## AC – Policy

### AC – Plan

#### Space faring nations should restrict private asteroid mining.

### AC – Advantage

#### Mining is inevitable down the line regardless of capital limits because of oligopolistic consolidation

Ahadi 2/10/20 [Blake Ahadi works in project finance and operations at a private renewable energy developer. Before this, he worked in private banking, advising on investments, lending, and estate planning to clients in the Chicago private equity industry. He holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of Michigan and is pursuing an M.S. in Space Resources from the Colorado School of Mines. "Alternative financing for lunar mining exploration." https://www.thespacereview.com/article/3880/1]

The proliferation of a lunar economy rests upon patient access to capital and fostering innovative ideas for large-scale development. At the moment, capital requirements for lunar miners are too high for companies to succeed in a perfectly competitive market. For the lunar economy, the emergence of large, vertically integrated companies will lead to the economies of scale necessary for proliferation. Terrestrially, when an industry becomes mature and beholden to traditional economics, like scarcity, a focus on profit margins takes over, and limitations emerge in the form of price manipulation and a lack of competition. As mentioned, the lunar economy will operate privately, and independent of scarcity, using profit margins to increase cash flow for innovation. An oligopoly of dedicated space holding companies, each comprised of diverse companies along the value chain, funded by the parent company and incentivized by prizes, will maintain a culture of innovation and competition. Rather than a few concentrated entities, each sacrificing their identity to their acquirer, the lunar economy will be an oligopoly of teams.

#### Multilateralism solves dangerous space mining and deregulation.

Edd Gent 20, freelance science and technology writer, “Space Mining Should Be a Global Project—But It's Not Starting Off That Way,” Singularity Hub, 10-12-2020, https://singularityhub.com/2020/10/12/the-us-is-trying-to-hijack-space-mining-and-there-could-be-disastrous-consequences/

Exploiting the resources of outer space might be key to the future expansion of the human species. But researchers argue that the US is trying to skew the game in its favor, with potentially disastrous consequences. The enormous cost of lifting material into space means that any serious effort to colonize the solar system will require us to rely on resources beyond our atmosphere. Water will be the new gold thanks to its crucial role in sustaining life, as well as the fact it can be split into hydrogen fuel and oxygen for breathing. Regolith found on the surface of rocky bodies like the moon and Mars will be a crucial building material, while some companies think it will eventually be profitable to extract precious metals and rare earth elements from asteroids and return them to Earth. But so far, there’s little in the way of regulation designed to govern how these activities should be managed. Now two Canadian researchers argue in a paper in Science that recent policy moves by the US are part of a concerted effort to refocus international space cooperation towards short-term commercial interests, which could precipitate a “race to the bottom” that sabotages efforts to safely manage the development of space. Aaron Boley and Michael Byers at the University of British Columbia trace back the start of this push to the 2015 Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act, which gave US citizens and companies the right to own and sell space resources under US law. In April this year, President Trump doubled down with an executive order affirming the right to commercial space mining and explicitly rejecting the idea that space is a “global commons,” flying in the face of established international norms. Since then, NASA has announced that any countries wishing to partner on its forthcoming Artemis missions designed to establish a permanent human presence on the moon will have to sign bilateral agreements known as Artemis Accords. These agreements will enshrine the idea that commercial space mining will be governed by national laws rather than international ones, the authors write, and that companies can declare “safety zones” around their operations to exclude others. Speaking to Space.com Mike Gold, the acting associate administrator for NASA’s Office of International and Interagency Relations, disputes the authors’ characterization of the accords and says they are based on the internationally-recognized Outer Space Treaty. He says they don’t include agreement on national regulation of mining or companies’ rights to establish safety zones, though they do assert the right to extract and use space resources. But given that they’ve yet to be released or even finalized, it’s not clear how far these rights extend or how they are enshrined in the agreements. And the authors point out that the fact that they are being negotiated bilaterally means the US will be able to use its dominant position to push its interpretation of international law and its overtly commercial goals for space development. Space policy designed around the exploitation of resources holds many dangers, say the paper authors. For a start, loosely-regulated space mining could result in the destruction of deposits that could hold invaluable scientific information. It could also kick up dangerous amounts of lunar dust that can cause serious damage to space vehicles, increase the amount of space debris, or in a worst-case scenario, create meteorites that could threaten satellites or even impact Earth. By eschewing a multilateral approach to setting space policy, the US also opens the door to a free-for-all where every country makes up its own rules. Russia is highly critical of the Artemis Accords process and China appears to be frozen out of it, suggesting that two major space powers will not be bound by the new rules. That potentially sets the scene for a race to the bottom, where countries compete to set the laxest rules for space mining to attract investment. The authors call on other nations to speak up and attempt to set rules through the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Writing in The Conversation, Scott Shackelford from Indiana University suggests a good model could be the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, which froze territorial claims and reserved the continent for “peaceful purposes” and “scientific investigation.” But the momentum behind the US’ push might be difficult to overcome. Last month, the agency announced it would pay companies to excavate small amounts of regolith on the moon. Boley and Byers admit that if this went ahead and was not protested by other nations, it could set a precedent in international law that would be hard to overcome. For better or worse, it seems that US dominance in space exploration means it’s in the driver’s seat when it comes to setting the rules. As they say, to the victor go the spoils.

#### Dangerous mining greatly increases the risk of space debris.

Sarah Scoles 15, “Dust from asteroid mining spells danger for satellites,” New Scientist, 5-27-2015, https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22630235-100-dust-from-asteroid-mining-spells-danger-for-satellites/

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. Handmer and Roa want to point out the problem now so that we can find a solution before any satellites get dinged. “It is possible to quantify and manage the risk,” says Handmer. “A few basic precautions will prevent harm due to stray asteroid material.”

#### Clustering makes the risk of collisions *uniquely high* and the risk is understated

Dr. Darren McKnight 17, Ph.D., Technical Director for Integrity Applications, Previously Senior Vice President and Director of Science and Technology Strategy at Science Applications International Corporation, “Proposed Series of Orbital Debris Remediation Activities,” 3rd International Conference and Exhibition on Satellite & Space Missions, 5/13/2017, https://iaaweb.org/iaa/Scientific%20Activity/debrisminutes03166.pdf [graphics omitted]

In the future, this population will be added to primarily from collisions between large objects in orbit as the number of LNT produced is proportional to the mass involved in a collision (or explosion).2 Cataloged debris produced from a catastrophic collision will be liberated at about 1-3 fragments per kilogram of mass involved while LNT production is around 10-40 fragments per kilogram of mass involved. The Iridium/Cosmos collision involved a total mass of 2,000kg and produced over 3,000 trackable fragments and likely 10,000-15,0003 LNT debris. The Feng-Yun purposeful collision yielded over 2,200 trackable fragments and likely over 30,000 LNT from only ~850kg of mass involved. While it is important to prevent these types of events from occurring in the future, the consequence of a collision (based on number of LNT produced) will be proportional to the mass involved in the collision. The term “mass involved” implies a good coupling of the impactor mass with the target mass. For a large fragment (e.g., several kilograms) striking a typical payload (that is densely built) in its main satellite body (vice striking a solar array or other appendage) at hypervelocity speeds (i.e., above 6km/s) will result in all the mass being “involved” in the debris. However, a large fragment striking a derelict rocket body, due to the way that the mass is concentrated at the ends of a rocket body, will likely not result in all of the mass being “involved” in the liberated debris. However, it is likely that when two large derelicts, either rocket bodies or payloads, collide with each other, then all of the mass will be involved due to the likely direct physical interaction between the mass. The table below summarizes the mass involvement scenarios which highlight why the massive-on-massive collisions are the focus of our analyses. Therefore, it is best to prevent the collision of the most massive objects with each other (higher consequence) and the ones that are the most likely (higher probability) since risk is probability multiplied by consequence. Our ability to model and predict the rate of collisions is based empirically upon only one catastrophic accidental collision event and a model developed on the kinetic theory of gases (KTG). However, clusters of massive objects that have identical inclinations plus similar and overlapping apogees/perigees may indeed have a greater probability of collision than predicted by the KTG-based algorithms as they are not randomly distributed and their orbital element evolution (e.g., change in right ascension of ascending node and argument of perigee) is also similar. It is hypothesized that these similarities could result in resonances of collision dynamics that may lead to larger probability of collision values than predicted with current algorithms. The not well-known fact is that many of the most massive objects are in tightly clumped clusters that will likely produce greater probability of collision than estimated by the KTG approach (see attached paper) and with the much larger consequence (i.e., creation of catalogued LNT fragments). The attached paper that studied this possibility shows some initial indications that this may indeed be true but much more analysis is needed to provide this conclusively. This table of clusters represents well over 50% of the total derelict mass in LEO. However, no one is currently monitoring these potential events. It is proposed that it would be a prudent risk management approach for space flight safety to monitor and characterize this inter-cluster collision risk. The Massive Collision Monitoring Activity (MCMA) is proposed whereby the encounters between members of these clusters are constantly monitored and close encounter information collected, plotted, analyzed, and shared. This would provide a rich research base for scientists and a predictive service for spacefaring countries. I am currently executing a subset of this proposed activity in an ad hoc fashion in conjunction with JSpOC. I have been monitoring the interaction dynamics between the SL-16 population in the 820- 865km altitude region for the last nine months.

#### Debris cascades cause global nuke war

Les Johnson 13, Deputy Manager for NASA's Advanced Concepts Office at the Marshall Space Flight Center, Co-Investigator for the JAXA T-Rex Space Tether Experiment and PI of NASA's ProSEDS Experiment, Master's Degree in Physics from Vanderbilt University, Popular Science Writer, and NASA Technologist, Frequent Contributor to the Journal of the British Interplanetary Sodety and Member of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, National Space Society, the World Future Society, and MENSA, Sky Alert!: When Satellites Fail, p. 9-12 [language modified]

