Official Brief for the Presidential Cabinet

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Issue 1: Data Leaks and Whistleblowers

A central problem for the US government in maintaining data security has been striking a balance between punishing data leakers who reveal damaging secrets and protecting whistleblowers who bring light to important issues. Yet, in the scope of policy, no two leaks are the same, with problems arising whenever significant government data breaches occur. These issues include endangering US citizens, the lives and missions of US espionage in hostile states, damage US relationships with allies, and more. The most straightforward proposal is an increase in basic security measures. These measures would prevent leakers from accessing or removing classified/protected documents without appropriate authorization or cause. This solution can be addressed both physically and digitally: the government could increase levels of physical and digital security in order to access classified information and documents, which would help solve concerns of access to top secret information being too widespread and difficult to track. However, its drawback criticism could be "delays vetting new employees for security clearances and for over-classifying information" (Baldor and Copp 2023).

Like any other, this issue also faces partisan split in opinion. The conservative view is more concerned with national security, viewing data leaks of any kind as doing more harm than good. Thus, conservatives promote the strongest national security measures with harsher punishments for data leakers, thus strongly supporting increased data security measures. Meanwhile, the liberal view is more complicated: liberals tend to advocate for government transparency and better protection for whistleblowers. However, past cases of whistleblowing and data leaks have shown that the left more

likely considers motives as the primary factor in discussing national security leaks, thus believing that the problem is multifaceted and cannot be addressed by only one solution.

Briefing Referenced: Data Leaks and Whistleblowers by Audrey Moorehead

Issue 2: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAPs) include a wide range of anomalous aerial sightings that are not readily identifiable, representing a genuine national security threat from foreign adversaries as a violation of US airspace. A major issue that the government faces is a call for a comprehensive approach to UAPs to bolster national security and reaffirm public confidence in the defense capabilities of the US. With over-classification of UAP intelligence and lack of public access to information, facing international espionage efforts, and the lack of a formal reporting mechanism for UAPs, the US government faces a plethora of issues surrounding UAPs. A core question is what should be the US initial response when a UAP is spotted and how should these sightings be handled after the incident?

A prominent solution is to declassify UAP intelligence, which the Department of Defense currently considers classified, with public inaccessibility leading to conspiracy theories and government distrust. Arguments for declassification state that most UAP data is not sensitive to national security, also encouraging NGO entities to contribute resources to analyze reports of UAPs, and of course destigmatizing false theories around UAPs. However, opponents argue that UAP data provides information about US security defense capacity to face airborne threats and also drain resources with officials having to determine which data can be released or not. Further, declassification and dissemination of further information can cause disproportionate hysteria to spread among the public.

Politically, Democratic party-affiliated officials have expressed pro-declassification sentiments, but both ends of the political spectrum have funded UAP programs in secret, with Republicans recently calling for further transparency from the Biden Administration following the February 2023 UAP incidents. Comparatively, the DOD remains that UAP reports should generally be considered classified.

Briefing Referenced: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena by Alan Zhang

Issue 3: Homelessness: The Economics & Solutions

This year in the US, approximately 500,000 people will not have their own homes to sleep in ("State of Homelessness", 2023). Homelessness, which can range from a brief spell to a chronic crisis, introduces various problems to American society, such as health, with homeless civilians tending to be in a different state of health, and employment, with correlation between homelessness and unemployment. One potential solution is investing in government-run shelters, one of the most immediate answers to the homelessness crisis. With approximately 48% of unhoused persons living in

unsheltered conditions, more funding for shelter expansion, tax deduction for emergency shelters, or Congressional encouragement by increasing tax deduction per number of beds a shelter offers are all ways this solution can be implemented, which would greatly decrease unsheltered homelessness, thus helping to improve public health of homeless individuals in the US. However, concerns that arise with a policy of expanding shelter access is that this is a short-term solution, with shelters lacking privacy and facing problems of overcrowding. Additionally, investing in these resources raises a possible moral hazard, with making an action have fewer consequences for an individual only causing them to do it more, thus becoming societally detrimental.

Politically, the liberal end of the political spectrum is much more in favor of shelter expansion policies, believing more that housing is a fundamental human right. Conservatives, on the other hand, argue that shelter expansion is not a long-term solution and can cause a moral hazard issue, thus supporting spending for homeless shelter expansion to be cut.

