likelihood that the places we live will be inundated in future hurricanes, torrential rains, or even high tides. Emergency exercises reveal that governmental response systems are not prepared to deal with future disease outbreaks. Stress tests isolate weak links in national and global financial systems that would be exposed in the event of a panic or an economic downturn. Network analyses point to alarming vulnerabilities to accidents or attacks (whether cyber or physical) on critical nodes of power systems. Models of climate change demonstrate the vulnerability of cities and critical infrastructures to heat waves, drought, floods, and landslides. This mountain of evidence points to a troubling contemporary reality: the vulnerability of the vital systems on which modern life depends to a startling range of potentially catastrophic events.1

Discussions of vulnerability and preparedness are often, understandably, caught up in the urgency of recent disasters and future threats: a looming hurricane; a critical system that is prone to failure; a virus that is a single mutation away from causing a deadly pandemic. And experts, policymakers, and scholars often search out the sources of vulnerability in relatively recent changes in the structure of our collective existence. Intensifying global flows of people, goods, and capital, they argue, make our world increasingly interdependent and therefore subject to sudden disruptions that spread through financial systems, electricity grids, information networks, or human bodies in rapid circulation and close proximity.2 But there is another way to think about our vulnerable world. Rather than taking vulnerability for granted as a category of understanding—and investigating how our vulnerability became so acute and pervasive—we can ask how it became possible to think about our world in this way in the first place. More specifically, we can ask how we came to think of our world in terms of a particular kind of vulnerability. When did government first become concerned with the disruption or breakdown of life-sustaining vital systems? For what purposes were the techniques that, today, generate such an extraordinary profusion of evidence about our vulnerability originally invented? How did norms such as resilience and preparedness become political obligations, to which policymakers and officials are held accountable?

The Government of Emergency addresses these questions by turning to a period of American history in which this distinctive and now mostly taken-for- granted way of thinking about vulnerability was just taking shape. In the middle decades of the twentieth century, amid the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War, an array of technical experts and government officials developed a new understanding of the United States as a complex of vulnerable, vital systems. They also invented technical and administrative devices to mitigate the nation’s vulnerability, as well as organizing a distinctive form of emergency government designed to prepare for uncertain future events that might catastrophically disrupt these systems. In doing so, these experts and officials did not, of course, solve the problem of vulnerability. Quite the contrary, they defined vulnerability as a particular kind of problem with which today’s experts, officials, policymakers, and emergency managers are still grappling.

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Our interest in these topics was initially sparked by the aftermath—at once troubling and disorienting—of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The most visible and controversial response by the federal government to these attacks was a series of aggressive security policies identified with the “war on terror.” External security measures taken in the wake of the September 11 attacks included preemptive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, drone strikes on suspected terrorist cells, and extrajudicial detentions, most notoriously in the prison complex at Guantanamo Bay. Domestically, new security measures included heightened border controls, domestic surveillance, and steps to protect large cities and transportation networks against attack. Many of these domestic measures were associated with a new federal agency, established soon after the attacks of 9/11, with an unfamiliar and Orwellian name: the Department of Homeland Security.

At one level, these new security measures challenged familiar conceptions of security. Externally, the focus of military and intelligence organizations on terrorist groups and other nonstate actors seemed distinct from the traditional framework of national security, related to struggles among sovereign states. Meanwhile, new domestic policies pointed to an ominous “securitization” of civilian life, with totalitarian overtones. In another sense, however, these widely discussed elements of the “war on terror” fit relatively comfortably with familiar understandings of security. These measures sought to identify and interdict enemies of the United States, employing traditional means of intelligence, surveillance, military force, border control, and policing.

But beneath the surface of these highly visible and contested measures, a different formation of contemporary security was consolidating. Its contours could be glimpsed by perusing the plans and strategic statements on problems such as “national preparedness” and “critical infrastructure protection” issued by the president, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, and other parts of the US government in the years after 2001. The key norm articulated in these statements was not the deterrence, interdiction, capture, or defeat of an enemy. Rather, these statements laid out a strategy of preparedness for a range of uncertain future events—from natural disasters to disease outbreaks, blackouts, and terrorist attacks—that threatened to disrupt the vital systems that make contemporary life possible. They drew on forms of specialized knowledge and expert assessment that were quite different from those of domestic surveillance, foreign intelligence, and other approaches to understanding the plans and motivations of enemies. The evidence these documents adduced to assess vulnerability was produced by tools such as simulations of catastrophic events; scenario-based exercises to pinpoint gaps in preparedness plans; and evaluations of the “criticality” of particular facilities, such as ports, power plants, communication nodes, and transportation hubs. Finally, these statements of strategy proposed a distinctive set of preparedness measures: stockpiling critical supplies; securing vital facilities or creating redundant facilities; improving coordination among different parts of the federal government, and among federal, state, and local governments; and, perhaps above all, conducting more exercises to test readiness. The sudden consolidation of these norms, knowledge practices, and security measures was puzzling. Where had they developed and been cultivated before coming together so rapidly in new plans and practices?

In 2005, two years after the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, these questions were cast into starker relief, and inflected in new ways, by another domestic catastrophe: Hurricane Katrina, which inundated the city of New Orleans. Like the attacks of September 11, Katrina was followed by rancorous debate and finger pointing. Much of the blame fell on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA had borne responsibility for disaster preparedness and response in the federal government for almost thirty years. But by 2005, it was incorporated into the new Department of Homeland Security, whose emphasis on counterterrorism, some observers charged, had left the agency unprepared for a massive natural disaster.3 FEMA’s failure to organize a competent response to Katrina raised doubts about the federal government’s ability to prepare for a range of other disasters, such as the outbreak of a novel and dangerous infectious disease, a particularly acute concern for public health officials in 2005 given the reemergence of avian flu in Asia, one year earlier. 4 The failed response to Katrina also focused attention on the “distributed” structure of preparedness in the United States, which required complex coordination among local, state, and federal governments. This structure, too, had failed in spectacular fashion. Local governments proved poorly organized and ill equipped. State governments were unable to provide timely assistance.

But amid the arguments about where the failure lay, and who was to blame, a basic diagnosis was universally accepted: the government had been unprepared to deal with an event like Katrina and was obliged, in the future, to bolster preparedness, not only for natural disasters but also for a range of other future catastrophes. Thus, more questions: Where did this peculiar American structure of distributed preparedness come from? Why would an agency charged with anticipating terrorism also be responsible for natural disaster preparedness? And how had this unquestioned political responsibility—to prepare for events like Katrina—initially been established and entrusted to such a peculiar and apparently precarious governmental arrangement?

In a first stage of our research, we sought to address these questions by looking back to civil defense planning of the early Cold War.5 Cold War civil defense was in one sense quite different from contemporary emergency management. Its primary concern was not preparedness for natural disasters, pandemic disease, or terrorist attacks. Rather, civil defense focused on strengthening the preparedness of local governments, communities, and households for a nuclear attack on the United States.6 In another sense, however, the way civil defense planners identified problems and sought to address them was familiar: preparing to respond in the wake of a catastrophic event. Moreover, Cold War civil defense, particularly the Federal Civil Defense Administration (1950–1958), was a recognized part of the landscape of postwar history for scholars of American emergency management, who have identified it as the source of our current way of thinking about and organizing for emergencies.7

But as our research proceeded, our attention was increasingly drawn to another history—adjacent to but distinct from the history of civil defense—that turned out to be more germane to our concerns. Initially, we encountered a forgotten federal government office, the Office of Emergency Preparedness, that in the 1960s was charged with addressing many of the problems that have become so urgent and visible at the beginning of the twenty-first century. 8 The central concern of this office was the vulnerability of vital systems, such as oil pipeline networks, electricity and communication grids, and systems of economic circulation. And it sought to develop methods for anticipating the effects of various kinds of events—terrorist attacks, economic shocks, industrial strikes—that might disrupt these systems, as well as techniques for planning and testing a governmental structure capable of rapid, coordinated response. Digging into the history of this office and its predecessors, we found ourselves on a track that ran parallel to the story of civil defense (see figure 0.1). It led us to the National Security Resources Board and the Office of Defense Mobilization, which were established not to carry out the now-familiar functions of emergency management but to prepare for military-industrial mobilization. In contrast to the well-studied history of civil defense, the activities of these organizations have been largely neglected in the scholarship on the history of emergency management and, indeed, in the broader scholarship on American political development in the middle of the twentieth century. And yet, from 1947 (when the National Security Resources Board was created by the National Security Act) to 1958 (when the Office of Defense Mobilization was combined with the Federal Civil Defense Administration), these were the organizations working on the central problem of emergency government: preparedness for a nuclear attack on the United States. As we show in the chapters that follow, experts and officials working in these now obscure offices shaped current understandings and practices related to the vulnerability of vital systems, preparedness for future catastrophes, and the organization of emergency government.

Our research into the work of these mobilization planning offices opened up, in turn, a deeper history, which connected the history of emergency management in the United States to very different kinds of emergencies: the Great Depression and World War II. During these earlier episodes, we found, experts and officials working in domains such as mobilization planning, target selection for air war, and national economic planning developed new kinds of knowledge about flows of resources through the nation’s vital systems and their vulnerability to catastrophic disruption. These were also the circumstances in which government reformers assembled the distinctive administrative and political mechanisms of American emergency government, with its small, centralized planning offices (the ancestors of FEMA), its complex arrangements for distributed preparedness across agencies and governmental units, and its often-fraught accommodations between democratic norms, expert control, and strong executive authority to address crisis situations. Thus, in the unexpected settings of depression and world war, we encountered the now-familiar norms and forms of US emergency government taking shape.

When we set out to write this book, we imagined that it would begin in the 1950s and move into the present, tracing how Cold War civil defense evolved into contemporary emergency management in its various guises of homeland security, pandemic preparedness, and natural disaster policy. But as this parallel history unfolded, the scope of our book shifted. What we had previously imagined would be the beginning of the story—nuclear pathways of American emergency government. Many of the practices and institutions of contemporary American emergency government emerged from little-studied offices such as the National Security Resources Board and the Office of Defense Mobilization. The history of these organizations points to largely unexplored genealogical connections between emergency government as we know it today and major midcentury episodes in the development of American political institutions. Credit: Janice Yamanaka-Lew. preparedness in the 1950s—became its endpoint. Our question changed as well. The book’s central concern was no longer the process through which nuclear preparedness expanded into preparedness for a range of other emergencies in the decades after the 1950s—a history that largely remains to be written. Instead, we traced how the knowledge practices, administrative devices, and governmental mechanisms originally invented to manage the emergencies of economic depression and world war were redirected to preparedness for uncertain future events that threaten vital systems.

This shift in empirical focus went hand in hand with a shift in, and significant expansion of, the conceptual and historical problems with which we were grappling. In the United States and elsewhere, the problem of the vulnerability of vital systems to catastrophic disruption is coeval with—and is indeed a crucial element in—the history of industrial and urban modernity itself. Thus, the process through which system vulnerability became such a prevalent governmental concern, and such a dominant feature of our politics, can only be described as one dimension of the broader emergence of a mass industrial and metropolitan society in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. It is also linked to a significant mutation in political institutions. In contending with the “emergencies” of the Great Depression, World War II, and the early Cold War—all of which were understood as existential crises that demanded exceptional government measures—political reformers created new mechanisms of expert rule and expanded executive power. Thus, in investigating the genealogy of system vulnerability, we also address the process through which, as political scientist Clinton Rossiter put it in 1949, US government was “adjusted in all its ramifications to the mounting stresses of a protean, outward-looking, industrial society.”9

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As we completed this book, governments around the world were struggling to respond to a global crisis. In early 2020, the coronavirus outbreak that began in China was spreading rapidly. As the first wave of the pandemic arrived in the United States, officials faced a daunting prospect: the onset of a deadly disease with no effective biomedical countermeasures at hand, and an immunologically naïve population. Experts rushed to identify bottlenecks in health systems, such as shortages of masks, testing reagents, and medical personnel, that would limit the number of patients that could be treated. Policymakers argued about how to procure scarce materials and establish priorities for the allocation of limited resources. Local officials sought to identify essential functions—medical services, critical infrastructure, and the production and distribution of food, for example—whose operation would need to be secured as stay-at- home orders were imposed across the country. Epidemiologists updated pandemic models to anticipate surges in cases in particular areas and to estimate the demand that such surges would make on health resources. Debates flared up about the distribution of responsibility between federal agencies and the president, and between the federal government and the states.

As authorities sought to address multiplying breakdowns and bottlenecks in health systems, a distant episode of American history came to public attention. In spring 2020, Democratic lawmakers and a range of experts and interest groups urged then-president Donald Trump to draw on the emergency powers of the Defense Production Act to organize a forceful federal response to the pandemic. This Act, passed in 1950, gave the president authority to manage national economic resources in order to mobilize the industrial economy, initially for the Korean War.10 By the late 1950s, mobilization planners had laid plans to use Defense Production Act powers to manage an array of other problems— including massive nationwide medical response—that would arise in the aftermath of a large-scale nuclear attack on the United States. These plans addressed many of the issues that health officials and policymakers would face, over half a century later, in spring 2020: ensuring adequate production capacity of essential medical supplies through government loans and production agreements; securing vital inputs to such production through priorities ratings and allocation controls; and managing the distribution of scarce medical resources, including personnel, to meet a medical emergency unfolding across the country.

The Trump administration made limited use of the Defense Production Act to procure items such as test kits and protective gear but was widely criticized for its unwillingness to employ it more expansively. “We’re at war,” proclaimed the former director of the Defense Production Act program division at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, “and the enemy is called Covid. The question is do we have the guts that our grandfathers had to mobilize the economy of the United States against the enemy.” 11 Upon taking office in January 2021, President Joseph Biden issued an executive order that outlined a broad use of the Defense Production Act’s emergency authorities. Priorities ratings would bolster vaccine manufacturers’ access to equipment such as filling pumps and filtration units required to ramp up production. Loans and purchase agreements would spur investment in domestic plants to manufacture surgical gloves, whose production in other countries had been constrained by shortages of a vital input: nitrile butadiene rubber. Officials contemplated similar actions, such as issuing loans and purchase agreements, to expand the production of at-home coronavirus tests, N95 masks, and other critical supplies.12

As we show in this book, the powers of priorities ratings, allocation control, emergency loans, and purchase agreements are not the only elements of the government response to the Covid-19 pandemic that have roots in the emergencies of the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, many dimensions of the response can be traced back to attempts to manage national resources and to ensure the operation of vital systems during these prior emergencies. Perhaps like no other event in the last seventy years, the Covid-19 pandemic has thrust these problems to the center of attention. But a range of current issues—most notably the intensifying disasters that will result from climate change—ensure that this largely neglected dimension of emergency government will be increasingly central to contemporary politics.

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INTRODUCTION

The New Normalcy

During the past twenty years we have substituted for the normalcy of the halcyon 1920s an almost unbroken series of emergencies: depression, defense, war, inflation, cold war. Indeed, emergency appears to have become the new kind of normalcy. National emergencies tend to favor improvisation by government. Yet with all our improvising, our “putting out of fires,” our apparent activation by events instead of deliberate activation of events, we have emerged with a discernible pattern of domestic and foreign policy and, most important, with an acceptance of the idea that government should consciously plan a strategy for anticipating and meeting domestic and foreign emergencies at the operational level.

— JAMES FESLER, SPEECH TO THE INDUSTRIAL COLL EGE OF THE ARMED FORCES, SEPTEMBER 4, 1952

In 1954, the United States’ Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) published a massive multivolume tome, Emergency Management of the National Economy.1 The ICAF volumes collected a series of lectures that had been delivered to military officers at the college, as well as a range of government documents that addressed ICAF’s main concern: managing industrial mobilization for war. The fourth volume, dedicated to Principles of Administration, reproduced a lecture by political scientist James Fesler, a veteran of government reform during the New Deal and of mobilization planning during World War II.2 Looking back on the previous two tumultuous decades, Fesler observed that the United States had emerged from an “unbroken series of emergencies”—“ depression, defense, war, inflation, cold war”—with a “discernible pattern” of emergency government. Its hallmark was a new norm: “government should consciously plan a strategy for anticipating and meeting domestic and foreign emergencies at the operational level.” In the “new kind of normalcy” Fesler described, emergency government was no longer confined to exceptional situations. Rather, ongoing emergency preparedness had become a part of governmental routine.

More than six decades later, it is taken for granted that government bears responsibility for continuously anticipating and preparing for emergencies. This assumption has been evident in efforts to assign blame and bolster readiness following disasters such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, and, most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic. It is noteworthy, then, that in 1952, when Fesler gave his lecture, this governmental norm was neither established nor taken for granted. Rather, it was new and required explicit statement and elaboration.

It is also noteworthy that Fesler’s discussion addressed a set of problems and institutional contexts that seem distant from our contemporary understandings of emergency management. Today, government offices tasked with managing emergencies are concerned with preparedness for events such as natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and terrorist attacks, as well as with response and recovery in the aftermath of such events. But in 1952, the object of emergency management was the national economy, and its central aim was military-industrial mobilization—marshaling raw materials, industrial facilities, and manpower to build the tanks, planes, munitions, and other supplies necessary for total war. In this sense, Fesler’s speech points us to the specificity of the historical conjuncture during which new norms for managing emergencies were first articulated in the United States and were connected to forms of expert knowledge, administrative practices, and legal mechanisms. The topics addressed in Emergency Management of the National Economy suggest some of the issues that, in this now unfamiliar landscape, were initially clustered around emergency government: resource planning, economic controls, internal security, economic intelligence, air targeting, government reorganization, domestic vulnerability, and nonmilitary defense. And the government offices, commissions, and agencies whose work was either collected or discussed in the ICAF volumes—most long-since dissolved, and many virtually forgotten—provide a map of the institutional settings in which emergency government was addressed at this time. Among these were committees working on government reform and resource management during the New Deal; wartime and postwar mobilization planning offices; air-targeting and strategic intelligence units in the military; and offices of civil defense and domestic preparedness of the early Cold War.3

If Emergency Management of the National Economy situates the history of American emergency government in relation to economic management and military-industrial mobilization during the Great Depression and World War II, it also marks a point of inflection. In the early 1950s, emergency government was already in the process of becoming something different and, from our contemporary perspective, more familiar. In the foreword to the ICAF tome, another veteran of wartime mobilization planning, Arthur Flemming, described this new horizon of emergency government. At the time, Flemming was serving as director of the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM). Created in 1950 to lead civilian mobilization planning for the Korean War, ODM had by 1953 become the most important domestic preparedness agency in the federal government. Surveying the landscape of the early Cold War, Flemming offered a grim assessment of the current world situation. The United States, he wrote, was in an “age of peril.” The advent of long-range bombers and atomic weapons confronted national security strategists with the specter of a sudden “devastating attack on the continental United States.” In the event of such a sudden attack, the United States would not have time to mobilize its “material and human resources” over the course of months or years, as it had in the prior two world wars. Rather, Flemming argued, the country would have to shift immediately to war footing and would be faced with managing the consequences of a crippling initial blow. Adequately preparing the nation for this eventuality could “save an untold number of human lives” and ensure that the United States could “continue a substantial portion of our war production and production essential for the holding together of our civilian economy.” 4

In light of these concerns about a devastating enemy attack, during the 1950s the civilian mobilization planning agencies turned their attention to a novel task. If earlier these agencies were concerned primarily with military-industrial production during a long war fought overseas, then increasingly their focus shifted to preparedness planning to ensure the survival of the national population and recovery of the economy in the aftermath of a domestic catastrophe. It is indicative of this shift that, by the early 1960s, the Office of Defense Mobilization had evolved into the Office of Emergency Planning, which was in turn renamed the Office of Emergency Preparedness. In 1962, the director of this office, Edward McDermott, outlined the aims and means of emergency government as they had come to be understood by this time. Citing a draft executive order issued by President John F. Kennedy, McDermott reported that he had been charged with coordinating the “national preparedness program,” whose goal was to maintain a “state of readiness with respect to all conditions of national emergency.” This meant, first and foremost, maintaining an “emergency management organization” that would be prepared to “handle the myriad of resource and economic problems necessary to save lives and sustain survival and expedite recovery.” Reviewing these “resource and economic problems”— related to electric power, transportation, communications, food, and medical care—McDermott pointed to the vast scope of his office’s concern. “We are really talking about the fundamentals of life on this earth,” he intoned, “the elemental problems of safeguarding the food we eat, the fuel we consume, the transportation to maintain a steady flow of commerce, an intricate telecommunications system which will continue to function under all conditions, and perhaps most important, the foundation of constitutional government which underpins our way of life.”5 In sum, the Office of Emergency Planning was charged with sustaining the very biological and associational life of the American population during a future emergency.

