## **1AC—Plan**

#### **Plan: The appropriation of outer space through asteroid mining by private entities should be banned.**

#### **We’ll defend normal means as the signatories of the OST adding an optional protocol under Article II.**

**Tronchetti 7**[Fabio Tronchetti is a professor at the International Institute of Air and Space Law, Leiden University, The Netherlands, 2007, <https://iislweb.org/docs/Diederiks2007.pdf>, 12-15-2021 amrita]

ARTICLE II OF THE OUTER SPACE TREATY: A MATTER OF DEBATE The legal content of Article II of the Outer Space Treaty is one of the most debated and analysed topic in the field of space law. Indeed, several interpretations have been put forward to explain the meaning of its provisions. Article II states that: “Outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means”. **The text of Article II represents** the final point of a process, formally initiated with Resolution 1721, aimed at conferring to outer space the status of res communis omnium, namely a thing open for the **free exploration** and use by all States **without the possibility of being appropriated**. By prohibiting the possibility of making territorial claims over outer space or any part thereof based on use or occupation, Article II **makes clear that** the customary procedures of **i**nternational **law allowing** subjects to obtain **sovereignty rights over un-owed lands**, namely discovery, occupatio and effective possession, **do not apply to** outer **space.** This prohibition was considered by the drafters of the Outer Space Treaty the best guarantee for preserving outer space for peaceful activities only and for stimulating the exploration and use of the space environment in the name of all mankind. What has been the object of controversy among legal scholars is the question of whether both States and private individuals are subjected to the provisions of Article II. Indeed, **while Article II forbids** expressis verbis the national **appropriation by** claims of **sovereignty**, by means of use and occupation or other means of outer space, **it does not** make **a**ny explicit **mention** **to** its **private** appropriation. Relying on this consideration, some authors have argued that the private appropriation of outer space and celestial bodies is allowed. For instance, in 1968 Gorove wrote: “Thus, at present an individual acting on his own behalf or on behalf of another individual or private association or an international organisation could lawfully appropriate any parts of outer space…”6 . The same argument is used today by the enterprises selling extraterrestrial acres. They base their claim to the Moon and other celestial bodies on the consideration that Article II does not explicitly forbid private individuals and enterprises to claim, exploit or appropriate the celestial bodies for profit7 . However, it must be said, that nowadays there is a general consensus on the fact that **both national appropriation and private** property rights **are denied** under the Outer Space Treaty. Several way of reasoning have been advanced to support this view. Sters and Tennen affirm that the argument that Article II does not apply to private entities since they are not expressly mentioned fails for the reason that they do not need to be explicitly listed in Article II to be fully subject to the non-appropriation principle8 . **Private entities are allowed to carry out** space **activities but**, according to Article VI of the Outer Space Treaty, they **must be authorized** to conduct such activities **by the** appropriate **State** of nationality. But if the State is prohibited from engaging in certain conduct, then it lacks the authority to license its nationals or other entities subject to its jurisdiction to engage in that prohibited activity. Jenks argues that “States bear international responsibility for national activities in space; it follows that what is forbidden to a State is not permitted to a chartered company created by a State or to one of its nationals acting as a private adventurer”9 . It has been also suggested that **the prohibition of national** appropriation **implies prohibition of private** appropriation because the latter cannot exist independently from the former10. In order to exist, indeed, private property requires a superior authority to enforce it, be in the form of a State or some other recognised entity. In outer space, however, this practice of State endorsement is forbidden. Should a State recognise or protect the territorial acquisitions of any of its subjects, this would constitute a form of national appropriation in violation of Article II. Moreover, it is possible to use some historical elements to support the argument that both the acquisition of State sovereignty and the creation of private property rights are forbidden by the words of Article II. During the negotiations of the Outer Space Treaty, the Delegate of Belgium affirmed that his delegation “had taken note of the interpretation of the non-appropriation advanced by several delegations-apparently without contradiction-as covering both the establishment of sovereignty and the creation of titles to property in private law”11. The French Delegate stated that: “…there was reason to be satisfied that three basic principles were affirmed, namely: the prohibition of any claim of sovereignty or property rights in space…”12. The fact that the accessions to the Outer Space Treaty were not accompanied by reservations or interpretations of the meaning of Article II, it is an evidence of the fact that this issue was considered to be settled during the negotiation phase. Thus, summing up, we may say that **prohibition of appropriation of outer space** and its parts is a rule which **is valid for both private and public entity**. The theory that private operators are not subject to this rule represents a myth that is not supported by any valid legal argument. Moreover, it can be also added that if any subject was allowed to appropriate parts of outer space, the basic aim of the drafters of the Treaty, namely to prevent a colonial competition in outer space and to create the conditions and premises for an exploration and use of outer space carried out for the benefit of all States, would be betrayed. Therefore, **the need to protect the non-appropriative nature o**f outer **space emerges** in all its relevance.

**1AC—Advantages**

### **Solvency/Inherency ev**

#### **Countries and their companies are making their own rules through patchwork which creates conflict—an international body is key**

**Foster 16** – Craig, J.D., University of Illinois College of Law, “EXCUSE ME, YOU’RE MINING MY ASTEROID: SPACE PROPERTY RIGHTS AND THE U.S. SPACE RESOURCE EXPLORATION AND UTILIZATION ACT OF 2015”, *JOURNAL OF LAW, TECHNOLOGY & POLICY*, No. 2, page 428-430, http://illinoisjltp.com/journal/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Foster.pdf

There are many reasons to be excited about the prospect of mining resources from space. Hopes are high **that these mining efforts will provide an economic boon by producing jobs and injecting more money into the economy. 214 Additionally, the negative impact of mining natural resources on Earth is widely reported215 and might be mitigated by space mining. If mining precious resources from space can minimize the burden on Earth, then this would lend even greater support for asteroid mining. Finally, little enchants the human mind and propels innovation more than sending people and manmade objects into space. For good reason, there is much enthusiasm about the prospect of space mining. On the other hand, it is troublesome to some that private, commercial entities will be paving the way and making up many of the rules as they go. Might this lead to repeating many of the mistakes humans have made on Earth? Might there be unforeseen problems that could spell trouble if mining efforts are not properly regulated? The answer to these questions is likely “yes” as well. It will be important in the coming years to balance the former excitement against the latter** caution. Space might seem limitless and impossible to affect in any significant fashion; but, history must be a major voice for the spacemining industry.216 **It must be remembered that humans can make an impact that will be felt for generations to come**. Thus, **it will be important that lawmakers and the international community be as proactive as possible**—**both in outlining property rights and protecting the final frontier from being harmed by an industry that might become overzealous** if left unchecked. **Specifically, it will be vital for countries to enter into some sort of international agreement**. One option is to create an agreement similar to UNCLOS, **which would regulate how individual states** and their citizens **interact with resources mined from space.217 Such an agreement should recognize not only the property rights of the extracting commercial entities but also the rights of non-spacefaring countries to benefit from the minerals as well. This might include the creation of an international body, much like the ISA, that will ensure that the interests of all nations are maintained by distributing funds and technology to less wealthy or non-sp**acefaring nations. **The U.S. would do well to help create and ratify such an agreement**— something they have failed to do with UNCLOS. If the U.S. and other countries are uneasy about entering into such a restrictive agreement, **they might also consider an international regulatory body** and scheme much **like the one used for satellites. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is a United Nations agency that, among other services, provides the international community with uniform satellite orbit oversight and regulatory guidance.218 Currently, 193 countries** follow the ITU regulations and utilize their services, which have been likened to domain name registration.219 In the **same way, spacefaring countries could form an international body that helps create and maintain a uniform space-mining legal framework.220 Without some sort of international framework as described above, the U.S. and other space-mining countries leave themselves open to great conflict and will be required to patch together a multitude of treaties between themselves as problems inevitably arise.221 V. CONCLUSION The idea of mining resources from celestial bodies is something that has always been relegated to video games and sci-fi movies. But as technology continues to progress at an exponential rate, such mining is starting to come within the realm of possibility. A number of companies are currently creating prospecting technologies** that will allow them to determine exactly what an individual asteroid holds. They hope to eventually harvest these resources and sell them for lucrative profits. Fortunately for these companies, **the current legal regime governing property rights to space resources is undergoing rapid change at the national level. The U.S. recently passed the Space Resource Exploration and Utilization Act of 2015, which explicitly entitles U.S. citizens to property rights over any space resources they obtain. This is certain to induce confidence in U.S. investors. The situation at the international level is different. Current international space agreements are vague, lacking in consensus, and provide little precedent for ownership of space resources. This has led the international** community to move in the direction of creating a better regulatory framework, but this **movement is still in discussion stages and is likely to take a while to come to fruition**.

