### 1AC: FW

#### TJFs first,

#### A] substance begs the question of a framework being good for debate---fairness is a gateway issue to deciding the better debater and education is the reason schools fund debate

#### B] Topicality interpretations of the word ought

#### Util is the best theoretically justified framework

#### 1] Ground – Util cares about all impacts which ensures link and impact turn ground for both sides. Util impacts are easy to contextualize and allows for all types of ground with work debaters have to do.

#### 2] Novice Accessibility – Util is fairer and more educational for novice debaters since contention/LARP ground is what they learn you crowd out novice debaters by debating up and guts accessibility for trad debate. B] Encourages tricking novices and preventing clash and engagement on your offense. OW on participation to the activity

#### 3] Topic Ed – LARP authors mutually agree upon consequentialism when talking oppression and big stick impacts. That’s key for predictability within the resolutional stasis point.

### 1AC: Plan

#### Plan – A just government of the People’s Republic of China ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

#### That solves worker liberation, labor reforms, and re-establishes credible Collective Bargaining in China – establishing legal protection for Labor Unions reduces overall labor-related discontent.

Dongfang 11 Han Dongfang 4-6-2011 "Liberate China's Workers" <https://archive.md/7RvDG#selection-307.0-316.0> (director of China Labour Bulletin, a nongovernmental organization that defends the rights of workers in China.)//Elmer

HONG KONG — **There is no legal right to strike in China**, but there are strikes every day. Factory workers, hotel employees, teachers and taxi drivers regularly withdraw their labor and demand a better deal from their employer. Strikes are often successful, and these days strike leaders hardly ever get put in prison. It may seem ironic that workers in a nominally Communist country don’t have the right to strike, and that workers are apparently willing to defy the Communist Party by going out on strike. But China effectively abandoned Communism and embraced capitalism many years ago. And in a capitalist economy, strikes are a fact of life. Chinese scholars, government **officials** and even some businessmen have long recognized this fact and have **called for the** **restoration of the right to strike**, **which was removed from the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China in 1982**. **Deng Xiaoping feared that the economic reforms he was introducing would lead to labor unrest.** Although Deng and his successors were able to quiet labor unrest and strike action for a while, the trend over the last five years or so has been clear. As the business leader Zeng Qinghong noted recently, the number of strikes is increasing every year. Mr. Zeng, who is head of the Guangzhou Automobile Co., reported that in just two months last summer, there were more than 20 strikes in the automotive industry in the Pearl River Delta alone, and that new strikes were occurring all the time. Mr. Zeng suggested in a submission to this year’s National People’s Congress, China’s annual legislature, that the right to strike should be restored because it was a basic right of workers in a market economy and a natural adjunct to the right to work. I agree with Mr. Zeng on this point and would like to take his argument one step further. The **right to strike** **is** clearly important, but the most vital and fundamental right of workers is **the right to collective bargaining**. After all, **why do workers go out on strike**? Very simply, they go on strike **for higher pay and better working conditions**. **The strike is not an end in itself but is part of a bargaining process.** And **if the collective bargaining process were more effective**, in many cases, **workers would not need to go out on strike at all**. If you talk to factory workers, most will tell you they would rather not go on strike if they can avoid it. Indeed, most only go on strike because they have no alternative. **China’s workers want and need an alternative**. They want **a system** in **which they can raise their demands** for higher pay and discuss those demands **in** peaceful, **equal and constructive negotiations** with management. **If workers can achieve their goals through peaceful collective bargaining, in the long run there will be fewer strikes**, workers will be better paid and labor relations will be vastly improved. We also have to be aware that if the right to strike is reinstated in the Constitution in isolation — without the right to collective bargaining — there would be a danger that the right of workers to go on strike might actually be eroded. Just look at the right to stage a public demonstration. Chinese citizens do have the constitutional right to demonstrate but in reality they have to apply to the police for permission, and of course very few of those applications are granted. Likewise, if workers have to apply to the authorities before they can go on strike, the right to strike will become meaningless. Moreover, the number of strikes would not be reduced because workers would continue to go out on strike regardless and labor relations will deteriorate even further. On the other hand, if the **right to strike** is framed in a way that **can** **liberate workers** and **encourage** **and empower them to engage in collective bargaining**, **safe** **in the knowledge that they have a powerful weapon that can be deployed if necessary, labor relations will be enhanced** and the number of strikes might actually decrease. There is a saying in China that “you should not only focus on your head when you have headache because the real reason for the headache could be your foot.” As Mr. Zeng noted, the rapidly increasing number of strikes in China has become a major headache, not only for business but for the government as well. If the government wants to reduce the number of strikes in China, it needs to take a holistic approach and address the root cause of the problem — the absence of an effective collective bargaining system in which democratically elected workers’ representatives can negotiate better pay and conditions with their employer. If such a system can be implemented in China it would obviously benefit workers but it would also **benefit employers** like Mr. Zeng who are **concerned** **about** **high worker turnover and the loss of production through strike action.** Crucially, it is also in the interest of the Chinese government to introduce collective bargaining. The authorities may be nervous about handing power to the workers but they should bear in mind that by doing so they would aid the development of more harmonious labor relations, which could lead to the Communist Party’s goal of creating a more prosperous, stable and harmonious society.

### 1AC: Soft Power Advantage

#### Lack of Chinese Right to Strike devastates Collective Bargaining – undermines any legal leverage for Strikes.

Friedman 17 Eli Friedman 4-20-2017 "Collective Bargaining in China is Dead: The Situation is Excellent" <https://www.chinoiresie.info/collective-bargaining-in-china-is-dead-the-situation-is-excellent/> (Assistant Professor of International and Comparative Labour at Cornell University)//Elmer