Whatever the initial cause, the result may be the same. A satellite destroyed in orbit will break apart into thousands of pieces, each traveling at over 8 km/sec. This virtual shotgun blast, with pellets traveling 20 times faster than a bullet, will quickly spread out, with each pellet now following its own orbit around the Earth. With over 300,000 other pieces of junk already there, the tipping point is crossed and a runaway series of collisions begins. A few orbits later, two of the new debris pieces strike other satellites, causing them to explode into thousands more pieces of debris. The rate of collisions increases, now with more spacecraft being destroyed. Called the "Kessler Effect", after the NASA scientist who first warned of its dangers, these debris objects, now numbering in the millions, cascade around the Earth, destroying every satellite in low Earth orbit. Without an atmosphere to slow them down, thus allowing debris pieces to bum up, most debris (perhaps numbering in the millions) will remain in space for hundreds or thousands of years. Any new satellite will be threatened by destruction as soon as it enters space, effectively rendering many Earth orbits unusable. But what about us on the ground? How will this affect us? Imagine a world that suddenly loses all of its space technology. If you are like most people, then you would probably have a few fleeting thoughts about the Apollo-era missions to the Moon, perhaps a vision of the Space Shuttle launching astronauts into space for a visit to the International Space Station (ISS), or you might fondly recall the "wow" images taken by the orbiting Hubble Space Telescope. In short, you would know that things important to science would be lost, but you would likely not assume that their loss would have any impact on your daily life. Now imagine a world that suddenly loses network and cable television, accurate weather forecasts, Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation, some cellular phone networks, on-time delivery of food and medical supplies via truck and train to stores and hospitals in virtually every community in America, as well as science useful in monitoring such things as climate change and agricultural sustainability. Add to this the [destruction] ~~crippling~~ of the US military who now depend upon spy satellites, space-based communications systems, and GPS to know where their troops and supplies are located at all times and anywhere in the world. The result is a nightmarish world, one step away from nuclear war, economic disaster, and potential mass starvation. This is the world in which we are now perilously close to living. Space satellites now touch our lives in many ways. And, unfortunately, these satellites are extremely vulnerable to risks arising from a half-century of carelessness regarding protecting the space environment around the Earth as well as from potential adversaries such as China, North Korea, and Iran. No government policy has put us at risk. It has not been the result of a conspiracy. No, we are dependent upon them simply because they offer capabilities that are simply unavailable any other way. Individuals, corporations, and governments found ways to use the unique environment of space to provide services, make money, and better defend the country. In fact, only a few space visionaries and futurists could have foreseen where the advent of rocketry and space technology would take us a mere 50 years since those first satellites orbited the Earth. It was the slow progression of capability followed by dependence that puts us at risk. The exploration and use of space began in 1957 with the launch of Sputnik 1 by the Soviet Union. The United States soon followed with Explorer 1. Since then, the nations of the world have launched over 8,000 spacecraft. Of these, several hundred are still providing information and services to the global economy and the world's governments. Over time, nations, corporations, and individuals have grown accustomed to the services these spacecraft provide and many are dependent upon them. Commercial aviation, shipping, emergency services, vehicle fleet tracking, financial transactions, and agriculture are areas of the economy that are increasingly reliant on space. Telestar 1, launched into space in the year of my birth, 1962, relayed the world's first live transatlantic news feed and showed that space satellites can be used to relay television signals, telephone calls, and data. The modern telecommunications age was born. We've come a long way since Telstar; most television networks now distribute most, if not ali, of their programming via satellite. Cable television signals are received by local providers from satellite relays before being sent to our homes and businesses using cables. With 65% of US households relying on cable television and a growing percentage using satellite dishes to receive signals from direct-to-home satellite television providers, a large number of people would be cut off from vital information in an emergency should these satellites be destroyed. And communications satellites relay more than television signals. They serve as hosts to corporate video conferences and convey business, banking, and other commercial information to and from all areas of the planet. The first successful weather satellite was TIROS. Launched in 1960, TIROS operated for only 78 days but it served as the precursor for today's much more long-lived weather satellites, which provide continuous monitoring of weather conditions around the world. Without them, providing accurate weather forecasts for virtually any place on the globe more than a day in advance would be nearly impossible. Figure !.1 shows a satellite image of Hurricane Ivan approaching the Alabama Gulf coast in 2004. Without this type of information, evacuation warnings would have to be given more generally, resulting in needless evacuations and lost economic activity (from areas that avoid landfall) and potentially increasing loss of life in areas that may be unexpectedly hit. The formerly top-secret Corona spy satellites began operation in 1959 and provided critical information about the Soviet Union's military and industrial capabilities to a nervous West in a time of unprecedented paranoia and nuclear risk. With these satellites, US military planners were able to understand and assess the real military threat posed by the Soviet Union. They used information provided by spy satellites to help avert potential military confrontations on numerous occasions. Conversely, the Soviet Union's spy satellites were able to observe the United States and its allies, with similar results. It is nearly impossible to move an army and hide it from multiple eyes in the sky. Satellite information is critical to all aspects of US intelligence and military planning. Spy satellites are used to monitor compliance with international arms treaties and to assess the military activities of countries such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Figure 1.2 shows the capability of modem unclassified space-based imaging. The capability of the classified systems is presumed to be significantly better, providing much more detail. Losing these satellites would place global militaries on high alert and have them operating, literally, in the blind. Our military would suddenly become vulnerable in other areas as well. GPS, a network of 24-32 satellites in medium-Earth orbit, was developed to provide precise position information to the military, and it is now in common use by individuals and industry. The network, which became fully operational in 1993, allows our armed forces to know their exact locations anywhere in the world. It is used to guide bombs to their targets with unprecedented accuracy, requiring that only one bomb be used to destroy a target that would have previously required perhaps hundreds of bombs to destroy in the pre-GPS world (which, incidentally, has resulted in us reducing our stockpile of non-GPS-guided munitions dramatically). It allows soldiers to navigate in the dark or in adverse weather or sandstorms. Without GPS, our military advantage over potential adversaries would be dramatically reduced or eliminated.

#### Satellites are key to environmental monitoring – debris collapses it and causes climate extinciton

Ben Biggs 18, PhD Researcher in Computer Vision and Deep Learning at the University of Cambridge, “How Satellites Can Protect Planet Earth From Disaster”, HowItWorks Daily, 12/22/2018, https://www.howitworksdaily.com/how-satellites-can-protect-planet-earth-from-disaster/

It might not look it, but our planet is a fragile place. A delicate balance of pressure, temperature and gases keeps us alive, as our atmosphere lets in enough heat for us to thrive – but not too much that we get too toasty. For many years our planet has looked after itself with ease. Now, with humans on the scene, things are changing more than ever, from climate change to mass deforestation. If our planet is going to survive long into the future it’s going to need our help. Fortunately, we’ve got plenty of missions that are working for the benefit of our world already. Using observation satellites in orbit, scientists have been monitoring Earth for decades, watching how the planet pulsates and changes over time. From orbit we can watch how species migrate, identify and predict environmental changes and even fix problems. A great example of this was the global effort to repair a hole in the ozone above the Antarctic back in 1987. Two years prior, scientists had discovered that chemicals known as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) – produced by fridges and aerosols, among other things – were causing the hole to grow. As a result countries around the world agreed to phase out the use of CFC as part of the Montreal Protocol. In early 2018, NASA announced that its Aura satellite had watched the hole successfully close, with it expected to fully repair as early as 2060. It was proof that we could work together to change the planet for the better. Aura is part of a broader NASA project called the Earth Observing System (EOS). This programme, which began in 1997, has seen NASA launch missions and instruments into orbit. This has included the groundbreaking Landsat series of satellites, which have provided surface images of the whole globe. Then there’s the Terra mission that launched in 2009 and studies clouds, sea ice and more from orbit. Most of these satellites are in polar orbits, which means they orbit the planet from top to bottom so that it rotates underneath and gives them a global view. Planning for the EOS began back in the 1980s, with NASA keen to regularly fly instruments for at least 15 years. “Human activity has altered the condition of the Earth by reconfiguring the landscape, by changing the composition of the global atmosphere, and by stressing the biosphere in countless ways,” they noted in a handbook in 1993. “There are strong indications that natural change is being accelerated by human intervention.” More than two dozen missions have been launched as part of the EOS to date. Among the programme’s many accomplishments, scientists watched as an ice shelf collapsed on the Antarctic Peninsula in 2002 using the Terra satellite. The same satellite, along with the Aqua satellite launched in 2002, has provided a global view of how the vegetation cycle changes over the course of a year and the effect the climate has on it. Those same two satellites have also allowed us to see how summer sea ice in the Arctic is decreasing, which means that more of the Sun’s light is being absorbed rather than being reflected, raising global temperatures. The EOS has helped in other ways too, such as enabling scientists to keep a close eye on the levels of toxic gases like carbon monoxide being emitted from massive fires in the atmosphere. This allows people on the ground to be alerted to these dangers, and they can in turn be advised to limit their outdoor activity to protect their health. The EOS is even helping to track and monitor rare animals, such as chameleons in Madagascar. Here, scientists have been able to use satellite imagery, combined with known habitats of the animals, to map out where they are likely to be living. It would take survey teams on the ground thousands of years to replicate this information without satellites. It’s not just NASA that has been keeping a close eye on the planet. The European Space Agency (ESA) runs the Copernicus project, billed as the world’s largest single Earth observation campaign. Previously known as the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) programme, it began with the launch of the Sentinel-1A satellite in April 2014. This radar imaging satellite provides images both day and night and during all weather conditions, and these are being used to map sea ice, track oil spills and more. This has been followed by half a dozen more missions, with the latest – Sentinel-3B – launching on 25 April 2018. This mission is focusing on monitoring the behaviour and health of the oceans, but it has a wide range of abilities. It flies in formation with its predecessor, Sentinel-3A, and together the two of them can provide global data for Earth across an entire day. The satellites can measure the temperature over oceans, as well as the colour and height of the sea. They can also monitor wildfires from space, check the health of vegetation and map the way that land is being used around the world. And there are more Sentinel satellites on the way. In the coming years we’ll see the Sentinel-4 and Sentinel-5 missions launch, studying the composition of our planet’s atmosphere, while Sentinel-6 will measure global sea surface height for ocean and climate studies. “Copernicus will help shape the future of our planet for the benefit of all,” said the ESA, also noting that it isthe “most ambitious Earth observation programme to date,” one that will provide accurate and timely data on the environment, climate change and more. All of this data is vital for directing climate policy and other human activities on Earth. By observing our planet around the clock from space we can see the direct effect that humans are having on it. These are not the only climate-monitoring missions run by NASA and the ESA. The former has a number of other missions, including the Deep Space Climate Observatory, which observes the sunlit side of Earth. The latter has eight missions on the books in its Earth Explorer programme, including a mission to study how Earth’s gravity field varies over the surface of the planet, called the Gravity field and steady-state Ocean Circulation Explorer (GOCE), which ended in 2013. In 2016, countries of the world came together to sign the Paris Climate Agreement, a global effort to reduce carbon emissions to prevent the global average temperature rising by two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. While the US later infamously reneged from this agreement, it was proof that with enough level-headed minds, minds that can see the data from missions showing how the planet is changing, we can take action. Humans continue to have a major effect on the planet, for better or worse, and monitoring that change is vital to our planet’s survival.

#### Independently, it shreds the ozone.

Josy **O’Donnell 18**, creator of Conservation Institute, “WHAT HAPPENS TO THE “SPACE JUNK” THAT FALLS BACK TO EARTH?,” https://ourplnt.com/space-junk-earth/#axzz5xRXia1uD

Second, as the orbits of man-made debris degrade, and they re-enter the earth’s atmosphere, **a shock wave occurs** in the upper reaches of the layer of ozone. This physical stress on the area can be damaging to the protective buffer. Researchers have discovered that the impact of objects entering the atmosphere at high speed can produce nitric oxide during the rapid cooling that follows the splitting of oxygen and nitrogen. **Nitric oxide is very destructive to the ozone layer**. Finally, though most of the debris that re-enters the earth’s atmosphere is vaporized due to the build- up of intense heat, the chemical residue of this material can also react with the ozone and deplete it. Some scientists fear that erosion of the ozone layer may cause global climate change. They predict that these altered weather patterns could transform fertile farmland into deserts and threaten human life on the planet. Thus, the environmental effect of space debris upon the ozone is of great concern to these experts.

#### Extinction

Sean **Martin 18**, express reporter, “Ozone layer DECAYING as scientists fear Earth 'heading towards MASS-EXTINCTION',” https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/916405/ozone-layer-destroyed-recovering-mass-extinction-dinosaurs

News in January broke that the ozone was on its way to recovering as Earth cuts down on CO2 emissions. However, on closer inspection, scientists now say the ozone layer – the part of the atmosphere which protects us from harmful radiation – **is continuing to deplete** over major cities, and is only really recovering over Antarctica. Chemicals known as CFCs, which are found in aerosols for example, have been destroying the ozone layer since the 1970s. The Montreal Protocol was agreed in 1987 to phase out CFCs, but researchers say it may be too late. Study co-author Professor Joanna Haigh, co-director of the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment at Imperial College London, said of the study published in Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics: "Ozone has been seriously declining globally since the 1980s, but while the banning of CFCs is leading to a recovery at the poles, the same does not appear to be true for the lower latitudes. "The potential for harm in lower latitudes may actually be worse than at the poles. The decreases in ozone are less than we saw at the poles before the Montreal Protocol was enacted, but UV radiation is more intense in these regions and more people live there.” In a separate study, researchers have found a thinning ozone layer could have **led to a mass extinction** 252 million years ago – meaning a depletion of the protective layer of the atmosphere could be more **catastrophic** than previously thought.