In the decades since McDermott’s speech, practices for anticipating and managing emergencies have continued to evolve, and the organization of emergency government has been frequently reshuffled. But McDermott’s 1962 description of the task of governmental preparedness for emergency is strikingly similar to contemporary understandings. Emergency preparedness continues to focus on reducing the vulnerability of vital systems in anticipation of a range of potentially catastrophic future events, and on preparing for life-saving response and recovery in their aftermath. Thus, the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s 2015 National Preparedness Goal—which currently guides governmental preparedness for events ranging from terrorist attacks to hurricanes and pandemics—refers to a “secure and resilient Nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk.” 6 The emphasis now, as in 1962, is on what the Department of Homeland Security’s 2017 guidance on critical infrastructure protection refers to as “the essential services that underpin American society and serve as the backbone of our nation’s economy, security, and health”; “the power we use in our homes, the water we drink, the transportation that moves us . . . and the communication systems we rely on.”7 Today, as in the early 1960s, emergency preparedness aims to ensure governmental functions relating to “health and safety,” “infrastructure systems,” “hydration, feeding, and sheltering,” that, in the wake of a future disaster, will be essential to “rapidly meeting basic human needs,” “restoring basic services,” “establishing a safe and secure environment,” and “supporting the transition to recovery.”8 And as has been true since the beginning of the postwar period, emergency government today is not an exception to the normal operation of the state. Rather, it encompasses the management of unfolding emergencies and ongoing preparedness for future emergency situations as permanent functions of normal government.

A Genealogy of Emergency Government

This book examines the formation of American emergency government in the middle decades of the twentieth century. It follows the process through which a governmental apparatus initially assembled to manage economic depression and industrial mobilization for war mutated into an apparatus of emergency preparedness for domestic catastrophe. The account presented in this book is a genealogy of emergency government that traces how now-familiar forms of knowledge, practices, and norms first came into being.9 It is only relatively recently, we suggest, that we have come to understand and organize emergency government as a matter of reducing the vulnerability of vital systems, and it is only recently that preparedness for events that might disrupt these systems has become a basic obligation of government.

This genealogical approach to the study of emergency government can be usefully distinguished from histories of the field of disaster preparedness and emergency management, which follow the changing forms of knowledge and governance that have been applied to a certain class of phenomena—disasters. For example, in Acts of God, historian Ted Steinberg traces how the US government has understood and managed (or failed to manage) natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and storms, from the early days of the American republic to the present. 10 Scott Knowles, in The Disaster Experts, constructs what he calls a “disaster chronology” over roughly the same period, tracking how experts have made “the knowledge and control of disasters their special concern.”11 In contrast to such historical studies of disaster and disaster management, a genealogical approach asks how a range of seemingly disparate phenomena, from nuclear attacks and economic shocks to hurricanes and disease outbreaks, have been constituted as common types of events that present similar kinds of problems. Thus, the title of this book—The Government of Emergency—does not refer to the way that a pregiven class of events or situations has been governed. Rather, it refers to a form of political rationality, which we understand, following sociologist Nikolas Rose, as an “intellectual machinery or apparatus for rendering reality thinkable in such a way that it is amenable to political programming.”12

As Rose suggests, political rationalities have both normative and epistemological dimensions. On the one hand, a given political rationality entails specific assumptions about the “proper distribution of tasks between different authorities” and the “ideals or principles to which government should be addressed.” Thus, it implies certain presumptions (however contested and unstable) about what government is, what it should do, and what its limits should be. On the other hand, a political rationality involves a distinct “style of reasoning,” that is, a body of “intellectual techniques for rendering reality thinkable and practicable, and constituting domains that are amenable—or not amenable—to reformatory intervention.” Importantly, a style of reasoning entails specific “conceptions of the objects to be governed,” whether the national economy, the population, or the vulnerable, vital systems on which the economy and the population depend.13

One strategy of genealogical research is to paint a “before and after” picture that aims, as Ian Hacking has put it, “to permanently fix in the mind of the reader the fact that some upheaval has occurred”—a momentous shift in ways of thinking and governing.14 Our account is framed by such a conceptual and political “upheaval,” in which new objects, aims, and practices of government came into being over a relatively brief period. But we also present a detailed account of how this momentous shift unfolded. We focus on specific organizations and on historically situated actors as they took up existing ways of knowing and intervening, or invented new ones, to address novel problems. 15 Through these often-mundane practices, a new political rationality—and indeed, we suggest, a new dimension of political modernity—took shape over the period spanning roughly from the Great Depression through the early Cold War.

The first part of the book examines the period from the 1930s to the early 1940s, in which the federal government faced two conditions of “national emergency”: the Great Depression and World War II. During this period, emergency government largely involved economic interventions to ameliorate the Depression and to manage industrial production for total war. Chapter 1 follows the work of experts in a succession of domains—from city and regional planning to economic management, wartime mobilization, and air targeting—as they constituted vital systems as objects of systematic knowledge and as targets of intervention. Chapter 2 describes a parallel process through which government reformers invented administrative devices and organizational forms to address the economic emergencies of depression and war. It focuses in particular on how these reformers addressed the tensions between liberal constitutionalism and crisis government by assembling what they called an “administrative machinery” to organize and prepare for emergency situations.

The book’s second part is situated in the years immediately after World War II, a period of heightening concern about the prospect of an enemy attack on the continental United States that would cripple military-industrial production systems. Chapter 3 shows how civilian experts and military officers developed systematic knowledge about American economic and infrastructural vulnerability and devised practices and understandings that would constitute a new kind of expertise—and a new kind of expert, the “vulnerability specialist.”16 Chapter 4 turns to the first efforts to develop techniques for reducing this vulnerability and preparing to manage the consequences of a massive attack. It examines postwar mobilization planning agencies, where experts and officials reoriented the existing institutions and practices of emergency government. If previously these institutions had focused on economic management of the unfolding emergencies of depression and war, their objective now shifted to preparing for a future war. Emergency government was thus becoming a matter of ongoing peacetime preparedness.

Part III traces a further shift in American emergency government that took place during the 1950s. As nuclear weapons and delivery systems grew increasingly powerful, mobilization planners deemphasized readiness to ramp up industrial production for a long war. Instead, they turned to the task of ensuring the continuous functioning of vital systems that would be required to sustain human life, economic activity, and governmental operations in the unprecedented conditions that would result from a thermonuclear attack. Chapter 5 examines the practices of “administrative readiness” developed by mobilization planners to prepare for government operations in a future emergency, culminating with a description of Mobilization Plan D-Minus (1957)—the first plan for national emergency preparedness in the United States. Chapter 6 focuses on one dimension of such national preparedness planning: the management of resources such as food, medical supplies, and services that would be essential to the population’s postattack survival. The chapter traces how mobilization planners used the new tool of computer simulation to envision and prepare for an unprecedented future event—a catastrophic nuclear attack.

By the late 1950s, emergency government, which had previously focused on alleviating economic depression and mobilizing for war, had mutated into emergency preparedness for a future domestic catastrophe. A coherent set of understandings, practices, and organizational forms had consolidated into an apparatus that continues to structure emergency government—in the United States and beyond—to the present day. In the next two sections, we outline the broader conceptual and theoretical significance of this mutation in governmental rationality. First, we introduce the concept of vital systems security as a form of “reflexive biopolitics,” oriented to the management of uncertain and potentially catastrophic future events. We argue that, beginning with the midcentury episodes we examine, securing the nation’s vital systems has become a central norm of modern government. Second, we describe how American emergency government took shape as a response to the challenge that increasingly common use of emergency powers during war and economic crisis posed to democratic government. In these contexts, reformers assembled a political technology for governing emergencies that, they thought, would make it possible to avoid recourse to exceptional measures that would undermine constitutional democracy.

Vital Systems Security

In 1984, applied mathematician and security expert Robert Kupperman published Technological Advances and Consequent Dangers, a working paper for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank based in Washington, DC.17 Kupperman’s essay was a far-reaching reflection on the vulnerability of vital systems as a central problem of national security. For our purposes, Kupperman’s paper indicates how system vulnerability was linked to a broader problematization of risk and security in modern societies.

For millennia, Kupperman argued, human beings had faced relatively localized and “self-extinguishing” threats that were “dissipated by the distribution of cultural assets, by the existence of physical and psychological ‘hinterlands,’ and by the cushioning function of institutional diversity and independence.” Even the cataclysm of World War I was a contained event. “Diversities, distances, and differences, systematic inefficiencies of civilization in themselves,” he argued, “provided the recuperative forces necessary to maintain continuity.” But in the intervening years, the “extension of technology in the service of civilization” had enabled human beings to move “into every suitable niche, and even into some not so suitable.” The increasingly “efficient, economical infrastructure” required to sustain this process carried with it an unacknowledged price. “Modern technological efficiency in the provision of food, water, energy, medicine, transport and communication,” he wrote, has been “oriented toward economic affordability without much attention to complex network fragility.” Pointing to the “interlocking technologies” that underpin the “fragile dynamic cycle of production, transportation, and consumption” in contemporary societies, Kupperman argued that the “greater a society’s dependence for survival on its technological infrastructure, the greater its vulnerability to a collapse triggered naturally or artificially at a key point.” Like biological organisms, contemporary human societies could not manage “fundamental system failures multiplying at a biological rate.” “A critical point is reached,” Kupperman warned. “A cascade of organ-system failures ensues, and death comes quickly.” Modern civilization, in developing technologies oriented to furthering the “ends of human life,” had created a system whose “success and importance to social survival make it, ironically, one of society’s greatest weaknesses.”18

In the 1970s and 1980s, the kinds of hazards that Kupperman identified—what sociologist Ulrich Beck describes as “modernization risks”19—were taking on a new kind of public and political life. Economic and energy shocks, environmental crisis, and terrorism garnered increasing attention alongside the paradigmatic specter of catastrophic risk, thermonuclear war, which raised the prospect, for the first time, of self-inflicted human extinction. 20 Kupperman’s reflections are especially significant for our story given his career trajectory, which passed through some of the mostly forgotten technical domains in which, we show in this book, the vulnerability of vital systems was identified and addressed as a matter of governmental concern. In 1980, Kupperman served the incoming Ronald Reagan administration as the head of the transition for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which President Jimmy Carter had created by executive order in 1979. Prior to that, during the 1960s and early 1970s, Kupperman had worked in one of FEMA’s predecessors, the Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP). As director of the Systems Evaluation Division within OEP, Kupperman oversaw studies on “the impact on the Nation’s security and economy created by emergency contingencies of both military and nonmilitary nature,” examining issues such as natural disaster assistance, the continuity of government, damage assessment, resource management, and the “survivability of networks related to national preparedness.”21

The arc of Kupperman’s career points us to a broader question: How did it become possible to understand collective existence in the United States as dependent on a complex of vital and vulnerable systems, and how did the protection of such systems come to be a taken-for- granted obligation of contemporary government? In the chapters that follow we show that, for nearly a century, a persistent discourse has examined collective life from a particular point of view: the vulnerability of modern society and economy to disruption of the vital systems on which they depend. And since at least the early Cold War, the federal government has been concerned with ensuring the continuous functioning of such systems in the face of catastrophic threats. Today, this problem of “vital systems security” is a central object and aim of government, defined in legislation, executive orders, and broad statements of security strategy.

REFLEXIVE BIOPOLITICS

We analyze the emergence of vital systems security as the product of a mutation in the government of modern life. Specifically, it marks a reflexive moment in the history of “biopolitics”—that is, the government of human beings in relation to their biological and social existence. Michel Foucault famously coined the term “biopolitics” to mark a shift, dating roughly to the late eighteenth century, in the aims and objects of government in European countries: from the “classical sovereignty” of the European territorial monarchies to a new governmental concern with ensuring the health and well-being of national populations.22 Classical sovereignty, Foucault argued, ruled “from the standpoint of the juridical-political notion” of the legal subject. Diplomatic, military, and police apparatuses—elements of what might be called “sovereign state security”—aimed to ensure the security of the state itself in the face of foreign and domestic threats. By contrast, biopolitical government is exercised over the population—a collection of living beings understood as a “technical-political object of management.” Foucault traced the “birth of biopolitics” to late eighteenth-and early nineteenth-century Europe, when government authorities sought to manage the health and welfare of populations in growing urban centers. The rapid growth of towns, the expansion of industry, the intensification of trade, and increasingly crowded living conditions posed “new and specific economic and political problems of governmental technique.” In response, officials, planners, and experts in the nascent human sciences invented new forms of knowledge about—and devices for governing—the “fine materiality of human existence and coexistence, of exchange and circulation.”23 As Foucault emphasized, the point is not that the birth of biopolitics displaced prior mechanisms of sovereignty; indeed, particularly with the advent of total war, threats to sovereignty were a key catalyst for the development of biopolitics. Rather, the theme of biopolitics designates the interplay between the exercise of juridical power over legal subjects and the technical management of living beings.

Building on Foucault’s analysis, scholars have traced the development of biopolitical government in a range of domains from the early nineteenth century. In efforts to reduce the toll of epidemics, organize conscription for war, or manage economic fluctuations, government bureaucracies generated vast amounts of data about phenomena such as birth, illness, and death; suicide and crime; and levels of production and employment.24 This “avalanche of numbers,” as Hacking puts it, made possible a new, statistical understanding of collective life.25 The technical and political category of risk played a central role in this development, enabling experts and government officials to quantitatively analyze how phenomena such as crime, illness, accident, and poverty were distributed over a given population, and to assess the costs and benefits of measures to minimize these risks.26 New governmental apparatuses in areas such as economic regulation, urban planning, and public health specified and managed these problems. As Foucault describes this complex process, a “constant interplay between techniques of power and their object” served to “carve out” the population and its specific phenomena (birth and death rates, disease processes, etc.) as a “field of reality.” 27

We take up this story of biopolitical modernity at a later conjuncture and in a different locale. Beginning in the early twentieth century, American planners and policymakers in various domains argued that with the development of mass industrial and metropolitan societies, the interdependencies that made modern collective life possible also rendered it vulnerable to catastrophic disruption from events such as economic shocks, industrial accidents, or wars. Over the following decades, experts and officials addressed this vulnerability by devising new ways to anticipate and mitigate the effects of such events, to reduce the vulnerability of vital systems, and to make society resilient to shocks.28

The first governmental apparatus for securing vital systems was assembled in the 1950s. In the early Cold War, planners and officials working on nuclear preparedness brought together a set of elements— knowledge forms, techniques of intervention, and organizational arrangements—that constituted system vulnerability as a target of governmental intervention. Like the demographers, public health experts, and urbanists of the nineteenth century, mobilization planners produced an “avalanche of numbers” about collective existence, not through statistical analysis of populations but by using scenarios, catastrophe models, and vulnerability assessments. Through this process, society became vulnerable in a novel way. Like the figure of population a century earlier, a new figure of collective life—the vulnerable, vital system—was “carved out” as an object of expert knowledge, technical intervention, and political concern.

By the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, this apparatus of vital systems security had been extended into new domains, including natural disaster response, pandemic preparedness, the management of economic crises, and homeland security.29 This is not to say that vital systems security displaced prior forms of security or became the dominant form of collective security. As we will show, vital systems security emerged and consolidated in complex relation to sovereign state security and population security. Thus, the officials and planners in the 1950s-era Office of Defense Mobilization viewed the task of ensuring the functioning of vital systems in the wake of a nuclear attack as a matter of sovereign state security—prevailing in a future war.30 Meanwhile, vital systems security has become central to many domains of biopolitical government, including the provision of population security in areas such as public health, urban planning, and economic governance. Indeed, we suggest that vital systems security should be understood as a form of “reflexive biopolitics.” It shares the aim of population security: ensuring the health and welfare of populations. But these two forms of biopolitical security differ in their objects of concern, knowledge practices, and norms (see table 1). Whereas population security addresses regularly occurring events that can be managed through the distribution of risk, vital systems security deals with events whose probability cannot be precisely calculated, but whose consequences are potentially catastrophic. Vital systems security does not rely on statistical analysis of past events, but rather employs techniques of enactment such as catastrophe models and scenario-based exercises to simulate potential future events and thereby generate knowledge about present vulnerabilities.31 Its interventions seek to increase the resilience of critical systems and to bolster preparedness for future emergencies.

A NEW POLITICAL RATIONALITY

Our claim is not that governmental concern with vital systems is itself novel. Governments have long been concerned with vital systems like roads, communication networks, and large systems of water management. The construction and control of transportation, energy, and communication systems—what has only recently come to be called “infrastructure”—is found in all large-scale complex societies. 32 Territorial empires have for centuries recognized what were referred to as “communications” as essential to prosperity and security. And military strategists have long been concerned with the importance of transportation and communication for military lines of supply; the military tactic of blockade goes back millennia.33 But from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, we observe a significant intensification and modulation of these concerns. In particular, three features distinguish vital systems security as a political rationality and delimit the conceptual and empirical scope of this book: first, its relationship to biopolitics; second, the emergence of specialized expertise about vital systems; and third, the consolidation of a new political norm—that governments must ensure the ongoing functioning of vital systems in the face of catastrophic threats.

Vital systems and modern biopolitics. First, we can refer to vital systems security in the sense we use the term here only with the emergence of modern biopolitics. Electricity networks, railroads, and complex chains of production became “vital systems” when they were linked to newly constituted problem domains such as the national economy or social welfare.34 Although this development can be traced to the late nineteenth century, particularly in European contexts,35 our narrative begins in the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century. We focus on two apparently disparate fields: regional planning and strategic bombing theory.36 Experts in these fields initially used biological metaphors to illustrate the dependence of collective existence on what Muir Fairchild, an instructor at the US Army’s Air Corps Tactical School in the 1930s, called “life-sustaining vital systems.”37 Fairchild’s term suggested that, like the failure of vital organs or the breakdown of circulatory systems in a biological organism, the disruption of such systems would be catastrophic to the social body. As another Air Corps instructor put it in 1938, as the United States had “grown and prospered in proportion to the excellence of its industrial system,” it had become “more vulnerable . . . to wartime collapse caused by the cutting of one or more of its essential arteries.”38 The use of such biological metaphors would fade over time (though never disappear, as Kupperman’s 1984 report demonstrates). But from the case studies of the Air Corps Tactical School and the quantitative analyses of “criticality” and “essentiality” in wartime and postwar facilities ratings to contemporary assessments of critical infrastructure vulnerability or resilience, experts have defined the “vitality” of vital systems, and the threat posed by their disruption, in terms of these systems’ role in the health and well-being of populations—the central concerns of biopolitical government.