#### **Disputes and misperceptions create cascading effects towards space weaponization and an arms race—an international framework solves BUT unilateral action causes escalating space wars**

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**The first concern is establishing clear regulations regarding asteroid mining**. With an intent to establish clear regulations with respect to asteroid mining and to legalise material extraction from the moon and other celestial bodies by private companies in the US, **the US government legalised space mining in** 2015 by introducing **the** **US Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act**, 2015.[xxvii] This move was heartily welcomed by the private companies as it provided legitimacy to their planned activities. Subsequently in 2017, Luxembourg followed suit.[xxviii] While the US has been a spacefaring nation for many decades now, Luxembourg aspires to become a global leader in the nascent race to mine resources in outer space. In the 1980s the tiny European nation arose out of almost nowhere to become a leader in the satellite communications industry; today it is looking to the skies again, hoping to be the Silicon Valley of asteroid mining.[xxix] In the backdrop of a thriving steel industry that faced trade recession during the oil crisis of 1973, Luxembourg is trying to capitalise on the potential of space mining. As Prime Minister Xavier Bettel put it, “We realized it wouldn't be forever, the steel, so we decided to do other things.”[xxx] Similarly, looking beyond oil, the UAE is framing its policy approaches to make advances in two key areas: human space exploration, and commercial activities of resource extraction through mining.[xxxi] The two formal pieces of legislation (passed by the US and Luxembourg) provide an answer to the complex question of ownership in outer space; the two-word answer appears to be, “finders, keepers”. The US Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act, 2015 states: “A US citizen engaged in commercial recovery of an asteroid resource or a space resource shall be entitled to any asteroid resource or space resource obtained.”[xxxii] **This legislation gives US space firms the right to own, keep, use, and sell the spoils of the cosmos** as they deem fit. Luxembourg’s legislation is fairly analogous to the US Act, giving mining companies the right to keep their plunder. However, unlike the US law, Luxembourg’s does not require a company’s major stakeholders to be based in the country to enjoy its safeguards; the only requirement is for that company to have an office in the country.[xxxiii] In 2017, Japan entered into a five-year agreement with Luxembourg for mining operations in celestial bodies. Japan today appears a step closer to realising its objective of asteroid mining with two Japanese rovers, Minerva II-1, of JAXA landing on the surface of the asteroid named Ryugu in September 2018.[xxxiv] Earlier, Portugal and the UAE signed similar cooperation agreements with Luxembourg.[xxxv] Meanwhile, a **few other countries**—which have been critical of the US and Luxembourg, at the forefront of the space mining efforts**—**have also decided to join the field. The increasingly competitive and contested nature of outer space activities is spurring major spacefaring nations to push the boundaries in their space exploration. **Asteroid mining could possibly become the next big thing and is already seeing a race among the space powers.** The US and Luxembourg are at the forefront in space resource extraction in terms of the policy frameworks and funding.[xxxvi] Even as the US has clarified that the US Space Act 2015 is being misunderstood and that there is no change in the US policy towards national appropriation of space, the reality is that it has already spurred a major debate**.[xxxvii]** China and Russia are among those countries that are following on the path of the **US** and Luxembourg in undertaking mining missions in space. According to media reports, Ye Peijian, chief commander and designer of China’s lunar exploration programme has stated that China would send the first batch of asteroid exploration spacecraft around 2020.[xxxviii] Speaking to China’s Ministry of Science and Technology-run newspaper, Science and Technology Daily, Ye said that these asteroids have a high concentration of precious metals, which could rationalise the huge cost and risks involved in these activities as their economic value could run into the trillions of US dollars. Therefore, extraction, mining and transporting them back to Earth through robotic equipment will be a significant activity. Chinese scientists are working on missions to “bring back a whole asteroid weighing several hundred tonnes, which could turn asteroids with a potential threat to Earth into usable resources**.**”[xxxix] Ye was also quoted as saying that China has plans of “using an asteroid as the base for a permanent space station.”**[xl]** Helium mining on the moon is also part of China’s goals.[xli] Russia, for its part, is also responding to the space-mining developments of the last decade. For one, **it plans** to have a permanent lunar base somewhere between 2015 and 2020 for possible extraction of Helium.[xlii] Even as Russia’s official position on asteroid mining is that it is forbidden under the 1967 OST—which states that space is the “province of mankind”—**the Russian industry** players are of the view that they **must follow the lead** taken by the US and Luxembourg.[xliii] In early 2018, the director of the Scientific-Educational Center for Innovative Mining Technologies of the Moscow-based National University of Science and Technology MISIS (NUST MISIS), Pavel Ananyev, spoke about the Russian ambitions and proposed activities including space drilling rigs, water extraction on the Moon and 3D printers at space stations.[xliv] Russia’s private space companies including Dauria Aerospace, one of the first Russian private space companies, also hold the opinion that they must go forward in the same direction and call for a larger space to private sector to engage in extracting space resources.[xlv] **Moscow may not have yet actively pursued space mining and resource extraction, but it is likely to pick up pace in the coming years alongside global efforts. Moscow clearly has a capacity gap in terms of funding because** its earlier plans to have a permanent base in the Moon by 2015 is yet to happen. India, too, has ambitions in extraterrestrial resource extraction. In fact, a year after the US legislation, Prabhat Ranjan, executive director of Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), a policy organisation within the Department of Science and Technology, made a case for India to push ahead with lunar and asteroid mining. He said, “Moon is already being seen as a mineral wealth and further one can go up to the asteroids and start exploiting this. This can be a big game changer and if India doesn’t do this, we will lag behind.”[xlvi] More recently, Dr. K Sivan, Chairman of the country’s civil space organisation, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), talked about ISRO’s plans for helium-3 extraction and said, “the countries which have the capacity to bring that source from the moon to Earth will dictate the process. I don’t want to be just a part of them, I want to lead them.”[xlvii] However, gaining proficiency in such missions is not easy – the NASA and ESA (the European Space Agency) have been discussing these possibilities for a longer time, albeit quietly. The ISRO Chairman’s response was characterised by an Indian commentator as “aspirational” and “emotional”, clearly conceding that the country’s technological wherewithal is yet to be adequate.[xlviii] Importantly, **it is not clear how the legal and regulatory aspects of space mining operations are being dealt with**. There was one instance, though, when Luxembourg and Japan in a joint press statement said, “The exchange of information may cover all the issues of the exploration and commercial utilization of space resources, including legal, regulatory, technological, economic, and other aspects.”[xlix] Whether such legalisation is truly legal is arguable. Space Mining: Legal or Not? The Outer Space Treaty (OST) of 1967, considered the global foundation of the outer space legal regime, along with the other four associated international instruments have provided the fundamental basis for outer space activities by prohibiting certain activities and emphasising aspects such as the “common heritage of mankind”. These **agreements have been** useful in highlighting the global common nature of outer space. At the same time, however, they have been **insufficient and ambiguous in providing clear regulations to newer space activities such as asteroid mining**. Based on the premise of ‘res communis’, the magna carta of space law, the OST, illustrates outer space as “the province of all mankind”.[l] Under Article I, States are free to explore and use outer space and to access all celestial bodies “on the basis of equality and in accordance with international law.”[li] Although the OST does not explicitly mention “mining” activities, under Article II, outer space including the Moon and other celestial bodies are “not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty” through use, occupation or any other means.[lii] Furthermore, the Moon Agreement, 1979, not only defines outer space as “common heritage of mankind” but also proscribes commercial exploitation of planets and asteroids by States unless an international regime is established to govern such activities for “rational management,” “equitable sharing” and “expansion of opportunities” in the use of these resources.[liii] Slipping conveniently through the loophole in the OST, both the US and Luxembourg have authorised companies to claim exclusive ownership over extracted resources (but not of the asteroid itself). Proponents argue that since no sovereign nation is actually asserting rights over an area of outer space, instead, it is only a private unit claiming rights over singular resources, the treaty norm, “national appropriation by claim of sovereignty”, is not being violated. In the words of renowned space lawyer, Frans von der Dunk, “In terms of the law, yes it’s true that no country can claim any part of outer space as national territory — but that doesn’t mean private industry can’t mine resources.”