



Project 2025 Will Undermine America's National Security

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The far-right policy proposals in Project 2025 will fundamentally undermine the national and economic security of the United States, benefiting its adversaries and making all Americans less safe.

This article is part of a series from the Center for American Progress exposing how the sweeping Project 2025 policy agenda would harm all Americans. This new authoritarian playbook, published by the Heritage Foundation, would destroy the 250-year-old system of checks and balances upon which U.S. democracy has relied and give far-right politicians, judges, and corporations more control over Americans' lives.

In a nearly 1,000-page proposal, a group of far-right former officials and experts have authored a [policy agenda](#), dubbed “Project 2025,” for a future right-wing presidency. The plan, which would gut America’s 250-year-old system of checks and balances to allow far-right extremism to take over the federal government, includes a vision for the “common defense” that will place the United States in direct confrontation with its adversaries and privilege unilateral militarism over a thoughtful, holistic, and adequately resourced national security strategy. In so doing, Project 2025’s proposals would fundamentally undermine America’s national and economic security, and ordinary Americans will pay the price.

The far-right project [seeks](#) to “reorient the U.S. government’s posture toward friends and adversaries alike ... represent[ing] the most significant shift in core foreign policy principles and corresponding action since the end of the Cold War.” This reorientation makes all Americans less safe.

Use the QR code to find more of our work on Project 2025.



Gutting agencies protecting Americans against foreign threats

Project 2025 advocates for staffing the National Security Council and Situation Room with individuals whose primary qualification is political fealty, putting

the country in a tremendously vulnerable position. Its proposals would replace nonpartisan career national security officials with partisan operatives, placing a future president immediately on the back foot in responding to world events and leading to confusion and mistrust worldwide. On Inauguration Day, Project 2025 [recommends](#) reassigning “nonessential” National Security Council staff to their home agencies, including military officers, intelligence analysts, and diplomats, leaving the White House unprepared to fully engage the U.S. departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, and Justice, as well as the Intelligence Community. Similarly, Project 2025 recommends recalling career foreign service ambassadors serving in the nation’s most consequential postings if they have not demonstrated significant loyalty to the incoming president. The lack of experience or knowledge many of those political ambassador appointees bring, as well as the embarrassing and, at times, costly consequences that result—already makes the United States an [outlier](#) in the developed world. Further entrenching this practice would be a significant blow to international relations.

Perhaps worse, Project 2025 would politicize the military chain of command and U.S. intelligence agencies. It recommends the White House review all senior military general officer and flag officer promotions to ensure they align with domestic political priorities, and to replace career intelligence officers at the Central Intelligence Agency with new hires more committed to the president’s agenda.

Project 2025 would also directly undermine the safety of ordinary Americans and the security of the country’s democratic system. Rather than seek to reform and improve federal agencies, Project 2025 recommends that the next administration eliminate the Department of Homeland Security and many of its component offices; eliminate and privatize the Transportation Security Administration; and eliminate the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency’s (CISA) Cybersecurity Advisory Committee and limit CISA’s ability to support states on election security. Eliminating these agencies would put security of air travel, ports, and rails at risk and would prevent CISA from helping state and local governments and private companies defend against attacks from foreign adversaries.

Benefiting America’s adversaries

Project 2025 [advocates](#) for “transforming” NATO by handing over lead responsibility to deter Russia’s authoritarian aggression to European allies and pulling back U.S. forces—and effectively U.S. political commitment—from Europe. This proposition would endanger American security and prosperity and signal to allies and adversaries around the world that the United States is at best inconsistent, and at worst unreliable. America’s alliances have been singularly important in deterring aggression. Were deterrence to fail, the United States would need the help of [allies](#) to prosecute any future great power war with its adversaries, whether China

or Russia. But alliances require trust, durability, and respect. Although the United States should continue to encourage [greater self-reliance](#) among NATO members, the U.S. and its allies should carefully coordinate any future reorientation to prevent a weakening of NATO's collective defense, lest it encourage [further Russian aggression](#).

On Iran, Project 2025 advocates a markedly more confrontational stance, denigrating diplomacy and the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action](#) (JCPOA) in favor of barely veiled advocacy for regime change. The document outlines a new security architecture in the Middle East that builds on the [Abraham Accords](#) but undermines those efforts by deliberately making no mention of the Palestinian people and promising to defund the Palestinian Authority—a sabotage of any hopes for a Palestinian state. As the past year has tragically [demonstrated](#), continued neglect of the root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will only benefit Iranian proxy [recruitment](#) efforts and risk continued violence, including [attacks](#) on American troops and installations.

Placing the United States in direct confrontation with China

While China will be the United States' most consequential competitor for the foreseeable future, Project 2025's policy prescriptions would exacerbate current conflicts and create new ones. The strategy outlined in Project 2025 would be profoundly expensive, financially and diplomatically. It would set back support and cooperation from regional allies, perversely encourage rather than deter military conflict, and create insecurity and instability across the globe.

Project 2025 has a myopic, militarization-first view of the U.S. security strategy toward China—ramping up funding for all four branches of U.S. conventional forces even as the Pentagon has repeatedly failed to pass audits of money already appropriated; spending heavily to field newer, more destabilizing kinds of nuclear weapons and rejecting arms control engagement; creating new mandates for offensive cyber operations; and instructing the U.S. Space Force to impose America's will to dominate the space domain. Project 2025 even dangerously calls on U.S. special operations forces to depart from its counterterrorism mandate to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative infrastructure investment projects.