#### Unregulated mining causes space war and turns DA’s

Fengna Xu 20, Law School, Xi’an Jiaotong University, “The approach to sustainable space mining: issues, challenges, and solutions,” Fengna Xu 2020 IOP Conf. Ser.: Mater. Sci. Eng. 738 012014

3.1. Conflicts between multiple States Space resources, as res communis [3], can be appropriated to some extent on the basis of freedom of exploration and use of the outer space. However, it is likely to follow a ‘first come, first served’ approach to space resources activities. In fact, the ‘first come, first served’ approach drove early and rapid development of oil industry of the US in the 19th century, although a frenetic race among surface owners followed and led to an extraordinary waste of oil and gas. Given that so far there are no agreement or property rights on space resources, they are essentially in a ‘state of nature’. Allocation by the ‘first come, first served’ approach is simple and requires very little government involvement to deter another one (called a ‘junior’) from displacing the rightful first comer (called a ‘senior’). However, overprotecting the senior by priority rights could run the risk of disorder, waste, inequality, and even monopoly. The Outer Space Treaty, requires State parties to conduct all their activities in outer space ‘with due regard to the corresponding interests of all other States Parties’. Without specific coordinating rules, conflicts between multiple States are likely to happen. Private entities may choose to arm themselves to safeguard their own interests. In extreme cases, States may also protect them by placing weapons of mass destruction in outer space if necessary [4]. As a result, priority rights should not be absolute but subjected to some arrangements. 7

#### That goes nuclear – the domain is fragile and offense dominant, so even small incidents escalate

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Why space is a particular problem for crisis stability

For a number of reasons, space poses particular challenges in preventing a crisis from starting or from being managed well. Some of these are to do with the physical nature of space, such as the short timelines and difficulty of attribution inherent in space operations. Some are due to the way space is used, such as the entanglement of strategic and tactical missions and the prevalence of dual-use technologies. Some are due to the history of space, such the absence of a shared understanding of appropriate behaviors and consequences, and a dearth of stabilizing personal and institutional relationships. While some of these have terrestrial equivalents, taken together, they present a special challenge.

The vulnerability of satellites and first strike incentives

Satellites are inherently fragile and difficult to protect; in the language of strategic planners, space is an “offense-dominant” regime. This can lead to a number of pressures to strike first that don‘t exist for other, better-protected domains. Satellites travel on predictable orbits, and many pass repeatedly over all of the earth‘s nations. Low-earth orbiting satellites are reachable by missiles much less capable than those needed to launch satellites into orbit, as well as by directed energy which can interfere with sensors or with communications channels. Because launch mass is at a premium, satellite armor is impractical. Maneuvers on orbit need costly amounts of fuel, which has to be brought along on launch, limiting satellites‘ ability to move away from threats. And so, these very valuable satellites are also inherently vulnerable and may present as attractive targets.

Thus, an actor with substantial dependence on space has an incentive to strike first if hostilities look probable, to ensure these valuable assets are not lost. Even if both (or all) sides in a conflict prefer not to engage in war, this weakness may provide an incentive to approach it closely anyway.

A RAND Corporation monograph commissioned by the Air Force15 described the issue this way:

First-strike stability is a concept that Glenn Kent and David Thaler developed in 1989 to examine the structural dynamics of mutual deterrence between two or more nuclear states.16 It is similar to crisis stability, which Charles Glaser described as ―a measure of the countries‘ incentives not to preempt in a crisis, that is, not to attack first in order to beat the attack of the enemy,‖17 except that it does not delve into the psychological factors present in specific crises. Rather, first strike stability focuses on each side‘s force posture and the balance of capabilities and vulnerabilities that could make a crisis unstable should a confrontation occur.

For example, in the case of the United States, the fact that conventional weapons are so heavily dependent on vulnerable satellites may create incentives for the US to strike first terrestrially in the lead up to a confrontation, before its space-derived advantages are eroded by anti-satellite attacks.18 Indeed, any actor for which satellites or space-based weapons are an important part of its military posture, whether for support missions or on-orbit weapons, will feel “use it or lose it” pressure because of the inherent vulnerability of satellites.

Short timelines and difficulty of attribution

The compressed timelines characteristic of crises combine with these “use it or lose it” pressures to shrink timelines. This dynamic couples dangerously with the inherent difficulty of determining the causes of satellite degradation, whether malicious or from natural causes, in a timely way.

Space is a difficult environment in which to operate. Satellites orbit amidst increasing amounts of debris. A collision with a debris object the size of a marble could be catastrophic for a satellite, but objects of that size cannot be reliably tracked. So a failure due to a collision with a small piece of untracked debris may be left open to other interpretations. Satellite electronics are also subject to high levels of damaging radiation. Because of their remoteness, satellites as a rule cannot be repaired or maintained. While on-board diagnostics and space surveillance can help the user understand what went wrong, it is difficult to have a complete picture on short timescales. Satellite failure on-orbit is a regular occurrence19 (indeed, many satellites are kept in service long past their intended lifetimes).

In the past, when fewer actors had access to satellite-disrupting technologies, satellite failures were usually ascribed to “natural” causes. But increasingly, even during times of peace operators may assume malicious intent. More to the point, in a crisis when the costs of inaction may be perceived to be costly, there is an incentive to choose the worst-case interpretation of events even if the information is incomplete or inconclusive.

Entanglement of strategic and tactical missions

During the Cold War, nuclear and conventional arms were well separated, and escalation pathways were relatively clear. While space-based assets performed critical strategic missions, including early warning of ballistic missile launch and secure communications in a crisis, there was a relatively clear sense that these targets were off limits, as attacks could undermine nuclear deterrence. In the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, the US and Soviet Union pledged not to interfere with each other‘s ―national technical means‖ of verifying compliance with the agreement, yet another recognition that attacking strategically important satellites could be destabilizing.20 There was also restraint in building the hardware that could hold these assets at risk.

However, where the lines between strategic satellite missions and other missions are blurred, these norms can be weakened. For example, the satellites that provide early warning of ballistic missile launch are associated with nuclear deterrent posture, but also are critical sensors for missile defenses. Strategic surveillance and missile warning satellites also support efforts to locate and destroy mobile conventional missile launchers. Interfering with an early warning sensor satellite might be intended to dissuade an adversary from using nuclear weapons first by degrading their missile defenses and thus hindering their first-strike posture. However, for a state that uses early warning satellites to enable a “hair trigger” or launch-on-attack posture, the interference with such a satellite might instead be interpreted as a precursor to a nuclear attack. It may accelerate the use of nuclear weapons rather than inhibit it.

Misperception and dual-use technologies

Some space technologies and activities can be used both for relatively benign purposes but also for hostile ones. It may be difficult for an actor to understand the intent behind the development, testing, use, and stockpiling of these technologies, and see threats where there are none. (Or miss a threat until it is too late.) This may start a cycle of action and reaction based on misperception. For example, relatively low-mass satellites can now maneuver autonomously and closely approach other satellites without their cooperation; this may be for peaceful purposes such as satellite maintenance or the building of complex space structures, or for more controversial reasons such as intelligence-gathering or anti-satellite attacks.

Ground-based lasers can be used to dazzle the sensors of an adversary‘s remote sensing satellites, and with sufficient power, they may damage those sensors. The power needed to dazzle a satellite is low, achievable with commercially available lasers coupled to a mirror which can track the satellite. Laser ranging networks use low-powered lasers to track satellites and to monitor precisely the Earth‘s shape and gravitational field, and use similar technologies. 21

Higher-powered lasers coupled with satellite-tracking optics have fewer legitimate uses. Because midcourse missile defense systems are intended to destroy long-range ballistic missile warheads, which travel at speeds and altitudes comparable to those of satellites, such defense systems also have inherent ASAT capabilities. In fact, while the technologies being developed for long-range missile defenses might not prove very effective against ballistic missiles—for example, because of the countermeasure problems associated with midcourse missile defense— they could be far more effective against satellites. This capacity is not just theoretical. In 2007, China demonstrated a direct-ascent anti-satellite capability which could be used both in an ASAT and missile defense role, and in 2009, the United States used a ship-based missile defense interceptor to destroy a satellite, as well. US plans indicated a projected inventory of missile defense interceptors with capability to reach all low earth orbiting satellites in the dozens in the 2020s, and in the hundreds by 2030.22

Discrimination

The consequences of interfering with a satellite may be vastly different depending on who is affected and how, and whether the satellite represents a legitimate military objective.

However, it will not always be clear who the owners and operators of a satellite are, and users of a satellite‘s services may be numerous and not public. Registration of satellites is incomplete23 and current ownership is not necessarily updated in a readily available repository. The identification of a satellite as military or civilian may be deliberately obscured. Or its value as a military asset may change over time; for example, the share of capacity of a commercial satellite used by military customers may wax and wane. A potential adversary‘s satellite may have different or additional missions that are more vital to that adversary than an outsider may perceive. An ASAT attack that creates persistent debris could result in significant collateral damage to a wide range of other actors; unlike terrestrial attacks, these consequences are not limited geographically, and could harm other users unpredictably.

In 2015, the Pentagon‘s annual wargame, or simulated conflict, involving space assets focused on a future regional conflict. The official report out24 warned that it was hard to keep the conflict contained geographically when using anti-satellite weapons:

As the wargame unfolded, a regional crisis quickly escalated, partly because of the interconnectedness of a multi-domain fight involving a capable adversary. The wargame participants emphasized the challenges in containing horizontal escalation once space control capabilities are employed to achieve limited national objectives.

Lack of shared understanding of consequences/proportionality

States have fairly similar understandings of the implications of military actions on the ground, in the air, and at sea, built over decades of experience. The United States and the Soviet Union/Russia have built some shared understanding of each other‘s strategic thinking on nuclear weapons, though this is less true for other states with nuclear weapons. But in the context of nuclear weapons, there is an arguable understanding about the crisis escalation based on the type of weapon (strategic or tactical) and the target (counterforce—against other nuclear targets, or countervalue—against civilian targets).

Because of a lack of experience in hostilities that target space-based capabilities, it is not entirely clear what the proper response to a space activity is and where the escalation thresholds or “red lines” lie. Exacerbating this is the asymmetry in space investments; not all actors will assign the same value to a given target or same escalatory nature to different weapons.

#### Commercialized proximity mining operations create dual-use deflection risks – inherent interoperability makes dangerous repurposing easy and likely

Howe 15 [Jim Howe is a writer and policy analyst who focuses on space and national security issues. He works in the nuclear power industry. COMMON GROUND: Asteroid Mining and Planetary Defense. Summer 2015. https://space.nss.org/media/Asteroid-Mining-And-Planetary-Defense.pdf]

Extensive and prolonged proximity operations will be an essential element of most types of planetary defense mitigation missions. The most technologically mature method for fragmentation or deflection of a hazardous object is through a surface, subsurface, or stand-off nuclear explosion: The tremendous impulsive force of the blast and resulting surface ablation could, in one moment, deliver the necessary velocity change to the body to miss its future collision with Earth. Time permitting, to assure exact positioning and maximum deflective or fragmentation effect, the nuclear device would be buried, anchored to the surface, or orbiting just above the asteroid, an effort that would involve precise proximity operations.