System vulnerability expertise. Second, vital systems security is distinguished by the development of specialized knowledge that constitutes vital systems and their vulnerability as objects of expert analysis and rational-technical intervention. By the mid-twentieth century, technical specialists and officials working in mobilization and air-targeting agencies had devised new practices for assessing vulnerability and preparing for future events that might disrupt the nation’s vital systems. This new form of expertise rested on the accumulation of a vast amount of information about American natural resources, productive facilities, and public works—what President Franklin Delano Roosevelt referred to in 1935 as an “inventory of our national assets.”39 Such expertise also drew on techniques for analyzing the interrelationships among the elements that this “inventory” comprised. Although specialists from many fields were involved in constituting vital systems—and the vulnerability of these systems—as objects of systematic knowledge, economists played a particularly prominent role. Economists first appear in our account during the New Deal, inventing a “science of flows” to analyze how shocks would propagate through the economic system, whether these shocks resulted from a plunge in demand during economic downturns or from a surge in demand caused by government stimulus policies or wartime mobilization. A number of these New Deal economists then migrated to air intelligence offices during World War II, where they developed an “economics of strategic target selection” to assess the vulnerability of enemy production systems and to recommend bombing targets.40 A decade prior to the development of “systems analysis” at the RAND Corporation in the 1950s, these mobilization planners and air intelligence specialists established methods for the quantitative analysis of military-industrial complexes as ensembles of interlocking vital systems.41

In the closing years of World War II and the early Cold War, technical experts coupled the analysis of vital systems with new methods for modeling how a catastrophic event—such as an incendiary bombing attack on a city (during World War II) or an atomic detonation (after the war)—would unfold in space. As we show in chapter 3, these experts produced a new kind of knowledge about vital and vulnerable systems. Initially, military analysts in air intelligence units used graphical techniques such as maps and transparent overlays to generate assessments of urban and industrial vulnerability. By the mid-1950s, vulnerability experts had replaced maps and physical overlays with digital computers and geographically tagged data sets—a precursor of geographic information systems (GIS). The advent of computer simulation added another dimension to vulnerability analysis. By incorporating randomization procedures and multiple simulated runs in their models, vulnerability specialists could account for uncertainties about how a future attack would unfold. These simulation techniques—initially used as speculative “experiments” or “war games” 42 as part of nuclear preparedness planning (see chapter 6)—have come to be accepted in various domains as authoritative tools for generating knowledge about uncertain future events.43

Vital systems security as political obligation and norm. Third, and finally, vital systems security refers to an increasingly taken-for- granted norm of politics. After World War II, the task of ensuring the continuous operation of vital systems and managing the risk of catastrophic disruption came to be accepted as a basic obligation of sovereign government. This was not the first time that the US government was expected to deal with the consequences of domestic catastrophes. As Michele Landis Dauber has documented, there is a long American tradition of federal relief following disasters.44 But prior to the middle of the twentieth century, these governmental responses were ad hoc, organized in the wake of what were understood to be unforeseeable “acts of god.” 45 Only in the last several decades has government been held responsible for preparing in advance of future catastrophes that can be anticipated if not precisely predicted. And only in the last several decades has this obligation been addressed, at least in part, by technical measures that aim to ensure the functioning of vital systems.

The first statutory mention of this new governmental obligation (discussed in chapter 4) was in the 1947 National Security Act. The Act created a new peacetime mobilization agency—the National Security Resources Board (NSRB)—and charged it with undertaking measures to protect “industries, services, Government and economic activities” whose “continuous operation” Congress deemed “essential to the Nation’s security.” 46 The NSRB was a defense mobilization agency, in which the norm of “preparedness” still referred to military-industrial readiness for war. But planners working in government agencies charged with preparedness gradually adapted these techniques to address other kinds of potentially catastrophic events, such as hurricanes, floods, and infectious disease outbreaks. By the 1960s, the norm of preparedness could refer to any event that might catastrophically disrupt the nation’s vital systems. The organization of responsibility for emergency preparedness has shifted almost constantly over the subsequent decades, and attention to this problem has ebbed and flowed. But the task of ensuring the continuous operation of vital systems is now a virtually unquestioned—if not always successfully met—obligation of contemporary government.

An “Administrative Machinery” for Governing Emergencies

The prior section described how experts and officials constituted system vulnerability as an object of specialized knowledge and a target of governmental intervention during the Depression, World War II, and the early Cold War. But on its own, this description of expert knowledge and technical interventions is too serene. It is too serene, in part, because these “interventions” into vital systems were closely linked to projects— whether war mobilization, strategic air targeting, or nuclear preparedness—that involved the mass slaughter of civilians, the annihilation of cities, and, after World War II, the prospect of nuclear holocaust.47 It is also too serene because the developments we have described corresponded to an upheaval in American government. Technical experts and government officials often instituted the mechanisms of vital systems security through “emergency” measures that challenged American political traditions, such as deference to legislative prerogative and judicial precedent, as well as a diffuse and decentralized pattern of sovereignty. An account of the emergence and consolidation of vital systems security must, therefore, address the fraught relationship between emergency powers and constitutional democracy.

As a point of entry into these questions, we turn to the writings of a prominent midcentury American commentator on crisis government, political scientist Clinton Rossiter. Rossiter began his seminal study Constitutional Dictatorship, published in 1948, with a question that President Abraham Lincoln had posed at the outset of the American Civil War. “Is there in all republics,” Lincoln asked, “this inherent and fatal weakness? Must a government be too strong for the liberties of its people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?” Had Lincoln been alive on the eve of World War II, Rossiter observed, he could have “framed his question in more modern terms.” Was it possible for a democracy to “fight a successful total war and still be a democracy when the war is over?” For Rossiter, writing just after the end of World War II, the “incontestable facts of history” had provided an answer. “We have fought a successful total war,” Rossiter declared, “and we are still a democracy.” In this “severe national emergency,” the US government had employed “devices and techniques” that made it “strong enough to maintain its own existence without at the same time being so strong as to subvert the liberties of the people it has been instituted to defend.” 48

In what follows, we show that the “devices and techniques” Rossiter referred to were the product of efforts by governmental reformers who, during the New Deal and World War II, sought to meet the challenge that, they thought, emergency situations posed to constitutional democracy. These reformers assembled what Rossiter called an “administrative machinery” that would enable the US federal government, especially its executive branch, to manage emergency situations through expert rule without recourse to an extra-constitutional state of exception. They believed, like Rossiter, that in an era of pervasive doubt about the prospects for democracy, they had successfully responded to the “taunt of the dictators” that “democracies cannot meet the demands of the modern world and still remain democratic,” as the reformer Luther Gulick put it in 1941.49 Our aim in describing these reformers’ efforts is not to assess the validity of such claims. Rather, it is to reconstruct how they formulated and sought to address the problem that emergencies posed to democratic constitutionalism. Their responses shaped a distinctive political technology for governing emergency situations.

DEMOCRACY, EMERGENCY, AND THE MODERN AMERICAN STATE

Our account begins in the early twentieth century. At this time, Progressive reformers argued that, as Charles Merriam put it in 1933, governments had “to undertake new activities” to address intensifying processes of urbanization and industrialization. Among these new activities were the management of “public welfare, including education, recreation, health, social relief, and welfare planning”; the construction of public works, such as “highways and aid to communications”; and the “central control over social and economic forces.”50 The challenge, Merriam and other reformers held, was that American governmental institutions, which were set up when the United States was a largely rural and sparsely populated country, were ill suited to the functions required of what they referred to as a “positive state” that was involved in managing the health, well-being, and conditions of existence of a rapidly growing and an increasingly urban population. Merriam described this mismatch as “social lag” and argued for governmental “adjustment.”51 On the one hand, technical experts would have to play an expanded role in political administration. On the other hand, such an “adjustment” would require a significant shift in the locus of political authority: centralization to address issues that crossed local jurisdictional boundaries and decisive executive leadership to manage urgent social and economic problems.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, administrative reformers succeeded in instituting significant changes along the lines Merriam and other Progressives prescribed. Initially, their efforts focused on state and local governments, as they sought to deal with the growing pressures of urban growth and industrial expansion. By the 1930s, in the context of the New Deal, these reformers turned their attention to the national level and the federal government, where they confronted the “emergency” situations of the Great Depression and World War II. Between 1933 and 1945, federal agencies took on a vast range of new functions relating to the provision of social welfare, economic management, and industrial mobilization.52 To better equip the federal government—particularly the executive branch—to meet these new demands, Progressive reformers working in and around the Roosevelt administration pushed through a series of laws and administrative changes. Partly as a result of their efforts, the American presidency, which began the 1930s as a solitary office with a small staff, emerged from the war as a powerful office that oversaw an array of agencies, wielding formidable discretionary powers.53 [FOOTNOTE] 53. Waldo (Administrative State) referred to the federal government that emerged from World War II as the “administrative state.” On the expansion of the Executive Office of the President (EOP) in particular, see Relyea, Executive Office. As one indicator of the growth of this apparatus of executive rule, President Hoover’s staff consisted of thirty-three people; today, more than two thousand people are on the EOP’s staff. [END FOOTNOTE] New expert bodies were scattered throughout the executive branch, and new mechanisms of rational-technical administration were woven into laws and regulations.

#### Perceived US weakness causes global nuclear war.

Grady Means 21, Former Policy Assistant to Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, Retired American Business Executive, MA in Economics and Engineering from Stanford University, 8/30/2021, “Biden Brings The World Closer To Nuclear War,” https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/569732-biden-brings-the-world-closer-to-nuclear-war

Over the past six months, the world has edged closer to nuclear war than it has been since the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Doomsday Clock is ticking toward midnight. The global power balance has been dramatically reshuffled, and the potential for disastrous miscalculation hasn't been so high in 80 years. The match and fuse for this is instability — an exaggerated sense of U.S. weakness and lack of capability and resolve — that could lead to huge, aggressive military miscalculations and mistakes by our enemies. The Biden administration has set the table for such a catastrophe.

The timing could not be more dangerous. China has changed strategic direction and has been building its nuclear stockpile and delivery systems. China also has continued to develop hypersonic weapons, including stand-off “carrier killers,” space weapons and cyber capabilities to blind opponents’ strategic and conventional systems. Russia has been advertising (mostly for domestic consumption, but nonetheless worrying) its “unstoppable” delivery systems, and has a very capable nuclear stockpile and military. Iran will continue to move forward with building nuclear weapons. Pakistan and India both have significant nuclear capability in an increasingly unstable part of the world. Nuclear-armed North Korea is again assuming a more belligerent posture. Israel has a full nuclear triad (land, air, subs) to respond to existential aggression. The U.K. and France have significant nuclear deterrents. The world is a powder keg.

In Hollywood terms, today’s capacity for nuclear [catasrophe] holocaust is thousands of times greater than the era portrayed in the Armageddon films “On the Beach,” “Fail Safe,” or “Dr. Strangelove.” There would not be anything left for “Mad Max.” Climate disasters may be unfolding over the next hundred years. Nuclear disaster is unfolding now. COVID-19 has killed more Americans than the flu typically does. Nuclear war could kill us all. Our leaders must get their priorities straight.

#### A living wage for federal employees solves recruitment and retention.

NFFE 24. National Federation of Federal Employees. January 30, 2024. “NFFE Endorses New Legislation to Give Federal Employees a 7.4% Pay Adjustment in 2025.” https://nffe.org/press-release/nffe-endorses-new-legislation-to-give-federal-employees-a-7-4-pay-adjustment-in-2025/. TDI

Washington, D.C. – Today, the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM) praises the introduction of the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act of 2024. This legislation, introduced by Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) would provide a 7.4% pay increase for federal employees in 2025.

“Last year, federal employees again lost ground in the fight for a fair wage,” said NFFE National President Randy Erwin. “Pay increases for 2024 were not enough to offset rising inflation and the widened federal-private pay deficit, which rose 5% in the last two years and is now over 27%, according to the most recent report from the Federal Salary Council.”

According to the Department of Labor, last year’s salaries for federal employees were severely lacking behind those in comparable positions in the private sector, as has been the case for decades. In fact, the public-private pay gap again grew last year, from a 24.1% difference in 2022 to 27.54% in 2023. Additionally, the 2023 OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey concluded that over the last three years, satisfaction with wages declined from 67% to 57%. The lack of competitive pay for federal employees hurts recruitment and retention within the civil service.

“Congress must understand that to attract and retain a skilled workforce that best serves the American people, we need to pay our civil servants competitive wages,” continued Erwin. “The FAIR Act is a simple, yet effective tool to ensure all federal employees can earn a living wage and their communities receive the best essential services from the federal government. Thank you to Representative Connolly and Senator Schatz for their commitment to the civil service.”

#### Starting pay is the largest internal link to federal recruitment.

Warren 23. Kenneth Warren, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science @ Saint Louis University. April 26, 2023. “Pay and Prestige For Civil Servants: The Historical Advantages—and Disadvantages—of Government Work.” Government Executive. https://www.govexec.com/pay-benefits/2023/04/pay-prestige-civil-servants-historical-advantages-disadvantages-government-work/385623/. TDI

Most Americans take it for granted that we have federal government agencies staffed by capable people who can and will provide services to help solve problems. For all the disparagement of government employees in recent years, especially among some politicians, Pew Research poll results released last month show a majority of Americans continue to approve of the work of 14 of 16 leading federal agencies.

Reinforcing that message, a recent report from the Gallup organization summarizes that, “the majority of Americans say the federal government should have the responsibility for a number of societal functions, including protection from foreign threats, protection from unsafe products, preventing discrimination, maintaining the nation's transportation systems, protecting the environment and making sure Americans have adequate healthcare.”

And a major factor behind why most Americans can reasonably maintain expectations that government should perform these crucial tasks must be because it is already doing so. That is, each day people see the fruits of the work of public servants—and in their estimation much of it is getting done, and well enough, thanks. Because paid professionals at most agencies, hired competitively over the years, are for the most part perceived to be doing a decent job.

But historically this hasn’t always been the case. For example, prior to the New Deal our federal government was smaller, paid less and played a less prominent role. Having said that, some countries and cultures have long offered a relatively good deal in life to civil servants—including periods of higher prestige (if not pay) that go back centuries. For some snapshots of the varied role of pay and prestige in public sector work, Government Executive interviewed Saint Louis University’s Ken Warren, a veteran political scientist, and expert on American government and the history of the civil service in the U.S. and abroad.

Q&A with Kenneth Warren

GovExec: Prof. Warren, you study and teach not just on the civil service in the U.S., but also on public servants at the state level, governments of other countries as well as historical changes in these over time. How important is pay to recruiting and retaining good people—and in making sure government is able to provide services and keep societies strong and functioning?

Warren: It’s very important. When you look at the United States—and paid work by people in the federal government in particular—starting pay is usually higher for government work than in private enterprise. And that is a competitive advantage that has helped to get some of the best people to ensure government services get done. But—and this was for a long time rule of thumb—on average after just three years a person who went to work for private enterprise was earning more money than a person with the same qualifications in a federal job. The point is there have long been—and still are—some advantages to government work, and that has helped to recruit and keep some very good people in government work.

GovExec: How does the federal government stack up on pay, historically speaking, compared to state and local governments and the private sector?

Warren: Pretty well. Especially at first. The biggest downside for the person who goes to work for the private sector is that their starting pay is usually low. At first, that is. Like I said, and as your readers have seen elsewhere, the federal government historically has done quite well in recruiting, because the starting pay for many jobs has been comparatively quite high. That's an advantage specifically for federal work—it’s usually not the case at the state and local level. Of course, this all depends on which state government we’re talking about. Looking at public sector pay by state, it varies greatly. Missouri—and West Virginia, Arkansas and others—for instance, are low-paying state governments. Connecticut, New York and others, on the other hand, are high-paying state governments. The important thing to your readers is that if you look at the federal government, new hires do quite well at first—and that has helped federal agencies to do pretty well at recruiting, historically speaking, because their initial pay rate is pretty high for salary paid for comparable positions—versus state governments or the private sector.

GovExec: But in recent decades, as federal government work increasingly demanded higher skills—for backgrounds in STEM and tech—that “rule of thumb” you just cited must be less applicable, right? Government is doing less well for new hires against private industry as those higher-paying lower-skill jobs go away or are contracted out, right?

Warren: That’s right. We can look to my own family for examples on these trends. During the Great Depression—yes, a long time ago—my father ran chicken farms and was going broke. He was saved by government work. The pay was much higher than the private sector! My daughter, on the other hand, has advanced degrees and was offered very high-paying jobs from Silicon Valley employers, and many of these companies are offering better pay for new hires, too. Anecdotes aside, the statistics show federal employees on average are paid about a quarter less on the dollar compared to the private sector (and the problem is even more glaring at for public sector employment at the level of the states.) But these figures don’t take into account specific jobs—or the advantages of some federal benefits and basic job security.

#### Federal agencies face a cybersecurity labor shortage.

Aster 23. Hannah Aster. August 30, 2023. “Why the Cybersecurity Labor Shortage Is a Big Deal (+Solutions?).” Shortform. https://www.shortform.com/blog/cybersecurity-labor-shortage/. TDI

Why is there such a huge cybersecurity labor shortage right now? What’s the government doing to try to fix it?

The US government faces a dangerous shortage of qualified experts to safeguard vital systems and networks from attack. The federal government is working to solve the cybersecurity labor shortage, but it will struggle if it fails to address pay discrepancies between public and private sector cybersecurity jobs.

Keep reading for insight into the cybersecurity talent shortage.

Where Are All the Cybersecurity Workers?

With 39,000 cybersecurity jobs vacant across US federal agencies, the nation faces a severe cybersecurity labor shortage, which threatens national security by putting critical infrastructure and networks at risk of attack.

Background on Cyber Workers

America’s cybersecurity talent pipeline is in dire straits, with only 69 skilled workers available for every 100 that employers need. In an April Congressional hearing, the FBI director testified that if his entire cyber team focused solely on threats from China, the number of Chinese hackers would still exceed the FBI’s cyber workforce by 50 to 1. The problem is so severe that federal agencies are poaching cybersecurity staff from one another.

The scarcity of cybersecurity professionals has far-reaching implications. The shortage comes amid a growing number of cyberattacks, including the crippling 2021 Colonial Pipeline ransomware attack and the 2020 SolarWinds hack.

#### Labor shortages make cyberattack prevention impossible.

Bate and Montgomery 22. Workforce Development Agenda for the National Cyber Director. https://cybersolarium.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/CSC2.0\_Report\_WorkforceDevelopmentAgenda\_FullText.pdf. TDI

Executive Summary

Nearly 10 years ago, researchers hypothesized that market forces would correct the U.S. shortage of cyber professionals over time.1 This has not occurred, and the cybersecurity community is out of time. The pervasiveness of avoidable cyber problems such as misconfigured systems, slow patching, and insufficient attention to risk management can frequently be directly tied to cyber staffing shortages.2 Not only are these problems expensive to remediate after incidents occur, but they are also a threat to national security, particularly when they occur in critical-infrastructure systems or in the supply chains upon which that infrastructure depends.

#### Cyberattacks spread between interlinked systems---nuclear war.

Acton ’20 [James; March 23; Jessica T. Mathews Chair and is Co-Director of the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Daedalus, “Cyber Warfare and Inadvertent Escalation,” vol. 149]

The vulnerability of nuclear forces and C3I systems creates the risk of inadvertent escalation: that is, escalation resulting from military operations or threats that are not intended to be escalatory. So-called crisis instability, for example, could arise if a state were afraid of being disarmed more or less completely in a preemptive strike by an adversary, whether or not such fears were well founded.4 In the most extreme case, “use-’em-or-lose-’em” pressures could lead the state to employ nuclear weapons, conceivably in its own preemptive attempt to disarm its adversary, but more likely in a limited way to try to terrify the opponent into backing down. In less extreme scenarios, a state afraid of being disarmed might take steps–issuing nuclear threats, for example, or dispersing mobile nuclear forces– that raised the likelihood of nuclear use later.