For many years reform-oriented labour activists and scholars working in China have seen **collective bargaining** as the **cure for** the **country’s severe labour problems**. The logic underlying this was often unstated, but straightforward: collective bargaining was crucial for twentieth century labour movements in capitalist countries in giving workers a voice and creating a more equitable social distribution of wealth. With growing levels of labour unrest in China over the past twenty years, collective bargaining seemed like a logical next step. Hopeful reformers—both within the official unions as well as labour NGO activists and academics—envisioned rationalised, legalised bargaining between labour and capital as a central pillar in the construction of a more just workplace and society. The **challenges to institutionalising** a robust **collective bargaining** system **in** the People’s Republic of **China** (PRC) **have** always **been profound**. **Fundamental** to labour relations theory **is** that collective bargaining rights must be accompanied by the **right to strike** and freedom of association—**capital** **has no reason to take workers seriously without labour possessing some coercive power**. But independent unions have long been an anathema to the Communist Party. From the Lai Ruoyu debacle of the 1950s to the crushing of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation in 1989, the Party has made it clear time and again that independent worker organisations are forbidden. Although workers have never enjoyed the right to strike in practice, the right was formally included in the Chinese constitutions of 1975 and 1978. It **was Deng Xiaoping who removed it from the constitution just as private capital began pouring into China in the early 1980**s. Working Within the System Nonetheless, with no signs of articulated worker movements since 1989, many well-intentioned people thought it was worth trying to advance worker rights within the system. Especially from the mid 2000s on, academics (myself included) launched research projects, NGOs held training sessions, and foreign unions engaged with the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). Many assumed that the state would eventually decide that worker insurgency was exacting too high a cost, and that serious labour reforms were therefore necessary. And indeed, beginning in the late 2000s the ACFTU made collective negotiations (xieshang)—rather than the more antagonistic sounding ‘bargaining’ (tanpan)—a high priority, investing time and resources into expanding the coverage of collective contracts. At its best, **collective bargaining in China** **has been woefully inadequate**. The state and the ACFTU have been very cautious about controlling workers’ aspirations, and have insisted on the fundamental harmony of interests between labour and capital. Experiments with bargaining have been almost **exclusively restricted to single enterprises**, thereby preventing workers from constituting cross-workplace ties. The overwhelming majority of collective contracts are **formulaic**: **actual bargaining rarely occurs**, and **enforcement is** largely **non-existent**. The few shining examples where employers have made real compromises during collective bargaining have followed autonomously organised wildcat strikes. The best-known case is the 2010 strike from a Honda transmission plant in Guangdong province, which resulted in major wage gains as well as an (ultimately unsuccessful) effort to reform the enterprise union. It is not coincidental that substantive worker-led bargaining is much more likely in Japanese or American firms, where the state must be cautious not to inflame patriotic sentiments. State-sanctioned economic nationalism is a shaky foundation for a robust collective bargaining system. The Death of Collective Bargaining under Xi Even these timid efforts have been smothered in recent years, as the central government has turned in a markedly anti-worker direction under Xi Jinping. There was a brief moment in 2010 when discussion about the right to strike emerged from hushed whispers into the public discourse. But this opening was ephemeral, and union reformers in Guangdong who had pushed gentle reforms in the mid-late 2000s were replaced with typical Party apparatchiks. The country’s pre-eminent centre for labour studies at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou was shuttered. The academic study of employment has now been left almost entirely to business schools, as the government has stymied further expansion of labour relations programs. Labour NGOs in Guangzhou were subjected to a brutal crackdown in December 2015, with the government specifically targeting those groups that had been helping workers to engage in collective negotiations to resolve strikes. And the ACFTU has seemingly given up on advancing collective negotiations altogether. The Chairman of the ACFTU Li Jianguo does not even mention the term in his speeches anymore. Under the ‘work developments’ section of the ACFTU’s website, a lonely single report on collective contracts for the entirety of 2016 is a stark indication that the union has almost totally forsaken this agenda. Collective bargaining is not dead in the sense that it will disappear from China’s labour-capital relations. It is almost certain that official unions will continue to pursue bargaining in its current vacuous, bureaucratic, and worker-exclusionary form. Collective contracts will continue to be signed, tabulated, and then hidden from view from workers. Somewhat less pessimistically, workers will continue to force management to bargain with the collective via wildcat strikes. This latter form will still be an important means by which workers can attempt to ensure their most basic rights, and these efforts are absolutely worth supporting. But collective bargaining is dead as a political aim. It is not going to be the cornerstone of twentieth century-style class compromise in China, it is not generative of worker power, and it certainly does not herald broader social transformation. To the extent that legal bargaining does develop, it will be as a mechanism for the state to deprive workers of autonomous power. What then might Chinese workers and allied intellectuals and activists aim for? At the risk of stating the obvious, **the working class needs more power**. The question is, how to foster proletarian power in the face of a highly competent authoritarian state that views organised workers as an existential threat? In the absence of independent organisations, the only option is an intensification of already widespread worker insurgency. The more wildcat strikes, mass direct action, and worker riots, the more the state and capital will be forced to take worker grievances seriously. Of course such forms of collective action come at great risk for workers, and many have already paid a high price. In any particular case, the risks may certainly outweigh the benefits. But in the aggregate, expansive unrest is just what the working class needs. With the institutions firmly oriented towards advancing the inter-related goals of state domination and exploitation by capital, disruption on a large scale is the only chance workers have of forcing change. Ungovernability will be the necessary prelude to any institutional reform worthy of the name.

#### Any credible union power is under-cut by detentions of labor activists.

Merkley and McGovern 13 Jeff Merkley and James McGovern 12-20-2013 "Detention of Labor Representative Highlights Challenges for Collective Bargaining in China" <https://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/detention-of-labor-representative-highlights-challenges-for> (Representative and Co-Chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China)//Elmer

