## 1AC

### 1AC – Mining

#### Plan: Private entities ought to prohibit asteroid mining involving artificial asteroid capture.

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

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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.

#### 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

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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 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.

#### Unregulated mining turns DA’s and benefits from appropriation

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

#### AAC involves intentional relocation

Neeness ND— (Neeness, Neeness’ founder runs several websites: Cyber Insight, Apassant, Crow Survival, and Planted Shack. Neeness started as a blog where the founder could share their love for animals., “Which mission is meant for asteroid?“, Neeness, Available Online at https://neeness.com/which-mission-is-meant-for-asteroid/, accessed 3-25-2022, HKR-AR)

Can you push an asteroid?

Natural asteroid capture is ballistic capture of a free asteroid into orbit around a body such as a planet, due to gravitational forces. Artificial asteroid capture involves **intentionally** exerting a force to insert the asteroid into a specific orbit.

#### 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 - extinction

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 powerful WMD ever – it’s more likely than natural hits and structurally outweighs

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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.

#### 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).

#### Causes war, ASAT deployment, and debris – don’t assume mining operations will be benevolent

Skibba 18 [Ramin Skibba is a science writer and astrophysicist based in Santa Cruz and San Diego. Mining in Space Could Lead to Conflicts on Earth. May 2, 2018. nautil.us/blog/-mining-in-space-could-lead-to-conflicts-on-earth]

Major space-faring nations are not among the 16 countries party to the treaty, but they should arguably come to some equitable agreement, since international competition over natural resources in space may very well transform into conflict. Take platinum-group metals. Mining companies have found about 100,000 metric tons of the stuff in deposits worldwide, mostly in South Africa and Russia, amounting to $10 billion worth of production per year, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. These supplies should last several decades if demand for them doesn’t rise dramatically. (According to Bloomberg, supply for platinum-group metals is constrained while demand is increasing.)

Palladium, for example, valued for its conductive properties and chemical stability, is used in hundreds of millions of electronic devices sold annually for electrodes and connector platings, but it’s relatively scarce on Earth. A single giant, platinum-rich asteroid could contain as much platinum-group metals as all reserves on Earth, the Google-backed Planetary Resources claims. That’s a massive bounty. As Planetary Resources and other U.S. and foreign companies scramble for control over these valuable space minerals, competing “land grabs” by armed satellites may come next. Platinum-group metals in space may serve the same role as oil has on Earth, threatening to extend geopolitical struggles into astropolitical ones, something Trump is keen on preparing for. Yesterday he said he’s seriously weighing the idea of a “Space Force” military branch.

Moreover, the technology that might enable this free-for-all—versatile “nanosatellites,” no larger than a loaf of bread—is relatively inexpensive. While reporting for a story about these tiny satellites, also known as CubeSats, I came across some missions applicable to mining asteroids. In November, NASA will launch a satellite for a mission called Near-Earth Asteroid Scout, for example. It will deploy a solar sail, propel itself with sunlight, and journey to the asteroid belt, where it will scope out a particular asteroid and analyze its properties. NASA has also awarded grants to Planetary Resources to advance the designs of spectral imagers and propulsion systems for CubeSats, and other missions will develop the satellites’ abilities to communicate and network with each other. NASA also awarded Deep Space Industries contracts to assess commercial approaches for NASA’s asteroid goals, which may involve hosting DSI’s asteroid-prospecting equipment on its missions.

Like all forms of mining, it will be dangerous. If space-mining activities break up asteroids, the resulting debris could be hazardous for satellites, other spacecraft, and astronauts nearby. On the other hand, in a best-case scenario, space mining could be environmentally safe, capture only necessary minerals and water, and, in the more distant future even lead to the construction of a far-flung space station led by NASA and other space agencies, orbiting 200 million miles from Earth and serving as both a mining depot and a pit-stop for passing spacecraft.

But it’s not clear that a pact between the commercial space mining industry and NASA would align with the public’s interest. NASA’s increasing collaboration with space mining companies could distort and divert efforts previously focused on space exploration and basic research, and discourage public interest and engagement in astronomy.