[liv] Quoting reference from maritime law, Luxembourg regards space resources as appropriable akin to fish and shellfish, but celestial bodies and asteroids are not, just like the high sea. It is noteworthy that out of the only 18 nations that have ratified the Moon Agreement,[lv] none are major spacefaring nations, thereby giving themselves a convenient leeway to not abide by the same. These **unilateral initiatives have set off a critical response from the international community**. **Applying literal interpretation of the OST, there is certainly room to construe that space mining may be legal**, compared to the Moon Agreement whose prohibition is absolute. **However, taking into consideration the letter and spirit of the OST,** strengthened by the Moon Agreement, **the argument that “national appropriation” only extends to appropriation of territory and not appropriation of resources is a far reach**. That resource extraction is contemplated, albeit implicitly, in the OST, is nothing but logical. Not only have such claims of possessory rights not been recognised in the past**, there is also global consensus regarding its illegality**.[lvi] It therefore forms a part of customary international law, despite the Moon Agreement not having been widely ratified. In this light, **the legalisation of space mining is a sheer violation of the elemental principles of international space law**. **Yet, there is no clarity on what activity is allowed and what is prohibited** in outer space under the existing law.[lvii] **There is ambiguity around most issues—from “who would license and regulate asteroid mining operations” to the legality of these activities as per the existing international space law**.[lviii] **When comparing it to the law of the seas**, resource appropriation in the high seas and deep seabed is governed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982, and that in Antarctica, as per the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, 1991. While the former is strictly regulated under Part XI of UNCLOS, the latter is completely forbidden but for scientific purposes. The law of the sea argument—**“owning the fish, not the sea”—cannot be applied to outer space primarily because fish are living resources that can reproduce and therefore are renewable**. **Outer space resources**, on the other hand, **are depletable**: once harvested, they cannot be replenished. The analogy with fish and seas, therefore, is not a fair one and its transposition to outer space and celestial bodies would be inaccurate. Perhaps a more comparable regime is the deep seabed, which contemplates property rights over mineral extraction. The utilisation and ownership of the deep seabed’s resources are exclusively structured around the International Seabed Authority (ISA), which is responsible for organising, carrying out and controlling all activities in the seabed.[lix] Not only must State parties seek sanction from the ISA before beginning resource exploitation, but the fiscal benefits from seabed mining must also be shared among all.[lx] Evidently, even the UNCLOS upholds State ownership and fair distribution over individual ownership and self-centred gains.[lxi] By allowing private ownership, the US and Luxembourg are once again in contravention of the very same law they are relying on. The touchstone principle, “province of all mankind” is also being defeated. Therefore, to even reap the limited benefits as under UNCLOS, at least the derivation must be made alike. This argument too falls flat.The Way Ahead Undoubtedly**, growing technological adeptness has made space mining inevitable and, therefore, the question is no longer “if” but “when”.** **Nevertheless, a scenario where companies can, solely based on domestic laws, steadily exploit mineral resources in outer space, would be universally unacceptable. Minus regulations, the realisation of space exploitation will create great disparity between nations and disrupt dynamics of the world economy. Regulations are particularly important in the context of the space debris problem. We definitely do not wish for a future, bef**ittingly described by renowned engineer and inventor Graham Hawkes, thus: “Space exploration promised us alien life, lucrative planetary mining, and fabulous lunar colonies. News flash, ladies and gents: Space is nearly empty. It’s a sterile vacuum, filled mostly with the junk we put up there.”[lxii] Therefore, **it is extremely important that resource appropriation is carried out in an ethical manner, without interrupting safe and secure access to outer space, simultaneously allowing all countries a share in the proceeds**. Technological advances and financial readiness are pushing both, states and non-state players towards new ventures in outer space. Yet, **the rules of engagement especially dealing with the new commercial activities are far from ideal**. **There is a clear and urgent need to debate and come up with either a new regulation or accommodate the space mining activities within the existing international legal measures**. Experts have articulated that these could possibly be addressed under the existing property law principles or old mining law principles.[lxiii] However, **given the scale of activities that states and non-state parties will engage in, the ability of the existing regime to address space mining could be highly inadequate**. The second option would be to develop a new instrument including an institutional architecture that would set out the parameters for activities related to resource extraction and space mining. Since there are a good number of commercial players playing a formidable role in asteroid mining, there has to be space for commercial players in the new gig, which might be a big departure from the earlier era institutions that saw states being the sole authority in regulating activities in outer space. A clear role for commercial players has been articulated for some time but the global space community has yet to reach a consensus in how they can be incorporated into the global governance debates. The apprehension on the part of a number of states is driven by the fact that private sector participation is still largely a western phenomenon. This trend may be undergoing change in other parts of the world but until there is a sizeable private sector community in other major spacefaring powers, there is a fear that the western bloc of countries may stand to gain from the industry being represented in the global governance debates. A third possible option is to get a larger global endorsement of the Moon Treaty, which highlights the common heritage of mankind. The Moon Treaty is important as it addresses a “loophole” of the OST “by banning any ownership of any extraterrestrial property by any organization or private person, unless that organization is international and governmental.”[lxiv] But the fact that it has been endorsed only by a handful of countries makes it a “failure” from the international law perspective.[lxv] Nevertheless, efforts must be made to strengthen the support base for the Moon Agreement given the potential pitfalls of resource extraction and space mining activities in outer space. Signatories to the Moon Treaty can take the lead within multilateral platforms such as the UN to debate the usefulness of the treaty in the changed context of technological advancements and new geopolitical dynamics, and potentially find compromises where there are disagreements. **Pursuing a collective approach is ideal**. An example is UNCLOS, which demonstrates that **the international society possesses the capability of regulating mining quarters deemed to be the “province of mankind”**. However, a sui generis legal framework must be crafted because the difference between the marines and outer space and their resources is wide, **and the regulations are too region-specific to permit a superimposition of the oceanic regime to outer space. A sound legal environment will protect both the company performing operations and its beneficiaries, while ensuring even-handed resource allocation. In addition, regulations spelling out safety standards and identifying safety zones around mining operations could be useful in ensuring safe and secure operations in outer space**. It would be wrong, however, to say that the international community has not debated over this. In fact, one of the main agenda points of the fifty-seventh session of UNCOPUS Legal Committee held in April 2018, was especially devoted to “general exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources.”[lxvi] Upon evaluation, **it is clear that countries are not against space mining** as such; rather **the contentious points are** vis-à-vis **authorisation, regulation, and where to place responsibility**. There also appears to be concurrence regarding the need for international coordination efforts of some sort. Over the last two years, The Hague Space Resources Governance Working Group,[lxvii] established with the purpose of “assess[ing] the need for a regulatory framework for space resource activities, has identified 19 “building blocks”,[lxviii] encompassing subject matters that could be included in such a regulatory framework. Although this leaves a lot of hope for the legitimate mining of space resources, its status is still pending. Also, several questions need to be agreed upon by the global space policy community before the establishment of a framework. First, **there must be an agreement among all the space powers on the need for a global governance framework for the use of space resources**. This must be followed by detailed deliberations on the scope, mandate and objectives of such a framework. Can and should there be safety zones and exclusive rights be recognised under such a framework and how one can ensure equitable sharing of the resources, and lastly, the role of industries and how the interests of the industry as pioneers in this area can be secured. These are all pertinent questions that need to be considered and debated before an international regime for extraction and use of space resources can be established.[lxix] **Even legal space mining activity could have serious impacts** in two ways. For instance, **any technological spinoffs that a country might have could add to the space weaponisation debate**. Two, the **erosion of norms with regard to space mining could have a cascading effect on other norms in the same issue area such as weaponisation of space**. **It is imperative for nations to actively combine their efforts to ensure that this activity transpires in the most globally acceptable manner** and not one which stirs anarchism. The ancient Roman maxim, ‘Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus approbatur’ (What touches all must be approved by all) gains due traction in this kind of a scenario. Therefore, **a universal activity like space exploration mandates an international guideline**; **or else, the first haul from mining**, instead of earning admiration and exultation, **will only be enmeshed in litigation**.