**Authorities** in Shenzhen city, Guangdong province, **detained** migrant worker and **labor representative** Wu Guijun in May 2013 reportedly **for participating in a peaceful labor protest**. Prior to his detention, Wu was one of seven elected labor representatives involved in collective bargaining with his employer. Labor advocates have condemned Wu’s detention and expressed concern that he has been held for an extended period of time without being formally indicted. Wu’s case **illustrates** the **challenges** **Chinese workers face engaging in collective bargaining** to resolve workplace grievances. On May 23, 2013, public security officials in Bao’an district, Shenzhen city, Guangdong province, detained migrant worker Wu Guijun, after he reportedly participated in a local Bao’an labor protest.[1] Employed at the Diweixin manufacturing factory (“Diweixin”) in Bao’an, Wu was one of seven elected labor representatives negotiating with factory management on a resolution to a near month-long labor dispute. Workers staged a public protest after management failed to agree to collective bargaining demands, including worker compensation for a proposed factory closure. As a result of the protest, authorities **detained** a number of protesters, including Wu. According to his lawyer, Wu now faces possible criminal prosecution **for** “gathering a crowd to **disrupt social order**,” a crime punishable by three to seven years’ imprisonment under Article 290 of the PRC Criminal Law.[2] Background on Wu’s Case In early May 2013, workers at Diweixin, a Hong Kong-owned factory, initiated a strike in response to management plans to close and relocate manufacturing operations from Shenzhen to Huizhou municipality, Guangdong.[3] Seeking severance compensation in connection with the factory’s closure, workers elected Wu, along with six others, to advance their demands in collective negotiations with factory management. According to multiple reports, management repeatedly refused to cooperate with the representatives for more than two weeks of collective negotiations, reportedly offering at one point to provide workers with compensation below the legal minimum required by law.[4] In an attempt to pressure local authorities to intervene in the dispute, 300 workers marched on May 23 to the Shenzhen municipal government.[5] Local public security reportedly intervened in the march, detaining as many as 200 workers, including Wu. Authorities released a majority of those detained the following day and others in the succeeding weeks, but authorities continued to detain Wu, eventually placing him under criminal detention.[6] Labor advocates have expressed concern that authorities have held Wu for an extended period of time without being indicted.[7] In October 2013, procuratorate officials returned Wu’s case to public security officials for additional investigation.[8] According to Wu’s lawyer, the Bao’an district procuratorate twice rejected indicting Wu—apparently on the charge of “gathering a crowd to disrupt social order”—due to insufficient evidence.[9] Reactions to Wu’s Detention Fellow workers, academics, and labor advocates have criticized Wu’s detention. On September 27, 2013, 32 Chinese and international labor organizations cosigned a petition expressing concern that the collective actions taken by Diweixin workers resulted in detentions and the potential criminal prosecution of Wu, despite protections provided under the PRC Constitution guaranteeing freedom of assembly.[10] Signatories stressed that “Wu and other **worker leaders** were **alone in their struggle** without receiving support from the trade union,” and called on authorities to “**defend the worker’s right to strike**” and release Wu. In a September 11, 2013, open letter to the Shenzhen Federation of Trade Unions, Wu’s coworkers called his **detention** a “**bad precedent**” that would **cause** “**workers striking in the future [to face] the risk of prosecution.”**[11] According to the letter, such a situation would “**intensify social contradictions and influence social harmony**.” Workers urged the Shenzhen Federation of Trade Unions to fulfill its “core responsibility” to protect workers’ rights and to pressure local authorities to release Wu. Continued Challenges for Collective Bargaining Wu’s case illustrates the continued challenges Chinese workers face pursuing collective bargaining to resolve workplace grievances. The Commission’s 2013 Annual Report noted that demographic and economic shifts have provided workers with greater bargaining power in the workplace, increasing their determination to redress grievances and press for better pay and working conditions.[12] While the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU)—China’s sole official trade union under the direction of the Chinese Communist Party—has promoted collective contract and wage bargaining to address workers’ grievances and maintain “harmonious” labor relations, a general lack of autonomy and genuine worker representation in enterprise-level unions continues to limit ACFTU-led collective bargaining.[13] According to Wan Xiangdong, a professor and deputy director of the labor research and service center at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangdong, **government** and local trade union **officials** **continue to approach labor disputes through the perspective of maintaining social stability** and protecting against economic losses, **which places workers at a marked disadvantage**.[14] Wu’s case also highlights the risk workers face by engaging in collective bargaining without trade unions. A December 7, 2012, China Labour Bulletin report, indicated that labor representatives “have suffered reprisals after taking part in collective bargaining with management,” including forced resignations, firings, and detention.[15] The report notes that despite some successful cases of worker-led collective bargaining, a **lack** **of** “any **clear defined legal protection**” for labor representatives **makes them susceptible to retaliation**, necessitating “protection from both the law and a fully functioning trade union.” As a member of the International Labor Organization (ILO), China is obligated to respect, promote, and realize the principles of freedom of association and the “effective recognition” of the right to collective bargaining.[16]

#### The Right to Strike re-balances China’s Economy.

Roberts 10 Dexter Roberts 8-5-2010 "Is the Right to Strike Coming to China" <https://archive.md/hjNI7> (Editor at Bloomberg)//Elmer

The name gives no hint of the revolutionary changes afoot for mainland workers. Yet the **proposed Regulations** on the Democratic Management of Enterprises, now being debated by the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress, **could give Chinese labor the ultimate**—and until now taboo—**bargaining tool**: **an officially sanctioned right to strike**. "This has been a no-go area in China for decades," says Robin Munro, deputy director at the Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin. All **Chinese workers** belong to one **union**, but it **wields little power**. "This is the first time ever Chinese authorities have said it is O.K. to strike." The draft law could take effect by this fall in Guangdong, the industrialized coastal province where Honda (HMC) workers in June illegally and successfully struck for higher wages. The proposed law is seen by many activists and researchers as a trial balloon before a possible national rollout. The rules: If one-fifth or more of a company's staff demands collective bargaining, then management must discuss workers' grievances. Before talks begin, the union must elect local worker representatives. Until now, union reps came from management ranks. The next section of the proposed law ventures into even more radical territory. For six decades, picketing and disrupting production have been illegal and subject to harsh punishment. Under the Guangdong proposal, as long as workers first try negotiating and refrain from violence, they're allowed to strike. Though the draft could still get watered down, the fact that officials are even considering legalizing strikes signals a sea change. The party's moves are an attempt to recognize—and regulate—what is already happening. "Every month there are hundreds of strikes," says Chang Kai, a labor relations professor at Renmin University of China who advised the Honda workers. "What the government is concerned about is whether it can control these strikes or not." **Formalizing workers' rights** **could** also advance **China's goal of rebalancing the economy**. "There is a **new emphasis on how to reduce the wage gap** **and get consumers to spend more**," says Chang-Hee Lee, an industrial relations expert at the International Labour Organization's Beijing office. "This is **not** very **easy** to accomplish **unless** **workers have more bargaining power**." The bottom line: A proposed law being debated in Guangdong could greatly strengthen the bargaining power of Chinese workers.