On the opposite end of the spectrum for deflecting an inbound body are the “slow push" methods, which would deliver a minute but steady deflective force to the asteroid or comet, over time providing a cumulative change in velocity. With few exceptions, every proposed slow push technique would be dependent on extended operations in close proximity to the body. Gravity tractors would hover a spacecraft near the asteroid for years or decades, slowly imparting a deflective gravitational force; an enhanced gravity tractor would first collect boulders or regolith from the threatening body, to increase the mass and gravitational pull of the spacecraft. Laser or solar ablation methods would require the stationing of a spacecraft near the asteroid to direct the ablative beam. Using thrusters or a space tug would require direct physical contact with the body for years on end, nudging it to alter its velocity. Mass driver systems would land and anchor a robotic mining apparatus on the asteroid’s surface, to cast a steady stream of regolith into space and produce a minute but steady deflective counterforce.

Similarly, asteroid or comet mining would rely entirely on the ability to conduct reliable, long-term, repetitive proximity operations. Several mining concepts have been analyzed. The most common concept would land and anchor robotic mining and support systems on the asteroid or comet; these systems would methodically drill, scrape, crush, lift, or scoop the desired minerals or ice from the body. Support systems would discard unwanted tailings and transport the ore to a processing station or collection facility. The mining operation could occur on the surface, in pits, or in caverns cut into the interior of the asteroid or comet.

Alternative mining methods include leaching minerals through the injection of high pressure steam, fully encapsulating a small asteroid or comet and capturing the escaping water as the container is heated by the Sun, and collecting water vapor from a passing comet using a spacecraft stationed in a trailing position behind it. Each of these activities would require the ability to operate on and near the surface of the body for long periods.

The commonalities between planetary defense and asteroid mining are extensive for the wide range of proximity operations. For both endeavors, hovering, orbiting, landing, and anchoring on the space body are essential competencies. The same base technologies that can be used to mine metals could be employed in burying a nuclear device to fragment an asteroid, or as a mass driver apparatus used in deflection. The technologies that could be employed to secure thrusters or a solar sail to a tumbling asteroid to change its orbit could be adapted to anchor a full suite of mining equipment to the surface of a resource-rich body.

#### That increases the risk of accidental collisions, astro-terror, and space weaponization

Mares 15 [Miroslav Mares, Professor, at the Division of Security and Strategic Studies, Masaryk University, Czech Republic. Jakub Drmola PhD student, at the Divison of Security and Strategic Studies, Masaryk University, Czech Republic. Revisiting the deflection dilemma. October 1, 2015. https://academic.oup.com/astrogeo/article/56/5/5.15/235650]

Sooner or later, in order to avoid the fate of the dinosaurs, humanity needs to develop scientific and technological capabilities to prevent extinction-level impact events. But most solutions bring about new challenges, because new technologies rarely have only one application. Here lies the dilemma: any technology allowing us to deflect asteroids from a collision trajectory with the Earth could also be used to direct them towards the Earth. This means we could potentially turn any future near-miss into an impact, with all its devastating consequences.

Sagan & Ostro (1994b) concluded that this is a risk not worth taking. Considering the very low probabilities of impacts with objects larger than 1 km (generally less than 1 in 5000 for a given century), they were more worried about the misuse of such trajectory-altering technology than the undiverted asteroids themselves. Humans visited a great deal of violence upon each other during the 20th century; war has been prevalent and increasingly technological. The beginning of the 21st century does not seem overly promising either. The risk that one of humanity's irrational totalitarian powers decides to have some nearby asteroid steered towards Earth might simply be too high. Many people still see the default cosmic odds as preferable to the lessons of recent history.

Later on, a modification of sorts to the deflection dilemma appeared, positing that the “real” dilemma (Schweickart 2004, Morrison 2010) lies in putting various parts of the Earth and its population in harm's way during a deflection attempt. Inevitably, any mission to deflect an object that is on a collision course with the Earth will involve moving its supposed point of impact across the surface until it misses the planet entirely. Should such a deflection attempt fail to modify the trajectory sufficiently, the impact would still occur, albeit in a different area. This could expose to risk countries that were not originally threatened by the asteroid (depending on its size and path), while diminishing the risk to those living near the original point of impact. The damage and casualties around this new and modified point of impact would then, to some extent, be caused by those who tried but failed to deflect the asteroid. The repercussions of such an event would certainly be grave.

Privatization and industry

Both of these versions of the deflection dilemma are essentially state-centric and neither presumes that this technology might be wielded by private companies and non-state actors. But the current trend of greater involvement of private companies in space suggests that states might be unable (or unwilling) to maintain their exclusive hold on the advanced space technologies. The private sector is currently hot on the heels of national and international space agencies in exploring feasible and economically viable options. At the moment, private companies are already in the business (or at least in the process of making it a profitable business) of resupplying the International Space Station, taking tourists to the edge of space and operating communication satellites. And, recently, a new area of potential commercialization of space, asteroid mining, has received increased attention and investment. It has already spawned private companies (such as Deep Space Industries and Planetary Resources, Inc.); this industry is highly relevant to the deflection dilemma (Ostro 1999).

While the idea of mining asteroids carries with it an air of science fiction (as all space-based endeavours do, at some stage), it is based on science fact. One of the most significant facts on which to base a space mining industry is the apparent abundance of highly valued raw materials in asteroids. Platinum, rhodium and other precious metals are extremely useful because of their catalytic and electrical properties, but are also exceedingly rare in the Earth's crust. While such metals sank deep into the planet during core formation, asteroids retained their original composition and even delivered much of the accessible reserves to our planet in the form of meteorite bombardment (Willbold et al. 2011). Some of the largest known deposits of these metals on Earth are found within ancient impact craters. Platinum-group metals are deemed critical to our modern technology-based civilization, without substitutes in many applications, and their supply is at risk of “geopolitical machinations” (Graedel 2013). The combination of natural scarcity and industrial demand leads to their high price, which easily rivals that of gold. Because space missions are inherently expensive, these precious metals are prime high-value candidates for economically viable asteroid mining. Since the projected market value of these metals within an asteroid is in the order of billions or even hundreds of billions of US dollars (depending on the size of the asteroid), the success of the industry comes down to developing technically feasible and cost-effective methods of mining them and retrieving them (Blair 2000, Gerlach 2005). The other interesting and potentially worthwhile resource we could harvest from asteroids is water. Not only is liquid water required by astronauts to survive, but it can also be broken down into oxygen and hydrogen to be used as fuel. And, while water is abundant and cheap here on Earth, it is very expensive to transport it to orbit. It costs $3000–$10 000 per kilogramme to launch water (or anything else) to low Earth orbit and about two or three times more for geostationary transfer orbit (Jain & Trost 2013). It is not the prospect of procuring something we covet here on the surface of the Earth that makes this venture attractive, but rather the idea of not having to wage an expensive battle with Earth's gravity each time we want to make use of something as mundane as water in space. If the costs associated with mining water from asteroids can be brought below the cost of launching water from Earth, this seemingly counter-intuitive industry might take off and become profitable. Additionally, through the use of some form of refuelling depots, it would probably in turn make space endeavours more affordable and sustainable. The same would apply if some of the more common metals found in asteroids (such as iron or nickel) were used to build structures directly in orbit instead of launching them from the Earth. The risks of mining asteroids 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 well-funded 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.

#### The dilemma causes the most power WMD ever – it’s more likely than natural hits and structurally outweighs

Deudney 20 [Daniel H. Deudney is professor of political science, international relations and political theory at Johns Hopkins University. He holds a BA in political science and philosophy from Yale University, a MPA in science, technology, and public policy from the George Washington University, and a PhD in political science from Princeton University. "Dark Skies: Space Expansionism, Planetary Geopolitics, and the Ends of Humanity." Google Books]

While asteroids loom large in the horizons of habitat and some military expansionists, they receive little attention from arms controllers and most global security thinkers. As a planetary defense project, diverting asteroids seems a logical part of a Whole Earth Security program and international space infrastructure security cooperation, but opponents of military space expansion are sharply divided about asteroidal diversion. In part these disputes carry over from Cold War nuclear debates, with Edward Teller, Darth Vader for arms controllers, pushing nuclear solutions to the asteroid threat, and arms controllers raising alarms.

An important analysis of the dangers inherent in the deflection of asteroidal bodies is provided by Carl Sagan and Stephen Ostro.67 Few figures of the Space Age have been as productive and prominent as Sagan, a planetary astronomer, science educator, and SF author.68 Over the later decades of the twentieth century Sagan’s work on planetary science, particularly Mars, his television series Cosmos, and his science fiction, most notably Contact (coauthored with Ann Druyan), made him an international celebrity and influential voice for science and space exploration. Unlike virtually all other space scientists and engineers of his era, Sagan also was active in advancing nuclear arms control, studying— and publicizing—the “nuclear winter” hypothesis and promoting cooperation in space to improve Soviet-American relations.69 Although a strong supporter of the larger habitat expansionist vision, Sagan insists large-scale space activities should occur only after nuclear disarmament and planetary habitat stability have been achieved because of an ominous asteroid “deflection dilemma.”70

The essence of the deflection dilemma is simple: species and civilizational survival inevitably will eventually require the development of the ability to deflect asteroids and comets away from Earth, but this technology also inherently creates the possibility that such objects could be directed toward the Earth. The existential stakes are clear: “the destructive energy latent in a large near-Earth asteroid dwarfs anything else the human species can get its hands on,” making them potentially “the most powerful weapon of mass destruction ever devised”71 (see Table 7.4. A and B).72 Once the population of these bodies is fully mapped, and technologies to deflect them are developed, Sagan argues, the prospects for collision increase over the natural rate due to the possibility of intentional bombardment. Given these possibilities, perhaps the reason the dinosaurs lasted for nearly two hundred million years is because they did not have a space program.

In his major book on the human space future, Pale Blue Dot, Sagan lays out several scenarios for intentional collisions. His arguments are essentially the arguments of nuclear arms controllers. Madmen exist, and some “achieve the highest levels of political power in modern industrial nations.”'3 Recalling the extreme destruction caused by Hitler and Stalin, Sagan posits the possibility that a “misanthropic psychopath” or a “megalomaniac lusting after ‘greatness’ or glory, a victim of ethnic violence bent on revenge, someone in the grip of severe testosterone poisoning, some religious fanatic hastening the Day of Judgment, or just some technicians incompetent or insufficiently vigilant” will bring about a catastrophic collision.74 Earth-approaching asteroids amount to “30,000 swords of Damocles hanging over our heads,” for which “there is no acceptable national solution.”75 And, like Cole and Salkeld (not mentioned), Sagan points to the possibilities of clandestine use of this technology.

#### Accidental and intentional deflection attacks outweigh the threat of conventional hits – only building in response time with enhanced tracking and attribution solves rogue strikes that bypass conventional deterrence

Dello-Iacovo 18 [Michael, PhD candidate (Mining Engineering), emphasis on space science, looking at asteroid exploration, mining and impact risk @ University of New South Wales. “Asteroids and comets as space weapons,” <http://www.michaeldello.com/asteroids-comets-space-weapons/>]

Ignoring accidental deflection, which might occur when an asteroid is moved to an Earth or Lunar orbit for research or mining purposes (see this now scrapped proposal to bring a small asteroid in to Lunar orbit), there are two categories of actors that might maliciously deflect such a body; state actors and terrorist groups.