**Advantage – Collisions**

#### **Unregulated mining is existential and causes collisions – multiple scenarios**

#### **Scenario 1 is deflection**

#### **Unregulated mining causes asteroid deflection and astroterror**

**Drmola and Mareš 15** - Jakub Drmola is a PhD student and Miroslav Mareš professor, at the Divison of Security and Strategic Studies, Masaryk University, Czech Republic, "Revisiting the deflection dilemma", *Astronomy & Geophysics*, Volume 56, Issue 5, October 2015, Pages 5.15–5.18, <https://academic.oup.com/astrogeo/article/56/5/5.15/235650>

There are two basic ways to go **about moving the resources contained within a given asteroid to the Earth. They can be extracted from the asteroid during its natural orbit and then transported to the Earth, or the entire asteroid might be moved closer to a more convenient location before starting mining. Thus repositioned, it might even be used as a shielded habitat, once hollowed out (Ostro 1999). There are different speculative costs and benefits associated with either option, which would vary with the size, orbit and composition of the asteroid. But, crucially, the second option would entail putting asteroids into orbit around the Earth, the** Moon or possibly at one of the Earth’s Lagrangian points. Indeed, NASA has already planned a mission to capture a small asteroid and place it in a high cislunar orbit, where it would serve as a destination for future manned missions and experiments. This “Asteroid Redirect Mission” is to take place in the next decade and is being pitched mainly as a stepping stone **towards a future mission to Mars (see box “NASA’s Asteroid Redirect Mission”; Brophy et al. 2012, Burchell 2014, Gates et al. 2015). Programmes to redirect asteroids and, especially, plans to mine asteroids on an industrial scale essentially resurrect the deflection dilemma. But it is no longer a matter of superpowers intentionally misusing technology designed to prevent dangerous impacts. It becomes an issue of proliferation among private entities. Once private mining companies acquire the technical ability to redirect suitable NEOs (Baoyin et al. 2011) in order to extract platinum or** water from them, perilous inflections become more likely. The **probability of accidents will rise with the number of asteroids whose trajectories we decide to manipulate**. Such accidents might be very unlikely, but **even a tiny technical or human error** in the execution of an inflection meant to place an asteroid into the lunar or geocentric orbit **might send it crashing into the Earth with potentially devastating consequences.** And while we might find solace in the low probabilities associated with such an accident, even contemporary industries which are considered very safe suffer from unlikely tragedies. Despite being dependable and reliable, airliners do crash; there are a lot of them flying and very improbable accidents do happen if the dice are rolled often enough. Undoubtedly, we will not be steering as many asteroids as we steer planes any time soon, but industries tend to be more accident-prone during their infancy. Furthermore, a single asteroid can do a lot more damage than a single plane. And who is to say how much metal or water we are going to need in space over the course of the 21st century, or the next? **The second source of risk is the intentional misuse**, similar to the original deflection dilemma. But the **entry barrier for asteroid weaponization gets much lower if mining them and moving them around becomes a common industrial activity**. This is in stark contrast to the original scenario which envisioned this technology to be used solely for planetary defence and under control of a very small number of the most powerful countries (Morrison 2010). **If such a powerful technology becomes widely and commercially available, even rogue states and wellfunded terrorist groups might be tempted to use it for an unexpected and devastating attack. In addition, an active asteroid mining industry would make it more difficult to detect any hostile inflection attempts among the number of legitimate and benign ones**. Policy implications Considering these possible future dangers, it seems prudent to consider what to do about them sooner rather than later. The most obvious “solution” would be **a blanket ban on the development of any technology that might lead to artificially inflected asteroids crashing into the Earth. However, such a ban would be incompatible with the dream of increased presence of humans in the solar system. It would stymie both scientific exploration and economic development here on Earth, which is increasingly dependent on precious metals and spacebased technologies. Furthermore, this approach would leave us more vulnerable to natural impacts which**, in the long view, seems less than desirable. Another approach might be similar to the current regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, aiming to support peaceful civilian use of nuclear power while at the same time prohibiting the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The regime mostly works (with caveats, see Wood et al. 2008) because these applications require different infrastructures and fissile materials enriched to different levels of purity. This makes it possible, at least in principle, to tell apart operations meant for the production of electricity and those designed to create weapons. Unfortunately, the difference between legitimate and hostile trajectory modification would lie only in the acceleration imparted on the asteroid and not in the technical means to do it. As the spacecraft launched with the intent to cause impact with the Earth might be identical to those sent off to retrieve resources, telling them apart would be nearly impossible, until it was too late. And this approach makes no difference to the chances of an industrial accident. If monitoring equipment on Earth is unhelpful, the focus changes to space. In other words, all asteroid movement missions should be constantly monitored. For an attacker, it would make most sense to delay the final course adjustment for as long as possible in order to give the least warning and make the timeframe for reaction as short as possible. So an asteroid might head towards a safe orbit fit for resource extraction for most of its altered flight time, but be further accelerated at the last possible moment onto an impact trajectory, perhaps mere days before it hits a major city. Our current programmes cataloguing NEOs (such as CSS or Pan-STARRS), which look for new, previously unknown objects, are not ideally suited for the task of constantly tracking a number of different, already known asteroids. New instruments would be needed to track them in order to immediately detect any hazardous inflection, whether intentional or accidental. Once such a detection is made, emergency measures to evacuate the population or, preferably, to “re-deflect” the incoming object can be executed right away, regardless of the cause. Accidents and hostilities could be treated the same way and countered by the same system (initially, at least). Such a system would be more akin to an air traffic control than a non-proliferation regulation, offering security through vigilance, rather than absence. Additionally, development of a system able to deflect incoming objects at relatively short notice would be beneficial in case of an impending natural impact. Conclusion Perhaps none of these concerns will become relevant. Maybe the idea of asteroid mining will soon fizzle out because we will discover cheaper and more efficient local alternatives. Maybe humanity will lose the will or the capability to explore space any further. Or perhaps manipulating asteroid trajectories will prove impractical or too costly. Certainly, it would not be the first time that a promising and seemingly obvious future does not come about. In the 1960s it seemed almost self-evident that by the second decade of the 21st century we would have flying cars and a base on the Moon. Yet we do not. **Asteroid mining might be a similar case of unfulfilled promises and misplaced visions. On the other hand, there are examples of industries that developed surprisingly fast despite being considered unrealistic, not too long ago:** air travel, nuclear power generation, or commercial satellites. The spread of the internet and the accompanying digital information revolution is another example; **hardly anyone anticipated** **having virtually the entire repository of human knowledge at our fingertips** at all times (except Douglas Adams). Whether the deflection dilemma forever remains an unmaterialized threat or it becomes a palpable problem, **it is something to be mindful of now, as the foundations of the prospective asteroid mining industry are being laid**. In the end, the purpose of this paper is not to predict the future. Instead it aims to merely update a conscientious warning which called for our diligence more than 20 years ago. While the world has changed somewhat, the basic idea remains valid. Whether the danger comes from warring superpowers, terrorists or negligent corporations, we must be aware of the realistic risks in order to avoid being either stumped by unforeseen catastrophes or paralysed by unwarranted fear. Either extreme would be harmful for our future.●

#### **Major collisions cause extinction**

**Baum ’19** - executive director of the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute, Ph.D in Geography

Seth Baum, “Risk-Risk Tradeoff Analysis of Nuclear Explosives for Asteroid Deflection,” SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, May 31, 2019), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3397559>.