#### Enhanced Unions and Labor Reforms key to sustained Chinese Economic Growth.

Haack 21 Michael Haack 2-13-2021 "Could Biden Make US-China Trade Better for Workers?" <https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/could-biden-make-us-china-trade-better-for-workers/> (Michael Haack currently a contractor with the China Labor Translation Project, a project of the Chinese Progressive Association. He previously worked with industrial workers in southern China. Michael holds master’s degrees from SOAS, University of London and American University)//Elmer

Meanwhile, **even as China grows, its wealth** **remains** largely **with companies and the government**. **Individual households capture only around 40 percent** of China’s GDP compared to around 70 percent in the United States. **Inequality has soared**. China’s official **Gini coefficient is at 0.47 (independent analyses put the number considerably higher) compared to 0.39 in the U.S**. “**Chinese workers** are **underpaid** and overtaxed, so they **can’t** afford to **spend as much** on goods and services,” said Mathew Klein of Barron’s. “The result is that Chinese businesses systematically generate a **surplus** of goods that gets **dumped** **on the rest of the world**, which in turn **leads to** some combination of **deindustrialization and rising indebtedness**.” Concern for the United States’ industrial capacity has led populists to rally for “decoupling.” For its part, China would also prefer to not rely on the United States for consumers and technology. In a recent speech to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO Dialogues, Xi Jinping was clear that “making **domestic consumption** the **main driver of** its **growth**” is the priority for China. While parties on both sides have called for a distancing, the counties’ asset-holding elites have become further entwined. Promising a fairer deal with China, former U.S. President Donald Trump launched a tariff war in 2018, which reached a partial resolution with the Phase One deal on January 15, 2020. The deal dovetailed with China’s domestic efforts to remove barriers on financial services and strengthen intellectual property rights. On April 1, 2020 China removed the caps on foreign ownership of financial services, letting U.S. firms soak up more of the profits from their operations in China. The Wall Street giants were quick to respond. Within days, JP Morgan committed $1 billion to buy the other 49 percent of its joint venture in China. Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley soon followed. This just added to the steady increase in U.S. investment into China over the last two decades. Additionally, $2.2 trillion worth of Chinese companies are capitalized on U.S. markets. These financial entanglements indicate that distancing can only lead to a “messy divorce,” according to Raghuram Rajan of the University of Chicago. “They are tied together in so many ways – trade, investment, tourism, student and academic exchanges – as well as distrustful on so many issues,” Rajan said. “Looks like a bad marriage to me, and they need to figure out how they work out their differences.” Since a total decoupling is not in the cards, could the Biden administration’s approach to the U.S.-China relationship bear fruit for workers when one considers that any worker related demand is likely to have to be balanced against the interests of the financial sector? Policy Opportunities Since the 1990s even when labor provisions were secured in trade agreements, there was little hope of enforcement. Though 14 U.S. free trade agreements have labor provisions, only seven complaints have ever been submitted and only one resolved. This, however, may be changing. “Trump’s ham-fisted, clumsy, cynical, ignorant, desire to approach trade from a different angle did allow for greater attention to issues like labor rights than anyone thought was possible,” said Trevor Sutton from the Center for American Progress. When the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), a.k.a. NAFTA 2.0, was signed at the end of January, 2020 the list of people that celebrated it included Donald Trump’s brash conservative trade representative, Robert Lighthizer; AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka; and a folk singer named Ryan Harvey, who cut his teeth protesting the evils of capitalism before joining Global Trade Watch. In order to be in compliance, the Mexican Congress had to pass a new labor law. Employers in Mexico can be brought to a court chaired by the U.S. trade representative (USTR) and secretary of labor for violating their workers’ right to form a union. If the dispute is unable to be resolved bilaterally, then the United States may directly sanction the Mexican company for violating workers’ right to organize. The new NAFTA also mandates that 40-45 percent of car components be made by a worker earning at least $16 per hour, or be subject to tariffs. The USMCA will rely on activists to bring cases, something that has caused many to question its applicability in authoritarian contexts. The recent experience of Vietnam and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), however, may be more analogous to what could be possible with China. While the TPP was being negotiated, Vietnam’s manufacturing sector was experiencing a long wave of wildcat strikes. Many reformers believed the answer was to give workers a legal avenue to organize and collectively bargain. The TPP negotiations were able to provide cover for the reformers in this system and nudge the skeptics to reform Vietnam’s labor laws. Though the labor agreement fell apart when the United States pulled out of the TPP, Vietnam has recently legalized “worker representative organizations at the enterprise level,” said Joe Buckley of Vietnam Labor Update. It has also signed on to certain International Labor Organization (ILO) collective bargaining conventions that strengthen workers’ right to organize, a first for the one party “socialist” state. A Worker-First Approach to China Like Vietnam, China’s industrial sector faced a wave of strikes in the 2000s and 2010s. In China, just as in Vietnam, reformers in the country’s single party-controlled union federation began to experiment with collective bargaining, especially in the manufacturing hub of Guangdong province. Talk about instituting a “right to strike” emerged amidst a strike wave in 2010. Then came 2013. Xi Jinping took the reins of the Communist Party and set out to remake China and the **crackdowns began**. **Labor NGOs**, labor studies professors, progressive labor lawyers, and even Marxist students have been **shut down**, arrested or otherwise silenced. “Although China enacted a series of **pro-worker laws** in the late 2000s, many of these provisions **are poorly implemented**,” said Eli Friedman, professor at Cornell University (Disclosure: Eli Friedman is one of the author’s supervisors at the China Labor Translation Project). “As has been the case in countless other countries, **China would** likely **experience reduced inequality and greater domestic consumption** **if independent trade unions were allowed to flourish** — thus advancing their own stated policy aims.”

#### China’s Economy is on the brink of collapse – only solving poverty can reverse it.

Lopez 10-24 Linette Lopez 10-24-2021 "If China's economy keeps stumbling, it won't just take down Beijing - the whoel world will collapse with it" <https://archive.md/M4qjY#selection-2241.0-2250.1> (Linette is the senior finance correspondent at Business Insider, writing a combination of opinions and analysis. She joined BI in the summer of 2011 after graduating from Columbia University's School of Journalism.)//Elmer

**China's economy** — the 2nd-largest in the world — **is teetering on the brink of disaster**. Since this spring, Beijing has **canceled** initial **public offerings**, **fined tech companies** billions for antitrust violations, forcibly **shut down** China's entire for-profit **education industry**, and **sent CEOs running** for the exits to avoid the government's ire. Even more dire, the Chinese megadeveloper Evergrande recently started missing payments on its more than $300 billion in debt, shaking global markets. The convulsions have woken the world up to a startling new possibility — that Beijing may be willing to allow some of its private corporate behemoths to collapse in a bid to reshape the economic model that made China a superpower. The **upheaval**, spanning multiple industries and vast swaths of the country, **is** the result of one giant issue: **China's inability to** **borrow or buy** its **way out of its current economic crisis**. **For decades**, the country **relied on cheap labor** and eye-popping amounts of debt, handed out by government-owned banks, to fuel economic growth — pouring money into massive apartment developments, factories, bridges, and other projects at lightning speed. **Now** the **country** **needs people to actually use**, **and pay for**, **everything that's been built**. But the **bulk of China's population lacks** the **income needed to shift the economy** from one driven by state investments to one sustained by consumer spending.

