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In our latest edition of NENSC News, the [Nuclear Energy and National Security Coalition \(NENSC\)](#) brings you the latest industry news, events you don't want to miss, and policies we are watching. Be sure to keep scrolling to learn how you can follow us and stay up to date with the latest information you need.

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## TOP STORY

### **New Episode of *Atomically Speaking* Podcast** **"U.S.-Saudi Nuclear Cooperation: Imperatives for National Security"**

In the latest *Atomically Speaking* podcast, NENSC Co-Chair Dan Poneman convenes a thoughtful conversation with experts regarding ongoing negotiations between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on a "123 agreement," a civil nuclear cooperation agreement that provides a framework for peaceful nuclear energy cooperation. Participants include **Robert Einhorn**, a senior fellow in the Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative and the Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy, and Technology, at the Brookings Institution, and **Pranay Vaddi**, a senior nuclear fellow in the Center for Nuclear Security Policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. To access the podcast, click [HERE](#).

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## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

**Senate NDAA Advances with Nuclear, Minerals, and Security Provisions:** The Senate [passed](#) its \$879 billion fiscal 2026 National Defense Authorization Act on October 9<sup>th</sup> in a 77–20 vote, including major provisions on nuclear energy, critical minerals, and environmental security. The bill encourages the Pentagon's use of advanced reactors, creates a pilot program for microreactors on military bases, and modernizes nuclear security. It also establishes a new office to coordinate international nuclear cooperation and mandates biennial summits on nuclear energy. Additional amendments expand critical mineral mapping, combat illegal fishing, and restrict foreign purchases of U.S. farmland. The NDAA allocates \$35 billion for DOE national security programs and reauthorizes the Defense Production Act through 2026.

**White House Taps Douglas Weaver for NRC Role:** The Trump White House has [nominated](#) seasoned nuclear regulatory expert Douglas Weaver for a commissioner seat on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Weaver's nomination comes after former Republican NRC Commissioner

Annie Caputo resigned from the post earlier this year. The NRC currently has three of its five seats filled, with fellow former NRC official Ho Nieh awaiting confirmation in the full Senate.

**A Framework for Trilateral U.S.-UK-Poland Nuclear Cooperation:** In [this piece](#), Third Way outlines a trilateral framework for U.S.-UK-Poland civil nuclear cooperation, building on its earlier Atombridge work. The paper highlights Poland's strategic position to expand nuclear capacity as it transitions from Russian energy, and recommends actions to de-risk financing, accelerate regulatory collaboration, strengthen supply chains, and develop the workforce to support advanced reactor deployment.

**U.S. and Japan Sign Deal to Boost American Nuclear Exports:** President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi [signed an agreement](#) for Japan and its major banks to help finance U.S. nuclear projects, particularly those led by Westinghouse and GE Vernova Hitachi. The deal is designed to expand American reactor exports and strengthen U.S. influence in global nuclear markets, where Russia and China currently dominate.

**Lessons from China's Nuclear Buildout for a U.S. Comeback:** In this piece, Joy Jiang from Breakthrough Institute [breaks down](#) how China's rapid nuclear expansion offers key lessons for the United States, where recent projects have faced major delays and cost overruns. China's success stems from predictable licensing, state-backed low-cost financing, standardized "core designs," and modular construction.

**Russia and India Explore New Nuclear Projects and SMR Cooperation :** Rosatom and India's Department of Atomic Energy [held talks](#) in Mumbai on expanding nuclear collaboration, including plans for a new Russian-designed VVER-1200 nuclear plant in India and potential deployment of small modular and floating reactors.

**Uranium Regains U.S. Critical Mineral Designation:** The U.S. Geological Survey's 2025 Critical Minerals List [once again includes](#) uranium, highlighting its role in supporting national security, economic resilience, and U.S. energy strategy. This update reverses the mineral's removal in 2022 and reflects a renewed federal focus on strengthening domestic uranium supply chains. The restored designation brings significant advantages to the U.S. uranium sector and aligns the industry more closely with defense and energy priorities.

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## IN THE NEWS

**ANS:** [ANS Winter Conference: DOE, NRC Leaders Stress Need for Speedier Nuclear Approval](#)

**Breakthrough Institute:** [Abundant Fuel for Abundant Reactors](#)

**Center Square:** [US, India to Hold New Round of Trade Talks, with Focus on Energy](#)

**DOE:** [Energy Department Announces Fusion Science and Technology Roadmap to Accelerate Commercial Fusion Power -- \[Roadmap\]](#)

**E&E News:** [Can US Nuclear Heavyweights Catch Russia and China? Trump Bets on i t](#)

**Financial Times:** [US Offers Nuclear Energy Companies Access to Weapons-grade Plutonium -\[paywall\]](#)

**The Hill:** [Advanced Nuclear Reactors Will Secure U.S. Military Energy Resilience](#)

**National Interest:** [The Race for Nuclear Energy Dominance—and How America Can Win](#)

**NEI Magazine:** [IEA's Birol Backs Nuclear](#)

**Nuclear Energy Agency:** [Roadmaps to New Nuclear 2025: Report for Ministers and CEOs](#)

**NY Times:** [How China Raced Ahead of the U.S. on Nuclear Power](#)

**POLITICO:** [Nuclear Regulator Signs on to Streamlined Reactor Licensing](#)

**Reuters:** [US to Announce Recipients of Plutonium for Reactors by Year-end](#)

**Washington Times:** [Powering the future: Army Sees Small, Mobile Nuclear Reactors as Key to Energy Resilience](#)

**World Nuclear Association:** [World Nuclear Outlook Report: Preview 2025](#)

**WNN:** [Cold Testing of Chinese SMR Completed](#)

**WNN:** [Chinese Molten Salt Reactor Achieves Conversion of Thorium-uranium Fuel](#)

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