**The most severe asteroid collisions and nuclear wars can cause global environmental effects**. **The core mechanism is the transport of particulate matter into the stratosphere**, **where it can spread worldwide and** **remain aloft for** years or **decades**. **Large asteroid collisions create** large quantities of **dust and large fireballs**; **the fire heats the dust so that some portion of it rises into the stratosphere**. **The largest collisions**, such as the 10km Chicxulub impactor, can also **eject debris** from the collision site **into space**; upon **reentry** into the atmosphere, the debris **heats up enough to spark global fires** (Toon, Zahnle, Morrison, Turco, & Covey, 1997). The fires **are a major impact in their own right and can send additional smoke into the stratosphere**. For nuclear explosions, there is also a fireball and smoke, in this case from the burning of cities or other military targets. While in the stratosphere, **the particulate matter blocks sunlight and destroys ozone** (Toon et al., 2007). **The ozone loss increases the amount of ultraviolet radiation** reaching the surface, **causing skin cancer and other harms** (Mills, Toon, Turco, Kinnison, & Garcia, 2008). T**he blocked sunlight causes abrupt cooling of Earth’s surface and in turn reduced precipitation** due to a weakened hydrological cycle. The **cool, dry, and dark conditions reduce plant growth**. Recent studies use modern climate and crop models to examine the effects for **a hypothetical IndiaPakistan nuclear war scenario with 100 weapons** (50 per side) each of 15KT yield. The studies **find agriculture declines** in the range of **approximately** 2% to **50%** depending on the crop and location.11 Another study compares the crop data to existing poverty and malnourishment and estimates that the **crop declines could threaten starvation for two billion people** (Helfand, 2013). However, the aforementioned studies do not account for new nuclear explosion fire simulations that find approximately five times less particulate matter reaching the stratosphere, and correspondingly weaker global environmental effects (Reisner et al., 2018). Note also that **the 100 weapon scenario** used in these studies **is not the largest potential scenario**. Larger nuclear wars and large asteroid collisions could cause greater harm. **The largest asteroid collisions could even reduce sunlight below the minimum needed for vision** (Toon et al., 1997). Asteroid risk analyses have proposed that **the global environmental disruption from large collisions could cause one billion deaths** (NRC, 2010) **or** the death of **25% of all humans** (Chapman, 2004; Chapman & Morrison, 1994; Morrison, 1992), though these figures have not been rigorously justified (Baum, 2018a). The harms from asteroid collisions and nuclear wars can also include important secondary effects. The **food shortages from severe global environmental disruption could lead to infectious disease outbreaks as public health conditions deteriorate** (Helfand, 2013). Law and order could be lost in at least some locations as people struggle for survival (Maher & Baum, 2013). **Today’s complex global political-economic system already shows fragility to shocks** such as the 2007- 2008 financial crisis (Centeno, Nag, Patterson, Shaver, & Windawi, 2015); **an asteroid collision** or nuclear war **could be an extremely large shock**. **The systemic consequences of a nuclear war would be further worsened by the likely loss of major world cities** that serve as important hubs in the global economy. Even a single detonation in nuclear terrorism would have ripple effects across the global political-economic system (similar to, but likely larger than, the response prompted by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001). **It is possible for asteroid collisions to cause nuclear war**. **An asteroid explosion could be misinterpreted as a nuclear attack, prompting nuclear attack that is believed to be retaliation.** For example, the 2013 **Chelyabinsk** event **occurred near an important Russian military installation**, prompting concerns about the event’s interpretation (Harris et al., 2015). The ultimate severity of an asteroid collision or violent nuclear conflict use would depend on how human society reacts. **Would the reaction be disciplined** and constructive: bury the dead, heal the sick, feed the hungry, and rebuild all that has fallen**?** **Or would the reaction be disorderly and destructive**: leave the rubble in place, fight for scarce resources, and descend into minimalist tribalism or worse**?** Prior studies have identified some key issues, including the viability of trade (Cantor, Henry, & Rayner, 1989) and the self-sufficiency of local communities (Maher & Baum, 2013). However, the issue has received little research attention and remains poorly understood. **This leaves considerable uncertainty in the total human harm from an asteroid collision** or nuclear weapons use. Previously **published** point **estimates of the human consequences** of asteroid collisions12 and nuclear wars (Helfand, 2013) **do not account for this uncertainty and are likely to be inaccurate.** **Of particular importance** are the consequences for future generations, **which could vastly outnumber the present generation**. **If an asteroid collision or nuclear war would cause human extinction, then there would be no future generations**. Alternatively, if survivors fail to recover a large population and advanced technological civilization, then **future generations would be permanently diminished.** The largest long-term factor is whether future generations would colonize space and benefit from its astronomically large amount of resources (Tonn, 1999). However, it is not presently known which asteroid collisions or nuclear wars (if any) would cause the permanent collapse of human civilization and thus the loss of the large future benefits (Baum et al., 2019). Given the enormous stakes, **prudent risk management would aim for very low probabilities of permanent collapse** (Tonn, 2009). It should be noted that **the severity of violent nuclear conflict could depend on more than just the effects of nuclear explosions, because the overall conflict scenario could include non-nuclear violence.