#### Chinese Economic Decline leads to all-out War – specifically over Taiwan.

Joske 18 Stephen Joske 10-23-2018 “China’s Coming Financial Crisis And The National Security Connection” <https://warontherocks.com/2018/10/chinas-coming-financial-crisis-and-the-national-security-connection/> (senior adviser to the Australian Treasurer during the 1997–98 Asian crisis)//re-cut by Elmer

The biggest **national security issues**, however, **arise from** the unpredictable **political impact of a recession in China**. We learned this, or should have, during the 1997 to 1998 Asian crisis. China may have had a disguised recession or near recession in 1998, but it was in a much smaller economy. Apart from that one episode there is no collective memory of recession and how to deal with it. As such, **China** is now **psychologically unprepared** to deal with the challenges of a recession. China’s coming recession will be accompanied by a large uncontrolled devaluation of the RMB as foreign exchange reserves evaporate, so it will be impossible to conceal this time. All asset prices, including housing prices, will be hit. **Combine** the **shock** of an unexpected economic setback **with tensions** in a one party state where a single individual has been calling the shots, and **political instability could set in.** While Xi’s anti-corruption campaign has not eliminated corruption, it has created many enemies who are biding their time. Minxin Pei has documented the activities of China’s powerful corruption networks. These networks, not a debilitated civil society, represent the alternative government of China. Competition between them could easily be destabilizing in a winner-take-all political environment. While our understanding of elite politics in China is poor, a recession would likely discredit the existing leadership and **set off intense competition between corrupt factions** for control of China. Bo Xilai, a former Chongqing party chief and Politburo member, was purged in 2012 but his son appears to still be interested in politics. While the outcome is impossible to predict, we can **see** the conditions in place for destabilizing events ranging from **military adventurism** to **civil war**. Alternatively, the regime could reassert its stability through increased repression, which would make China harder to deal with and would spill over into the Chinese diaspora. China’s Belt and Road Initiative has never had a real economic base. It is all about power projection (such as the Gwadar port) and would quickly be dropped by Beijing as a post-crisis China becomes focused on domestic political and economic stability. **Any Chinese military adventurism is likely to be focused on Taiwan.** China’s military is currently poorly equipped for an invasion of Taiwan, which has difficult geography and a substantial military, making an invasion of Taiwan unlikely to succeed. However, it is possible the Chinese **leadership would miscalculate** the risks, leaving it in a limited war with no clear resolution that would quickly **draw in Japan and the U**nited **S**tates. China has spent most of its history disunited, reflecting its geography. It has a number of widely dispersed economic centers. It was in outright civil war as recently as the 1960s. If competition between political factions remains unresolved, a civil war could develop, leaving China as a battleground where Russia, Japan, and the United States seek to influence the outcome. This scenario would stall or even end China’s rise as a global military and political power.

#### Taiwan goes Nuclear.

Talmadge 18 [Caitlin, Associate Professor of Security Studies at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, “Beijing’s Nuclear Option: Why a U.S.-China War Could Spiral Out of Control,” accessible online at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-10-15/beijings-nuclear-option>, published Nov/Dec 2018]//re-cut by Elmer