This danger is likely to be exacerbated by any cyber vulnerabilities affecting nuclear forces and C3I systems. Most directly, the existence of such vulnerabilities could intensify existing fears of being disarmed–fears that are already acute in China and Russia (as well as in Pakistan and, most likely, North Korea).5 However, because of their unique characteristics and effects, cyber threats could create at least three qualitatively new mechanisms by which a nuclear-armed state might come to the incorrect conclusion that its nuclear deterrent was under threat. First, the purpose of cyber interference could be misinterpreted. In particular, espionage could be mistaken for an attack. Second, a cyberattack could have a more significant effect than intended. Malware implanted into information technology (IT) systems associated with non-nuclear weapons could accidentally spread into more sensitive nuclear-related systems, for instance. Third, the initiator of a cyber operation could be misidentified. An operation carried out by a third party, for example, could be misattributed by one state in a bilateral confrontation to its opponent. What makes these pathways so pernicious is that the catalyst for escalation could appear to its initiator to be a relatively benign action.

To make matters worse, such pathways could lead to inadvertent escalation even if the target of the cyber interference were not afraid of being completely disarmed. Today at least, this description fits the United States. If, in a conflict against Russia, say, the United States wrongly concluded that its strategic early-warning system was under cyberattack, it might reason that Moscow was seeking to undermine U.S. missile defenses, which use early-warning data, prior to launching a nuclear attack.6 Given that U.S. declaratory policy explicitly highlights the option of a nuclear response to non-nuclear attacks on nuclear C3I assets, such a “misinterpreted warning” might lead Washington to use nuclear weapons.7 But even if it did not, its response, which might include nuclear threats, could still be escalatory.

My focus here is narrowly limited to inadvertent cyber threats against, or interference with, one state’s nuclear forces or C3I systems by another nuclear-armed state (C3I systems encompass not only communication capabilities, but also the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities, including early warning, that would be critical to decision-making). To be sure, cyber vulnerabilities probably create other escalation risks too, though, in my judgment, they are less serious.8 For example, while no state would likely try to detonate another’s nuclear weapons, a nihilistic terrorist group might (though it is unclear whether such a group could obtain the requisite cyber capabilities). Separately, vulnerabilities associated with conventional forces or their C3I systems could increase the likelihood of a conventional war’s escalating to a higher level of violence, thus making nuclear use more credible.9

Cyber interference with nuclear forces and C3I systems can involve two (not mutually exclusive) types of operations: espionage and attack. Cyber espionage involves collecting data from a target IT system without otherwise damaging it. A cyberattack involves undermining the operations of the target system, typically by compromising the integrity or availability of data. Cyber tools suitable for surveilling or attacking nuclear forces or C3I systems have innumerable differences from noncyber tools, which are themselves quite varied. Six of these differences are particularly salient to the risk of inadvertent nuclear escalation.

First, cyber espionage offers the potential to obtain information about an adversary’s military forces and operations that cannot plausibly be obtained in any other way. By accessing an adversary’s C3I systems directly, cyber tools may be capable of exfiltrating exceptionally sensitive information, such as the locations of mobile delivery systems. This is not to suggest that cyber surveillance is infallible. As a security measure, for example, a state could choose not to track the movements of its mobile delivery systems (or it could do so only approximately). Alternatively or additionally, it could try to use a cyber intrusion in its networks to feed misinformation to the adversary. In spite of these and other limitations, however, cyber espionage almost certainly offers unique advantages. For example, no practical constellation of high-resolution surveillance satellites in low Earth orbit could provide continuous coverage of a given location on Earth’s surface.10 Cyber surveillance, by contrast, may allow for continuous monitoring of an adversary’s military posture.

Second, cyber weapons offer an unparalleled capability to manipulate the data that go into decision-making. Other types of weapons, by destroying or disabling sensors or communication systems, can also deny data to decision-makers. However, their use generally alerts the target to the fact it is under attack. By contrast, if a well-designed cyber weapon is used, a loss of data may appear to be, say, the result of a malfunction, potentially allowing the attacker to conduct surprise follow-on attacks. Even more significant, cyber weapons can be used to feed false information to decision-makers. For example, the Stuxnet virus, which was reportedly developed by the United States and Israel, was designed not only to destroy centrifuges at Iran’s Natanz enrichment plant, but also to hinder plant operators from discovering the cause of these failures by producing falsely reassuring readings on monitoring equipment.11 In a similar vein, sophisticated cyber weapons offer a unique capability to shape an adversary’s perception of a battlefield by feeding misinformation into C3I systems.12 To be sure, information operations have always been a part of warfare. However, cyber weapons represent a sea change because their effects can be tailored with great precision in real time, and because they could be used to directly influence the perceptions of high-level decision-makers.

Third, cyber operations–whether conducted for espionage or offensive purposes–can present particularly significant risks of unanticipated collateral effects, that is, of affecting IT systems other than the intended target.13 Noncyber weapons can, of course, lead to collateral damage. Yet such effects are inherently constrained by geography. Moreover, the likelihood of physical collateral damage can be often quantified, at least to some extent (military planners may be able to estimate, for example, the probability of an incoming weapon missing its military target and hitting a nearby civilian facility).14 The risks of collateral effects in cyberspace are much more difficult to estimate. Minimizing such effects relies, in part, on detailed intelligence about the target network and on connections between it and other networks. Obtaining the requisite intelligence is potentially much more difficult than identifying what surrounds a target in physical space (as is verifying that the resulting picture is complete). To complicate matters further, sophisticated malware must generally be tailored to each target and, if revealed, will become ineffective once the adversary can clean its networks and fix whatever exploit was used to gain access. As a result, the effects of cyber weapons cannot usually be understood through testing, further increasing the likelihood of unanticipated collateral damage (simulations can be used but they are only as good as the available intelligence on the target).

Fourth, in peacetime, malware used to enable a cyberattack may often be inserted into an enemy’s networks–but not activated–in the hope that it will remain undetected and thus can be used in a potential future crisis or conflict. (In theory, not only can a vulnerability in an operational IT system be exploited in this way, but so too could security weaknesses in the supply chain for the system’s components.) Noncyber weapons, by contrast, are generally used as and when the decision to authorize a strike on a particular target is taken.15 One consequence of this difference is that, if a state discovers dormant malware in its networks, it can be faced with the challenge of attributing it–that is, identifying which entity is responsible for its implantation–before activation. The equivalent challenge rarely arises with the kinds of noncyber weapons typically used in interstate warfare (though it does arise in irregular warfare or counterterrorism with unexploded ordnance).

Fifth, and relatedly, cyberattacks are generally easier to conceal than other forms of attack. As a result, decision-makers may be more inclined to authorize them. In fact, if the goal is for a cyber weapon to have either a persistent effect or an effect when triggered at some future time, the malware used in the attack must remain hidden to be effective because exposure could enable the adversary to take countermeasures.

Sixth, and finally, distinguishing between offensive operations and espionage is significantly more challenging in cyberspace than in other domains.16 To be sure, the line dividing espionage and offensive operations in physical space is not always entirely clear. Aircraft–unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), in particular –are used for both surveillance and offensive operations. But the distinction is much murkier in cyberspace. One challenge is that identifying the purpose of a piece of malware–understanding whether it can be used for espionage, offensive purposes, or both–can be time-consuming. In a fast-moving conflict or crisis, this process might move slower than decision-making. Moreover, even if a state quickly and confidently established that a piece of malware could be used solely for espionage, it could not be confident that whatever vulnerability was used to introduce the malware would not also be exploited for offensive purposes–at least until it had identified and fixed the vulnerability.

States can threaten each other’s nuclear forces through a combination of offensive “counterforce” operations to target nuclear-weapon delivery systems preemptively, and air and missile defense operations to intercept whatever remained. The United States openly acknowledges it would seek to limit the damage it would suffer in a nuclear war.17 Russian doctrine is believed to embrace a similar concept.18 India may be moving in the same direction.19

The question of whether, in practice, a state could actually succeed in limiting the damage it would suffer in a nuclear war to an extent that decision-makers would consider meaningful is currently a subject of considerable debate.20 However, from the perspective of inadvertent escalation, what matters is not whether damage-limitation operations would actually prove effective, but whether a potential target believes they might. In this context, Chinese and Russian fears that the United States is seeking the capabilities–non-nuclear capabilities, in particular–to negate their nuclear deterrents could prove escalatory in a crisis or conflict by generating “crisis instability,” that is, pressures to use nuclear weapons before losing the capability to do so.21 And even though the United States is not concerned today about the possibility of being disarmed, Washington appears to be less sanguine about the future, given growing threats to its C3I assets, in particular.

Cyber capabilities could contribute to damage-limitation operations in two distinct ways. First, cyber espionage could prove useful in collecting intelligence that might increase the effectiveness of counterforce attacks and air and missile defenses, especially if complemented by effective analytic tools for synthesizing large amounts of data from multiple sources.22 If cyber espionage helped reveal the locations of mobile weapons, for example, it could enable preemptive attacks against them. And if it helped to reveal targeting data, it could assist defenses in intercepting missiles and aircraft after launch.

Second, cyber weapons could be used, alongside other capabilities, to conduct counterforce strikes. A hypothetical cyber “kill switch” that could permanently shut down an adversary’s nuclear C3I systems would certainly be attractive to any state with a damage-limitation doctrine. In practice, this kind of perfect capability seems fanciful, not least because a state could find analog or even nonelectronic ways to use its own nuclear forces given enough time (in fact, some states may even prepare such means in advance). At best, therefore, a cyberattack could be a “pause button” that delayed an adversary’s ability to use its nuclear weapons. Real cyber weapons are likely to be still less effective, however. All nuclear-armed states likely operate multiple C3I systems with some degree of redundancy between them. Cyber operations would probably not prove equally effective against these different systems, potentially delaying the target from using some elements of its nuclear forces for longer periods of time than others.

Even given these limitations, however, cyberattacks could still assist with damage limitation. They could buy more time for counterforce operations to attrite an opponent’s nuclear forces and reduce the coherence of any retaliatory attacks, somewhat simplifying the task of air and missile defenses. Moreover, the potential for cyberattacks to shape an adversary’s perceptions could prove valuable. For example, an attacker might try to “blind” its adversary’s early-warning system just before launching counterforce strikes on its nuclear forces.

Just how effective cyber-enabled damage-limitation operations might prove in an actual conflict is far from clear, not least because of the difficulty of testing cyber weapons. That said, any state that has made the enormous investments necessary to develop damage-limitation capabilities is likely to spend relatively modest additional sums on developing complementary cyber tools, and it might reach a different conclusion about their potential efficacy. Even more important, from the perspective of inadvertent escalation, its potential adversaries might do so too.

China, in particular, appears to be concerned about cyber-enabled damage limitation. Summarizing the thinking of their peers on this subject, two Chinese scholars, Tong Zhao and Li Bin, have concluded that “Chinese analysts have demonstrated an acute awareness of the potential vulnerabilities of the country’s nuclear C3I system, particularly against cyber infiltrations.”23 Russian views have been less aired. In fact, a dichotomy has emerged in what little public discussion there has been. For example, three respected experts, including a former general officer in Russia’s Strategic Rocket Forces, have recently played down the threat, arguing that “because the command-and-control systems of strategic nuclear forces are isolated and highly protected, they are, in all probability, not vulnerable to cyber attacks.”24 At about the same time, however, another influential Russian scholar argued that, among the emerging non-nuclear technologies that could threaten nuclear forces, “probably the most dangerous development is cyber weapons, which could be used for non-nuclear disarming and decapitating attack by completely paralysing the entire command-and-control system.”25 News reports that Russia has created cyber defense units for its nuclear forces suggest that the Russian military may be less than sanguine about the cyber threat.26

Fears about cyber-enabled damage limitation may be particularly pernicious because of the potential difficulty of detecting a cyberattack. A sophisticated cyberattack on nuclear forces or C3I systems could conceivably occur without being detected. In the extreme case, a state might only find out that it had been attacked when it attempted to launch nuclear weapons and discovered that its ability to do so had been impeded in some way. If a state believed that it would be unlikely to detect an ongoing cyberattack, then it could rationally conclude that it might be under attack even in the absence of attack indicators. The simple belief that an opponent had highly sophisticated cyber capabilities could, therefore, precipitate a false positive–the incorrect assessment that an attack was underway–by itself. By contrast, if a state’s nuclear forces were under assault from kinetic strikes, the target would likely be aware. To be sure, it is still not entirely impossible that a state could wrongly come to believe it was under kinetic attack. Early-warning systems, for example, have produced false warnings of incoming ballistic missile strikes.27 But mistakes of this kind could be identified once the incoming weapons ceased to exist (though the window of time before they disappeared could be particularly dangerous).

To make matters worse, a state that was concerned about its nuclear forces and C3I systems coming under cyberattack might be inclined, especially in a crisis or conflict, to interpret ambiguous indicators in the worst possible light. For example, if one of its nuclear C3I systems malfunctioned because of, say, bad design or aging components, it might wrongly attribute the failure to a cyberattack (in fact, the temptation among operators to do so might be particularly strong if they would otherwise be held responsible for an internal failure). Regardless of precisely how it arose, however, a false positive that occurred in a crisis or conflict could generate significant escalation pressures.

Concerns about the potential for cyber operations to enhance the effectiveness of damage limitation can have effects beyond generating crisis instability at a time of heightened tensions or during a conflict. In peacetime, such concerns may induce nuclear-armed states to take steps to try to ensure that nuclear weapons could be employed when duly ordered in a crisis or conflict, even at the expense of exacerbating the danger of inadvertent or unauthorized use. Concerned states, for example, could remove permissive action links–electronic “locks” designed to prevent the unauthorized use of nuclear weapons–because of the perceived danger that they could be hacked and thus subverted to prevent authorized use.28

Alternatively or additionally, states could make plans to predelegate the authority to use nuclear weapons down the chain of command to guard against the possibility of the communication links serving national leaders being severed. The dangers of predelegation depend, in part, on the degree of flexibility afforded to commanders in determining whether and how to use nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, certain risks are inherent in any model. A localized communications failure might be mistaken for an attack, for example, leading to inadvertent use.29 Predelegation also increases the risk of unauthorized use because a field commander could order the use of nuclear weapons in a scenario in which he or she was not permitted to do so. This danger becomes greater as more people are granted launch authority. In this respect, cyber threats could promote a particularly dangerous form of predelegation by inducing a state to entrust launch authority to the relatively large number of lower-level officers who are capable of issuing a launch order without electronic communications.

Surveillance operations in cyberspace, even if conducted exclusively for defensive purposes, pose unique risks of escalation. Cyber surveillance of an adversary’s nuclear forces can serve purposes besides damage limitation. In any dyad involving two nuclear-armed states, each has a strong incentive to monitor the status of the other’s nuclear forces at all times–and particularly during a crisis or conflict–including for the exclusively defensive purpose of spotting any preparations for nuclear use. Several intelligence collection techniques, including overhead imagery and signals intelligence, are likely used for this purpose. Given the potentially unique advantages of surveillance in cyberspace, however, states may see good reason to adopt it alongside these other approaches, especially if they judge that the likelihood of cyber espionage being detected is small.

Depending on the sophistication of the malware used and the target’s defenses, the true likelihood of being detected may or may not be small, but the consequences of being caught could be significant. In fact, if the target detected ongoing cyber espionage of networks associated with its nuclear forces or C3I systems, inadvertent escalation could result from either of two concerns that are distinct from those that might plausibly be generated by other forms of surveillance.

First, even if the target of cyber interference were convinced that the operation was being conducted exclusively for the purpose of espionage, it might worry that the data being collected could be used against it in damage-limitation operations. Intelligence collection in physical space could also enable damage limitation, but it differs from cyber surveillance in one critical respect. In a crisis or conflict, a state would generally have no way of knowing whether or not countermeasures against physical surveillance (such as camouflage or concealment) had proved effective–unless its nuclear forces were successfully attacked. By contrast, if it detected an ongoing effort to collect intelligence through its C3I networks, it would know definitively that at least some of its cyber defenses had failed. This realization might lead the state to fear that attacks on its nuclear forces were imminent.

Second, because of the difficulty of rapidly distinguishing cyber espionage from a cyberattack, espionage against nuclear forces or C3I systems would risk being misinterpreted as an attack. In theory, the use of armed UAVs for surveillance of an adversary’s nuclear forces could generate a similar risk. However, a state motivated by purely defensive considerations would have strong and obvious reasons not to use armed UAVs in this way.

The risks resulting from cyber espionage being mistaken as an attack would depend on who had initiated the operation and who was the target. China or Russia might assess that U.S. cyber surveillance was actually an offensive effort intended to undermine–or, more likely, give Washington the option of undermining– Beijing’s or Moscow’s ability to launch nuclear weapons, thus potentially generating crisis instability. By contrast, because Washington is apparently more confident in the survivability of its nuclear deterrent, cyber espionage directed against U.S. nuclear forces or C3I systems would be less likely to have the same result. Nonetheless, such operations would likely be of real concern to Washington and could, for example, be misinterpreted as a prelude to nuclear use by China or Russia.

Even if the two states involved in a crisis or conflict did not engage in any kind of deliberate cyber interference with one another’s nuclear forces or C3I systems, one of them might wrongly conclude that the other had. Such a misperception, which could be the result of collateral effects or third-party action, could also induce escalation through crisis instability or misinterpreted warning.

A state that eschewed cyber operations of any kind against an opponent’s nuclear forces or C3I systems might still launch such operations against adversary military networks involved exclusively in non-nuclear operations. If, because of design flaws, imperfect intelligence, or mistakes in execution, the malware used in such attacks spread and infected networks that were involved in nuclear operations, the target might conclude that its nuclear forces or C3I systems were under deliberate cyberattack or cyber surveillance.

There could be collateral effects even if a state’s networks for nuclear operations were entirely isolated; air-gapping (physically isolating one particular network from others) is, after all, not a cyber security panacea.30 Moreover, achieving perfect isolation could prove difficult in practice.31 To give but one reason, every nuclear-armed state, apart from the United Kingdom, has dual-use delivery systems, which can be used to deliver nuclear or non-nuclear weapons. Such delivery systems represent a potential point of contact between the C3I systems supporting nuclear operations and those supporting non-nuclear operations.

In practice, some nuclear-armed states–perhaps many or even all of them– have not tried to isolate their nuclear C3I systems. The United States, for example, has a number of dual-use C3I assets for communications and early warning that support both nuclear and non-nuclear operations.32 Other nuclear-armed states, including China and Russia, may as well, but are less transparent.33 Because the networks supporting dual-use C3I assets are likely to be connected directly to others involved in non-nuclear operations, there may be a particularly high risk of their being subject to collateral effects.

#### FDA pay increases have not kept up with inflation, harming recruitment and retention.

Al-Faruque 24. Ferdous Al-Faruque. April 16, 2024. “FDA officials say FY 2025 budget increase needed to offset inflationary pay increases.” Regulatory Focus. https://www.raps.org/news-and-articles/news-articles/2024/4/fda-officials-say-fy-2025-budget-increase-needed-t. TDI

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is asking for a nearly 5% increase in its budget for FY 2025, in part to provide its staff with pay increases to offset recent inflation.

During a webinar hosted by the Alliance for a Stronger FDA on 15 April, FDA officials said the lack of additional inflationary pay increases in the current budget has had detrimental effects on its ability to fulfill its public health mission.

Such pay increases would be accounted for in the agency’s $7.2 billion budget request to Congress for FY 2025, which includes about $3.7 billion in appropriations and $3.5 billion in user fee dollars. The request includes $173 million in appropriations over the agency’s FY 2024 funding level.

Benjamin Moncarz, FDA’s chief financial officer, said the increased funding is meant to help the agency make progress in key areas such as food safety and nutrition; cross-cutting issues related to medical products; modernizing the agency's infrastructure, buildings, and facilities; tobacco regulations; and strengthening US biodefense capabilities. He noted the agency is asking for an additional $8 million to modernize its cosmetics oversight, $2 million for enterprise transformation, $15 million for its human foods program, $8.3 million for IT modernization, $12.3 million to address supply chains and product shortages, $1 million to expand its foreign offices, and $114.8 million cover a 5.2% inflation-based pay increase for certain federal employees that took effect earlier this year.

