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**Energy Policy under the Trump Administration: Enhanced linkage
with national security**

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In accordance with its public pledges during the 2024 presidential campaign, the Trump administration has rapidly launched a series of policies to repudiate clean energy policies emphasized by the preceding Biden administration. On January 20, the day of his inauguration, President Trump signed four executive orders (EOs) relating to energy.¹ EO 14156, “[Declaring a National Energy Emergency](#),” orders maximum use of domestic energy resources, including fossil fuels, while EO 14162, “[Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements](#),” orders the re-withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement. Meanwhile, EO 14153, “[Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential](#),” abolishes a number of regulations in the State of Alaska (one of the areas which had been subject to the stringent regulations under the previous administration) in order to bring about maximum development of the state’s resources. Finally, EO 14154, “[Unleashing American Energy](#),” declaring the termination of the Green New Deal, orders the pausing of the disbursement of climate-related funds through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) which had provided leverage behind the deployment of clean energy during the Biden era; far-reaching environmental deregulation; elimination of the mandate on electric vehicle (EV) deployment; and the restarting of reviews of applications for approvals of new liquefied natural gas (LNG) export projects for non-FTA (free trade agreement) signatories.

The heads of those government agencies pertaining to the field of energy are now occupied by climate change skeptics, who have moved rapidly to take action in line with the above-mentioned EOs. On February 3, Secretary of the Department of the Interior Doug Burgum signed six [Secretary’s Orders \(SOs\)](#) which aim to accelerate legal provisions and deregulation for promoting the development and export of energy resources and critical minerals; to reduce domestic energy prices; and to establish the United States as the global leader in the field of energy. Key items set out in [Unleashing the Golden Age of American Energy Dominance](#), a SO issued by Secretary of the Department of Energy Christopher Wright on February 5, include the expansion of energy

production regardless of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; the strengthening of research and development (R&D) with an aim to promote innovations in the area of energy, including nuclear fusion, quantum computing and artificial intelligence (AI); exertion of US leadership in the global civilian nuclear sector to meet the growing demand for energy; and to expand energy production by streamlining federal permitting processes for the sake of reinforcing international competitiveness and national security.

On February 14, the [National Energy Dominance Council](#) (NEDC) was established by another EO (EO 14213) with Secretary of the Interior Burgum as Chair and Secretary of Energy Wright as Vice Chair. With “energy dominance” being one of the most important slogans established by the Trump administration, the goals set out for the [NEDC](#) include securing the stability and affordability of energy prices by maximizing domestic energy production and de-risking the energy supply chain for the United States as well as its allies.

One of the hallmarks of Trump administration 2.0 goes beyond simply rejecting the decarbonization policies promoted by the previous administration, and underscores the linkage between energy policies and national security.

Firstly, given the projected growth of demand for electricity against the backdrop of the widespread deployment of AI and data centers, the administration aims to substantially raise the energy self-sufficiency rate of the United States through the use of fossil fuels and nuclear energy. Strengthening energy independence, regardless of its impacts on the environment, by making use of every kind of energy is the goal. “Declaring a National Energy Emergency” (EO [14156](#), cited above) notes that, in the face of a growing need to protect the United States’ energy security from hostile foreign powers, the securing of an affordable and reliable domestic supply of energy is a pressing issue from the perspectives of national and economic security.

Secondly, vigilance against China is evident throughout energy policies. On March 14, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced](#) that it was commencing work on far-reaching environmental deregulation, including the relaxation of regulations concerning coal-fired thermal power generation. Subsequently, President Trump [emphasized](#) the need for countermeasures against China, which maintains its economic supremacy over the United States by way of increasing electricity production from coal-fired thermal power generation. EO 14241, “[Immediate Measures to Increase American Mineral Production](#),” signed by President Trump on March 20, states that the national and economic security of the United States is threatened by its reliance upon hostile foreign

powers' mineral production. Its related Fact Sheet stresses the indispensability of critical minerals for manufacturing military products, noting that the status of China, Iran and Russia as holders of large-scale deposits of several mineral resources critical to the United States poses a security risk, and sounds the [alarm](#) in particular about US reliance on China for 70% of its rare earth imports. Meanwhile, with Russia providing [27%](#) (as of 2023) of the United States' imports of low-enriched uranium, an essential mineral for nuclear power generation, securing an alternative source for the supply of this mineral is becoming a pressing issue.

Thirdly, the Trump administration emphasizes the diplomatic significance of increasing LNG exports from the United States, while its allies, including Europe, are seeking to reduce their dependence on Russian gas. When announcing EO 14213, [the White House](#) explained that the United States had warned Western Europe about the need to rely on US rather than Russian gas in 2017 (i.e. at the time of the first Trump administration), and that the increased LNG exports from the United States has actually helped to reduce Europe's level of reliance on Russian gas. With regard to [the development of Alaska](#), the second Trump administration highlights the US's role to exercise global energy dominance and to prevent the weaponization of energy supplies by foreign powers in the event of a geopolitical conflict.

Fourthly, the inextricability of maintaining a presence in the international nuclear market and nuclear non-proliferation issues is stressed. The above-noted [SO from the Energy Secretary](#) addresses the importance of the rapid commercialization, deployment and export of next-generation nuclear reactors while also emphasizing the role that the DOE will play in the peaceful use of nuclear technology and nonproliferation.

At the [Japan-US Summit Meeting](#), held in Washington, D.C. on February 7, the two countries agreed to strengthen their energy security, including increasing LNG exports to Japan, in a mutually beneficial manner); to diversify critical mineral supply chains; and to collaborate on developing and deploying cutting-edge small modular reactors (SMRs) and other advanced nuclear reactor technology. Japan and the United States could expand collaboration beyond the bilateral sphere into the global domain, including opening up new markets for LNG and nuclear power in third countries, and policy coordination on increasing the supply of critical minerals with non-Chinese origins in the international market. Rather than passively reacting to unpredictable moves of the Trump administration, it is more important for Japan to proactively present a strategic concept on the geopolitical benefits of energy cooperation as well as the long-term energy security of both countries.

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*This text expresses the author's personal opinions, and does not in any regard represent the views held by any organizations with which the author is affiliated.

¹ On the same day, President Trump also signed a [Memorandum](#), aside from those EOs, which temporarily withdrew the federal government's leasing and permitting processes for wind projects on public land.