As China’s power has grown in recent years, so, too, has the risk of war with the United States. Under President Xi Jinping, China has increased its political and economic pressure on Taiwan and built military installations on coral reefs in the South China Sea, fueling Washington’s fears that Chinese expansionism will threaten U.S. allies and influence in the region. U.S. destroyers have transited the Taiwan Strait, to loud protests from Beijing. American policymakers have wondered aloud whether they should send an aircraft carrier through the strait as well. Chinese fighter jets have intercepted U.S. aircraft in the skies above the South China Sea. Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump has brought long-simmering economic disputes to a rolling boil. A war between the two countries remains unlikely, but the prospect of a **military confrontation**—resulting, for example, **from a Chinese campaign against Taiwan**—**no longer seems** as **implausible** as it once did. And the odds of such a confrontation going nuclear are higher than most policymakers and analysts think. Members of China’s strategic community tend to dismiss such concerns. Likewise, U.S. studies of a potential war with China often exclude nuclear weapons from the analysis entirely, treating them as basically irrelevant to the course of a conflict. Asked about the issue in 2015, Dennis Blair, the former commander of U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific, estimated the likelihood of a U.S.-Chinese nuclear crisis as “somewhere between nil and zero.” This assurance is misguided. If deployed against China, the Pentagon’s preferred style of conventional warfare would be a potential recipe for nuclear escalation. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States’ signature approach to war has been simple: punch deep into enemy territory in order to rapidly knock out the opponent’s key military assets at minimal cost. But the Pentagon developed this formula in wars against Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Serbia, none of which was a nuclear power. **China**, by contrast, not only has **nuclear weapons**; it has also **intermingled** them **with its conventional** military **forces**, **making it difficult to attack one without attacking the other**. This means that a major U.S. military campaign targeting China’s conventional forces would likely also threaten its nuclear arsenal. Faced with such a threat, Chinese leaders could decide to use their nuclear weapons while they were still able to. As U.S. and Chinese leaders navigate a relationship fraught with mutual suspicion, they must come to grips with the fact that a conventional war could skid into a nuclear confrontation. Although this risk is not high in absolute terms, its consequences for the region and the world would be devastating. As long as the United States and China continue to pursue their current grand strategies, the risk is likely to endure. This means that leaders on both sides should dispense with the illusion that they can easily fight a limited war. They should focus instead on managing or resolving the political, economic, and military tensions that might lead to a conflict in the first place. A NEW KIND OF THREAT There are some reasons for optimism. For one, China has long stood out for its nonaggressive nuclear doctrine. After its first nuclear test, in 1964, China largely avoided the Cold War arms race, building a much smaller and simpler nuclear arsenal than its resources would have allowed. Chinese leaders have consistently characterized nuclear weapons as useful only for deterring nuclear aggression and coercion. Historically, this narrow purpose required only a handful of nuclear weapons that could ensure Chinese retaliation in the event of an attack. To this day, China maintains a “no first use” pledge, promising that it will never be the first to use nuclear weapons. The prospect of a nuclear conflict can also seem like a relic of the Cold War. Back then, the United States and its allies lived in fear of a Warsaw Pact offensive rapidly overrunning Europe. NATO stood ready to use nuclear weapons first to stalemate such an attack. Both Washington and Moscow also consistently worried that their nuclear forces could be taken out in a bolt-from-the-blue nuclear strike by the other side. This mutual fear increased the risk that one superpower might rush to launch in the erroneous belief that it was already under attack. Initially, the danger of unauthorized strikes also loomed large. In the 1950s, lax safety procedures for U.S. nuclear weapons stationed on NATO soil, as well as minimal civilian oversight of U.S. military commanders, raised a serious risk that nuclear escalation could have occurred without explicit orders from the U.S. president. The good news is that these Cold War worries have little bearing on U.S.-Chinese relations today. Neither country could rapidly overrun the other’s territory in a conventional war. Neither seems worried about a nuclear bolt from the blue. And civilian political control of nuclear weapons is relatively strong in both countries. What remains, in theory, is the comforting logic of mutual deterrence: in a war between two nuclear powers, neither side will launch a nuclear strike for fear that its enemy will respond in kind. The bad news is that one other trigger remains: a conventional war that threatens China’s nuclear arsenal. **Conventional forces** can threaten nuclear forces in ways that **generate pressures to escalate**—especially when ever more capable U.S. conventional forces face adversaries with relatively small and fragile nuclear arsenals, such as China. **If U.S. operations endangered** or damaged China’s **nuclear forces,** Chinese leaders might come to think that Washington had aims beyond winning the conventional war—that it might be seeking to disable or destroy China’s nuclear arsenal outright, perhaps as a prelude to regime change. In the fog of war, **Beijing might** reluctantly **conclude** that limited **nuclear escalation**—an initial strike small enough that it could avoid full-scale U.S. retaliation—**was** a **viable** option to defend itself. STRAIT SHOOTERS The **most worrisome flash point** for a U.S.-Chinese war **is Taiwan**. Beijing’s long-term objective of reunifying the island with mainland China is clearly in conflict with Washington’s longstanding desire to maintain the status quo in the strait. It is not difficult to imagine how this might lead to war. For example, China could decide that the political or military window for regaining control over the island was closing and launch an attack, using air and naval forces to blockade Taiwanese harbors or bombard the island. Although U.S. law does not require Washington to intervene in such a scenario, the Taiwan Relations Act states that the United States will “consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States.” Were Washington to intervene on Taipei’s behalf, the world’s sole superpower and its rising competitor would find themselves in the first great-power war of the twenty-first century. In the course of such a war, U.S. conventional military operations would likely threaten, disable, or outright eliminate some Chinese nuclear capabilities—whether doing so was Washington’s stated objective or not. In fact, if the United States engaged in the style of warfare it has practiced over the last 30 years, this outcome would be all but guaranteed. Consider submarine warfare. China could use its conventionally armed attack submarines to blockade Taiwanese harbors or bomb the island, or to attack U.S. and allied forces in the region. If that happened, the U.S. Navy would almost certainly undertake an antisubmarine campaign, which would likely threaten China’s “boomers,” the four nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines that form its naval nuclear deterrent. China’s conventionally armed and nuclear-armed submarines share the same shore-based communications system; a U.S. attack on these transmitters would thus not only disrupt the activities of China’s attack submarine force but also cut off its boomers from contact with Beijing, leaving Chinese leaders unsure of the fate of their naval nuclear force. In addition, nuclear ballistic missile submarines depend on attack submarines for protection, just as lumbering bomber aircraft rely on nimble fighter jets. If the United States started sinking Chinese attack submarines, it would be sinking the very force that protects China’s ballistic missile submarines, leaving the latter dramatically more vulnerable. Even more dangerous, U.S. forces hunting Chinese attack submarines could inadvertently sink a Chinese boomer instead. After all, at least some Chinese attack submarines might be escorting ballistic missile submarines, especially in wartime, when China might flush its boomers from their ports and try to send them within range of the continental United States. Since correctly identifying targets remains one of the trickiest challenges of undersea warfare, a U.S. submarine crew might come within shooting range of a Chinese submarine without being sure of its type, especially in a crowded, noisy environment like the Taiwan Strait. Platitudes about caution are easy in peacetime. In wartime, when Chinese attack submarines might already have launched deadly strikes, the U.S. crew might decide to shoot first and ask questions later. Adding to China’s sense of vulnerability, the small size of its nuclear-armed submarine force means that just two such incidents would eliminate half of its sea-based deterrent. Meanwhile, any Chinese boomers that escaped this fate would likely be cut off from communication with onshore commanders, left without an escort force, and unable to return to destroyed ports. If that happened, China would essentially have no naval nuclear deterrent. The situation is similar onshore, where any U.S. military campaign would have to contend with China’s growing land-based conventional ballistic missile force. Much of this force is within range of Taiwan, ready to launch ballistic missiles against the island or at any allies coming to its aid. Once again, U.S. victory would hinge on the ability to degrade this conventional ballistic missile force. And once again, it would be virtually impossible to do so while leaving China’s nuclear ballistic missile force unscathed. Chinese conventional and nuclear ballistic missiles are often attached to the same base headquarters, meaning that they likely share transportation and supply networks, patrol routes, and other supporting infrastructure. It is also possible that they share some command-and-control networks, or that the United States would be unable to distinguish between the conventional and nuclear networks even if they were physically separate. To add to the challenge, some of China’s ballistic missiles can carry either a conventional or a nuclear warhead, and the two versions are virtually indistinguishable to U.S. aerial surveillance. In a war, targeting the conventional variants would likely mean destroying some nuclear ones in the process. Furthermore, sending manned aircraft to attack Chinese missile launch sites and bases would require at least partial control of the airspace over China, which in turn would require weakening Chinese air defenses. But degrading China’s coastal air defense network in order to fight a conventional war would also leave much of its nuclear force without protection. Once China was under attack, its leaders might come to fear that even intercontinental ballistic missiles located deep in the country’s interior were vulnerable. For years, observers have pointed to the U.S. military’s failed attempts to locate and destroy Iraqi Scud missiles during the 1990–91 Gulf War as evidence that mobile missiles are virtually impervious to attack. Therefore, the thinking goes, China could retain a nuclear deterrent no matter what harm U.S. forces inflicted on its coastal areas. Yet recent research suggests otherwise. Chinese intercontinental ballistic missiles are larger and less mobile than the Iraqi Scuds were, and they are harder to move without detection. The United States is also likely to have been tracking them much more closely in peacetime. As a result, China is unlikely to view a failed Scud hunt in Iraq nearly 30 years ago as reassurance that its residual nuclear force is safe today, especially during an ongoing, high-intensity conventional war. China’s vehement criticism of a U.S. regional missile defense system designed to guard against a potential North Korean attack already reflects these latent fears. Beijing’s worry is that this system could help Washington block the handful of missiles China might launch in the aftermath of a U.S. attack on its arsenal. That sort of campaign might seem much more plausible in Beijing’s eyes if a conventional war had already begun to seriously undermine other parts of China’s nuclear deterrent. It does not help that China’s real-time awareness of the state of its forces would probably be limited, since blinding the adversary is a standard part of the U.S. military playbook. Put simply, the favored **U.S. strategy** to ensure a conventional victory **would** likely **endanger** much of China’s **nuclear arsenal** in the process, at sea and on land. Whether the United States actually intended to target all of China’s nuclear weapons would be incidental. All that would matter is that Chinese leaders would consider them threatened. LESSONS FROM THE PAST At that point, the question becomes, How will China react? Will it practice restraint and uphold the “no first use” pledge once its nuclear forces appear to be under attack? Or will it use those weapons while it still can, gambling that limited escalation will either halt the U.S. campaign or intimidate Washington into backing down? Chinese writings and statements remain deliberately ambiguous on this point. It is unclear which exact set of capabilities China considers part of its core nuclear deterrent and which it considers less crucial. For example, if China already recognizes that its sea-based nuclear deterrent is relatively small and weak, then losing some of its ballistic missile submarines in a war might not prompt any radical discontinuity in its calculus. The danger lies in **wartime developments** that could **shift** **China’s assumptions about U.S. intentions.** If Beijing interprets the erosion of its sea- and land-based nuclear forces as a deliberate effort to destroy its nuclear deterrent, or perhaps even as a prelude to a nuclear attack, it might see limited nuclear escalation as a way to force an end to the conflict. For example, China could use nuclear weapons to instantaneously destroy the U.S. air bases that posed the biggest threat to its arsenal. It could also launch a nuclear strike with no direct military purpose—on an unpopulated area or at sea—as a way to signal that the United States had crossed a redline. If such escalation appears far-fetched, China’s history suggests otherwise. In 1969, similar dynamics brought China to the brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. In early March of that year, Chinese troops ambushed Soviet guards amid rising tensions over a disputed border area. Less than two weeks later, the two countries were fighting an undeclared border war with heavy artillery and aircraft. The conflict quickly escalated beyond what Chinese leaders had expected, and before the end of March, Moscow was making thinly veiled nuclear threats to pressure China to back down. Chinese leaders initially dismissed these warnings, only to radically upgrade their threat assessment once they learned that the Soviets had privately discussed nuclear attack plans with other countries. Moscow never intended to follow through on its nuclear threat, archives would later reveal, but Chinese leaders believed otherwise. On three separate occasions, they were convinced that a Soviet nuclear attack was imminent. Once, when Moscow sent representatives to talks in Beijing, China suspected that the plane transporting the delegation was in fact carrying nuclear weapons. Increasingly fearful, China test-fired a thermonuclear weapon in the Lop Nur desert and put its rudimentary nuclear forces on alert—a dangerous step in itself, as it increased the risk of an unauthorized or accidental launch. Only after numerous preparations for Soviet nuclear attacks that never came did Beijing finally agree to negotiations. China is a different country today than it was in the time of Mao Zedong, but the 1969 conflict offers important lessons. China started a war in which it believed nuclear weapons would be irrelevant, even though the Soviet arsenal was several orders of magnitude larger than China’s, just as the U.S. arsenal dwarfs China’s today. Once the conventional war did not go as planned, the Chinese reversed their assessment of the possibility of a nuclear attack to a degree bordering on paranoia. Most worrying, China signaled that it was actually considering using its nuclear weapons, even though it had to expect devastating retaliation. Ambiguous wartime information and worst-case thinking led it to take nuclear risks it would have considered unthinkable only months earlier. This pattern could unfold again today.