Moncarz emphasized the importance of giving FDA staff increases based on inflation to maintain its competitiveness and ensure it can hire people in a timely manner so the agency can go about its business. He noted that like many other agencies, FDA did not get additional funding for the inflationary pay increase in FY 2024, which led the agency to shift resources from its centers to pay for the increases. He also noted that if the agency does not get additional funding for pay increases in the next budget, it will have a "devastating and challenging impact" on the agency and its offices.

"I fully understand the fiscal predicament, and this is the one area that we really would appreciate support from Congress in fiscal year 2025," said Moncarz. "I know that this is not tied to a specific initiative or programming increase, but this funding increase is critical to make sure we can continue serving the public in an exceptional manner."

Due to a lack of additional funding for pay increases, Moncarz said he's heard from FDA leaders that they have had to delay hiring staff and not fill certain vacancies. He also noted that this limits the professional and educational development the agency can provide, further straining its existing staff and hurting the agency's ability to recruit from the private sector.

"FDA does rely on its highly-skilled specialized staff that are difficult to recruit and retain without additional funding from Congress," said Moncarz. "We have to absorb those mandatory cost increases at the expense of filling needed positions and reducing some of our programmatic activities that support the public health."

FDA’s Chief Medical Officer Hilary Marston said that some of the additional funding will be used to address product shortages and supply chain vulnerabilities. The issue has been a major talking point for FDA Commissioner Robert Califf and other agency leaders, who have asked Congress for more authority to address potential product shortages.

Marston noted that while the COVID-19 pandemic "laid bare" the US products supply chain vulnerabilities, the agency has seen increased shortages driven by economic factors. Califf has also recently expressed concern that many drug shortages are due to generic drugmakers finding it not profitable enough to produce certain drugs. (RELATED: This Week at FDA: Califf faces House Oversight committee, diversity plans on the horizon, and more, Regulatory Focus 12 April 2024)

"We've had increasing market driven vulnerability in our medical product supply chains that FDA is working to help mitigate, but that ultimately we cannot solve," she said. "A market-based failure needs to be solved with market-based solutions."

Marston said that currently, FDA has a small staff that is working to address supply chain issues and help coordinate responses to them across agencies but wants the additional funding to increase its staffing to address larger supply chain challenges, such as those posed by natural disasters. The extra funding would also pay for additional investigators domestically and internationally.

"Further, we'd like to build out some of our analytic capabilities, both in drugs, devices, and foods, to make sure that we're able to understand vulnerabilities in the supply chain, but also predict where there might be risks of supply disruptions and understand better where to direct some of our resources, such as our inspectional resources," Marston added.

Martson also noted that FDA is asking for $670 million in the budget request to modernize the agency's regulatory capacity and infrastructure to address biological threats, such as its response to future pandemics.

"Drawing on some of the lessons from COVID-19, we want to make sure that we're building out our programs to better respond and build on what worked in responses in the future," she said. "What that funding will do is build up a cadre of reviewers, invest in data exchange platforms, and help build out some of our research and development that's so important to these efforts."

#### Lackluster FDA staffing means imports go uninspected.

Irena Hwang 23, data reporter at ProPublica, 4/19/2023, "After Pandemic Delays, FDA Still Struggling to Inspect Foreign Drug Manufacturers," https://www.propublica.org/article/fda-drugs-medication-inspections-china-india-manufacturers

For years, U.S. pharmaceutical companies have relied on drugs produced overseas to meet Americans’ medical needs. And for years, it’s been clear that federal drug regulators couldn’t keep up with inspections of the plants that made those drugs.

But a series of recent deaths linked to eyedrops produced overseas that were tainted with bacteria points to just how seriously behind the Food and Drug Administration is. Three people died and eight others were blinded in the United States from the drops, which were made in a plant in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu that the agency had never inspected prior to the outbreak. Worse, public health officials say they have detected the drug-resistant bacterial strain, which had never been seen in the U.S., among patients who never used the eyedrops, meaning it has likely achieved community spread.

A ProPublica analysis of FDA inspection data as of April shows that the agency’s inspections of overseas drug manufacturers, located mostly in India and China, has dropped precipitously even as the number of manufacturers has remained relatively steady. In fiscal year 2019, the year before the COVID-19 pandemic limited travel and movement, the FDA inspected 37% of the nearly 2,500 overseas manufacturers; in 2022, the agency only inspected 6% of around 2,800. And in India, where the contaminated eyedrops originated, the FDA inspected only 3% of manufacturers in 2022 — significantly less than in 2019, when 45% of plants were inspected.

The FDA, which is tasked with ensuring the safety and efficacy of both prescription and over-the-counter drugs, has acknowledged that limited resources make it impossible to inspect every plant, whether in the U.S. or not, that makes drugs or their ingredients. But the agency has been slow to make improvements.

This is not the first time that American consumers have been injured or killed as a result of contaminated drugs produced overseas. In the 1980s, drugs manufactured in Italy intended to prevent seizures resulted in epileptic seizures and two deaths. In 2007 and 2008, hundreds had allergic reactions, some fatal, to a commonly used blood thinner, prompting an FDA investigation. Some of the cases were later linked to an ingredient produced in a facility in China that had never been inspected by the FDA.

The Government Accountability Office, a federal watchdog agency, has warned for decades that the number of overseas inspections was worryingly low. Just weeks before the first cluster of COVID-19 patients was reported in China at the end of 2019, the GAO reported that despite some improvements in how the FDA tracked and prioritized its efforts, inspections of both foreign and domestic drug plants were on the decline, due in large part to challenges retaining staff and filling vacancies.

“While our drug supply is generally safe, problems do occur, as evidenced by contaminated eye drops in the last few months,” said Mary Denigan-Macauley, director of public health at the GAO. “No one wants to lose their vision or an eye simply from taking eyedrops to alleviate dry eyes.”

Without a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic slowed inspections to a trickle — in fiscal year 2021, according to the data, the agency inspected a mere 99 overseas sites, less than 4% of eligible foreign manufacturers. By comparison, 15% of domestic manufacturers were inspected that year. (Nearly three-quarters of manufacturers of U.S. drug ingredients, and more than half of producers of finished drugs, are located overseas.)

During the pandemic, the FDA began announcing domestic visits beforehand and paused surveillance visits overseas except for those deemed “mission critical,” conducting most preapprovals of new drugs without visiting foreign manufacturing sites.

The FDA defended this decision in an email statement to ProPublica, saying it used “alternative inspectional tools such as remote interactive evaluations, record requests, and leveraging information from trusted regulatory partners.”

Both the GAO and Rep. Sanford J. Bishop, a Georgia Democrat, say these remote interactions do not offer the same insight that in-person, unannounced inspections do. The FDA itself affirmed the utility of inspections in its latest annual report on pharmaceutical quality: “In the absence of inspections, many of these situations” that could result in defective products, “and possible public harm, could have gone undetected.”

But three years after the pandemic started, the FDA has been slow to return to pre-pandemic inspection rates. The pandemic heightened the urgency surrounding the FDA’s drug inspection process, as the need for more equipment, vaccines and antiviral medications, many of which are produced overseas, increased. Though routine domestic surveillance inspections resumed in July 2021, routine foreign inspections remained on hold until February 2022.

#### Food imports are a likely target for terrorism, introducing pathogens and collapsing food supplies.

Olufunke Adebola 21, PhD in International Affairs and Science and Technology from Georgia Institute of Technology, researcher at GIT, 7/27/2021, “Analyzing the Threat, Vulnerability, and Consequences of Agroterrorism,” *Proliferation of Weapons- and* Dual-Use Technologies, pp 292-293, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-73655-2\_14

8 Discussion

In 2018, agroterrorism is ranked medium risk in the border/perimeter security environment because of the increases in international trade and human and animal migration due to state failure and climate change. As humans migrate due to conflict situations in many countries, they could import foreign animal and plant diseases from terror groups interested in agriculture. This risk also increases as international trade across the borders continues. A terror group could intentionally introduce a FAD or FPD into the country by trading infected livestock or plants. It is often difficult to detect disease without advanced clinical testing in the early stages of a disease. This risk is intensified because of the extensive animal movement patterns in the U.S. It is common practice to move animals across State lines between their birth and slaughter. There is the possibility that a sick animal infects other animals, increasing the risk of disease spread. However, human migration from failing or failed States increases the mega-city environment’s risk because humans can illegally import plant and animal agents and toxins. Terrorist groups would find it attractive to attack the cyberinfrastructure of food supply chains to disrupt food distribution and cause food insecurity. Also, terrorist groups could contaminate large cities’ food supplies because of the substantial potential impact an attack could have.

The peer competitor is ranked medium risk because of the existence of international norms that prohibit the “development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling, and use of biological and toxin weapons [102].” These international norms reduce the risk of a State actor with access to these materials and capabilities deploying these materials in the act of agroterrorism. The virtual environment is also ranked medium risk because of open communities of scientific cooperation and data sharing that encourage the development of cybersecurity guidelines. The terrorist group is ranked high risk because based on rational choice considerations, terrorists will choose agroterrorism if it will align with their goals and has a high impact at relatively low cost compared to other alternatives. The relative ease of introducing livestock of plants and the potential damage could make biological agroterrorism attractive to terrorist groups. Also, the dual-use capabilities of chemical agents can make chemical agroterrorism attractive. For example, while chemical agents such as anhydrous ammonia, chlorine, and hydrogen cyanide are useful for legitimate purposes in industrial purposes, and as such, easily available, introducing these agents in the food supply can cause enormous damage.

In 2023, the risks in all environments increase as the advancement of current gene modification technologies may increase access to these technologies, especially by terrorist groups. With the abundance of easy-to-follow guidelines on gene modification, terrorist groups could create bioweapons such as pathogens that are pesticide resistant and other zoonotic diseases. The emergence of ISIS-type insurgents, due to continued instability in different parts of the world, would also lead to failing or total State failure would increase the terrorist group environment’s risk. ISIS was known for recruiting and inspiring followers through social media and encouraged to conduct homegrown attacks. At significant risk, it could be exploiting human and animal migration to neighboring States, particularly the mega-cities, making them attractive targets for an agroterrorism attack. Also, as mega-cities become inundated with a continuous influx of people, city infrastructure, particularly water and sanitary facilities, could become stretched beyond capacity and resulting in cholera and typhoid diseases. When these diseases occur, chlorine can be useful for disinfecting healthcare facilities and drinking water but could also be introduced into food sources.

A weakened international order due to difficulty in enforcing penalties against State actors and their proxies that violate international norms increases the risks in the peer competitor and virtual environments. International norms operate on the principle of good faith that requires signatories to an international norm act under the stipulations of the norm [103]. For example, signatories to international norms are expected to be honest with the reporting of their chemical, biological, and radiological stockpiles. In other words, these norms have no actual power to force individual members to comply with their rules. As more rouge States flout international laws without penalty, it could encourage more States to disregard the regulations resulting in weakening the laws.

In 2035, the risks in all six environments is expected to be high. At this time, terrorist groups would have increased their cyberwarfare capabilities in the virtual environment, operated in the virtual space, and created vaccine-resistant bioengineered animal or plant pathogens. These pathogens can cause enormous plant and animal damage and wage psychological warfare on the citizens. The increased virtualization of currency and financial transactions will also increase the risks in the virtual environment. These currencies and financial transactions will enable nefarious activities while complicating tracking and attribution of responsibility.

As violent terrorist groups seize more territories in failed and failing States with ability to operate without regard to international norms, they could develop sites for creating chemical, biological and radiological weapons that could be used in an agroterrorism attack.

#### Engineered pathogens cause extinction.

Bryan Walsh 20, the Future Correspondent for Axios, Editor of the Science and Technology Publication OneZero, Former Senior and International Editor at Time Magazine, BA from Princeton University, “BIOTECHNOLOGY: Engineering a Killer,” *End Times: A Brief Guide to the End of the World*, Chapter 6, pp. 204-206, ISBN: 978-0275948023

I’ve lived through disease outbreaks, and in the previous chapter I showed just how unprepared we are to face a widespread pandemic of flu or another new pathogen like SARS. But a deliberate outbreak caused by an engineered pathogen would be far worse. We would face the same agonizing decisions that must be made during a natural pandemic: whether to ban travel from affected regions, how to keep overburdened hospitals working as the rolls of the sick grew, how to accelerate the development and distribution of vaccines and drugs. To that dire list add the terror that would spread once it became clear that the death and disease in our midst was not the random work of nature, but a deliberate act of malice. We’re scared of disease outbreaks and we’re scared of terrorism—put them together and you have a formula for chaos.

As deadly and as disruptive as a conventional bioterror incident would be, an attack that employed existing pathogens could only spread so far, limited by the same laws of evolution that circumscribe natural disease outbreaks. But a virus engineered in a lab to break those laws could spread faster and kill quicker than anything that would emerge out of nature. It can be designed to evade medical countermeasures, frustrating doctors’ attempts to diagnose cases and treat patients. If health officials manage to stamp out the outbreak, it could be reintroduced into the public again and again. It could, with the right mix of genetic traits, even wipe us off the planet, making engineered viruses a genuine existential threat.

And such an attack may not even be that difficult to carry out. Thanks to advances in biotechnology that have rapidly reduced the skill level and funding needed to perform gene editing and engineering, what might have once required the work of an army of virologists employed by a nation-state could soon be done by a handful of talented and trained individuals. Or maybe just one.

When Melinda Gates was asked at the South by Southwest conference in 2018 to identify what she saw as the biggest threat facing the world over the next decade, she didn’t hesitate: “A bioterrorism event. Definitely.”2

She’s far from alone. In 2016, President Obama’s director of national intelligence James Clapper identified CRISPR as a “weapon of mass destruction,” a category usually reserved for known nightmares like nuclear bombs and chemical weapons. A 2018 report from the National Academies of Sciences concluded that biotechnology had rewritten what was possible in creating new weapons, while also increasing the range of people capable of carrying out such attacks.3 That’s a fatal combination, one that plausibly threatens the future of humanity like nothing else.

“The existential threat that would be most available for someone, if they felt like doing something, would be a bioweapon,” said Eric Klien, founder of the Lifeboat Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to helping humanity survive existential risks. “It would not be hard for a small group of people, maybe even just two or three people, to kill a hundred million people using a bioweapon. There are probably a million people currently on the planet who would have the technical knowledge to pull this off. It’s actually surprising that it hasn’t happened yet.”

#### Food supply collapse causes extinction.

John Castellaw 18, Lieutenant General in the United States Marine Corps, member of the Center for Climate and Security’s Advisory Board, teaching fellow in the College of Business and Global Affairs at the University of Tennessee, 3/14/2018, “Why Food Security Matters,” https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/031418\_Castellaw\_Testimony.pdf

Food Security Is Critical to Our National Security

The United States faces many threats to our National Security. These threats include continuing wars with extremist elements such as ISIS and potential wars with rogue state North Korea or regional nuclear power Iran. The heated economic and diplomatic competition with Russia and a surging China could spiral out of control. Concurrently, we face threats to our future security posed by growing civil strife, famine, and refugee and migration challenges which create incubators for extremist and anti-American government factions. Our response cannot be one dimensional but instead must be nuanced and comprehensive, employing “hard” as well as “soft” power in a National Security Strategy combining all elements of National Power, including a Food Security Strategy.

An American Food Security Strategy is an imperative factor in reducing the multiple threats impacting our National wellbeing. Recent history has shown that reliable food supplies and stable prices produce more stable and secure countries. Conversely, food insecurity, particularly in poorer countries, can lead to instability, unrest, and violence. Food insecurity drives mass migration around the world from the Middle East, to Africa, to Southeast Asia, destabilizing neighboring populations, generating conflicts, and threatening our own security by disrupting our economic, military, and diplomatic relationships. Food system shocks from extreme food-price volatility can be correlated with protests and riots. Food price related protests toppled governments in Haiti and Madagascar in 2007 and 2008. In 2010 and in 2011, food prices and grievances related to food policy were one of the major drivers of the Arab Spring uprisings.

These conclusions are based on my decades of experience while serving as a Marine around the world and from a lifetime as a steward of the soil on my family farm in Tennessee. I see food security strategy in military terms as either being “defensive” or “offensive”. “Defensive” includes those actions we take to protect our agricultural infrastructure including crops, livestock and the food chain here in the United States. Conversely, the “Offensive” side of food security takes the initiative to deal with food security issues overseas and this is where I will spend most of my time today.

There is a good reason for our success on the “defensive” here at home in ensuring our own food security. As my good friend and former Tennessee Deputy Agriculture Commissioner Louis Buck points out to me, American agriculture has always been about public/private enterprise. The Morrill Act of 1862 – showing our Country’s foresight and confidence in the future even in the dark days of our Civil War – created our Land Grant University model of teaching, research and extension. And equally importantly, we have a private sector that values individual initiative, unleashing an unparalleled vitality. With that vitality driving innovation, our farmers and ranchers leverage the expertise and information from the public sector to manage risks and seek profits from deployed capital. But above all, American farmers and ranchers are our “citizen soldiers” on the front lines here at home fighting to guarantee our food security.

America is also blessed with fertile soil, water availability, moderate climate, and the advanced technology to successfully utilize our abundance. Whether I walk the corn fields of Indiana or the cotton fields of Tennessee, I see agricultural technology in use that is amazing. Soon after I retired from the Marines and came home to the family farm, I climbed into the cab of a self-propelled sprayer. Settling into the seat was like strapping into the cockpit of one of the aircraft I flew, except the sprayer had more computing power and better data links. All these factors, public and private, natural and manmade, hard work and innovation, combine to provide the American people with the widest choices in the world of wholesome foods to eat and clothes to wear.

## Case

### AT: Alt Cause – *Chevron*

#### The admin state will weather the end of *Chevron*.

Seyfarth 24. Seyfarth Shaw LLP. June 28, 2024. “The Chevron Doctrine is Dead. Long Live the Administrative State.” https://www.seyfarth.com/news-insights/chevron-is-dead-long-live-the-administrative-state.html. TDI

Seyfarth Synopsis: Today, the administrative state’s foundation shook as the Supreme Court overruled Chevron, holding that federal administrative agencies are not entitled to deference in interpreting statutes and that courts, not agencies, must be the ultimate arbiters of statutory meaning. While the end of Chevron deference marks a sea change in administrative law, the conservative majority of the Supreme Court cited the value of stare decisis and also held that prior decisions on the lawfulness of agency action are not subject to immediate reversal. Additionally, much agency guidance, such as the EEOC’s Title VII guidance and the NLRB’s regulatory efforts, have not been subject to Chevron deference in the first place. Other agency guidance, such as certain DOL regulations relating to ERISA's reporting and disclosure requirements, stems from explicit statutory authority, and challenges to those regulations remain unlikely to succeed, even without Chevron's protective shield. While the end of Chevron deference represents a significant change in the way federal courts will handle challenges to agency guidance, the administrative state is still alive and kicking.

## Inflation DA

### 2AC – Inflation DA

#### No link.

Whiteley 23. Paul Whiteley, Emeritus Professor of Government @ University of Essex. February 21, 2023. “Does public sector pay drive inflation?.” LSE. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/does-public-sector-pay-drive-inflation/. TDI

<<FIGURES EXCLUDED>>

Putting the wage-price spiral theory to the test

The evidence that the public sector has been severely squeezed for more than a decade does not, of course, deal with the argument that pay increases could set off a wage-price spiral. However, the data in the graph does not support this idea. The correlation between public sector wage increases and inflation is negligible and not statistically significant (r = 0.04). This means that public sector pay is unrelated to inflation.