Briefing Referenced: Homelessness: The Economics & Solutions by Jay Garg

Issue 4: The 'Big Tech' Economy

Big Tech, the corporate winner from the modern technological booms, presents numerous challenges to the American economy, which are directed towards consumers, smaller tech companies, and governments that struggle to keep up with novel innovations and technological challenges presented by Big Tech corporations. These issues include monopolization, privacy and data protection, and outsized economic control and leverage on the labor market through AI threatening jobs. To address the prominent issue of privacy of consumers and large-scale data protection, one solution can be to regulate data collection and use. This can take the form of creating an agency devoted to data protection, outlining cybersecurity requirements for handling of user data, and more, which could fall under the umbrella of a data protection agency. Arguments in favor of this new data protection agency include being able to continuously adapt to new outlets for data protection and technology advances by establishing an agency devoted to data protection and digital privacy. Meanwhile, arguments against state the cost of creating the agency and the lack of emphasis on a free-market approach that sees users taking control of their own data and being able to freely sell it.

Politically, economic liberals would be in favor of the creation of a government agency and higher government regulation of companies' data management. Liberals tend to view protecting peoples' privacies and governmental regulation as a higher priority than maintaining a free market. On the other hand, economic conservatives still support some data collection regulation, yet oppose increasing government spending for the establishment of a new agency devoted solely to data protection. Instead, conservatives would tend to support by directly protecting users from egregious data collection and creating regulations enabling users to sell their own data.

Issue 5: Women-Led Economic Development

With the G-20 Conference reconvening in September 2023, women-led development has been stated as a priority, bridging the gender equality gap internationally. With America among G-20 nations leading the world economically, America must acknowledge that G-20 nations do not exhibit high levels of gender equality, with a Gender Inequality Index of 0.179, much higher than leading Denmark's score of 0.013. One potential solution proposed could be mandatory paid maternity leave amongst G-20 nations and America, although the exact amount of time for this paid maternity leave is still up for debate. This solution works to improve economic gender inequality and allows for more female-led development, not forcing women to put careers on hold in order to have a child. Arguments for this solution include removing obstacles for women to have babies, and also making it easier for women to open their own businesses or engage in women-led development with paid maternity-leave a reliable economic option when giving birth to a child. However, opponents of this policy believe it's not the government's or corporation's responsibility to fund a woman's maternity leave, rather it's up to the woman's place of work to determine these logistics.

Politically, liberals would stand in support of paid maternity leave, uplifting women through childbirth and raising economic gender equality, encouraging women-led development. Conservatives in the US would not support this policy, not wishing to intervene with a particular company's individual decision where a woman may work or give paid maternity leave, believing in free market reign and less governmental regulation/control over private companies.

Briefing Referenced: Women Led Economic Development by Matylda Urbaniak

Issue 6: Climate Change

As a leader at the 28th annual United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP28, which took place in December 2023, America discussed issues like the 1.5 degrees C goal, cooperation on carbon emissions reductions, and commitment to implementing all COP27 agreements. To stay true to these international initiatives, America must act domestically to reduce climate change and carbon emissions. One solution would be to target renewable energy sources here in the United States. This would look like increasing and maximizing other sources of energy like solar, wind, hydro and geothermal as opposed to existing fossil fuels. There could also be incentives for corporations and big businesses to choose these types of energies.

Liberals would typically support renewable energy sources. They support funding money into renewable energy resources like science, research and infrastructure.

Further, they world argue that a shift to more renewable energy sources would foster more economic activity and jobs here in the United States. Conservatives would not be against renewable energy sources, but most would not be too pleased with this solution. They would argue for a free market solution where consumers would pick what kind of energy they demand and want to consume. Additionally, they would warn about the rapid transition away from fossil fuels.

Briefing Referenced: Natural Climate Solutions & Biological Carbon Offsets by Blake Koerber

Issue 7: Domestic Terrorism

As America surpasses the three-year anniversary of the January 6th insurrection on the Capitol Building, both citizens and government officials grow wary of domestic terrorism and homegrown extremism within the country. Domestic terrorists can be influenced by a multitude of factors like extremist policies, misinformation, and strong political ideologies.

National security is no longer just a matter of international threats and foreign terrorists, but rather much, much closer to home for many Americans. This issue could be solved through intentional policy and legislation changes to the 2001 USA PATRIOT ACT.

Liberals who hold a broader interpretation of the United States Constitution would be open to amending the USA PATRIOT ACT to include domestic terrorism policy, especially legislation regarding the regulation of social media and stricter gun control measures. Conservatives would likely not support additional policy regarding domestic terrorism, arguing that the government should not overstep by expanding the USA PATRIOT ACT. In the years following 9/11, questions regarding the potential abuse of surveillance powers and the individual protection of privacy rights were at an all time high. Conservatives would refer to this period and support a more minimized interpretation of the policy.