#### Extinction

PND 16. internally citing Zbigniew Brzezinski, Council of Foreign Relations and former national security adviser to President Carter, Toon and Robock’s 2012 study on nuclear winter in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Gareth Evans’ International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Report, Congressional EMP studies, studies on nuclear winter by Seth Baum of the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute and Martin Hellman of Stanford University, and U.S. and Russian former Defense Secretaries and former heads of nuclear missile forces, brief submitted to the United Nations General Assembly, Open-Ended Working Group on nuclear risks. A/AC.286/NGO/13. 05-03-2016. <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/OEWG/2016/Documents/NGO13.pdf> //Re-cut by Elmer

Consequences human survival 12. Even if the 'other' side does NOT launch in response the smoke from 'their' burning cities (incinerated by 'us') will still make 'our' country (and the rest of the world) uninhabitable, potentially inducing global famine lasting up to decades. Toon and Robock note in ‘Self Assured Destruction’, in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists 68/5, 2012, that: 13. “A nuclear war between Russia and the United States, even after the arsenal reductions planned under New START, could produce a nuclear winter. Hence, an attack by either side could be suicidal, resulting in self assured destruction. Even a 'small' nuclear war between India and Pakistan, with each country detonating 50 Hiroshima-size atom bombs--only about 0.03 percent of the global nuclear arsenal's explosive power--as air bursts in urban areas, could produce so much smoke that temperatures would fall below those of the Little Ice Age of the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries, shortening the growing season around the world and threatening the global food supply. Furthermore, there would be massive ozone depletion, allowing more ultraviolet radiation to reach Earth's surface. Recent studies predict that agricultural production in parts of the United States and China would decline by about **20 percent** for four years, and by 10 percent for a decade.” 14. A conflagration involving USA/NATO forces and those of Russian federation would most likely cause the deaths of most/nearly all/all humans (and severely impact/extinguish other species) as well as destroying the delicate interwoven techno-structure on which latter-day 'civilization' has come to depend. Temperatures would drop to below those of the last ice-age for up to 30 years as a result of the lofting of up to 180 million tonnes of very black soot into the stratosphere where it would remain for decades. 15. Though human ingenuity and resilience shouldn't be underestimated, human survival itself is arguably problematic, to put it mildly, under a 2000+ warhead USA/Russian federation scenario. 16. The Joint Statement on Catastrophic Humanitarian Consequences signed October 2013 by 146 governments mentioned 'Human Survival' no less than 5 times. The most recent (December 2014) one gives it a highly prominent place. Gareth Evans’ ICNND (International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament) Report made it clear that it saw the threat posed by nuclear weapons use as one that at least threatens what we now call 'civilization' and that potentially threatens human survival with an immediacy that even climate change does not, though we can see the results of climate change here and now and of course the immediate post-nuclear results for Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well.

### 1AC: Method

#### Isolating China as a uniquely unjust state is sinophobic – read China’s rise contextually rather than through Western structural bias.