A state actor might be incentivised to authorise an asteroid strike on an enemy or potential enemy in situations where they wouldn’t necessarily authorise a nuclear strike or conventional invasion. For example, let us consider an asteroid of around 20 m in diameter. Near Earth orbit asteroids of around this size are often only detected several hours or days before passing between Earth and the Moon. If a state actor is able to identify an asteroid that will pass near Earth in secret before the global community has, they can feasibly send a mission to alter its orbit to intersect with Earth in a way such that it would not be detected until it is much too late. Assuming the state actor did its job well enough, it would be impossible for anyone to lay blame on them, let alone even guess that it might have been caused by malicious intent.

An asteroid of this size would be expected to have enough energy to cause an explosion 30 times the strength of the nuclear bomb dropped over Hiroshima in WWII.

Footnote

\* An ‘existential threat’ typically refers to an event that could kill either all human life, or all life in general. A ‘catastrophic threat’ refers to an event that would cause substantial damage and suffering, but wouldn’t be expected to kill all human life, which would eventually rebuild.

#### Even limited deflection failures cause nuke war because they look like preemptive strikes and the risk is inversely proportion to size

Lovett 19, [Richard Lovett is a Cosmos contributor, The biggest danger about an asteroid strike? Lawyers, Blasting away at incoming space rock raises real risks of nuclear war, experts say. Richard A Lovett reports, May 7, https://cosmosmagazine.com/space/the-biggest-danger-about-an-asteroid-strike-lawyers]

Governments and space agencies seeking to protect the Earth by changing the courses of potentially hazardous asteroids might face major legal hurdles, even if our planet is in the crosshairs of a bolide big enough to kill millions, experts say. One problem is what would happen if one country, worried about protecting its own citizens, attempted to deflect the asteroid, screwed up, and accidentally dumped it on a neighbour. Space law, says David Koplow of Georgetown University Law Centre, Washington DC, is based on the principle of strict liability. “The concept is that space activities are hazardous and therefore the harm should not fall on an innocent bystander,” Koplow says. Another problem stems from the fact that only a few countries have the technological ability to deflect an incoming asteroid, and there is, at present, no international authority tasked with making sure everyone else is represented in the decision-making process. In fact, says Cordula Steinkogler, a space law expert at the University of Vienna, Austria, current treaties don’t even require nations to share information about such hazards, let alone act to protect each other. She notes, however, that the United Nations charter does establish a “very general” duty for them to act toward solving international problems that affect economic, social, cultural, educational, and health wellbeing. Failure to share information can be more than just an inconvenience. To start with, says Petr Boháček, of Charles University in Prague in the Czech Republic, it could make countries wonder if, instead of international cooperation, the rule is actually everyone for themselves. It’s a particularly important problem, he says, because the nations at risk of being hit by an asteroid may not be the ones with the greatest geopolitical power. “Asteroids do not discriminate,” he notes. The nation-state concept of sovereignty, he adds, dates back several hundred years. “I’m not sure how many concepts from the seventeenth century you use in your decision-making,” he says, “but making decisions for planetary defence based on this dinosaur method of decision-making may not be the best choice.” Another problem is that the nation hit by an asteroid might see it as an attack by a foe, and retaliate. “[It] could look like the damage of a nuclear attack,” says Seth Baum, executive director of the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute, a US-based think tank, “so the prospect [of] a counterattack seems like something worth taking very seriously.” Ironically, the risk of this is probably inversely proportional to the size of asteroid. A big asteroid, capable of wiping out an enormous swath of territory, would be seen coming well in advance, and have generated a media frenzy (assuming people didn’t brand it as “fake news”).

#### The mining itself increases the risk of asteroid collisions

Byers and Boley 19 [Michael Byers, Professor of Political Science at the University of British Columbia, BA in Political Studies and Phd in International Law from Cambridge, Byers has written a number of op-ed articles on space issues. Relax: An asteroid will just miss hitting Earth. But our actions could still have a deep impact. March 19, 2019. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-relax-an-asteroid-will-just-miss-hitting-earth-but-our-actions-could/]

Beyond the battle over resource extraction lies a more existential threat: the act of removing large quantities of mass from an asteroid could change its trajectory, potentially leading to a human-caused Earth impact. For this reason, any asteroid mining will have to be fully informed by astrodynamics, and closely regulated under international rules. And while the U.S., Luxembourg and Russia might regulate asteroid-mining companies closely with the involvement of planetary scientists, what would happen if a mining company were to incorporate a “flag of convenience state” such as Panama or Liberia? Would the same respect be paid to science and safety?

#### They cause nuke war, miscalc, and extinction

Baum 19 (Executive director of the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute,“Risk-Risk Tradeoff Analysis of Nuclear Explosives for Asteroid Deflection,” May 31, 2019, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/risa.13339.)

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). The 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).

#### Reject conventional risk calculus – the magnitude and inevitability of emerging NEO threats requires a totally different model for risk calculus

Koplow 19 [David A. Koplow. Professor of Law at Georgetown University. He specializes in the areas of public international law, national security law, and the intersection between international law and U.S. constitutional law. Koplow served as Special Counsel for Arms Control to the General Counsel of the Department of Defense (2009-2011); Deputy General Counsel for International Affairs at the Department of Defense (1997-1999); and as Attorney-Advisor and Special Assistant to the Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1978-1981). A Rhodes scholar, Koplow graduated from Harvard College and Yale Law School. "Exoatmospheric Plowshares: Using a Nuclear Explosive Device for Planetary Defense against an Incoming Asteroid," UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs 23, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 76-158]

Astronomers are fond of observing that the real question is not "whether" Earth will again be struck by a large asteroid, but "when." We can detect around the planet the remnants of scores of impact craters of diverse size and age left by previous NEOs, and the pockmarks are even more obvious on the Moon and other celestial bodies, where erosion has not degraded their silhouettes. As asteroids pinball around the Solar System, it is only a matter of time before the next jarring impact-time that might be measured in months or in millions of years.

The potential consequences of such a collision beggar belief Prehistoric experience demonstrates that all of human civilization, as well as most or all other forms of life on Earth, may hang in the balance. Even a more moderately sized asteroid could devastate a community or a country in an instant. As Igor Ashurbeyli assesses the stakes, developing countermeasures to this apocalyptic threat "must become the most important task that humanity must solve in the 2 1st century. "211

But the time frame matters, too. If we knew, hypothetically, that an extinction-level event was not going to occur for thousands or millions of years, why would we devote time, attention, and money to it now? A known risk of extermination, eons into the future, would pose profound philosophical and psychological conundrums, but preemptively responding to it would not be on anyone's active "to-do list" for generations.

Still, timing matters in another way, too. With our present state of astronomical intelligence, we cannot be certain about our planet's prolonged safety, and we must exhibit appropriate modesty about our confidence in the completeness of the inventory of known NEOs. Accordingly, the planet may not have much advance notice about the next Chicxulub, and we may be no more able than the dinosaurs to immediately invent our way out of an unanticipated fatal space specter. Frances Lyall and Paul B. Larsen summarize the issue this way: "Time might be too short adequately to deal with the crisis-missile or other technology has to be prepared." 2 12

It is difficult for humans to think rationally about this sort of problem-it is hard to get our collective minds around such enormous consequences and such tiny probabilities simultaneously-especially when people have so little first-hand experience with the causal phenomenon. A 2010 study by the National Academy of Sciences referred to this as a classic "zero times infinity" problem that thwarts human cognitive processing.213 Cass Sunstein and Richard Zeckhauser label the resulting bias in decision-making as "probability neglect"-a propensity to misunderstand the fearsome risks that are so difficult to conceptualize.2 14 Behavioral economics literature abounds with examinations of the collective non-rationality in our species' approach to high-severity/low-probability events, leading to extreme discounting of remote future catastrophes, to the detriment of individuals and society.2 15

The underdeveloped state of international law on trans-border disasters reflects this cognitive deficit. Perhaps this should not be surprising-the tasks of preventing, responding to, and rebuilding after global catastrophes are daunting. These are topics that sovereign states, as well as individual human beings, shy away from addressing-they are uncomfortable to think about; they can involve sharing resources, as well as sympathy, with foreigners; and they seem to call for spending immense sums of money on vanishingly remote contingencies. It will never be easy to marshal political support for developing, improving, and sustaining planetary defense capabilities that in all likelihood will never be exercised during any government official's term in office or even lifetime.216 Nevertheless, planetary defense represents one of the occasions in which these psychological barriers must be overcome.

The extended time frame in dealing with asteroids places special burdens on the effort to think rationally about very-low-probability dangers, because the people at risk are (likely) not ourselves but our far-distant progeny, generations so remote that the emotional connection to them is strained. We can appreciate that the good work of IAWN and SMPAG today may help increase the odds of our species' survival, but we must also be aware that the counter-asteroid technology available to earthlings a century or two from now will surely surpass today's puny capabilities in ways we cannot imagine.2 17 Collision with a body of 3-5 km diameter) could kill, say, half the world's population (soon to reach eight billion people) sometime in the next million years. On an actuarial basis, that works out to 4,000 statistical deaths annually. That is surely a significant fatality rate-enough to warrant substantial financial investment-even though the incidents would be extraordinarily "lumpy," in the sense that for almost all of those one million years, there would be no deaths at all due to asteroids, but in one year there would be an unprecedented catastrophe. At this rate, asteroids would rank above many other natural and bizarre phenomena that people fear (and that societies attempt to do something about), such as floods, tornados, airplane crashes, terrorism, or choking. Asteroids, however, would still fall far below other leading causes of death, such as automobile accidents, communicable diseases, and tobacco use. 218

One plausible formula would be to posit that a major NEO impact (a collision with a body of 3-5 km diameter) could kill, say, half the world's population (soon to reach eight billion people) some time in the next million years. On an actuarial basis, that works out to 4,000 statistical deaths annually. That is surely a significant fatality rate-enough to warrant substantial financial investment-even though the incidents would be extraordinarily "lumpy," in the sense that for almost all of those one million years, there would be no deaths at all due to asteroids, but in one year there would be an unprecedented catastrophe. At this rate, asteroids would rank above many other natural and bizarre phenomena that people fear (and that societies attempt to do something about), such as floods, tornados, airplane crashes, terrorism, or choking. Asteroids, however, would still fall far below other leading causes of death, such as automobile accidents, communicable diseases, and tobacco use. 2 18

This weird combination of probabilities and consequences promotes what many call the "giggle factor": humans' seemingly congenital reluctance to discuss planetary defense seriously without retreating to the silliest tropes about alien attacks or sci-fi thrillers. The topic seems to be ripped from kitschy movie trailers, not news headlines. 2 19

An additional fear factor here is the danger of surprise. If a significant asteroid were to arrive without warning-as in the Chelyabinsk incident-the afflicted country might perceive that it had been attacked by a hostile neighbor, rather than by a fickle Mother Nature. If, by further malign luck, the event happened to occur during a period of heightened international tensions, the propensity to misinterpret, and to respond precipitously, would rise. The unforeseen space object could thus catalyze a larger human-caused tragedy.2 20

### AC – Solvency

#### Creating a legal regime so everyone benefits from mining creates sustainable mining while avoiding conflict.

Morgan Saletta 16, PhD, History and Philosophy of Science, The University of Melbourne, “All of humanity should share in the space mining boom,” Conversation, 4-17-2016, https://theconversation.com/all-of-humanity-should-share-in-the-space-mining-boom-57740