Briefing Referenced: Social Media, Radicalization, And Domestic Terrorism by Vivian Nguyen

Issue 8: Generative AI

The rise of ChatGPT has sparked ethical concerns about the use of Generative AI technologies. The lack of regulations for this new technology raises questions about its appropriate usage, integration with copyright and patent laws, and overall governance. Goldman Sachs predicts that Goldman Sachs predicts that 300 million jobs could be disrupted by AI and could lead to a 70% decrease in illustrator jobs, risking creative careers and intellectual property. Proposed regulatory options include extending copyrights to AI-generated work, restricting AI development, or establishing a federal

agency for AI regulation. Some advocate for privacy protection through a task force. Powerful interest groups, including ChatGPT and other AI-related companies, favor less-restricted AI development. The role of generative AI in education is emerging as an academic concern, but it has not gained significant attention in Congress.

Conservatives tend to emphasize the importance of job protection and the maintenance of a stable economy. While they may support the development of AI, especially in applications such as law enforcement, their primary concern is ensuring that advancements in technology do not lead to widespread job displacement. This perspective aligns with a conservative economic philosophy that places a high value on preserving traditional employment opportunities and preventing disruptions in the labor market. On the other hand, liberals generally view AI as a tool for economic growth and increased productivity. They are more inclined to see AI technologies as a means to boost overall economic output, which can potentially lead to job creation and innovation. Liberals often envision AI contributing to a more universalized income, where the benefits of technological progress are shared more broadly, thus addressing concerns about income inequality.

Briefing Referenced: The Economics of Artificial Intelligence in the Developing World by Matt Tibbitts

Issue 9: Gig Economy

The gig economy confronts multifaceted challenges, including job insecurity, income instability, and the absence of traditional labor protections for workers who often lack access to benefits such as healthcare and retirement plans. The platform-dependent nature of gig work exposes individuals to changes in policies and algorithms, while the ongoing debate on worker classification raises questions about the appropriate legal status for gig workers. Additionally, the gig economy lacks comprehensive social safety nets, leaving workers financially vulnerable during periods of unemployment or illness. A need for policy reforms and industry practices that balance flexibility with essential labor protections underscores the ongoing discussions surrounding the gig economy.

Uber, a prominent player in the gig economy, has sparked diverse opinions among liberals and conservatives regarding its impact and the appropriate regulatory framework. Liberals often advocate for increased regulations to address concerns related to workers' rights, job security, and fair wages within the gig economy. They emphasize the need for measures that ensure employee benefits, such as healthcare and paid leave while maintaining a balance with the flexibility that gig work provides. Conservatives, on the other hand, tend to favor a more hands-off approach, emphasizing free-market principles and the role of innovation in fostering economic growth. They argue that excessive regulations could stifle entrepreneurship and the benefits of platforms like Uber, which provide convenient services and income opportunities. The ideological divide reflects broader perspectives on the role of government intervention in the economy, with liberals pushing for worker protections and conservatives

emphasizing the importance of a dynamic, less regulated marketplace. The ongoing debate highlights the challenges of balancing innovation and worker well-being in the evolving landscape of gig economy platforms like Uber.

Briefing Referenced: Supporting Small Businesses In Rural Areas by Nia Burch

Issue 10: Gene Editing

In 2009, it was realized that CRISPR-Cas9, a manipulation of the traditional bacterial defense against viruses, could be use to edit the genomes of a wide variety of organisms—including plants and animals. CRISPR has been used for various applications in the medical and agricultural spheres, but with its use, questions have been raised regarding the regulation of such powerful technology. Particularly, should such technology be used in humans? If so, to what extent?

Currently, the consensus reached seems to not allow CRISPR edits than can last multiple generations, or heritable gene edits. This means that edits to the human embryo have been strictly banned in congress. However, CRISPR use to treat diseases are currently allowed and active included in several clinical trials. However, the line between using CRISPR for clinical purposes and therapeutic enhancement is quite blurry, and who decides this delineation is also predominantly undecided. Furthermore, the only legislation existing on the issue is the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2026, which bans FDA approval of embryo gene editing. Also passed in 2016, the Natural Bioengineered Food Law allows the USDA to create a mandatory disclosure for gene-edited foods. Lastly, another government entity, the NIH declared that they will not fund research in gene-edited technologies. Therefore, the problem of the regulation has been solved by creating legislation to pass the baton to other bureaucratic entities.

There are many arguments in favor of delineating responsibility to specific governing bodies. There have been thoughts to establish an oversight committee on gene editing to specifically monitor progress in genetic research and advise on appropriate regulations. There is also the possibility of creating interagency gene-editing working group to ensure proper coordination in regulations between bureaucratic agencies.

However, again, there is the question brought up as to if this is the best form of regulation of genetic modifications. Conservatives often argue that decisions over jurisdiction should be left up to the states, while liberals might want such decisions to be left up to the federal government.

Briefing Referenced: Gene Editing by Conrad Hock