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ICYMI: "An Important Opportunity For American Nuclear Leadership"

WASHINGTON – Representatives Byron Donalds (R-FL) and Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN) published the following op-ed entitled, "[An Important Opportunity For American Nuclear Leadership](#)." The op-ed headlines the rollout of the Washington Examiner's "Restoring America's Energy Dominance" series.

Read the full op-ed [here](#) or below:

An Important Opportunity For American Nuclear Leadership

U.S. Representatives Byron Donalds (R-FL) and Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN)
[Washington Examiner – Restoring America](#)
February 12, 2022

On Dec. 8, 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower gave his historic “Atoms for Peace” speech at the United Nations General Assembly in New York City. Eisenhower’s stirring address set the stage for the civil nuclear energy industry in America and abroad. His subsequent “Atoms for Peace” program prepared America for global civil nuclear success — and today, we must realize that vision once again.

Civil nuclear energy has many benefits, first and foremost as a reliable, carbon-free source of electricity. Since high-quality energy is a necessary condition for economic growth, American nuclear technology has the potential to bolster economic development and raise the standard of living around the world. Nuclear reactors can also be used for desalination, district heating, hydrogen production, isotope manufacturing, space exploration, chemical production, sustainable fuel creation, and more.

The global market is ripe for nuclear technology, and competition for international civil nuclear leadership is strong. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, up to 70 reactor designs are currently being developed and built in 17 countries around the world — with two-thirds being Russian and Chinese designs. Simply put, this is concerning. Russia plans on powering half of its country via nuclear energy by 2050, and China has active plans to build 150 Chinese nuclear reactors over the next 15 years. China also estimates that it can build as many as 30 nuclear reactors overseas by 2030. It’s also important to recognize that Russia currently dominates the global market for enriched uranium — a vital necessity to fuel nuclear reactors.

Let us emphasize: it is in the best interest of the United States and the rest of the world for our country, instead of China and Russia, to be the preferred partner for embarking nuclear nations. In that role, we can influence responsible protocols and regulations that govern nuclear safety, security, and safeguards.

Unleashing America’s true nuclear export potential and advancing new nuclear capacity domestically also benefits the United States economically. An essential component of our nation’s prosperity has been and must remain abundant, affordable, and reliable energy. The U.S. Department of Commerce has predicted an approximate \$740 billion international market opportunity for American nuclear equipment and services over the next 10 years. Other experts suggest that the global market for nuclear power could triple by 2050 — especially with the recent declaration signed by 25 countries to triple nuclear power by 2050. Plus, every \$1 billion worth of U.S. nuclear exports could support up to 10,000 American jobs.

Deliberate and meaningful action is needed to capitalize on the promising global nuclear renaissance. Specifically, the Department of Energy funding bill that was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year included strong support for (1) developing new nuclear reactor technologies, (2) improving the efficiency and safety of nuclear fuel, and (3) reestablishing our great nation’s domestic uranium enrichment capability. The bill also acknowledged the unsustainable trajectory of our national debt, however, by reprioritizing previously provided funding for much of this work — rather than providing all new funding. As staunch fiscal conservatives, we will continue to fight for fiscal discipline in Congress while simultaneously promoting sound policies to stimulate economic growth.

Policy and process improvements can be just as important as federal funding. For example, Congress has initiated important first steps with financial institutions, including the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and the Export-Import Bank of the United States, to develop the necessary nuclear expertise for assessing and overseeing the deployment of American nuclear technology with embarking nuclear nations around the world. We have also supported a variety of efforts to streamline pesky government regulations, and advocated the use of advanced computing, simulation, and modeling techniques to spur innovative advanced reactor deployment.

All in all, maximizing American ingenuity and establishing crucial international relationships will be key to capturing the current nuclear economic opportunity worldwide. This task will be difficult — and time is of the essence, especially since our adversaries have a head start — but American global nuclear leadership is achievable. Consistent with the foundational principles established by Eisenhower in 1953, the United States can *and will* once again be the world leader in nuclear power.

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