One solitary asteroid might be worth trillions of dollars in platinum and other metals. Exploiting these resources could lead to a global boom in wealth, which could raise living standards worldwide and potentially benefit all of humanity. There are already companies, such as Planetary Resources, hoping to make mining in space a reality. Peter Diamondis, co-founder of Planetary Resources and founder of the XPrize Grand Challenges, believes that the benefits to humanity give us a moral imperative to explore and utilise space. He has also declared “there are twenty-trillion-dollar checks up there, waiting to be cashed!” However, behind the utopian rhetoric and dazzling dreams of riches lie some very real problems. Ownership and the Outer Space Treaty The framework of international space law is given by the Outer Space Treaty (OST), which entered into force in 1967. Among its main principals, the OST includes these statements: the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and shall be the province of all mankind and, outer space is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means Because the OST is generally interpreted as preventing anything like private fee-simple ownership, it is sometimes claimed to be an obstacle to commercial ventures in space. But such claims simply do not hold water. There are numerous terrestrial examples where resources are profitably exploited in the absence of fee-simple ownership. Governments routinely licence companies to engage in timber extraction, mining, offshore oil exploration and other activities, receiving royalties payments on production. In the United States, revenues from such royalties totalled some US$13.5 billion dollars in 2014 from federally owned or managed lands alone. Nevertheless, some proponents of mining in outer space argue for serious modification or an end to the Outer Space Treaty and claim, against the evidence, that without fee-simple ownership, there is no incentive for commercial exploitation. The Unites States’ Space Act of 2015 was just one volley – and a deliberately vague one at that – in this ongoing international debate. A balanced approach? The riches exist, but how will humanity benefit from mining in outer space, or for that matter, other global commons such as the deep sea floor? Behind the lofty rhetoric of benefits to humanity, there is a dark shadow of voodoo economics, the shambling, walking dead figure of trickle down economics– and the possibility of a world where a few trillionaires enjoy the view from space while others barely eke a living on its surface. Yet we do suggest that commercial interests and profit seeking can be a healthy part of the exploration of outer space. Yet outer space is not the Wild West frontier of Frederick Jackson Turner, nor do we live in the Gold Rush days of Jack London’s tale of greed and death. In the common heritage of space, with multiple state and private actors engaging in exploration and potentially exploitation, international cooperation and oversight will benefit all. The Alaskan model There is a balanced, pragmatic approach that will promote commercial and profit driven activities, while also producing tangible benefits to all of humanity. Importantly, this pragmatic approach has a well established precedent that has existed for nearly 40 years. And this comes not from a social democracy or left-wing ideology, but was the brainchild of a libertarian, Republican governor of Alaska, Jay Hammond. That model is the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation (APFC) created in 1976, and its unique “citizen’s dividend”. The APF is a resource wealth fund, which derives its revenue primarily from leases on oil fields. In 1977, Hammond suggested that “rather than permitting government to spend all public monies earned through the exploitation of the public’s resources for what government thinks best, let’s grant shares to Alaskans.” The first dividend payment was made in 1982, and in 2015 that payment amounted to US$2,072. Linking a citizen’s dividend to a sovereign wealth fund was unique, but the idea of a citizen’s dividend has a long and venerable tradition. One of the earliest advocates was no less than the political theorist and American Revolutionary, Thomas Paine. International body How would this work for outer space? We need an international body similar to the International Seabed Authority, which was established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, or the International Telecommunications Union, which allocates satellite orbits. This would provide the stable business and investment environment that entrepreneurs seek by ensuring international law and obligations are met. This body could license outer space resources and levy a royalty on production, which is part of standard business practice between petroleum and other mining companies and governments here on Earth. In turn, these revenues, or a significant portion thereof, would be deposited in a Space Resource Fund, possibly under the aegis of the World Bank. And every single citizen on Earth, say aged 18 or above, would receive a dividend on a yearly basis as their rightful share as owners of the common province of humankind. Crucially, we are not suggesting redistribution, which has been an obstacle to the International Seabed Authority and the Moon Treaty in the past, but a fair share dividend of wealth that truly belongs to everyone. Our model doesn’t provide a handout, or a welfare cheque, or charity from a trillionaire philanthopist; it pays every owner in a global commons a share of what is rightfully theirs. Even tiny dividends by the standards of the world’s wealthy nations would make a difference for some developing world farmers. If there truly are trillions of dollars out there, then this might be something fundamentally world changing. We accept that Larry Page and Sir Richard Branson – founding investors and advisors in Planetary Resources – and its founders Eric Anderson and Peter Diamandis, truly want humanity to benefit from outer space, and that they truly believe in corporate social responsibility and a sustainable future. We would encourage them to embrace the idea that the sky really does belong to all of us, as the common “province of all mankind”. By paying rent for the right to exploit resources in space and royalties on production, the same way oil companies pay to exploit oil in the Gulf of Mexico, they’ll be engaging in business as usual. They will have bought the right to make a potentially enormous profit and prove they really are responsible global citizens. And they’d get a citizen’s dividend cheque too.

### AC – Framing

#### I value morality, the standard is maximizing wellbeing.

#### 1] Use util – it’s impartial, specific to public actors, and resolves infinite regress which explains all value. Reject flawed calc indicts that misunderstand happiness and rely on problematic intuitions.

Greene 15 — (Joshua Greene, Professor of Psychology @ Harvard, being interviewed by Russ Roberts, “Joshua Greene on Moral Tribes, Moral Dilemmas, and Utilitarianism”, The Library of Economics and Liberty, 1-5-15, Available Online at <https://www.econtalk.org/joshua-greene-on-moral-tribes-moral-dilemmas-and-utilitarianism/#audio-highlights>, accessed 5-17-20, HKR-AM) \*\*NB: Guest = Greene, and only his lines are highlighted/underlined

Guest: Okay. So, I think utilitarianism is very much misunderstood. And this is part of the reason why we shouldn't even call it utilitarianism at all. We should call it what I call 'deep pragmatism', which I think better captures what I think utilitarianism is really like, if you really apply it in real life, in light of an understanding of human nature. But, we can come back to that. The idea, going back to the tragedy of common-sense morality is you've got all these different tribes with all of these different values based on their different ways of life. What can they do to get along? And I think that the best answer that we have is--well, let's back up. In order to resolve any kind of tradeoff, you have to have some kind of common metric. You have to have some kind of common currency. And I think that what utilitarianism, whether it's the moral truth or not, is **provide** a kind of **common currency**. So, what is utilitarianism? It's basically the idea that--it's really two ideas put together. One is the idea of impartiality. That is, at least **as social decision makers**, we should regard everybody's interests as of equal worth. Everybody counts the same. And then you might say, 'Well, but okay, what does it mean to count everybody the same? What is it that really matters for you and for me and for everybody else?' And there the utilitarian's answer is what is sometimes called, somewhat accurately and somewhat misleadingly, happiness. But it's not really happiness in the sense of cherries on sundaes, things that make you smile. It's really the quality of conscious experience. So, the idea is that if you start with anything that you value, and say, 'Why do you care about that?' and keep asking, 'Why do you care about that?' or 'Why do you care about that?' you ultimately come down to the quality of someone's conscious experience. So if I were to say, 'Why did you go to work today?' you'd say, 'Well, I need to make money; and I also enjoy my work.' 'Well, what do you need your money for?' 'Well, I need to have a place to live; it costs money.' 'Well, why can't you just live outside?' 'Well, I need a place to sleep; it's cold at night.' 'Well, what's wrong with being cold?' 'Well, it's uncomfortable.' 'What's wrong with being uncomfortable?' 'It's just bad.' Right? At some point if you keep asking why, why, why, it's going to come down to the conscious experience--in Bentham's terms, again somewhat misleading, the pleasure and pain of either you or somebody else that you care about. So the utilitarian idea is to say, Okay, we all have our pleasures and pains, and as a moral philosophy we should all count equally. And so a good standard for **resolving** **public** **disagreements** is to say we should go with whatever option is going to produce the best overall experience for the people who are affected. Which you can think of as shorthand as maximizing happiness--although I think that that's somewhat misleading. And the solution has a lot of merit to it. But it also has endured a couple of centuries of legitimate criticism. And one of the biggest criticisms--and now we're getting back to the Trolley cases, is that utilitarianism doesn't adequately account for people's rights. So, take the footbridge case. It seems that it's wrong to push that guy off the footbridge. Even if you stipulate that you can save more people's lives. And so anyone who is going to defend utilitarianism as a meta-morality--that is, a solution to the tragedy of common sense morality, as a moral system to adjudicate among competing tribal moral systems--if you are going to defend it in that way, as I do, you have to face up to these philosophical challenges: is it okay to kill on person to save five people in this kind of situation? So I spend a lot of the book trying to understand the psychology of cases like the footbridge case. And you mention these being kind of unrealistic and weird cases. That's actually part of my defense.

Russ: Yeah, there's some plus to it, I agree.

Guest: Right. And the idea is that your amygdala is responding to an act of violence. And most acts of violence are bad. And so it is good for us to have a gut reaction, which is really a reaction in your amygdala that's then sending a signal to your ventromedial prefrontal cortex and so on and so forth, and we can talk about that. It's good to have that reaction that says, 'Don't push people off of footbridges.' But if you construct a case in which you stipulate that committing this act of violence is going to lead to the greater good, and it still feels wrong, I think it's a mistake to interpret that gut reaction as a challenge to the theory that says we should do whatever in general is going to promote the greater good. That is, our gut reactions are somewhat limited. They are good for everyday life. It's good that you have a gut reaction that says, 'Don't go shoving people off of high places.' But that shouldn't be a veto against a general idea that otherwise makes a lot of sense. Which is that in the modern world, we have a lot of different competing value systems, and that the way to resolve disagreements among those different competing value systems is to say, 'What's going to actually produce the best consequences?' And best consequences measured in terms of the quality of people's experience. So, that's kind of completing or partially completing the circle between the tragedy of the commons, that discussion, and how do we get to the Trolleys.