Interestingly, the same is not true for private sector pay. In this case, the correlation is weak but statistically significant (r=0.22), indicating that private sector pay contributes to inflation, but it is weak largely because price rises are primarily driven by supply shortages at present, rather than pay.

There is a problem with this analysis, however, namely that pay increases and inflation are unlikely to occur at the same time. There are always lags in the relationship between the two, posing the question: do pay rises in the public sector set off inflation in the months after they occur, or is it the other way round?

This idea is tested in the figure below, which examines correlations between public sector pay and inflation over time. The left-hand side of the figure shows the effects of past public sector pay increases on current inflation and on the right-hand side the effects of past inflation on current public sector pay. This is examined over a period of 24 months, and it shows that the effect of pay rises on inflation is negligible, whereas the effect of inflation on pay rises is substantial. The latter kicks in after a period of about a year.

Public sector workers are striking in response to inflation but there is no evidence that their wage increases are producing inflation. In effect, the wage-price spiral does not exist for public sector pay. A key reason for this is that the public sector labour force makes up only 17 per cent of the total work force, meaning that it has much less of an impact on the economy than the private sector.

The upshot of all this is that public sector workers are being penalised by reductions in their pay for reasons that do not bear up to scrutiny. Public sector pay increases do not translate into higher inflation.

#### Public sector investments and job creation reduce inflation.

Bivens 22. Josh Bivens, Ph.D., chief economist at the Economic Policy Institute. July 26, 2022. "Inflation is no excuse for inaction on needed tax reforms and investments," Economic Policy Institute. https://www.epi.org/blog/inflation-is-no-excuse-for-inaction-on-needed-tax-reforms-and-investments/. TDI

Proposed public investments would help reduce costs and future inflationary pressures

While tax increases are disinflationary, it is true that public spending increases are inflationary, all else equal. But context is crucial here. For one, the spending in these proposed packages will hit the economy gradually over time. These packages are not stimulus packages like the American Rescue Plan (ARP), which injected huge amounts of spending into the economy all at once by design to stabilize a sinking economy. Instead, the fiscal packages being debated today are largely about public investments—measures that will expand the economy’s supply side. These capacity expansions will tamp down inflationary pressures as they come to fruition.

An obvious example is the proposed investments in child and elder care. These types of investments have been shown to significantly boost women’s labor force participation rate, and this labor force growth is a key addition to the economy’s capacity. For those who think today’s inflation problem is “too much money chasing too few goods,” expanding the economy’s supply-side capacity enables more goods to be produced, hence tamping down inflationary pressures.

Of course, by far the most pressing investment need facing the U.S. and global economies today is reducing carbon emissions to slow climate change. If climate change proceeds under the “business-as-usual” scenarios wherein emissions are unconstrained by policy decisions, the results for the economy’s supply side are incredibly damaging. Climate-driven supply-side contractions moving forward will be extremely inflationary (not to mention causing huge human misery often quite hidden from macroeconomic aggregates).

Finally, many of the provisions in the fiscal packages under debate will reduce some of the most salient costs harming U.S. households. High-quality child care, for example, is extraordinarily expensive for most families today. Subsidies that cap its cost will provide huge relief to families. In the jargon of economists, this actually is not a reduction in “inflation” per se. But in the minds of the vast majority of the public, reducing the costs that pressure their family budgets is likely every bit as good as a reduction in “inflation.”

Some of these cost reductions can also happen extremely rapidly. For example, increased subsidies for health insurance purchased through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) exchanges, or reductions in prescription drug prices stemming from tougher bargaining with pharmaceutical companies in public insurance programs (like Medicare and Medicaid) can lead to near-instant cost declines.

A larger public sector is not inflationary

Essentially, the fiscal policy packages under debate aim to use a slightly larger public sector footprint in the economy to solve pressing social needs. By modestly boosting both public spending and taxes as a share of the economy, the hope is that the resources can be used in efficient and targeted ways to provide needed economic security the private sector is failing to deliver.

Some make implicit arguments that this public-sector expansion is somehow inflationary by definition. This conflates fiscal stimulus—using tax and spending policy changes to intentionally boost aggregate demand growth to spur a demand-constrained economy—with a balanced increase in the taxes and spending to deliver more public goods and services permanently. The latter does not need to be inflationary. And, while rising inflation in the wake of the COVID-19 economic shock has been universally global, it has not been any faster in those countries with larger public-sector footprints (see figure below).

A graph showing the growth of the economy

Description automatically generated

It’s also worth noting that the U.S. public-sector footprint is extremely small relative to our advanced country peers. There is a lot of room for the U.S. to increase this footprint to provide greater economic security and fairness and yet remain on the low end of this measure internationally.

#### State capacity cuts overall government outlays.

Rahman 24. K. Sabeel Rahman, J.D., Ph.D., Professor of Law @ Cornell Law School, Former Senior Counselor and Associate Administrator @ Biden’s OMB. June 2024. “Building the Government We Need: A Framework for Democratic State Capacity.” Roosevelt Institute. https://rooseveltinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/RI\_Building-the-Government-We-Need\_Report\_062024.pdf. TDI

We are used to talking about reducing government expenditure—or, making government more efficient so it can do more with less. But this attention to state capacity pushes us to think about how, if we want government to do better, we also need to invest more resources on government itself, through funding, personnel and talent, and expertise and information. Indeed, as one recent study highlighted, greater investment in administrative staff capacity in the highway construction context resulted in more efficient and effective procurement bids, and therefore in more bidders per contract, ultimately leading to significant cost savings in the end. 13 This study offers an example of how increased internal capacity can improve the efficacy of government itself.

### Thumper – Wage Growth

#### Thumper. Wage growth.

BLS 24. Bureau of Labor Statistics. July 31, 2024. “Employment Cost Index - June 2024.” https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/eci.pdf. TDI

Compensation costs for civilian workers increased 4.1 percent for the 12-month period ending in June 2024 and increased 4.5 percent in June 2023. Wages and salaries increased 4.2 percent for the 12-month period ending in June 2024 and increased 4.6 percent for the 12-month period ending in June 2023. Benefit costs increased 3.8 percent over the year and increased 4.2 percent for the 12- month period ending in June 2023. (See chart 2 and tables A, 4, 8, and 12.)

### AT: Link – Spillover

#### Public sector wage increases don’t spillover.

Boissay et al. 22. Frederic Boissay, Principal Economist @ Bank for International Settlements. Fiorella De Fiore, Deniz Igan, Albert Pierres-Tejada and Daniel Rees. May 4, 2022. “Are major advanced economies on the verge of a wage-price spiral?.” BIS Bulletin. No. 53. https://www.bis.org/publ/bisbull53.pdf. TDI

In several countries, calls for large public sector and minimum wage increases have not yet led to significant actual increases in these wages. With the exception of Germany,8 the minimum wage increases planned for 2022 are generally modest and will not fully compensate for inflation. Moreover, such increases have historically exerted somewhat limited spillovers to other wages (Graph 4, left-hand panel) and, based on past relationships, they appear unlikely to set off a wage-price spiral. Similarly, public wage increases have generally had few systematic spillovers (right-hand panel) and are currently lagging those in private wages. In the United States, the pay gap between private and public wages has actually widened since before the pandemic (Morrissey and Sherer (2022)).

#### A 1% increase in public wages corresponds to a 0.1% in average nominal wages in 10 quarters. Insert a chart.

Boissay et al. 22. Frederic Boissay, Principal Economist @ Bank for International Settlements. Fiorella De Fiore, Deniz Igan, Albert Pierres-Tejada and Daniel Rees. May 4, 2022. “Are major advanced economies on the verge of a wage-price spiral?.” BIS Bulletin. No. 53. https://www.bis.org/publ/bisbull53.pdf. TDI

A graph of the cost of a cost

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

## Elections DA

### 2AC – Elections DA

#### The plan is popular.

NTEU 24. National Treasury Employees Union. June 17, 2024. “Survey Shows Strong Support for Merit-Based Civil Service.” https://nteu280.org/news/2024/6/17/survey-shows-strong-support-for-merit-based-civil-service. TDI

A whopping 95 percent of Americans believe federal employees should be hired and promoted based on their individual merit and skill rather than their political beliefs, according to a new survey released by the Partnership for Public Service.

The overwhelming response is a strong rebuttal to those who want to remove career federal employees and make room for hiring only a president’s political allies.

While the survey also shows a concerning drop in overall public trust of the federal government, the desire for the civil service to remain independent is powerful and bipartisan. Regardless of political affiliation, 91 percent of Americans agree that “having competent civil servants is important for a strong American democracy” and 87 percent say a nonpartisan civil service is important to democracy.

#### Link turn. Federal employees are a key voting bloc and paying them more makes them vote Blue!

Weisner 24. Molly Weisner. May 10, 2024. “Federal workers, both Democrat and Republican, eager to vote this fall.” Federal Times. https://www.federaltimes.com/fedlife/career/2024/05/10/federal-workers-both-democrat-and-republican-eager-to-vote-this-fall/. TDI

<<FIGURES EXCLUDED>>

The vast majority of federal government employees and retirees responding to a new Federal Times survey are registered to vote and plan to cast ballots in the presidential election this November, with many saying they feel the civil service has become more politicized than in the past.

The federal workforce is a silent constituency, comprised of millions of employees working in every state. This population lives in rural areas and in cities. They work in highly academic fields and in blue collar occupations. It is a ubiquitous group, but it is not monolithic. And when it comes to politics, opinions may differ, but workers are barred from acting on them at work.

Despite its apolitical nature, this population is not one to be taken for granted, said experts interviewed by Federal Times. Like other citizens, they can vote, and they do, according to a poll of more than 1,000 readers.

“I would say it’s an important constituency in our country,” said Max Stier, founding president and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service, in an interview. “There are, at the federal level, limitations on the kinds of political activities that federal employees can engage in, but they do get to vote and therefore their vote does matter.”

Almost all — 98% — of the respondents said they are registered voters, and a whopping 95% told Federal Times they intend on casting ballots for president this fall when incumbent Joe Biden faces the Republican nominee, who almost certainly will be former President Donald Trump. That compares with 92% of registered voters and slightly more than two-thirds of all eligible voters who cast ballots in the 2020 elections nationwide.

The Census estimates there were roughly 122 million active U.S. voters in 2022, of which the federal workforce represents a small fraction: about 2.2 million. But counting millions more retirees, service members, sympathetic family and friends, and state and local government workers, the total government workforce has the potential to be a significant voter base, said Brian Baugus, a professor at Regent University who has studied public sector employees’ influence on elections.

“Government employees vote in disproportionately higher numbers than any other employment category,” he told Federal Times via email. “While they are a bit under 10% of the population, they are regularly 12% to 15% of the electorate.”

Experts surmise there are a few reasons for that. For one, Baugus said government workers have a strong vested interest in the outcome of elections. Simply put: executive branch employees are voting for their boss’ boss. They may also feel incentivized to vote indirectly for the policy proposals and priorities they will later be tasked with implementing.

“They don’t get to make that choice in their workplace,” said Stier. “In the workplace, they have to follow the lead of those people who are elected by the general population. So, their one opportunity to express their views about which direction the country should go in, is the voting booth.”

How powerful are feds as voters?

In recent months especially, Republicans floated campaign planks that would directly impact federal employees’ pay, benefits, telework offerings and career stability. In the survey, most respondents ranked federal salary raises or pay reform as a top concern, followed by retirement issues and then Schedule F.

Baugus said it’s also true that government employees, by virtue of their career, may have an affinity for public policy, or they may simply know more about it than the average voter who needs to make more of an effort to stay ahead on the issues.

“[Government workers’] costs of being an informed voter are lower,” he said. “Higher incentives and lower costs usually lead to more action, in this case voting, especially since they are usually forbidden from being involved in campaigns and electioneering, so voting is their only outlet for political activity.”

It’s also true that even though government employees tend to be concentrated geographically, they are not distributed evenly. In the survey, about 75% of respondents do not live or work in the National Capital Region.

In particularly close races or in low turnout elections, a few thousand votes can be influential, Baugus said.

“[Recent presidential elections] have been close enough that almost anyone can claim to have been the margin of difference, but the stronger case can be made for motivated voting blocs like government employees,” he said.

2020 as a case study

No survey, no matter how scientific (and this one is not), can predict the exact turnout of federal employees on Nov. 5, but if past behavior is any indicator, it seems likely this population will show up.

Federal Times found 96% of respondents “definitely” voted in the 2020 presidential election, which yielded the highest turnout rate of eligible voters in any national election since 1900, according to Pew Research Center.

Respondents with whom Federal Times spoke were not surprised by the high number.

“The [colleagues] I engage with are absolutely engaged voters,” said one employee, who requested anonymity to speak candidly about their political views. “The sense of obligation is definitely there.”

How feds will vote is less clear. The deeply polarized political environment coupled with ripple effects of the pandemic, complex overseas conflicts and social pressures magnified by social media have given voters much to consider.

While most elections are contentious, Stier said the discourse around politics and attitudes on government have struck a different tenor recently.

“I think that, historically, the differences have really been about policy direction,” he added. “And again, by and large, the civil service, they’re going to do their work irrespective of whoever the political leader is. I think what has been put center stage in a much more dramatic way is this question of the nature of our government and to what end does it serve?”

Before they dropped out of the Republican race, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis made a comment about “slitting throats” in the bureaucracy, and tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy vowed to reduce the federal workforce by 75%. Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley has pitched term limits for civil servants. And Trump, who was able to partially implement a plan to reclassify tens of thousands of federal employees to at-will status known as Schedule F, has said on the campaign trail that he’s concerned about the threat of the “deep state.”

“Normally we would not know how serious a candidate is about such actions — rhetoric is not always reality — but again, Trump is unique,” said Baugus. “We have four years’ experience, and I would think that will be the key in forming expectations.”

Most feds interviewed said a change in administration minimally impacts their day-to-day work, but employees may see policy priorities reflected in what teams are given money to hire and whether agencies backfill vacant positions.

The ‘woke’ bureaucracy? How feds lean

About 43% of respondents said they planned to vote Democrat this year compared to 33% Republican and 16% independent.

Half said they believed the Democratic party best represented the interests of the federal workforce, whereas 22% said the GOP was a better representative. Another 20% said neither were suitable, and 5% said independent third-party candidates were more in line with employees’ interests.

“[Feds] know by practice that the GOP is not worker friendly,” said retired public servant in an interview. “Schedule F initiatives solidified that view, if they weren’t already initiated and prejudiced by prior congressional and presidential temperament.”

When broken down by military service, those who identified as veterans leaned republican, while non-veterans respondents said they would vote democrat.

One combat-disabled veteran interviewed by Federal Times said it is frustrating to see the Biden administration send billions in foreign aid when the U.S. military is struggling with dilapidated barracks, recruiting shortfalls and aging tech.

“We can send money to everybody else, but we don’t have money to do things to help ourselves at home,” he said, adding that he feels there’s been a lack of decisiveness permeating U.S. foreign policy that ultimately costs more, both in dollars and reputation.

“I think that while some people look at [Trump] as being irrational or unpredictable, I think in some ways our enemies respected that,” said one service member who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to protect against retaliation for sharing their personal views.

When it came to other issues, roughly a quarter of respondents said they would switch their party affiliation or consider voting against their usual party of choice come November, and very few said that a conviction of Trump in court would change their opinion of him positively or negatively.

When it comes to Biden’s handling of the situation in Gaza, which has garnered criticism from employee groups in his own cabinet, about 27% said it eroded their support.

The issue of age has also come up, with several respondents telling Federal Times they were frustrated by a lack of new entrants to the race.

Roughly 57% said Biden, 81, is too old to run again, while only 34% said the same for Trump, who will be 78 come Election Day. For both candidates, around 20% said age is irrelevant either way.

‘I love what I do’

Respondents of opposing parties agreed that the civil service felt more politicized today than when they first joined. About 60% of all respondents said they felt that way, and of them, 40% said that made them want to leave government service.

“I don’t like feeling like a powerless pawn in the political mix,” said one respondent.

“Makes me glad I retired,” said another.

Still, almost every employee interviewed by Federal Times echoed the same message: they work on behalf of the American people, and they just want to be given the tools to do that.

“Our role is to support the administration, no matter who it is at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.,” said one respondent.

And while few said an election is likely to sway long-held beliefs about government, there is an opportunity for the current administration to back up its workers.

“I think the Democrats could be stronger not only to tout their accomplishments, but I think they do have to hit back on some of the bullshit that comes out of the other side,” said one employee.

Government is well-equipped to point at its own problems through audits, watchdog reports and inspectors general, Stier said, but it hasn’t been as good at messaging the things it has gotten right.

“Unfortunately, a lot of Americans don’t see they’re getting that when you ask them about the federal government,” he said. “What they really are thinking about are bickering politicians in Washington. And the best antidote for that is the truth and sunshine and ensuring that more Americans have access to information about what their public servants are doing for them.”

### AT: Link – Deep State

#### ‘Deep state’ conspiracies are non-unique and won’t work.

Kettl 23. Donald F. Kettl, Ph.D., Former Dean of the School of Public Policy and Professor Emeritus @ University of Maryland. “Will an attack on federal employees swing the election? Probably no.” October 13, 2023. https://www.govexec.com/management/2023/10/will-attack-federal-employees-swing-election-probably-no/391169/. TDI

As the 2024 campaign has gotten rolling, a very long time before the election, there’s been an unbroken drumbeat of criticism of the “deep state” and the “unaccountability” of federal employees.

It turns out that the “deep state” gets a lot of traction among Republican voters in the swing states of Arizona and Georgia. Donald Trump lost these two states by a total of just 22,000 votes. Are Trump Republicans ready to hang with him in 2024?

In September, Democracy Corps conducted a series of focus groups in the two states. The research organization gathered four different factions of the GOP—Trump loyalists, evangelical Trump loyalists, Cheney conservatives, and Moderate Republicans. When asked about how they felt about the future of the country, they weren’t a very sanguine bunch. Words like “worried,” “concerned,” “uncertain,” and “bleak” rose to the top.

They’re especially concerned about the Constitution, which a Trump loyalist in Arizona said is “dangling by a thread” and another said is “hijacked.” An evangelical Trumper in Georgia said she thought the Constitution is “under attack.”

But it’s not criticism of federal employees that’s driving their worries. It’s prices that they view as out of control, instability at the border, the cost of the Ukraine war, and “woke” policies that they think are being forced on their kids.

When it comes to the “deep state,” a Georgia woman who’s a Trump loyalist saw a “conspiracy.” A Georgia woman who’s an evangelical Trump loyalist called it “a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Hiding right in front of our faces.” People just don’t see it because “no one cares about it. It is outside people’s everyday lives. It makes them unaccountable.”

And a Trump loyalist in Arizona said “there is a Deep State.” And, he said, there were “Marxists. Protecting their own interests.” In fact, “I believe there is a small group of people controlling world finances.”

In digging into the focus group’s views, however, sentiment was decidedly mixed. A Trump loyalist in Arizona said he would never hire federal employees in the private sector. Another Trump loyalist there said, “They don’t have a good work ethic.” Yet another: “overpaid and underqualified. Not trustworthy.” A Trump loyalist added that he believed “if you have a job for the federal government, you have a job for life. I don’t think they care about what is going on.”

Evangelical Trump loyalists in Georgia were more pointed in their views. One said she thought federal employees were “overpaid,” while another said “some of them aren’t very good.” Yet another woman added, “They seem irritated to help you.” For one Evangelical Trumper, the opinion was simple: “entitled and lazy.”

In general, however, the participants in the focus groups weren’t stirred by Trump’s promise to clean out federal employees if he’s elected. Focus group members were most concerned by their conclusion that there were just too many bureaucrats and that too many of them were lazy. On the other hand, there wasn’t general concern that federal employees were pursuing their own agenda, a core tenet of the deep state argument.

These are fascinating findings, in several respects.

