



What, We Worry?

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For many decades, U.S. presidents have cited national security as a reason for this or that exercise of power . . . and spending.

Watching CBS's *60 Minutes* two weeks ago, it became painfully obvious that "national security" are simply two words our past leaders spat out when politically convenient and not at all a concept to which they have paid serious attention.

The first story in the popular TV news magazine's March 22nd episode concerned rare earth metals.

"Right now, China holds a near-monopoly over these strategic metals that are key components in so much that

makes the modern world go: smartphones, robotics, EV's; also fighter jets, drones and radar technology," [explained](#) correspondent Jon Wertheim. "That is, China controls materials essential to America's ability to wage war."

Quite a problem, especially considering that China is our most powerful and aggressive adversary.

Shipbuilding, or the lack thereof, was the subject of the segment that followed.

"The war in Iran is highlighting the importance of ships — not just warships but cargo vessels — like those carrying oil or gas trapped near the Strait of Hormuz," Lesley Stahl [reported](#). "But American shipbuilding is in shambles, due to decades of shortsighted policies and neglect.

"Our submarine building program is sluggish. And our commercial shipbuilding is nearly extinct," she continued. "China makes roughly 1,000 cargo ships a year. The U.S.? Maybe three. The Trump administration has called this a national security crisis."

Had presidents George H.W. [Bush](#), Bill [Clinton](#), George W. [Bush](#), and Barack [Obama](#) been awake and competent, and not [lapdogs](#) for Beijing, I wonder what they would have called it.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.