#### 2] Extinction outweighs---it’s the upmost moral evil and disavowal of the risk makes it more likely.

Burns 2017 (Elizabeth Finneron-Burns is a Teaching Fellow at the University of Warwick and an Affiliated Researcher at the Institute for Futures Studies in Stockholm, What’s wrong with human extinction?, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00455091.2016.1278150?needAccess=true>, Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 2017)

Many, though certainly not all, people might believe that it would be wrong to bring about the end of the human species, and the reasons given for this belief are various. I begin by considering four reasons that could be given against the moral permissibility of human extinction. I will argue that only those reasons that impact the people who exist at the time that the extinction or the knowledge of the upcoming extinction occurs, can explain its wrongness. I use this conclusion to then consider in which cases human extinction would be morally permissible or impermissible, arguing that there is only a small class of cases in which it would not be wrong to cause the extinction of the human race or allow it to happen. 2.1. It would prevent the existence of very many happy people One reason of human extinction might be considered to be wrong lies in the value of human life itself. The thought here might be that it is a good thing for people to exist and enjoy happy lives and extinction would deprive more people of enjoying this good. The ‘good’ in this case could be understood in at least two ways. According to the first, one might believe that you benefit a person by bringing them into existence, or at least, that it is good for that person that they come to exist. The second view might hold that if humans were to go extinct, the utility foregone by the billions (or more) of people who could have lived but will now never get that opportunity, renders allowing human extinction to take place an incidence of wrongdoing. An example of this view can be found in two quotes from an Effective Altruism blog post by Peter Singer, Nick Beckstead and Matt Wage: One very bad thing about human extinction would be that billions of people would likely die painful deaths. But in our view, this is by far not the worst thing about human extinction. The worst thing about human extinction is that there would be no future generations. Since there could be so many generations in our future, the value of all those generations together greatly exceeds the value of the current generation. (Beckstead, Singer, and Wage 2013) The authors are making two claims. The first is that there is value in human life and also something valuable about creating future people which gives us a reason to do so; furthermore, it would be a very bad thing if we did not do so. The second is that, not only would it be a bad thing for there to be no future people, but it would actually be the worst thing about extinction. Since happy human lives have value, and the number of potential people who could ever exist is far greater than the number of people who exist at any one time, even if the extinction were brought about through the painful deaths of currently existing people, the former’s loss would be greater than the latter’s. Both claims are assuming that there is an intrinsic value in the existence of potential human life. The second claim makes the further assumption that the forgone value of the potential lives that could be lived is greater than the disvalue that would be accrued by people existing at the time of the extinction through suffering from painful and/or premature deaths. The best-known author of the post, Peter Singer is a prominent utilitarian, so it is not surprising that he would lament the potential lack of future human lives per se. However, it is not just utilitarians who share this view, even if implicitly. Indeed, other philosophers also seem to imply that they share the intuition that there is just something wrong with causing or failing to prevent the extinction of the human species such that we prevent more ‘people’ from having the ‘opportunity to exist’. Stephen Gardiner (2009) and Martin O’Neill (personal correspondence), both sympathetic to contract theory, for example, also find it intuitive that we should want more generations to have the opportunity to exist, assuming that they have worth-living lives, and I find it plausible to think that many other people (philosophers and non-philosophers alike) probably share this intuition. When we talk about future lives being ‘prevented’, we are saying that a possible person or a set of possible people who could potentially have existed will now never actually come to exist. To say that it is wrong to prevent people from existing could either mean that a possible person could reasonably reject a principle that permitted us not to create them, or that the foregone value of their lives provides a reason for rejecting any principle that permits extinction. To make the first claim we would have to argue that a possible person could reasonably reject any principle that prevented their existence on the grounds that it prevented them in particular from existing. However, this is implausible for two reasons. First, we can only wrong someone who did, does or will actually exist because wronging involves failing to take a person’s interests into account. When considering the permissibility of a principle allowing us not to create Person X, we cannot take X’s interest in being created into account because X will not exist if we follow the principle. By considering the standpoint of a person in our deliberations we consider the burdens they will have to bear as a result of the principle. In this case, there is no one who will bear any burdens since if the principle is followed (that is, if we do not create X), X will not exist to bear any burdens. So, only people who do/will actually exist can bear the brunt of a principle, and therefore occupy a standpoint that is owed justification. Second, existence is not an interest at all and a possible person is not disadvantaged by not being caused to exist. Rather than being an interest, it is a necessary requirement in order to have interests. Rivka Weinberg describes it as ‘neutral’ because causing a person to exist is to create a subject who can have interests; existence is not an interest itself.3 In order to be disadvantaged, there must be some detrimental effect on your interests. However, without existence, a person does not have any interests so they cannot be disadvantaged by being kept out of existence. But, as Weinberg points out, ‘never having interests itself could not be contrary to people’s interests since without interest bearers, there can be no ‘they’ for it to be bad for’ (Weinberg 2008, 13). So, a principle that results in some possible people never becoming actual does not impose any costs on those ‘people’ because nobody is disadvantaged by not coming into existence.4 It therefore seems that it cannot be wrong to fail to bring particular people into existence. This would mean that no one acts wrongly when they fail to create another person. Writ large, it would also not be wrong if everybody decided to exercise their prerogative not to create new people and potentially, by consequence, allow human extinction. One might respond here by saying that although it may be permissible for one person to fail to create a new person, it is not permissible if everyone chooses to do so because human lives have value and allowing human extinction would be to forgo a huge amount of value in the world. This takes us to the second way of understanding the potential wrongness of preventing people from existing — the foregone value of a life provides a reason for rejecting any principle that prevents it. One possible reply to this claim turns on the fact that many philosophers acknowledge that the only, or at least the best, way to think about the value of (individual or groups of) possible people’s lives is in impersonal terms (Parfit 1984; Reiman 2007; McMahan 2009). Jeff McMahan, for example, writes ‘at the time of one’s choice there is no one who exists or will exist independently of that choice for whose sake one could be acting in causing him or her to exist … it seems therefore that any reason to cause or not to cause an individual to exist … is best considered an impersonal rather than individual-affecting reason’ (McMahan 2009, 52). Another reply along similar lines would be to appeal to the value that is lost or at least foregone when we fail to bring into existence a next (or several next) generations of people with worth-living lives. Since ex hypothesi worth-living lives have positive value, it is better to create more such lives and worse to create fewer. Human extinction by definition is the creation of no future lives and would ‘deprive’ billions of ‘people’ of the opportunity to live worth-living lives. This might reduce the amount of value in the world at the time of the extinction (by killing already existing people), but it would also prevent a much vaster amount of value in the future (by failing to create more people). Both replies depend on the impersonal value of human life. However, recall that in contractualism impersonal values are not on their own grounds for reasonably rejecting principles. Scanlon himself says that although we have a strong reason not to destroy existing human lives, this reason ‘does not flow from the thought that it is a good thing for there to be more human life rather than less’ (104). In contractualism, something cannot be wrong unless there is an impact on a person. Thus, neither the impersonal value of creating a particular person nor the impersonal value of human life writ large could on its own provide a reason for rejecting a principle permitting human extinction. It seems therefore that the fact that extinction would deprive future people of the opportunity to live worth-living lives (either by failing to create either particular future people or future people in general) cannot provide us with a reason to consider human extinction to be wrong. Although the lost value of these ‘lives’ itself cannot be the reason explaining the wrongness of extinction, it is possible the knowledge of this loss might create a personal reason for some existing people. I will consider this possibility later on in section (d). But first I move to the second reason human extinction might be wrong per se. 2.2. It would mean the loss of the only known form of intelligent life and all civilization and intellectual progress would be lost A second reason we might think it would be wrong to cause human extinction is the loss that would occur of the only (known) form of rational life and the knowledge and civilization that that form of life has created. One thought here could be that just as some might consider it wrong to destroy an individual human heritage monument like the Sphinx, it would also be wrong if the advances made by humans over the past few millennia were lost or prevented from progressing. A related argument is made by those who feel that there is something special about humans’ capacity for rationality which is valuable in itself. Since humans are the only intelligent life that we know of, it would be a loss, in itself, to the world for that to end. I admit that I struggle to fully appreciate this thought. It seems to me that Henry Sidgwick was correct in thinking that these things are only important insofar as they are important to humans (Sidgwick 1874, I.IX.4).5 If there is no form of intelligent life in the future, who would there be to lament its loss since intelligent life is the only form of life capable of appreciating intelligence? Similarly, if there is no one with the rational capacity to appreciate historic monuments and civil progress, who would there be to be negatively affected or even notice the loss?6 However, even if there is nothing special about human rationality, just as some people try to prevent the extinction of nonhuman animal species, we might think that we ought also to prevent human extinction for the sake of biodiversity. The thought in this, as well as the earlier examples, must be that it would somehow be bad for the world if there were no more humans even though there would be no one for whom it is bad. This may be so but the only way to understand this reason is impersonally. Since we are concerned with wrongness rather than badness, we must ask whether something that impacts no one’s well-being, status or claims can be wrong. As we saw earlier, in the contractualist framework reasons must be personal rather than impersonal in order to provide grounds for reasonable rejection (Scanlon 1998, 218–223). Since the loss of civilization, intelligent life or biodiversity are per se impersonal reasons, there is no standpoint from which these reasons could be used to reasonably reject a principle that permitted extinction. Therefore, causing human extinction on the grounds of the loss of civilization, rational life or biodiversity would not be wrong. 2.3. Existing people would endure physical pain and/or painful and/or premature deaths Thinking about the ways in which human extinction might come about brings to the fore two more reasons it might be wrong. It could, for example, occur if all humans (or at least the critical number needed to be unable to replenish the population, leading to eventual extinction) underwent a sterilization procedure. Or perhaps it could come about due to anthropogenic climate change or a massive asteroid hitting the Earth and wiping out the species in the same way it did the dinosaurs millions of years ago. Each of these scenarios would involve significant physical and/or non-physical harms to existing people and their interests. Physically, people might suffer premature and possibly also painful deaths, for example. It is not hard to imagine examples in which the process of extinction could cause premature death. A nuclear winter that killed everyone or even just every woman under the age of 50 is a clear example of such a case. Obviously, some types of premature death themselves cannot be reasons to reject a principle. Every person dies eventually, sometimes earlier than the standard expected lifespan due to accidents or causes like spontaneously occurring incurable cancers. A cause such as disease is not a moral agent and therefore it cannot be wrong if it unavoidably kills a person prematurely. Scanlon says that the fact that a principle would reduce a person’s well-being gives that person a reason to reject the principle: ‘components of well-being figure prominently as grounds for reasonable rejection’ (Scanlon 1998, 214). However, it is not settled yet whether premature death is a setback to well-being. Some philosophers hold that death is a harm to the person who dies, whilst others argue that it is not.7 I will argue, however, that regardless of who is correct in that debate, being caused to die prematurely can be reason to reject a principle when it fails to show respect to the person as a rational agent. Scanlon says that recognizing others as rational beings with interests involves seeing reason to preserve life and prevent death: ‘appreciating the value of human life is primarily a matter of seeing human lives as something to be respected, where this involves seeing reasons not to destroy them, reasons to protect them, and reasons to want them to go well’ (Scanlon 1998, 104). The ‘respect for life’ in this case is a respect for the person living, not respect for human life in the abstract. This means that we can sometimes fail to protect human life without acting wrongfully if we still respect the person living. Scanlon gives the example of a person who faces a life of unending and extreme pain such that she wishes to end it by committing suicide. Scanlon does not think that the suicidal person shows a lack of respect for her own life by seeking to end it because the person whose life it is has no reason to want it to go on. This is important to note because it emphasizes the fact that the respect for human life is person-affecting. It is not wrong to murder because of the impersonal disvalue of death in general, but because taking someone’s life without their permission shows disrespect to that person. This supports its inclusion as a reason in the contractualist formula, regardless of what side ends up winning the ‘is death a harm?’ debate because even if death turns out not to harm the person who died, ending their life without their consent shows disrespect to that person. A person who could reject a principle permitting another to cause his or her premature death presumably does not wish to die at that time, or in that manner. Thus, if they are killed without their consent, their interests have not been taken into account, and they have a reason to reject the principle that allowed their premature death.8 This is as true in the case of death due to extinction as it is for death due to murder. However, physical pain may also be caused to existing people without killing them, but still resulting in human extinction. Imagine, for example, surgically removing everyone’s reproductive organs in order to prevent the creation of any future people. Another example could be a nuclear bomb that did not kill anyone, but did painfully render them infertile through illness or injury. These would be cases in which physical pain (through surgery or bombs) was inflicted on existing people and the extinction came about as a result of the painful incident rather than through death. Furthermore, one could imagine a situation in which a bomb (for example) killed enough people to cause extinction, but some people remained alive, but in terrible pain from injuries. It seems uncontroversial that the infliction of physical pain could be a reason to reject a principle. Although Scanlon says that an impact on well-being is not the only reason to reject principles, it plays a significant role, and indeed, most principles are likely to be rejected due to a negative impact on a person’s well-being, physical or otherwise. It may be queried here whether it is actually the involuntariness of the pain that is grounds for reasonable rejection rather than the physical pain itself because not all pain that a person suffers is involuntary. One can imagine acts that can cause physical pain that are not rejectable — base jumping or life-saving or improving surgery, for example. On the other hand, pushing someone off a cliff or cutting him with a scalpel against his will are clearly rejectable acts. The difference between the two cases is that in the former, the person having the pain inflicted has consented to that pain or risk of pain. My view is that they cannot be separated in these cases and it is involuntary physical pain that is the grounds for reasonable rejection. Thus, the fact that a principle would allow unwanted physical harm gives a person who would be subjected to that harm a reason to reject the principle. Of course the mere fact that a principle causes involuntary physical harm or premature death is not sufficient to declare that the principle is rejectable — there might be countervailing reasons. In the case of extinction, what countervailing reasons might be offered in favour of the involuntary physical pain/ death-inducing harm? One such reason that might be offered is that humans are a harm to the natural environment and that the world might be a better place if there were no humans in it. It could be that humans might rightfully be considered an all-things-considered hindrance to the world rather than a benefit to it given the fact that we have been largely responsible for the extinction of many species, pollution and, most recently, climate change which have all negatively affected the natural environment in ways we are only just beginning to understand. Thus, the fact that human extinction would improve the natural environment (or at least prevent it from degrading further), is a countervailing reason in favour of extinction to be weighed against the reasons held by humans who would experience physical pain or premature death. However, the good of the environment as described above is by definition not a personal reason. Just like the loss of rational life and civilization, therefore, it cannot be a reason on its own when determining what is wrong and countervail the strong personal reasons to avoid pain/death that is held by the people who would suffer from it.9 Every person existing at the time of the extinction would have a reason to reject that principle on the grounds of the physical pain they are being forced to endure against their will that could not be countervailed by impersonal considerations such as the negative impact humans may have on the earth. Therefore, a principle that permitted extinction to be accomplished in a way that caused involuntary physical pain or premature death could quite clearly be rejectable by existing people with no relevant countervailing reasons. This means that human extinction that came about in this way would be wrong. There are of course also additional reasons they could reject a similar principle which I now turn to address in the next section. 2.4. Existing people could endure non-physical harms I said earlier than the fact in itself that there would not be any future people is an impersonal reason and can therefore not be a reason to reject a principle permitting extinction. However, this impersonal reason could give rise to a personal reason that is admissible. So, the final important reason people might think that human extinction would be wrong is that there could be various deleterious psychological effects that would be endured by existing people having the knowledge that there would be no future generations. There are two main sources of this trauma, both arising from the knowledge that there will be no more people. The first relates to individual people and the undesired negative effect on well-being that would be experienced by those who would have wanted to have children. Whilst this is by no means universal, it is fair to say that a good proportion of people feel a strong pull towards reproduction and having their lineage continue in some way. Samuel Scheffler describes the pull towards reproduction as a ‘desire for a personalized relationship with the future’ (Scheffler 2012, 31). Reproducing is a widely held desire and the joys of parenthood are ones that many people wish to experience. For these people knowing that they would not have descendants (or that their descendants will endure painful and/or premature deaths) could create a sense of despair and pointlessness of life. Furthermore, the inability to reproduce and have your own children because of a principle/policy that prevents you (either through bans or physical interventions) would be a significant infringement of what we consider to be a basic right to control what happens to your body. For these reasons, knowing that you will have no descendants could cause significant psychological traumas or harms even if there were no associated physical harm. The second is a more general, higher level sense of hopelessness or despair that there will be no more humans and that your projects will end with you. Even those who did not feel a strong desire to procreate themselves might feel a sense of hopelessness that any projects or goals they have for the future would not be fulfilled. Many of the projects and goals we work towards during our lifetime are also at least partly future-oriented. Why bother continuing the search for a cure for cancer if either it will not be found within humans’ lifetime, and/or there will be no future people to benefit from it once it is found? Similar projects and goals that might lose their meaning when confronted with extinction include politics, artistic pursuits and even the type of philosophical work with which this paper is concerned. Even more extreme, through the words of the character Theo Faron, P.D. James says in his novel The Children of Men that ‘without the hope of posterity for our race if not for ourselves, without the assurance that we being dead yet live, all pleasures of the mind and senses sometimes seem to me no more than pathetic and crumbling defences shored up against our ruins’ (James 2006, 9). Even if James’ claim is a bit hyperbolic and all pleasures would not actually be lost, I agree with Scheffler in finding it not implausible that the knowledge that extinction was coming and that there would be no more people would have at least a general depressive effect on people’s motivation and confidence in the value of and joy in their activities (Scheffler 2012, 43). Both sources of psychological harm are personal reasons to reject a principle that permitted human extinction. Existing people could therefore reasonably reject the principle for either of these reasons. Psychological pain and the inability to pursue your personal projects, goals, and aims, are all acceptable reasons for rejecting principles in the contractualist framework. So too are infringements of rights and entitlements that we accept as important for people’s lives. These psychological reasons, then, are also valid reasons to reject principles that permitted or required human extinction.