First, the “deep state” critique doesn’t get a lot of traction, even among Trump supporters. From the first week of Trump’s first term, the “deep state” argument has been a steady criticism by Trump forces of the federal government, but it’s not getting far.

That certainly doesn’t mean that conservatives aren’t quietly framing an agenda around unwinding what they view as the “deep state.” That campaign, however, isn’t catching fire among even Trump’s most loyal supporters.

Second, there’s strong support for the proposition that there are just too many federal employees. However, since the mid-1970s, public opinion polls have regularly shown that Americans would rather have a smaller government and fewer services. Support for that proposition has been rising among Republicans; it’s falling among Democrats.

But when asked about which programs they’d like to cut, from education to foreign aid, there wasn’t a plurality of support for reducing spending in any of 13 different policy areas. In half of the areas, in fact, including education, veterans benefits, infrastructure, and health care, more than half of those surveyed wanted to spend even more.

Moreover, underlying the eternal debate about cutting government employees is the disconnect of that debate from the government’s mission. I dug into which federal agencies employ the most people, and it turns out that the 15 largest agencies, by employment, account for nearly 80% of all federal employees. With the exception of the IRS and the FBI, they perform functions that no one wants to cut—support for the military, Customs and Border Protection, Social Security Administration, the FAA and TSA, FEMA, federal prisons.

There’s support from Vivek Ramaswamy and some House Republicans to defund the FBI, but no one really wants to weaken the American defense against organized crime, drug cartels, or homeland security threats. And the IRS is an agency that only the U.S. Treasury truly loves, but no government in the history of the world has ever existed long without an agency to collect taxes. And no tax collection agency has ever been popular.

Third, it’s clear that many federal employees have a black eye when it comes to dealing with the people. That’s supremely ironic, because most Americans never really encounter a federal employee except when traveling through airports or violating the law. Even in the biggest entitlement programs—Social Security and Medicare—most recipients never see or talk with a fed. Banks process Social Security payments and seniors get Medicare-paid health care through their own non-governmental providers, clinics, and hospitals.

There’s a powerful case for federal employees to pay much more attention to customer service. That’s why it’s a key part of the President’s Management Agenda. But the manifest problems in government’s connections with the people are why rankings of customer experience regularly put the federal government at the very bottom of more than a dozen industries. This is certainly something the government needs to work on.

But when it comes to mobilizing worries about the “deep state” to fuel the Republican presidential campaign, as Democracy Corps found, there’s little evidence that will work.

# Neg

## Case

### staffing internal

#### It’s HIGH.

Katz ’23 [Eric; Senior Correspondent, Government Executive. “Scientific federal agencies have restaffed to pre-Trump levels.” https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2023/11/scientific-federal-agencies-have-restaffed-pre-trump-levels/391860/] TDI

The Biden administration has fully restored the number of federal employees in scientific positions at key agencies to the levels they saw prior to President Trump, according to a new analysis, though they are in some cases failing to diversify their workforces.

From 2016 to 2020, scientific agencies across government experienced a drain of employees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics positions, according to a review by the Union of Concerned Scientists. In the subsequent years, the Biden administration has led hiring initiatives that have refilled vacancies and staffing levels at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Environmental Protection Agency, Food and Drug Administration, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and NASA have all surpassed where they stood in 2016.

### cyber defense

#### No catastrophic cyberattacks.

Lewis ’20 [James; Senior vice president & director of the Technology Policy Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies. “Dismissing Cyber Catastrophe.” https://www.csis.org/analysis/dismissing-cyber-catastrophe] TDI

A catastrophic cyberattack was first predicted in the mid-1990s. Since then, predictions of a catastrophe have appeared regularly and have entered the popular consciousness. As a trope, a cyber catastrophe captures our imagination, but as analysis, it remains entirely imaginary and is of dubious value as a basis for policymaking. There has never been a catastrophic cyberattack.

To qualify as a catastrophe, an event must produce damaging mass effect, including casualties and destruction. The fires that swept across California last summer were a catastrophe. Covid-19 has been a catastrophe, especially in countries with inadequate responses. With man-made actions, however, a catastrophe is harder to produce than it may seem, and for cyberattacks a catastrophe requires organizational and technical skills most actors still do not possess. It requires planning, reconnaissance to find vulnerabilities, and then acquiring or building attack tools — things that require resources and experience. To achieve mass effect, either a few central targets (like an electrical grid) need to be hit or multiple targets would have to be hit simultaneously (as is the case with urban water systems), something that is itself an operational challenge.

It is easier to imagine a catastrophe than to produce it. The 2003 East Coast blackout is the archetype for an attack on the U.S. electrical grid. No one died in this blackout, and services were restored in a few days. As electric production is digitized, vulnerability increases, but many electrical companies have made cybersecurity a priority. Similarly, at water treatment plants, the chemicals used to purify water are controlled in ways that make mass releases difficult. In any case, it would take a massive amount of chemicals to poison large rivers or lakes, more than most companies keep on hand, and any release would quickly be diluted.

More importantly, there are powerful strategic constraints on those who have the ability to launch catastrophe attacks. We have more than two decades of experience with the use of cyber techniques and operations for coercive and criminal purposes and have a clear understanding of motives, capabilities, and intentions. We can be guided by the methods of the Strategic Bombing Survey, which used interviews and observation (rather than hypotheses) to determine effect. These methods apply equally to cyberattacks. The conclusions we can draw from this are:

* Nonstate actors and most states lack the capability to launch attacks that cause physical damage at any level, much less a catastrophe. There have been regular predictions every year for over a decade that nonstate actors will acquire these high-end cyber capabilities in two or three years in what has become a cycle of repetition. The monetary return is negligible, which dissuades the skilled cybercriminals (mostly Russian speaking) who might have the necessary skills. One mystery is why these groups have not been used as mercenaries, and this may reflect either a degree of control by the Russian state (if it has forbidden mercenary acts) or a degree of caution by criminals.
* There is enough uncertainty among potential attackers about the United States’ ability to attribute that they are unwilling to risk massive retaliation in response to a catastrophic attack. (They are perfectly willing to take the risk of attribution for espionage and coercive cyber actions.)
* No one has ever died from a cyberattack, and only a handful of these attacks have produced physical damage. A cyberattack is not a nuclear weapon, and it is intellectually lazy to equate them to nuclear weapons. Using a tactical nuclear weapon against an urban center would produce several hundred thousand casualties, while a strategic nuclear exchange would cause tens of millions of casualties and immense physical destruction. These are catastrophes that some hack cannot duplicate. The shadow of nuclear war distorts discussion of cyber warfare.
* State use of cyber operations is consistent with their broad national strategies and interests. Their primary emphasis is on espionage and political coercion. The United States has opponents and is in conflict with them, but they have no interest in launching a catastrophic cyberattack since it would certainly produce an equally catastrophic retaliation. Their goal is to stay below the “use-of-force” threshold and undertake damaging cyber actions against the United States, not start a war.

This has implications for the discussion of inadvertent escalation, something that has also never occurred. The concern over escalation deserves a longer discussion, as there are both technological and strategic constraints that shape and limit risk in cyber operations, and the absence of inadvertent escalation suggests a high degree of control for cyber capabilities by advanced states. Attackers, particularly among the United States’ major opponents for whom cyber is just one of the tools for confrontation, seek to avoid actions that could trigger escalation.

The United States has two opponents (China and Russia) who are capable of damaging cyberattacks. Russia has demonstrated its attack skills on the Ukrainian power grid, but neither Russia nor China would be well served by a similar attack on the United States. Iran is improving and may reach the point where it could use cyberattacks to cause major damage, but it would only do so when it has decided to engage in a major armed conflict with the United States. Iran might attack targets outside the United States and its allies with less risk and continues to experiment with cyberattacks against Israeli critical infrastructure. North Korea has not yet developed this kind of capability.

One major failing of catastrophe scenarios is that they discount the robustness and resilience of modern economies. These economies present multiple targets and configurations; they are harder to damage through cyberattack than they look, given the growing (albeit incomplete) attention to cybersecurity; and experience shows that people compensate for damage and quickly repair or rebuild. This was one of the counterintuitive lessons of the Strategic Bombing Survey. Pre-war planning assumed that civilian morale and production would crumple under aerial bombardment. In fact, the opposite occurred. Resistance hardened and production was restored.1

This is a short overview of why catastrophe is unlikely. Several longer CSIS reports go into the reasons in some detail. Past performance may not necessarily predict the future, but after 25 years without a single catastrophic cyberattack, we should invoke the concept cautiously, if at all. Why then, it is raised so often?

Some of the explanation for the emphasis on cyber catastrophe is hortatory. When the author of one of the first reports (in the 1990s) to sound the alarm over cyber catastrophe was asked later why he had warned of a cyber Pearl Harbor when it was clear this was not going to happen, his reply was that he hoped to scare people into action. "Catastrophe is nigh; we must act" was possibly a reasonable strategy 22 years ago, but no longer.

### administrative state defense

#### *Chevron* zeroes the administrative state.

Blackmon ’24 [David; energy-related public policy analyst/consultant. “The Chevron Deference Is Dead. Will The Administrative State Follow?” https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidblackmon/2024/06/30/the-chevron-deference-is-dead-will-the-administrative-state-follow/] TDI

The existence of the Chevron deference has worked to ensure the judiciary branch of government has also been largely ~~paralyzed~~ [unable] to act decisively to review and overrule elements of the Biden agenda whenever the EPA, Bureau of Land Management or other agencies impose regulations that may lie outside the scope and intent of the governing statutes. In effect, this doctrine has served as a key enabler of the massive growth of what has come to be known as the US administrative state.

When established in 1984 in a unanimous, 6-0 decision written by Justice John Paul Stevens, Chevron instructed federal courts to defer to the judgment of legal counsel for the regulatory agencies when such regulations were challenged via litigation. Since that time, agencies focused on extending their authority well outside the original intents of the governing statutes have relied on the doctrine to ensure they will not be overturned.

Congress essentially surrendered its oversight authority two decades ago by failing to carry out its duties to pass real budget bills, choosing to rely instead on a seemingly endless series of omnibus continuing resolutions. That paralysis has left these regulatory bureaucracies of the executive branch of government meeting little resistance from the other two branches. The result has been a massive growth of the administrative state across all areas of government scope.

In his concurring opinion in the Loper Bright decision, Justice Neil Gorsuch summarizes the impacts Chevron has created over the past 40 years, saying it “precludes courts from exercising the judicial power vested in them by Article III to say what the law is. It forces judges to abandon the best reading of the law in favor of views of those presently holding the reins of the Executive Branch. It requires judges to change, and change again, their interpretations of the law as and when the government demands. And that transfer of power has exactly the sort of consequences one might expect.”

Where energy and climate policy is concerned, another key threshold moment came in 2007. Justice Stevens was also the author of the decision that year in the Massachusetts v. EPA case in which a more divided Supreme Court issued a 5-4 decision giving EPA the authority to regulate carbon dioxide as a pollutant under the Clean Air Act. That decision has served as the very foundation for most elements of expansive climate policies that have followed.

The Bottom Line

The recission of the Chevron deference will not only make it more difficult for aggressive regulators to expand the scope of their authority - it will also increase the likelihood of success for court challenges to regulations already in place.

In my piece last year, I noted that, even with Chevron in place, progress towards meeting Biden’s aggressive energy transition goals had already fallen well behind the pace needed to meet them. That deficit of progress has only become more pronounced over the past 14 months.

The loss of this crucial enabler for the expansion of the administrative state cries out now for a full reconsideration of the entire strategy. But of course, the November elections may well make that a fait accompli in any event.

#### It’s also useless anyways.

McGroarty & Robbins ’18 [Emmett; attorney and Director of Research and Planning at The Institute for Human Ecology. Jane; attorney and a senior fellow with the American Principles Project in Washington, DC. "The administrative state includes activist Big Business too.” https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/385667-the-administrative-state-includes-activist-big-business-too/] TDI

“The swamp” has become a catch-all term for what’s wrong with Washington. The word — also known as the administrative state — evokes images of arrogant bureaucrats enforcing their preferred policies regardless of the desires of the voters. But a key component of the swamp isn’t housed in the granite jungle of D.C. but in corporate boardrooms across the country.

A leftist professor once claimed that “the myth of individual greatness is a myth.” The same could be said of the myth of the conservatism of Big Business. While thousands of small businesses chafe under heavy-handed regulation and onerous tax policies, many mega-corporations take a different view. The same policies that smaller companies see as oppressive appear to the big guys as opportunity. And when opportunity knocks, they scoot through the door and slam it before anyone else can slip in.

America was built on capitalism. But capitalism requires competition, with its ever-present risk of financial reversal. Many large corporations have thus rejected capitalism in favor of an alliance with powerful government to protect their market share and profitability.

As we detail in our book, “Deconstructing the Administrative State: The Fight for Liberty,” this alliance comes into play when government has outgrown its constitutional constraints and assumed unwarranted power. If government can make or break an industry, corporations will naturally gravitate toward the government officials exercising the power. Lobbyists are hired, campaign contributions are made, all to influence government policy through either statute or regulation. The result is government largesse through either direct payment (contracts, etc.) or favorable regulations.

Obviously, the larger and richer the corporation, the more influence it can exercise. Smaller companies just can’t compete in that game. And too often, Big Business uses its clout not only to minimize the regulations to which its particular industry is subject, but also to enact regulations that will disadvantage smaller competitors.

The creation of ObamaCare illustrates how this works. Big insurance companies colluded with government officials, crafting a scheme that (the companies thought) would benefit them at the expense of their smaller competitors. Because Congress backtracked on some of the Obama commitments, the companies may have misplayed their hand. But their hearts were in the right protectionist place.

This kind of scheming has a long history. Our book relates the story of the steel industry of the early 20th century, when barons such as Andrew Carnegie actually sought government regulation to bring “stability” to the industry. Stability, of course, was accomplished by driving out the smaller companies that reduced the profitability of U.S. Steel.

Corporate-government collusion shows up throughout history. Under the mercantilist system of the 16th to the late 18th centuries, Western European governments imposed taxes and levies on large companies but, in exchange, enacted policies to protect them from foreign competition.

In Italy and Germany in the 1930’s, fascist (also called “corporatist”) governments operated on the same principle. Corporations would submit to heavy government regulation but, in return, would be protected from the vicissitudes of the free market.

In modern America, though, corporate-government collusion has taken on another dimension. The progressive march of the last century has achieved much of its objective: It has shifted power to the administrative state and away from the citizen and the legislature, it has made state government a federal functionary, and it has marginalized the citizen. This has left Big Business with outsized influence and an incentive to curry favor with the elite opinion stream — mainstream media, Hollywood, and academia.

### heg defense

#### No heg impact.

Mueller ’21 [John; Adjunct Professor of Political Science and Senior Research Scientist at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies. "The Rise of China, the Assertiveness of Russia, and the Antics of Iran.” *The Stupidity of War: American Foreign Policy and the Case for Complacency*, Chapter 6] TDI

Complacency, Appeasement, Self-destruction, and the New Cold War

It could be argued that the policies proposed here to deal with the international problems, whether real or imagined, presented by China, Russia, and Iran constitute exercises not only in complacency, but also in appeasement. That argument would be correct. As discussed in the Prologue to this book, appeasement can work to avoid military conflict as can be seen in the case of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. As also discussed there, appeasement has been given a bad name by the experience with Hitler in 1938.

Hitlers are very rare, but there are some resonances today in Russia’s Vladimir Putin and China’s Xi Jinping. Both are shrewd, determined, authoritarian, and seem to be quite intelligent, and both are fully in charge, are surrounded by sychophants, and appear to have essentially unlimited tenure in office. Moreover, both, like Hitler in the 1930s, are appreciated domestically for maintaining a stable political and economic environment. However, unlike Hitler, both run trading states and need a stable and essentially congenial international environment to flourish.128 Most importantly, except for China’s claim to Taiwan, neither seems to harbor Hitler-like dreams of extensive expansion by military means. Both are leading their countries in an illiberal direction which will hamper economic growth while maintaining a kleptocratic system. But this may be acceptable to populations enjoying historically high living standards and fearful of less stable alternatives. Both do seem to want to overcome what they view as past humiliations – ones going back to the opium war of 1839 in the case of China and to the collapse of the Soviet empire and then of the Soviet Union in 1989–91 in the case of Russia. Primarily, both seem to want to be treated with respect and deference. Unlike Hitler’s Germany, however, both seem to be entirely appeasable. That scarcely seems to present or represent a threat. The United States, after all, continually declares itself to be the indispensable nation. If the United States is allowed to wallow in such self-important, childish, essentially meaningless, and decidedly fatuous proclamations, why should other nations be denied the opportunity to emit similar inconsequential rattlings? If that constitutes appeasement, so be it. If the two countries want to be able to say they now preside over a “sphere of influence,” it scarcely seems worth risking world war to somehow keep them from doing so – and if the United States were substantially disarmed, it would not have the capacity to even try.

If China and Russia get off on self-absorbed pretensions about being big players, that should be of little concern – and their success rate is unlikely to be any better than that of the United States. Charap and Colton observe that “The Kremlin’s idee fixe that Russia needs to be the leader of a pack of post-Soviet states in order to be taken seriously as a global power broker is more of a feel-good mantra than a fact-based strategy, and it irks even the closest of allies.” And they further suggest that

The towel should also be thrown in on the geo-ideational shadow-boxing over the Russian assertion of a sphere of influence in post-Soviet Eurasia and the Western opposition to it. Would either side be able to specify what precisely they mean by a regional sphere of influence? How would it differ from, say, US relations with the western-hemisphere states or from Germany’s with its EU neighbors?129

Applying the Gingrich gospel, then, it certainly seems that, although China, Russia, and Iran may present some “challenges” to US policy, there is little or nothing to suggest a need to maintain a large US military force-in-being to keep these countries in line. Indeed, all three monsters seem to be in some stage of self-destruction or descent into stagnation – not, perhaps, unlike the Communist “threat” during the Cold War. Complacency thus seems to be a viable policy.

However, it may be useful to look specifically at a couple of worst-case scenarios: an invasion of Taiwan by China (after it builds up its navy more) and an invasion of the Baltic states of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia by Russia. It is wildly unlikely that China or Russia would carry out such economically self-destructive acts: the economic lessons from Putin’s comparatively minor Ukraine gambit are clear, and these are unlikely to be lost on the Chinese. Moreover, the analyses of Michael Beckley certainly suggest that Taiwan has the conventional military capacity to concentrate the mind of, if not necessarily fully to deter, any Chinese attackers. It has “spent decades preparing for this exact contingency,” has an advanced early warning system, can call into action massed forces to defend “fortified positions on home soil with precision-guided munitions,” and has supply dumps, booby traps, an wide array of mobile missile launchers, artillery, and minelayers. In addition, there are only 14 locations that can support amphibious landing and these are, not surprisingly, well-fortified by the defenders.130

The United States may not necessarily be able to deter or stop military attacks on Taiwan or on the Baltics under its current force levels.131 And if it cannot credibly do so with military forces currently in being, it would not be able to do so, obviously, if its forces were much reduced. However, the most likely response in either eventuality would be for the United States to wage a campaign of economic and military (including naval) harassment and to support local – or partisan – resistance as it did in Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion there in 1979. 132 Such a response does not require the United States to have, and perpetually to maintain, huge forces in place and at the ready to deal with such improbable eventualities.