The authors of Project 2025 are right that competing with China will require resources, but—somewhat surprisingly, given the painful and recent memory of the costs of the conservative [preference](#) for military intervention (and spending)—Project 2025 places little value in the civilian side of the U.S. security strategy

equation. Competing successfully with China will require diplomatic funding and vision; new development and finance tools designed to advance U.S. political and economic interests in a new kind of geopolitical competition; and investments in industrial, technology, and workforce development to [bolster](#) national strength and competitiveness. Project 2025 is dismissive of these ideas, doubling down instead on the mindset that had U.S. Marines dodging IEDs in Marjah while Chinese engineers made advances in quantum computing.

Project 2025 will benefit America's adversaries

- **North Korea:** With fanatical commitment to expanding the U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal, Project 2025 effectively incentivizes North Korea to expand its own nuclear weapons program.
- **Iran:** With the Iranian nuclear program revived by the scuttling of the JCPOA, Project 2025 would now boost Tehran's recruitment efforts in the region by deliberately sabotaging any hopes for Palestinian statehood.
- **Russia:** Turning away from decades-old alliances such as NATO, Project 2025 will weaken collective defense and embolden Russian President Vladimir Putin's imperial designs.
- **China:** Project 2025's ham-handed demand that countries choose between China or the United States will push many to the well-resourced competitor, and its call for the United States to withdraw from multilateral bodies would surrender the field to China to expand and exert its influence.

Increasing the risk of nuclear war

At a time when the doomsday clock is already set closer to midnight than ever before [due to](#) “widespread and growing reliance on nuclear weapons,” Project 2025's solution is to ramp up the U.S. nuclear arsenal. The United States and the Russian Federation have not been in a more precarious nuclear posture since the end of the Cold War. The lapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty [in 2019](#) and the uncertain future of the [New START Treaty](#), which is set to expire in 2026, further exacerbate tensions and raise concerns about a renewed arms race. In the Middle East, Iran is potentially days away from nuclear weapons capabilities after [aggressively stockpiling uranium](#) following the Trump administration's withdrawal from the JCPOA. In East Asia, China has rapidly expanded its nuclear arsenal and advanced its missile technology, aiming to reach [parity with the United States](#) by the mid-2030s. [North Korea](#) has continued to enhance its own nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, conducting frequent tests and increasing the range and precision of its systems.

Despite these risks, the playbook describes an aggressive expansion of the nuclear weapons programs as a top defense priority. There is scant mention of strategic arms control, and when it is mentioned—six times in the body text—it is done so derisively. Though framed as “deterrence,” this posture increases the risk of nuclear war. G7 leaders [committed](#) in Hiroshima, Japan, last year to pursue nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, a pledge to which they recommitted at this year’s [summit](#) in Apulia, Italy. The Project 2025 agenda would turn back on those commitments, not only elevating the risk of nuclear conflict, but also putting the United States at odds with its strategic allies, who would be critical partners in case of conflict.

Failing to address climate security threats

Project 2025 [calls for](#) a “whole-of-government unwinding” of climate policy that would cause greater harm to U.S. national security. The proposal not only calls for a repeat of then-President Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, it would go one step further and pull the United States out of its parent treaty—the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—entirely, which would make the United States the only government outside the UNFCCC and take the country completely out of the global rules and standards setting on climate action. Project 2025 also calls for the United States to withdraw all support for international climate finance, kneecapping vital climate finance institutions, chiefly the World Bank. These recommendations would amount to an abdication of global climate leadership during a critical decade for world action to stay within the 1.5 degree Celsius temperature rise limit to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

These actions would endanger U.S. national security. For one, climate change directly affects U.S. defense assets and installations worldwide, preparedness, and ultimately the defense budget. Rising tides, extreme weather patterns, and hotter temperatures all affect U.S. military bases, equipment, and personnel. The negative effects of climate change also bring [massive financial costs](#); these climate damages strain federal, state, and local budgets, [weakening](#) the United States’ economic security. Climate change also contributes to conflict and instability worldwide, making it more difficult for the United States to respond and protect its interests and those of its partners. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence has [assessed](#) that climate change will exacerbate geopolitical tensions through 2040, increasing the risk of internal or external conflict, particularly in countries least equipped to grapple with climate change. Perhaps most consequentially, dismantling climate policy would jeopardize not only U.S. national security but our very existence on Earth.

Damaging the United States' ability to address global threats

Project 2025 contains policy proposals that impair the United States'—and the world's—capacity to counter global threats such as pandemics, water, and food insecurity head on. The Biden administration has prioritized a science-based global health strategy, increasing bilateral partnerships and building global health capacity worldwide. Project 2025 would halt these efforts, promoting a unilateral approach that neglects global health needs. Project 2025's authors argue that the United States should withdraw from the World Health Organization, citing failures during the COVID-19 pandemic and the promotion of “radical social policies.” However, leaving the room would remove U.S. leadership and influence on a potential pandemic accord. In addition, Project 2025 would roll back funding for critical global health programs under the guise of protecting families and children, defying global trends. By politicizing support for proven global health programs, Project 2025 makes Americans more vulnerable to shocks from health and humanitarian crises—key factors that also drive conflict and migration.

Conclusion

While the authors of Project 2025 claim that defending the nation is among the playbook's top priorities, the policies it proposes would fundamentally undermine the U.S. government's ability to do so—all while increasing the risk of conflict, instability, and crisis. Instead, the United States can achieve more durable security at home and abroad by prioritizing alliances, values, and global leadership.