The Daily Dish

The Genesis Blunder

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Unlike the bluster that typically surrounds even the most minor administration initiative (see, for example, tiny cars), just before Thanksgiving the president quietly signed an executive order initiating the "Genesis Mission." Although not quite Star Trek's Project Genesis, the rhetoric is very ambitious:

> *In this pivotal moment, the challenges we face require a historic national effort, comparable in urgency and ambition to the Manhattan Project that was instrumental to our victory in World War II and was a critical basis for the foundation of the Department of Energy and its national laboratories.*

> *This order launches the "Genesis Mission" as a dedicated, coordinated national effort to unleash a new age of AI-accelerated innovation and discovery that can solve the most challenging problems of this century.*

> *The Genesis Mission will build an integrated AI platform to harness Federal scientific datasets — the world's largest collection of such datasets, developed over decades of Federal investments — to train scientific foundation models and create AI agents to test new hypotheses, automate research workflows, and accelerate scientific breakthroughs. The Genesis Mission will bring together our Nation's research and development resources — combining the efforts of brilliant American scientists, including those at our national laboratories, with pioneering American businesses; world-renowned universities; and existing research infrastructure, data repositories, production plants, and national security sites — to achieve dramatic acceleration in AI development and utilization.*

> *We will harness for the benefit of our Nation the revolution underway in computing, and build on decades of innovation in semiconductors and high-performance computing. The Genesis Mission will dramatically accelerate scientific discovery, strengthen national security, secure energy dominance, enhance workforce productivity, and multiply the return on taxpayer investment into research and development, thereby furthering America's technological dominance and global strategic leadership.*

Let's see, comparable to the Manhattan Project, creating AI agents trained on federal databases (including the ones "rigged" by the Bureau of Labor Statistics?), delivering "foundation models" that yield national security, energy dominance, and enhanced productivity! What's not to like? And all led by the Department of Energy (DOE).

Wait! What? DOE?

Given the enormous power demands of AI, one can understand that DOE has an interest, but putting Genesis under the charge of an agency that has accomplished essentially nothing in a half-century of existence is a strange decision. But the bigger problem is that this IS the Manhattan Project – a government-centric, top-down, military-like approach. Yes, there are the usual words about public-private partnerships. But make no mistake, the Feds will be in charge and issuing orders, allocating capital, and micromanaging decisions.

But it wasn't the government that put the United States in position to lead in AI. It was the private sector. The Genesis Mission continues the administration's tendency to forget that open markets and private enterprise have delivered greatness, and instead again imitate China's approach.

No thanks.