The current wariness about, and hostility toward, Russia and China is sometimes said to constitute “a new Cold War.”133 There are, of course, considerable differences. In particular, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union – indeed the whole international Communist movement – was under the sway of a Marxist theory that explicitly and determinedly advocated the destruction of capitalism and probably of democracy, and by violence to the degree required. Neither Russia nor China today sports such cosmic goals or is enamored of such destructive methods. However, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the United States was strongly inclined during the Cold War massively to inflate the threat that it imagined the Communist adversary to present. The current “new Cold War” is thus in an important respect quite a bit like the old one: it is an expensive, substantially militarized, and often hysterical campaign to deal with threats that do not exist or are likely to selfdestruct.134

It may also be useful to evaluate terms that are often bandied about in considerations within foreign policy circles about the rise of China, the assertiveness of Russia, and the antics of Iran. High among these is “hegemony.” Sorting through various definitions, Simon Reich and Richard Ned Lebow array several that seem to capture the essence of the concept: domination, controlling leadership, or the ability to shape international rules according to the hegemon’s own interests. Hegemony, then, is an extreme word suggesting supremacy, mastery, preponderant influence, and full control. Hegemons force others to bend to their will whether they like it or not. Reich and Lebow also include a mellower designation applied by John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan in which a hegemon is defined as an entity that has the ability to establish a set of norms that others willingly embrace.135 But this really seems to constitute an extreme watering-down of the word and suggests opinion leadership or entrepreneurship and success at persuasion, not hegemony.

Moreover, insofar as they carry meaning, the militarized application of American primacy and hegemony to order the world has often been a fiasco.136 Indeed, it is impressive that the hegemon, endowed by definition by what Reich and Lebow aptly call a grossly disproportionate military capacity, has had such a miserable record of military achievement since 1945 – an issue discussed frequently in this book.137 Reich and Lebow argue that it is incumbent on IR scholars to cut themselves loose from the concept of hegemony.138 It seems even more important for the foreign policy establishment to do so.

There is also absurdity in getting up tight over something as vacuous as the venerable “sphere of influence” concept (or conceit). The notion that world affairs are a process in which countries scamper around the world seeking to establish spheres of influence is at best decidedly unhelpful and at worst utterly misguided. But the concept continues to be embraced in some quarters as if it had some palpable meaning. For example, in early 2017, the august National Intelligence Council opined that “Geopolitical competition is on the rise as China and Russia seek to exert more sway over their neighboring regions and promote an order in which US influence does not dominate.”139 Setting aside the issue of the degree to which American “influence” could be said to “dominate” anywhere (we still wait, for example, for dominated Mexico supinely to pay for a wall to seal off its self-infatuated neighbor’s southern border), it doesn’t bloody well matter whether China or Russia has, or seems to have, a “sphere of influence” someplace or other.

More importantly, the whole notion is vapid and essentially meaningless. Except perhaps in Gilbert and Sullivan’s Iolanthe. When members of the House of Lords fail to pay sufficient respect to a group of women they take to be members of a ladies’ seminary who are actually fairies, their queen, outraged at the Lords’ collected effrontery, steps forward, proclaims that she happens to be an “influential fairy,” and then, with a few passes of her wand, brushes past the Lords’ pleas (“no!” “mercy!” “spare us!” and “horror!”), and summarily issues several edicts: a young man of her acquaintance shall be inducted into their House, every bill that gratifies his pleasure shall be passed, members shall be required to sit through the grouse and salmon season, and high office shall be obtainable by competitive examination. Now, that’s influence. In contrast, on December 21, 2017, when the United States sought to alter the status of Jerusalem, the United Nations General Assembly voted to repudiate the US stand in a nearly unanimous vote that included many US allies. Now, that’s not influence.

In fact, to push this point perhaps to an extreme, if we are entering an era in which economic motivations became paramount and in which military force is not deemed a sensible method for pursuing wealth, the idea of “influence” would become obsolete because, in principle, pure economic actors do not care much about influence. They care about getting rich. (As Japan and Germany have found, however, influence, status, and prestige tend to accompany the accumulation of wealth, but this is just an ancillary effect.) Suppose the president of a company could choose between two stories to tell the stockholders. One message would be, “We enjoy great influence in the industry. When we talk everybody listens. Our profits are nil.” The other would be, “No one in the industry pays the slightest attention to us or ever asks our advice. We are, in fact, the butt of jokes in the trade. We are making money hand over fist.” There is no doubt about which story would most thoroughly warm the stockholders’ hearts.

### disease defense

#### Interconnectedness is balanced by increased immunity and advances in medicine and sanitation

Halstead ’19 [John; Doctorate in Political Philosophy. “Cause Area Report: Existential Risk, Founders Pledge.” https://founderspledge.com/research/Cause%20Area%20Report%20-%20Existential%20Risk.pdf]

However, there are some reasons to think that naturally occurring pathogens are unlikely to cause human extinction. Firstly, Homo sapiens have been around for 200,000 years and the Homo genus for around six million years without being exterminated by an infectious disease, which is evidence that the base rate of extinction-risk natural pathogens is low.82 Indeed, past disease outbreaks have not come close to rendering humans extinct. Although bodies were piled high in the streets across Europe during the Black Death,83 human extinction was never a serious possibility, and some economists even argue that it was a boon for the European economy.84 Secondly, infectious disease has only contributed to the extinction of a small minority of animal species.85 The only confirmed case of a mammalian species extinction being caused by an infectious disease is a type of rat native only to Christmas Island. Having said that, the context may be importantly different for modern day humans, so it is unclear whether the risk is increasing or decreasing. On the one hand, due to globalisation, the world is more interconnected making it easier for pathogens to spread. On the other hand, interconnectedness could also increase immunity by increasing exposure to lower virulence strains between subpopulations.87 Moreover, advancements in medicine and sanitation limit the potential damage an outbreak might do

### bioweapons defense

#### No state bioweapons.

Bentley ’23 [Michelle; Reader in International Relations; Director, Royal Holloway Centre for International Security. "The Biological Weapons Taboo." https://warontherocks.com/2023/10/the-biological-weapons-taboo/] TDI

The World Health Organization defines bioweapons as “microorganisms like virus, bacteria or fungi, or toxic substances produced by living organisms that are produced and released deliberately to cause disease and death in humans, animals or plants.” Biowarfare is not an active or normalized part of state military strategies. Even when states have approved the strategic option to use biowarfare, they have rarely actually done so (aside from some limited examples such as Japan in World War II).

Some analysts explain non-use as a lack of military utility. Bioweapons are hard to make and difficult to control. Contagious agents are especially problematic in that disease can spread unintentionally and on a vast scale. The infection can rebound onto the attacker, known as the “boomerang effect.” It is also suggested that bioweapons are avoided out of a fear of like-for-like retaliation.

These explanations ignore the power of the biological weapons taboo. The taboo states that abhorrence of biowarfare shapes how humans understand and construct policy on the threat. The taboo exerts a forceful normative prohibition leading to the rejection and non-use of bioweapons. Taboos are already associated with other weapons of mass destruction including nuclear and chemical arms. The bioweapons taboo has not been analyzed in the same depth as those around the use of other weapons of mass destruction. The taboo has often been lumped together with the chemical weapons taboo — but these are very different types of weaponry and we should be more cautious about assuming that these taboos are the same.

Bioweapons are taboo in that they are potential mass killers that cause harm in disgusting ways. Al Mauroni said biowarfare is considered “a ‘dirty’ way to fight.” Disease is a repulsive threat and we fear the contamination of our bodies, especially when that contamination is deliberate. Biowarfare is not just a physical trauma but a psychological one. Bioweapons have been termed “weapons of terror” on that basis. Mahatma Gandhi famously said: “Fear of disease kills more men than disease itself.”

### agroterror defense

#### No agroterror.

Kirby & Carus ’20 [Reid; Military historian & consultant. Seth; Emeritus Distinguished Professor of National Security Policy, Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction at the National Defense University. “Agroterrorism Perspectives,” Agroterrorism: National Defense Assessment, Strategies, and Capabilities, United States Air Force Center for Strategic Deterrence Studies, Chapter 2.] TDI

Also useful for our purposes is a third study. In 2009, Gregory Dalziel, a researcher at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore, published a comprehensive survey of intentional food contaminations, what he termed “food defence incidents.” As such, he reviewed every incident in which people might have been exposed to a toxic chemical, biological, or radiological substance through deliberate contamination of food and water. Thus, while Dalziel focused on only a subset of agroterrorism incidents and included some clearly not related to agriculture (water contamination), his work is arguably the most comprehensive such review yet undertaken.

The results of Dalziel’s analysis are striking. He identified only a single example of preharvest contamination that resulted in a health risk for people, the deliberate contamination of the water used by a crop spraying service with glyphosate, the active ingredient in the well-known herbicide Roundup. About 40 hectares were affected, but government officials allowed harvested food on the market after determining that the produce remained safe for human consumption.69 Overall, 24 percent of contaminations that he identified occurred at retail or food services locations, 75 percent at homes, and only about one percent at “product assembly” site (which included food processing).70

These results, it is important to emphasize, is not an accurate reflection of the prevalence of agroterrorism. Dalziel was studying the risk to consumers from contamination of food supplies, reviewing the entire farm-to-fork chain, excluding any incidents that might have caused damage to agricultural produce that did not result in the spread of contaminated food. As a result, he ignored attacks that might have destroyed crops, such that they never entered the food supply, or that were intercepted before they reached consumers. Also, Dalziel’s analysis focused only on proven incidents, thus ignoring some significant possible examples of agroterrorism, such as the alleged infection of Rhodesian cattle with Bacillus anthracis. Both types of incidents will be discussed more in detail below.

Although Dalziel’s analysis excluded attacks on farms, ranches, dairies, and fisheries that did not result in food contamination, he reported on a handful of such incidents uncovered during his research.

These include:

* The alleged poisoning of cattle during the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya
* The poisoning of the water supply to a farm in Alabama with cyanide in 1970, resulting in the deaths of 30 cattle
* The contamination of cattle feed by Brian “Skip” Lea in Wisconsin, 1999. No cattle died, but it forced a recall, costing the company millions of dollars
* The intentional contamination in 2001 of a Northern Ireland fishery, destroying 500,000 fish
* The killing of 3,100 chickens, 243 pigs, 300 fish and 10 oxen by Chinese serial murderers Du Runqiong and Tang Youhua, most likely using the banned rat poison Dushuqiang (which roughly translates to “strong rat poison”) containing tetramine71

Terrorists were responsible for only one of these incidents, the Mau cattle poisoning, while the others were criminal, even if the precise motivation was unclear in some instances.

Dalziel’s analysis confirms the impression gained from reviewing the GTD dataset. The food supply chain is far more resilient than most people realize, due to the efforts of companies and governments by agricultural inspectors and public health investigators. While deliberate contaminations do occur, they are remarkably rare given the vast size of the global trade in food.

Unfortunately, in the absence of a comprehensive dataset of agroterrorism incidents, created using consistent coding standards, our understanding of the agroterrorism threat is based mostly on anecdotes, which may be illustrative provide no sense of the rate of incidence. All we know for certain is that agroterrorism using chemical or biological agents is extraordinarily rare and rarely causes more than limited damage.

### food defense

#### No food wars.

Vestby et al. ’18 [Jonas; Doctoral Researcher at the Peace Research Institute Oslo; Ida Rudolfsen, doctoral researcher at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University and PRIO; and Halvard Buhaug, Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Professor of Political Science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), and Associate Editor of the Journal of Peace Research and Political Geography. “Does hunger cause conflict?” https://blogs.prio.org/ClimateAndConflict/2018/05/does-hunger-cause-conflict/]

It is perhaps surprising, then, that there is little scholarly merit in the notion that a short-term reduction in access to food increases the probability that conflict will break out. This is because to start or participate in violent conflict requires people to have both the means and the will. Most people on the brink of starvation are not in the position to resort to violence, whether against the government or other social groups. In fact, the urban middle classes tend to be the most likely to protest against rises in food prices, since they often have the best opportunities, the most energy, and the best skills to coordinate and participate in protests.

Accordingly, there is a widespread misapprehension that social unrest in periods of high food prices relates primarily to food shortages. In reality, the sources of discontent are considerably more complex — linked to political structures, land ownership, corruption, the desire for democratic reforms and general economic problems — where the price of food is seen in the context of general increases in the cost of living. Research has shown that while the international media have a tendency to seek simple resource-related explanations — such as drought or famine — for conflicts in the Global South, debates in the local media are permeated by more complex political relationships.

## Inflation DA

### Link

#### The plan causes a public-private wage spiral, spiking inflation.

Abdallah et al. 23. Chadi Abdallah, Senior Economist and Lead for Communications on Finance Issues @ International Monetary Fund. David Coady, and La-Bhus Fah Jirasavetakul. March 17, 2023. “Public-Private Wage Differentials and Interactions Across Countries and Time.” International Monetary Fund. Volume 2023. Issue 064. https://doi.org/10.5089/9798400236853.001. TDI

<<FIGURES EXCLUDED>>

B. Empirical Findings

B1. The Dynamic Interactions Between Public and Private Wages

The impulse responses presented in the figures are with respect to a one percent shock in public wages and are accumulated so that the effects are shown on the levels of the variables (wages and consumer prices). Our findings suggest that the effects of public wage shocks on private sector wages are stronger in countries where the public sector (as share of total employment) is relatively large (Figure 9). In particular, a one percent increase in average public wages leads to around 0.45 percent increase in average private sector wages (peak response) in countries with a larger level of public employment. The impact is also persistent, lasting for up to 15 quarters after the shock. This effect is significantly smaller (at around 0.07 percent) and very short-lived in countries where the public sector is relatively small.21 These findings suggest that the size of the public sector potentially has implications for the role of the sector in driving wage determination in the private sector. This is, for example, the case of Nordic countries in Europe where the incidence of collective bargaining is relatively strong. Labor markets in these countries tend to be characterized by both high union density and high public employment (relative to the EU average) and, for the most part, the public sector takes the lead in the annual bargaining rounds which help set wages in other sectors.

On the other hand, our findings also suggest that shocks to average private sector wages exhibit stronger effects on average public wages in countries that are more competitive and more open to trade (Figure 10). A one percent increase in average private wages leads to around a 0.27 percent increase in public sector wages in countries that are more open to trade. The impact is also persistent, remaining positive and significant over the entire horizon following the shock. In contrast, the effect is smaller (at around 0.10 percent) in countries that are relatively less open to trade, and the effect is very short-lived being significant for only two quarters after the shock. This implies that in more open economies, public sector wages are potentially primarily determined by fundamentals originating in the private sector with a limited influence by government on the wage the setting mechanism. This is broadly consistent with the predictions from the Scandinavian model of wage leadership, and are in line with the findings in Campos, et. al. (2017), which also suggest that observed pay gap differentials are explained by the degree of exposure to international competition.

B.2 The Impact of Public Wage Shocks on Private Wages

Figure 11–12 show that an increase in public wages leads to larger and more persistent effects on private wages in countries with higher union density and bargaining coverage and countries with greater degree of centralization of wage bargaining. For instance, a one percent shock in public wages in these countries increases average private wages by up to around 0.31 and 0.52 percent, respectively (Figures 11–12, LHS). The effects in countries with lower unionization and bargaining coverage and less centralized bargaining are much smaller (at around 0.13 and 25 percent, respectively) and are less persistent.22 Other conditions, such as the degree of overall price stability and the strength of the economy, may also increase the magnitude and persistence of the effects of public wage shocks on private wages. Whether a higher inflation environment increases the impact of public wage increases on private wages is assessed by interacting the public wage variable with a binary indicator equal to 1 if the initial level of inflation in a country is higher than a certain threshold, and zero otherwise.23 In the current context, if wage negotiations in the public sector set the benchmark for private sector negotiations, an increase in public wages would be expected to have larger spillovers on private wages in a high-inflation environment compared to under a low-inflation environment. Figure 13 displays the results, which suggest that a one percent increase in public wages leads to around 0.59 increase in private wages (peak response)—roughly 3 times larger than the increases observed in a low-inflation environment. We also find that the effect of public wage increases on private wages is larger and more persistent during periods of lower economic slack (Figure 14).24 This may be explained by the fact that workers’ bargaining power is greater when labor demand is strong, and supply is tight.

B3. The Impact of Public Wage Shocks on Inflation

The pattern for the responses of inflation, in terms of both magnitude and persistence, follows to a large extent the response of private wages to public sector wages. As explained earlier, through their association with private wages and the possibility of contributing to a wage spiral, public wages could lead to higher and more persistent inflationary pressures. Figure 15–19 display the impulse responses of the consumer price level to a public wage shock in different country environments. Our findings suggest the following:

An increase in public wages leads to larger and more persistent effects on the consumer price level in countries where the size of the public sector is relatively large. In particular, the effect in countries with a larger public sector is around 0.3 percent (Figure 15)—nearly 5 times bigger than the effect for countries with a relatively small public sector (around 0.06 percent). Furthermore, while shocks to public wages have a persistent effect on consumer prices in the former group, their effects on consumer prices in the latter group are transitory—being short-lived and becoming statistically insignificant starting from few quarters after the shock. This is expected as in countries with a relatively larger public sector, public wage negotiations tend to set the benchmark for private sector wage negotiations.

The impact on the consumer price level is also larger and more persistent in countries with higher bargaining (or union) coverage (Figure 16) and in countries with greater degree of centralization of wage bargaining (Figure 17). For instance, a one percent shock in public wages in these countries increases the consumer price level by up to around 0.10 and 0.22 percent, respectively (Figures 16–17, LHS). The effects in countries with lower unionization and bargaining coverage and less centralized bargaining are smaller (at up to around 0.03 and 0.06 percent, respectively), are less persistent, and mostly insignificant (Figures 16–17, RHS).25

Moreover, if wage negotiations in the public sector set the benchmark for private sector negotiations, an increase in public wages would be expected to have larger spillovers on inflation in a high-inflation compared to a low-inflation environment—mostly due to the fact, as we have shown earlier, private wages tend to rise more and in a more persistent way under a higher inflationary environment. Our results (Figure 18) suggest that a one percent increase in public wages leads to around 0.44 increase in consumer prices (peak response)—roughly 3 times larger than the response associated with a low inflation environment (peak response of around 0.14 percent).

We also find evidence that the effect of public wage increases on consumer prices is larger and more persistent during periods of lower economic slack (Figure 19). In such periods, consumer prices rise by about 0.2 percent in response to the public wage shock and remain positive and significant over long horizons. As discussed earlier, this could be explained by the fact that during periods of low economic slack workers’ bargaining power is typically greater since labor demand is strong and labor markets are tight. In contrast, we find no evidence of ana effect of public wage shocks on consumer prices during periods of higher economic slack.

#### It would apply economy-wide and trigger a wage-price spiral.

King ’20 [Adam, Ph.D., Department of Politics, York University, the fields of Labour Studies, Political Economy, and the Sociology of Work and Working-Class Culture. “Critical reflections on the job guarantee proposal.” Studies in Political Economy, Volume 101, Issue 3.] TDI

The change from describing the job guarantee as a wage- and inflation-containing institution to one geared towards improving the bargaining power of workers is quite remarkable. One need only to take stock of the various features and benefits that Wray et al. now include in their jobs program proposals. For example, in keeping with the movement demand for “$15 and Fairness,” the Levy Institute proposes to set the wage in their jobs program at $15 per hour, which would effectively function as the new US federal minimum wage.29 As Dean Baker points out, however, there are approximately 40 million US workers currently earning less than $15 per hour — the federal minimum wage remains $7.25 per hour. This could mean one of two things: either low-wage private sector employers would have to raise wages quickly in order to retain employees, or the JG program would have to absorb a lot of displaced private sector workers.30 It is hard to imagine employers tolerating this without a substantive fight. Additionally, this does not account for whatever “spillover effects” a substantial JG-induced wage increase might generate up the income ladder (or at least proximate to the JG wage). This is not to suggest simply that significant increases at the bottom of the wage distribution are not necessary and justifiable, but rather to point out that this outcome is incompatible with JG theorists’ previous insistence that the program would serve a “price stabilization” function — at least short of some other institutional mechanism, such as coordinated wage bargaining or a broad incomes policy.