Powers 21 Martin Powers 3-4-2021 "The West portrays itself as a defender of human rights, but does it still have a right to moral leadership?" <https://archive.md/blSqg#selection-6315.0-6341.214> (Professor Emeritus at the University of Michigan. He has written three books on the history of social justice in China.)//Elmer

The term “human rights” is properly a feature of the modern world, but people have been calling out cruelty for centuries. Who gets blamed for human tragedy reveals a lot about how a nation values human life. Western nations, chief among them the **U**nited **S**tates, have long **assumed** the **promotion of h**uman **r**ights **as** one of their **natural duties**, but in recent years some have questioned their qualifications for doing so. Last Fall in the journal Foreign Affairs James Goldgeier and Bruce W. Jentleson itemised the failures of America’s “**tarnished model**”, taking note of that “internationally controversial war in Iraq” and a major financial crisis in 2008. Following a period of recovery under President Barack Obama, America then lurched “in a very different direction … by electing a racist reality TV host who blames American allies for the country’s ills”. And that was before White Nationalists attempted to bring down the government by storming the Capitol on January 6. Do these events signal a need for reform in America – affecting its moral leadership – or are they passing bumps in a stable liberal tradition? Here is where the history of human rights in foreign policy might offer a useful perspective. Take the 17th century, when England and Holland were competing over trade privileges for their corporations. This marks the moment when England first made extensive use of moral atrocities to shape public opinion. At the time the common people of England were sick of war, but the crown needed them for battle, so prints were circulated showing Dutchmen committing what we would call human rights crimes, and what they called “atrocities”. The aim was to **weaponise moral outrage** for use against the Dutch. One print shows Dutch soldiers waterboarding an Englishman. The caption calls it “cruel and barbarous”, and most of us would agree, that is an egregious violation of human rights. Still, from a human rights perspective, the situation is more complex. To ignore the crime might be seen as condoning it, but Dutch citizens likewise suffered at the hands of occupying British troops. Pinning the label “barbaric” onto the Dutch then, amounted to whitewashing English crimes. The core message in many anti-Dutch prints was that the Dutch race, and the Dutch religion, were intrinsically evil. This was misleading at best. In many ways, Dutch society at the time was more liberal than England’s. Historian Jonathan Israel notes that “Dutch social fluidity, religious pluralism, toleration, and relative freedom of the individual tended rather to fuel the antipathy to Dutch society …” Why would religious toleration fuel British ire? Holland’s republic offered an alternative model to England’s aristocracy. Reports of China’s egalitarian civil service in fact, offered ammunition for Dutch opponents of social privilege. Both Holland’s Spinoza and China’s Confucius were seen as like-minded champions of religious toleration. The English found all this terrifying. In response, some charged that Holland was secretly plotting universal dominion over Europe and had to be stopped. Holland’s mercantile success they claimed, was due to unfair trading practices. Clearly the charges of cruelty, though true, were but a smokescreen for another human rights struggle where the roles of hero and villain might easily have been reversed. Let’s call this the human rights paradox: it seems wrong to overlook crimes of cruelty yet, what if those acts were exploited to suppress other human rights like social equality and religious freedom? How do you weigh one against the other? Back in 2013, the Cambridge philosopher Raymond Geuss unpacked the basic problem raised by human rights outrage: “ … what actually happens in the international regime of human rights even as it is defined by the United Nations is that the powerful countries use claims about rights to further their interests … “So you don’t have a universal, much less a completely equitable, enforcement regime, but one that is just as subject to the vagaries of politics as anything else.” Boris **Johnson warns against ‘sinophobia’** **amid** rising **tensions with China over h**uman **r**ights **and 5G** Organisations like **H**uman **R**ights **W**atch strive to apply a common standard, **calling out** the US as well as **China**, Israel, and any other nation that steps over the line of human decency. But powerful nations can hardly claim to be third-party observers. Not long ago, at the very moment Donald Trump was attempting to overturn the US elections, then Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was lecturing authorities in Georgia on that same topic. His transparent duplicity got hammered in both the US and the British media. Trump also used human rights to help **justify** his **trade war** with China, but that war inflicted crippling damage on American farmers and industrial workers. What about their rights? It would appear that the West has long employed **a double standard**, but at least the consciousness of human rights goes back several centuries. That is true for China as well. In fact, from the 10th century onwards, the **people of** imperial **China** **used** **literature, painting, prints, and peaceful demonstrations to expose injustice**, but they **rarely blamed other nations**, their religion, or their race. During the 11th century, as Europeans sought to punish Arabs for choosing the wrong faith, socially conscious Chinese worked to improve conditions in their own country. When unjust wars took innocent lives, or aid for flood victims fell short, the government typically took the blame. Focusing on local problems, **reformers** helped to **establish** public **orphanages**, **improve prison conditions**, and **institutionalise tax exemption** **and** **material aid for flood relief**. Spreading the true religion wasn’t an issue; religious tolerance already was standard. China today is very different from imperial times, but for long its stated policy has been non-interference in other nations’ domestic affairs, though that may change. You could call that Confucian, or you could call it Jeffersonian. In his letter to Gideon Granger, Jefferson advised that Americans should “let our affairs be disentangled from those of all other nations, except as to commerce”. He was even wary of exporting democracy, except by good example. Good examples are hard to come by these days. When Trump ignored the pleas of flood victims in Puerto Rico, he blamed them. This was consistent with a centuries old Christian tradition construing poverty as God’s punishment for sin and sloth. In other words, blame the victim. Even now, the Republican Party is attempting to block a desperately needed coronavirus aid package, preferring to blame those out of work for their pandemic fate. Add to that strategy the politics of race and you have the English crown’s formula for the Anglo-Dutch wars: playing the race and religion cards. The charm of that strategy is that it relieves the government of responsibility for any damage inflicted upon citizens. Under the Trump administration, more than 400,000 Americans needlessly lost their lives as the government spread disinformation and blocked distribution of needed supplies. Neither American citizens nor any Western nation has accused the US government of a human rights crime, yet it was both preventable and tragically wrong. Who is to blame? Some would blame Trump personally, noting that America now has a president who is a decent man and a capable leader. That is true, but Goldgeier and Jentleson argued that the problem with America’s tarnished model goes deeper than the outcome of one election. What if, for instance, the government had taken responsibility for those lives rather than blaming immigrants, or BLM, or China? Regrettably, we still lack an equitable metric for comparing human rights tragedies, but what we know for sure is that who gets blamed speaks volumes about how a nation values human life.