** Indeed, **it is possible for the nuclear explosions to constitute a relatively small portion of the total severity**, as was the case in World War II. 4.4 Risk of Violent Non-Nuclear Conflict Finally, **it is necessary to discuss the risk of violent non-nuclear conflict**. Only a small portion of violent non-nuclear conflicts are applicable, specifically the portion affected by nuclear weapons. More precisely, this section discusses non-nuclear conflicts involving one or more countries that possess nuclear weapons at some point during the lifetime of a nuclear deflection program. **Nuclear deterrence** theory predicts that nuclear-armed adversaries will not initiate major wars against each other because both sides could be destroyed in a nuclear war. However, the **theory does permit limited, small-scale violent conflicts between nuclear-armed countries**. These **conflicts** likely **would not involve nuclear weapons.** Indeed, **nuclear deterrence may** even **make** **small** violent **conflicts more likely**, because the countries know that neither side wants to escalate the conflict into major war. This idea is **known as the stability-instability paradox**: nuclear deterrence **brings** stability with respect to major wars but **instability with respect to minor conflicts. Empirical support** for the stability-instability paradox **has been found by some research** (Rauchhaus, 2009),while other research has found no significant effect of the possession of nuclear weapons on the probability of conflicts of any scale (Bell & Miller, 2015; Gartzke & Jo, 2009). If countries fully disarm their nuclear arsenals, such that they would never have nuclear weapons again, then there would be no nuclear deterrence to prevent the onset of major wars. A simple risk analysis could assume that the risk of major wars would be comparable to the risk prior to the development of nuclear weapons. The two twentieth century World Wars combined for around 100 million deaths in 50 years,13 suggesting an annualized risk of two million deaths. However, two World Wars do not make for a robust dataset. Indeed, the robustness of these two data points is called into question by historical analysis finding that both world wars might not have occurred in the reasonably plausible event that the 1914 assassination of Archduke Ferdinand had failed (Lebow, 2014). Similarly, another historical analysis finds that the U.S. and Soviet Union would probably not have waged major war against each other even in the absence of nuclear deterrence (Mueller, 1988). Furthermore, these past events are not necessarily applicable to the future conditions of a post-nuclear-disarmament world. To the best of the present author’s knowledge, no studies have analyzed the risk of major wars in a post-nucleardisarmament world.

#### **Scenario 2 is satellite collisions**

#### **An increase in space debris and dust from mining collides with key defense satellites**

**Scoles 15** Sarah Scoles [Freelance science writer, and a contributing writer at WIRED Science, with articles in places like Popular Science, the New York Times, Scientific American, Vice, Outside, and others.], 5-27-2015, "Dust from asteroid mining spells danger for satellites," New Scientist, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22630235-100-dust-from-asteroid-mining-spells-danger-for-satellites/> DD AG

IF THE gold mine is too far from home, why not move it nearby? It sounds like a fantasy, but would-be **miners are already dreaming up ways to drag resource-rich space rocks closer to home**. Trouble is, **that could threaten the web of satellites around Earth.**

Asteroids are not only stepping stones for cosmic colonisation, but may contain metals like gold, platinum, iron and titanium, plus life-sustaining hydrogen and oxygen, and rocket-fuelling ammonia. **Space age forty-niners can either try to work an asteroid where it is, or tug it into a more convenient orbit.**

NASA chose the second option for its Asteroid Redirect Mission, which aims to pluck a boulder from an asteroid’s surface and relocate it to a stable orbit around the moon. **But an asteroid’s gravity is so weak that it’s not hard for surface particles to escape into space. Now a new model warns that debris shed by such transplanted rocks could intrude where many defence and communication satellites live** – in geosynchronous orbit.

According to Casey Handmer of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and Javier Roa of the Technical University of Madrid in Spain**, 5 per cent of the escaped debris will end up in regions traversed by satellites. Over 10 years, it would cross geosynchronous orbit 63 times on average. A satellite in the wrong spot at the wrong time will suffer a damaging high-speed collision** with that dust.

The study also looks at the “catastrophic disruption” of **an asteroid 5 metres across or bigger. Its total break-up into a pile of rubble would increase the risk to satellites by more than 30 per cent** (arxiv.org/abs/1505.03800).

That may not have immediate consequences. But as Earth orbits get more crowded with spent rocket stages and satellites, **we will have to worry about cascades of collisions** like the one depicted in the movie Gravity.

#### **Laundry list of impacts – compromised communication, loss of military capability and more**

**Divorsky 15** George Divorsky [George P. Dvorsky (born May 11, 1970) is a Canadian bioethicist, transhumanist and futurist. He is a contributing editor at io9[1] and producer of the Sentient Developments blog and podcast. He was Chair of the Board for the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies (IEET)[2][3] and is the founder and chair of the IEET's Rights of Non-Human Persons Program], 6-4-2015, "What Would Happen If All Our Satellites Were Suddenly Destroyed?," Gizmodo <https://gizmodo.com/what-would-happen-if-all-our-satellites-were-suddenly-d-1709006681> DD AG

Given these grim prospects, it’s fair to ask what might happen to our civilization if any of these things happened. At the risk of gross understatement**, the complete loss of our satellite fleet would instigate a tremendous disruption to our current mode of technological existence**—disruptions that would be experienced in the short, medium, and long term, and across multiple domains.

Compromised Communications

Almost **immediately we’d notice a dramatic reduction in our ability to communicate**, share information, and conduct transactions.

“If our communications satellites are lost, then bandwidth is also lost,” Jonathan McDowell tells io9. He’s an astrophysicists and Chandra Observatory scientist who works out of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

McDowell says that, with telecommunication satellites wiped out, the burden of telecommunications would fall upon undersea cables and ground-based communication systems. But while many forms of communication would disappear in an instant, others would remain.