### Framing

#### The standard is maximizing expected wellbeing

#### 1. Science proves non util ethics are impossible and our version of util solves all aff offense

Greene 10 – Joshua, Associate Professor of Social science in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University

(The Secret Joke of Kant’s Soul published in Moral Psychology: Historical and Contemporary Readings, accessed: www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/~lchang/material/Evolutionary/Developmental/Greene-KantSoul.pdf)

**What turn-of-the-millennium science** **is telling us is that human moral judgment is not a pristine rational enterprise**, that our **moral judgments are driven by a hodgepodge of emotional dispositions, which themselves were shaped by a hodgepodge of evolutionary forces, both biological and cultural**. **Because of this, it is exceedingly unlikely that there is any rationally coherent normative moral theory that can accommodate our moral intuitions**. Moreover, **anyone who claims to have such a theory**, or even part of one, **almost certainly doesn't**. Instead, what that person probably has is a moral rationalization. It seems then, that we have somehow crossed the infamous "is"-"ought" divide. How did this happen? Didn't Hume (Hume, 1978) and Moore (Moore, 1966) warn us against trying to derive an "ought" from and "is?" How did we go from descriptive scientific theories concerning moral psychology to skepticism about a whole class of normative moral theories? The answer is that we did not, as Hume and Moore anticipated, attempt to derive an "ought" from and "is." That is, our method has been inductive rather than deductive. We have inferred on the basis of the available evidence that the phenomenon of rationalist deontological philosophy is best explained as a rationalization of evolved emotional intuition (Harman, 1977). Missing the Deontological Point I suspect that **rationalist deontologists will remain unmoved by the arguments presented here**. Instead, I suspect, **they** **will insist that I have simply misunderstood what** Kant and like-minded **deontologists are all about**. **Deontology, they will say, isn't about this intuition or that intuition**. It's not defined by its normative differences with consequentialism. **Rather, deontology is about taking humanity seriously**. Above all else, it's about respect for persons. It's about treating others as fellow rational creatures rather than as mere objects, about acting for reasons rational beings can share. And so on (Korsgaard, 1996a; Korsgaard, 1996b). **This is, no doubt, how many deontologists see deontology. But this insider's view**, as I've suggested, **may be misleading**. **The problem**, more specifically, **is that it defines deontology in terms of values that are not distinctively deontological**, though they may appear to be from the inside. **Consider the following analogy with religion. When one asks a religious person to explain the essence of his religion, one often gets an answer like this: "It's about love**, really. It's about looking out for other people, looking beyond oneself. It's about community, being part of something larger than oneself." **This sort of answer accurately captures the phenomenology of many people's religion, but it's nevertheless inadequate for distinguishing religion from other things**. This is because many, if not most, non-religious people aspire to love deeply, look out for other people, avoid self-absorption, have a sense of a community, and be connected to things larger than themselves. In other words, secular humanists and atheists can assent to most of what many religious people think religion is all about. From a secular humanist's point of view, in contrast, what's distinctive about religion is its commitment to the existence of supernatural entities as well as formal religious institutions and doctrines. And they're right. These things really do distinguish religious from non-religious practices, though they may appear to be secondary to many people operating from within a religious point of view. In the same way, I believe that most of **the standard deontological/Kantian self-characterizatons fail to distinguish deontology from other approaches to ethics**. (See also Kagan (Kagan, 1997, pp. 70-78.) on the difficulty of defining deontology.) It seems to me that **consequentialists**, as much as anyone else, **have respect for persons**, **are against treating people as mere objects,** **wish to act for reasons that rational creatures can share, etc**. **A consequentialist respects other persons, and refrains from treating them as mere objects, by counting every person's well-being in the decision-making process**. **Likewise, a consequentialist attempts to act according to reasons that rational creatures can share by acting according to principles that give equal weight to everyone's interests, i.e. that are impartial**. This is not to say that consequentialists and deontologists don't differ. They do. It's just that the real differences may not be what deontologists often take them to be. What, then, distinguishes deontology from other kinds of moral thought? A good strategy for answering this question is to start with concrete disagreements between deontologists and others (such as consequentialists) and then work backward in search of deeper principles. This is what I've attempted to do with the trolley and footbridge cases, and other instances in which deontologists and consequentialists disagree. **If you ask a deontologically-minded person why it's wrong to push someone in front of speeding trolley in order to save five others, you will get** characteristically deontological **answers**. Some **will be tautological**: **"Because it's murder!"** **Others will be more sophisticated: "The ends don't justify the means**." "You have to respect people's rights." **But**, as we know, **these answers don't really explain anything**, because **if you give the same people** (on different occasions) **the trolley case** or the loop case (See above), **they'll make the opposite judgment**, even though their initial explanation concerning the footbridge case applies equally well to one or both of these cases. **Talk about rights, respect for persons, and reasons we can share are natural attempts to explain, in "cognitive" terms, what we feel when we find ourselves having emotionally driven intuitions that are odds with the cold calculus of consequentialism**. Although these explanations are inevitably incomplete, **there seems to be "something deeply right" about them because they give voice to powerful moral emotions**. **But, as with many religious people's accounts of what's essential to religion, they don't really explain what's distinctive about the philosophy in question**.