#### 3] That is the only egalitarian metric---anything else collapses cooperation on collective action crises and makes extinction inevitable

Khan 18 (Risalat, activist and entrepreneur from Bangladesh passionate about addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and other existential challenges. He was featured by The Guardian as one of the “young climate campaigners to watch” (2015). As a campaigner with the global civic movement Avaaz (2014-17), Risalat was part of a small core team that spearheaded the largest climate marches in history with a turnout of over 800,000 across 2,000 cities. After fighting for the Paris Agreement, Risalat led a campaign joined by over a million people to stop the Rampal coal plant in Bangladesh to protect the Sundarbans World Heritage forest, and elicited criticism of the plant from Crédit Agricolé through targeted advocacy. Currently, Risalat is pursuing an MPA in Environmental Science and Policy at Columbia University as a SIPA Environmental Fellow, “5 reasons why we need to start talking about existential risks,” https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/01/5-reasons-start-talking-existential-risks-extinction-moriori/)

Infinite future possibilities I find the story of the Moriori profound. It teaches me two lessons. Firstly, that human culture is far from immutable. That we can struggle against our baser instincts. That we can master them and rise to unprecedented challenges. Secondly, that even this does not make us masters of our own destiny. We can make visionary choices, but the future can still surprise us. This is a humbling realization. Because faced with an uncertain future, the only wise thing we can do is prepare for possibilities. Standing at the launch pad of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the possibilities seem endless. They range from an era of abundance to the end of humanity, and everything in between. How do we navigate such a wide and divergent spectrum? I am an optimist. From my bubble of privilege, life feels like a rollercoaster ride full of ever more impressive wonders, even as I try to fight the many social injustices that still blight us. However, the accelerating pace of change amid uncertainty elicits one fundamental observation. Among the infinite future possibilities, only one outcome is truly irreversible: extinction. Concerns about extinction are often dismissed as apocalyptic alarmism. Sometimes, they are. But repeating that mankind is still here after 70 years of existential warning about nuclear warfare is a straw man argument. The fact that a 1000-year flood has not happened does not negate its possibility. And there have been far too many nuclear near-misses to rest easy. As the World Economic Forum’s Annual Meeting in Davos discusses how to create a shared future in a fractured world, here are five reasons why the possibility of existential risks should raise the stakes of conversation: 1. Extinction is the rule, not the exception More than 99.9% of all the species that ever existed are gone. Deep time is unfathomable to the human brain. But if one cares to take a tour of the billions of years of life’s history, we find a litany of forgotten species. And we have only discovered a mere fraction of the extinct species that once roamed the planet. In the speck of time since the first humans evolved, more than 99.9% of all the distinct human cultures that have ever existed are extinct. Each hunter-gatherer tribe had its own mythologies, traditions and norms. They wiped each other out, or coalesced into larger formations following the agricultural revolution. However, as major civilizations emerged, even those that reached incredible heights, such as the Egyptians and the Romans, eventually collapsed. It is only in the very recent past that we became a truly global civilization. Our interconnectedness continues to grow rapidly. “Stand or fall, we are the last civilization”, as Ricken Patel, the founder of the global civic movement Avaaz, put it. 2. Environmental pressures can drive extinction More than 15,000 scientists just issued a ‘warning to humanity’. They called on us to reduce our impact on the biosphere, 25 years after their first such appeal. The warning notes that we are far outstripping the capacity of our planet in all but one measure of ozone depletion, including emissions, biodiversity, freshwater availability and more. The scientists, not a crowd known to overstate facts, conclude: “soon it will be too late to shift course away from our failing trajectory, and time is running out”. In his 2005 book Collapse, Jared Diamond charts the history of past societies. He makes the case that overpopulation and resource use beyond the carrying capacity have often been important, if not the only, drivers of collapse. Even though we are making important incremental progress in battles such as climate change, we must still achieve tremendous step changes in our response to several major environmental crises. We must do this even while the world’s population continues to grow. These pressures are bound to exert great stress on our global civilization. 3. Superintelligence: unplanned obsolescence? Imagine a monkey society that foresaw the ascendance of humans. Fearing a loss of status and power, it decided to kill the proverbial Adam and Eve. It crafted the most ingenious plan it could: starve the humans by taking away all their bananas. Foolproof plan, right? This story describes the fundamental difficulty with superintelligence. A superintelligent being may always do something entirely different from what we, with our mere mortal intelligence, can foresee. In his 2014 book Superintelligence, Swedish philosopher Nick Bostrom presents the challenge in thought-provoking detail, and advises caution. Bostrom cites a survey of industry experts that projected a 50% chance of the development of artificial superintelligence by 2050, and a 90% chance by 2075. The latter date is within the life expectancy of many alive today. Visionaries like Stephen Hawking and Elon Musk have warned of the existential risks from artificial superintelligence. Their opposite camp includes Larry Page and Mark Zuckerberg. But on an issue that concerns the future of humanity, is it really wise to ignore the guy who explained the nature of space to us and another guy who just put a reusable rocket in it? 4. Technology: known knowns and unknown unknowns Many fundamentally disruptive technologies are coming of age, from bioengineering to quantum computing, 3-D printing, robotics, nanotechnology and more. Lord Martin Rees describes potential existential challenges from some of these technologies, such as a bioengineered pandemic, in his book Our Final Century. Imagine if North Korea, feeling secure in its isolation, could release a virulent strain of Ebola, engineered to be airborne. Would it do it? Would ISIS? Projecting decades forward, we will likely develop capabilities that are unthinkable even now. The unknown unknowns of our technological path are profoundly humbling. 5. 'The Trump Factor' Despite our scientific ingenuity, we are still a confused and confusing species. Think back to two years ago, and how you thought the world worked then. Has that not been upended by the election of Donald Trump as US President, and everything that has happened since? The mix of billions of messy humans will forever be unpredictable. When the combustible forces described above are added to this melee, we find ourselves on a tightrope. What choices must we now make now to create a shared future, in which we are not at perpetual risk of destroying ourselves? Common enemy to common cause Throughout history, we have rallied against the ‘other’. Tribes have overpowered tribes, empires have conquered rivals. Even today, our fiercest displays of unity typically happen at wartime. We give our lives for our motherland and defend nationalistic pride like a wounded lion. But like the early Morioris, we 21st-century citizens find ourselves on an increasingly unstable island. We may have a violent past, but we have no more dangerous enemy than ourselves. Our task is to find our own Nunuku’s Law. Our own shared contract, based on equity, would help us navigate safely. It would ensure a future that unleashes the full potential of our still-budding human civilization, in all its diversity. We cannot do this unless we are humbly grounded in the possibility of our own destruction. Survival is life’s primal instinct. In the absence of a common enemy, we must find common cause in survival. Our future may depend on whether we realize this.