All international **calls and data traffic would have to be re-routed, placing tremendous pressure on terrestrial and undersea lines**. Oversaturation would stretch the capacity of these systems to the limit, preventing many calls from going through. Hundreds of millions of Internet connections would vanish, or be severely overloaded. A similar number of cell phones would be rendered useless. In remote areas, people dependent on satellite for television, Internet, and radio would practically lose all service.

“Indeed, a lot of television would suddenly disappear,” says McDowell. “A sizable portion of TV comes from cable whose companies relay programming from satellites to their hubs.”

It’s important to note that we actually have a precedent for a dramatic—albeit brief —disruption in com-sat capability. Back in 1998, there was a day in which a single satellite failed and all the world’s pagers stopped working.

The sudden loss of satellite capability would have a profound effect on the military.

The Marshall Institute puts it this way: “Space is a critical enabler to all U.S. warfare domains,” including intelligence, navigation, communications, weather prediction, and warfare. McDowell describes satellite capability as as the “backbone” of the U.S. military.

And as 21st century warfare expert Peter W. Singer from New America Foundation tells io9, “He who controls the heavens will control what happens in the battles of Earth.” Singer summarized the military consequences of losing satellites in an email to us:

Moreover, and as McDowell explains to io9, **the loss of satellite capability would have a profound effect on arms control capabilities. Space systems can monitor compliance; without them, we’d be running blind.**

“The overarching consideration is that **you wouldn’t really know what’s going on,”** says McDowell. “Satellites provide for both global and local views of what’s happening. We would be less connected, less informed—and with considerably degraded situational awareness.”

One great thing satellites have done for us is improve our ability to forecast weather. Predicting a slight chance of cloudiness is all well and good, but some areas, like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, are dependent on such systems to predict potentially hazardous monsoons. And in the U.S., **the NOAA has estimated that, during a typical hurricane season, weather satellites save as much as $3 billion in lives and property damage.**

There’s also the effect on science to consider. Much of what we know about climate change comes from satellites.

As McDowell explains, the first couple of weeks without satellites wouldn’t make much of a difference. But over a ten-year span, **the lack of satellites would preclude our ability to understand and monitor such things as the ozone layer, carbon dioxide levels, and the distribution of polar ice.** Ground-based and balloon-driven systems would help, but much of the data we’re currently tracking would suddenly become much spottier.

#### **That escalates – extinction**

**Johnson 14** Les Johnson [science fiction author, popular science writer, and NASA technologist]. “Living without satellites”. 2014 https://www.baen.com/living\_without\_satellites.

**Satellite imagery is used by the military and our political leaders to maintain the peace. When your potential adversaries can’t hide what they’re doing, where their armies are moving and what they are doing with their civilian and military infrastructure, then the danger of surprise attack is diminished**. In our nuclear age with instant death only minutes away by missile attack, the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (**MAD) only works if both sides know whether or not they are being attacked. The launch of missiles or a bomber fleet can easily be seen from space far in advance of either reaching their potential targets halfway around the globe.** The danger of surprise attack is therefore small, making an accidental war far less likely.

So what does all this mean? And what do we do about it?

First of all, it means that the advocates of space development, exploration and commercialization have succeeded far beyond their initial expectations and dreams. The economies and security of countries in the developed world are now dependent on space satellites. We space advocates should celebrate our success and be terrified of it at the same time. Should we lose these fragile assets in space, our economy would experience a disruption like no other: ship, air and train travel would stop and only restart/operate in a much-reduced capacity for years (GPS loss). Many banking and retail transactions would cease (VSAT loss). Distribution of news and vital national information would be crippled (communications satellite loss). **Lives would be put at risk and the productivity of our farming would dramatically decrease** (weather satellite loss). **The risk of war, including nuclear war, would increase (loss of spy satellites) and our military’s ability to react to crises would be significantly reduced** (loss of military logistics and intelligence gathering satellites).

### **Advantage– Resource Depletion**

#### **The West’s move to zero-emissions has made them really reliant on China for rare metals**

**Ings 21**—Simon Ings [Simon Ings writes for New Scientist about books, films and all things culture.]; “Why using rare metals to clean up the planet is no cheap fix”; Jan 27 2021; *New Scientist*;<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24933190-400-why-using-rare-metals-to-clean-up-the-planet-is-no-cheap-fix/#ixzz7H1YlrNxo>. (AG DebateDrills)

WE REAP seven times as much energy from the wind and 44 times as much energy from the sun as we did a decade ago. Is this good news? Guillaume Pitron, a French journalist and documentary maker, isn’t sure. He is neither a climate sceptic nor a fan of inaction. **But as the world moves to adopt a target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, Pitron worries about the costs.** The figures in his book The Rare Metals War are stark. **Changing the energy model means doubling the production of rare metals about every 15 years, mostly to satisfy demand for non-ferrous magnets and lithium-ion batteries. “At this rate,” writes Pitron, “over the next 30 years we… will need to mine more mineral ores than humans have extracted over the last 70,000 years.”** Before the Renaissance, humans had found uses for seven metals. During the industrial revolution, this increased to a mere dozen. Today, we have found uses for all 90-odd of them, and some are very rare. Neodymium and gallium, for instance, are found in iron ore, but there is 1200 times less neodymium and up to 2650 times less gallium than there is iron. Zipping from an abandoned mine in the Mojave desert to the toxic lakes and cancer-afflicted areas of Baotou in China, Pitron weighs the awful price of refining the materials, ably blending investigative journalism with insights from science, politics and business. There are two sides to Pitron’s story, woven seamlessly together. First, there is the economic story of how China worked to dominate the energy and digital transition. It now controls 95 per cent of the rare earth metals market, making between 80 and 90 per cent of the batteries for electric vehicles, says Pitron, and more than half the magnets in wind turbines and electric motors. **Then there is the ecological story of the lengths China took to succeed. Today, 10 per cent of its arable land is contaminated by heavy metals, 80 per cent of its groundwater isn’t fit for consumption and air pollution contributes to around 1.6 million deaths a year there, according to Pitron (a recent paper in The Lancet says 1.24 million deaths in China a year are attributable to air pollution – but let’s not quibble).** China freely entered into this Faustian bargain. Yet it wouldn’t have been possible had the **Western world not outsourced its own industrial activities, creating a planet divided, as Pitron memorably describes it, “between the dirty and those who pretend to be clean”. The West’s comeuppance is at hand, as its manufacturers, starved of rare metals, must take their technologies to China**. It should have seen how its reliance on Chinese raw materials would quickly morph into a dependence on China for the technologies of the energy and digital transition. **By 2040, in our pursuit of ever-greater connectivity and a cleaner atmosphere, we will need to mine three times more rare earth metals, five times more tellurium, 12 times more cobalt and 16 times more lithium than we do now.** China’s ecological ruination and global technological dominance advance in lockstep, unstoppably, unless the West and others start to mine for rare metals in Brazil, the US, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, Thailand and Pitron’s native France. Better that the West attains some shred of supply security by mining some of its own land, says Pitron. At least there consumers can fight (and pay) for cleaner processes. **Nothing will change if we don’t experience “the full cost of attaining our standard of happiness”, he says.** Read more: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24933190-400-why-using-rare-metals-to-clean-up-the-planet-is-no-cheap-fix/#ixzz7H1YRP81n>

#### **The impact is great power war—a space race sparked by need for rare metals pits China against the West**

**Butters 16**—Julie Butters; “Elements of Conflict: The Scramble to Control the rare elements powering the modern world”; BU The Brink; <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2016/rare-earths/>. (AG DebateDrills)

**The global prospecting sparked by China’s export restrictions isn’t purely about national security—or even keeping the world’s cell phones and x-ray machines switched on—according to Klinger. It’s about power.** Setting up large-scale mining in the Amazon, for example, would allow the Brazilian government greater control over land currently managed by a federation of 28 indigenous ethnic groups. The federation’s power—even the military has to ask permission to cross their land, says Klinger—is “seen as an affront to Brazil’s sovereignty because there’s a perception among some, including in the Brazilian federal government and in the Senate, that indigenous people are the puppets of foreign governments because so much funding from northern nongovernmental organizations has gone to supporting these indigenous people and their causes.” **The interstellar gold rush is little different. In November 2015, Congress passed the SPACE Act of 2015, granting citizens the right to mine and sell material from outer space.** The legislation was cause for rejoicing among asteroid mining companies that stand to make a fortune plumbing space for water, industrial metals, and rare earths. These companies have already taken the first step toward mining: In July 2015, Planetary Resources launched a spacecraft to test control systems and other technologies necessary for asteroid prospecting. Klinger attended a 2015 space mining conference where **private space industry representatives were “invoking the rarity of rare earth elements, and the fact that we’re running out of them here on Earth.”** **As Klinger sees it, the SPACE Act of 2015 is largely an attempt to place outer space under US jurisdiction.** “And if you can cut through all of the fluff about outer space and the great frontier in the transcripts discussing this bill,” she says, “**what you see is actually this directly undermines” the 1967 Outer Space Treaty signed by the United States, Russia, and other countries.** That treaty “enshrines outer space as belonging to all of humankind,” she says, **and “was explicitly organized to minimize conflict in respect to outer space.”** She adds, “One of the rather potent and persuasive debates in the US surrounding the promotion and ultimate passage of this law was fear that China would ‘colonize’ the moon if we didn’t get there first.” **Klinger hopes other countries won’t take the SPACE Act seriously, because their doing so could lead to a global conflict.**

#### **Space may seem like an infinite resource but that’s the problem. We overrely on it and it dries up quickly—speeding up prospects of war**

**Khan 19-** Sieeka Khan, “Providing the latest research, discoveries and scientific breakthroughs for science enthusiasts”, 5-15-2019, "Space Mining Could Ruin Our Solar System, Researchers Warn," Science Times, <https://www.sciencetimes.com/articles/21813/20190515/space-mining-could-ruin-our-solar-system-researchers-warn.htm> VS

Limiting the galactic consumption to 1/8th of the available resources may sound like a bad deal, but space is a huge place and even a small fraction of our solar system's bounty could set humans up for generations."One-eighth of the iron in the asteroid belt is more than a million times greater than all of the Earth's currently estimated iron ore reserves," the authors wrote, "and it may well suffice for centuries." The researchers looked at the estimated iron use on Earth since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and come up with the "1/8th principle". According to a survey in 1994 regarding the environmental impacts of the revolution, the global production of crude iron increased from half a million tons in 1800 to half a billion tons of steel produced in 1994. **This rate is equivalent to the world's iron production doubling once every 20 years. The new data from the U.S Geological Survey supports this estimate as the world's iron production increased from 1 billion tons in 994 to 2.2 billion tons in 2016.If humans show the same level of industriousness when mining the resources on moons, asteroids and nearby planets, we could reach the hypothetical 1/8th point after 400 years. If the production continues to double every 20 years after that, all of the resources in the solar system would be depleted in just 60 years. This would give humans 60 years to change from a space resource-based economy** to **an unhopeful prospect, given the nonchalant response to the current environmental crises that we are facing, such as climate change and population growth.**

"Worldwide, the present rate of planetary mission launches is 15 per decade," the authors wrote. "At this rate, even just the nearly 200 worlds of the solar system that gravity has made spherical would take 130 years to visit once."

#### **Historically, resource shortages have been a primary reason for war—no reason to think space changes anything**

**Drake 20**—Erin Drake; “Conflict and Resource Scarcity Around the World”; *SRM*; Jan 15 2020; <https://insights.s-rminform.com/conflict-and-resource-scarcity-across-the-world>; (AG DebateDrills)

**Resource scarcity has historically contributed to – and prolonged – various conflicts, both between states, as well as between communities or groups within states. This trend continued in 2019, exacerbated by factors such as climate change, expanding populations, and resource shortages – including water, oil and land.** Resource scarcity and worsening environmental conditions will continue to play a prominent role in driving conflict dynamics across the world in the coming years. WATER WARSPV Special Edition Water Icon SRM-1 Water scarcity has fuelled longstanding disputes, due the prominent role that water plays in various sectors such as agriculture and fishing. **While Southeast Asian countries dispute maritime boundaries, communities in Sub-Saharan Africa clash over water access in drought-affected areas.** Militant groups – such as the Houthis in Yemen – use water as a weapon to force compliance among populations and gain political leverage, while indigenous populations in Latin America oppose large extractive companies, which they accuse of diverting and polluting water resources. In 2019, the UN estimated that around 75,000 people die annually in conflicts over water. As global warming exacerbates water scarcity in the coming years, such conflicts will likely intensify. CASE STUDIES **Amid severe drought and an ongoing water crisis in India, communities in Chennai, Tamil Nadu State, and Madhya Pradesh State, clashed over access to water in June and July 2019.** Security personnel were deployed to guard water facilities and escort tanker drivers amid attacks, while clashes between residents in affected areas resulted in multiple injuries. An estimated 21 major cities could run out of water in 2020. **With the ongoing impact of global warming, such shortages which will likely lead to further, widespread clashes in the coming years. China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan and Malaysia have historically made overlapping claims to territory in the South China Sea (SCS) – a vital shipping route, also accounting for over 12 percent of global commercial fishing.** Due to competing claims, fishing in the SCS has also historically driven clashes between Chinese vessels – often escorted by the Chinese coast guard – and other fishing vessels. Over-fishing and the destruction of marine life in the area will likely drive further clashes in the coming years, particularly as countries continue to expand their fisheries in disputed territories. This, in turn, may exacerbate geopolitical and military tensions already present in the region.

## **1AC — FW**

### **FW**

#### **The standard is maximizing expected wellbeing.**

#### **Prefer it:**

#### **1] Actor specificity:**

#### **A] Aggregation – every policy benefits some and harms others, which also means side constraints freeze action.**

#### **B] No act-omission distinction – choosing to omit is an act itself – governments decide not to act which means being presented with the aff creates a choice between two actions, neither of which is an omission**

#### **C] No intent-foresight distinction – If we foresee a consequence, then it becomes part of our deliberation which makes it intrinsic to our action since we intend it to happen**

o/w

#### **2] Lexical pre-requisite: threats to bodily security preclude the ability for moral actors to effectively act upon other moral theories since they are in a constant state of crisis**