#### 2. Uncertainty and social contract require governments use util

Gooden, 1995 **(**Robert, philsopher at the Research School of the Social Sciences, Utilitarianism as Public Philosophy. P. 62-63)

Consider, first, the argument from necessity. Public officials are obliged to make their choices under uncertainty, and uncertainty of a very special sort at that. All choices—public and private alike—are made under some degree of uncertainty, of course. But in the nature of things, private individuals will usually have more complete information on the peculiarities of their own circumstances and on the ramifications that alternative possible choices might have on them. Public officials, in contrast, are relatively poorly informed as to the effects that their choices will have on individuals, one by one. What they typically do know are generalities: averages and aggregates. They know what will happen most often to most people as a result of their various possible choices. But that is all. That is enough to allow public policy-makers to use the utilitarian calculus—if they want to use it at all—to choose general rules of conduct. Knowing aggregates and averages, they can proceed to calculate the utility payoffs from adopting each alternative possible general rules.

#### 3. Disregarding foreseeable harm reifies structures of domination

**McCluskey 12** – JSD @ Columbia, Professor of Law @ SUNY-Buffalo

(Martha, “How the "Unintended Consequences" Story Promotes Unjust Intent and Impact,” Berkeley La Raza, doi: dx.doi.org/doi:10.15779/Z381664)

**By similarly making structures of inequality appear beyond the reach of law** reform, **the "unintended consequences" message helps update and reinforce the narrowing of protections against intentional racial harm. Justice is centrally a question of whose** interests and whose **harms should count**, in what context and in what form and to whom. **Power is centrally about being able to act without having to take harm to others into account**. **This power to gain by harming others is strongest when it operates through** systems and **structures that make disregarding that harm appear** routine, rational, and beneficial or at least **acceptable** or perhaps inevitable. By portraying law's unequal harms as the "side effects" of systems and structures with unquestionable "main effects," **the** "**unintended consequences" story helps affirm the resulting harm** even as it seems to offer sympathy and technical assistance. In considering solutions to the financial market problems, the policy puzzle is not that struggling homeowners' interests are overwhelmingly complex or uncertain. Instead, the bigger problem is that overwhelmingly powerful interests and ideologies are actively resisting systemic changes that would make those interests count. The failure to criminally prosecute or otherwise severely penalize high-level financial industry fraud is not primarily the result of uncertainty about the harmful effects of that fraudulent behavior, but because the political and justice systems are skewed to protect the gains and unaccountability of wealthy executives despite the clear harms to hosts of others. **The unequal effects of** the prevailing **policy** response to the crisis **are foreseeable and obvious, not accidental or surprising**. It would not take advanced knowledge of economics to readily predict that modest-income homeowners would tend to be far worse off than bank executives by a policy approach that failed to provide substantial mortgage forgiveness and foreclosure protections for modest-income homeowners but instead provided massive subsidized credit and other protections for Wall Street. Many policy actions likely to alleviate the unequal harm of the crisis similarly are impeded not because consumer advocates, low-income homeowners, or racial justice advocates hesitate to risk major changes in existing systems, or are divided about the technical design of alternative programs or more effective mechanisms for enforcing laws against fraud and racial discrimination. Instead, the problem is that these voices pressing for effective change are often excluded, drowned out or distorted in Congress and in federal agencies such as the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve, or in the media, in the mainstream economics profession, and to a large extent in legal scholarship about financial markets. More generally, those diverse voices from the bottom have been largely absent or marginalized in the dominant theoretical framework that constructs widespread and severe inequality as unforeseeable and largely inevitable, or even beneficial. Moreover, **justice requires careful attention to both harmful intent and to complex harmful effects**. But **the concept of "unintended consequences" inverts justice by suggesting that the best way to care** for those at the bottom **is to not care to make law more attentive** to the bottom. "**Unintended consequences" arguments promote a simplistic moral message in the guise of sophisticated intellectual critique**-the message that those who lack power should not seek it because the desire for more power is what hurts most. Further, **like Ayn Rand's overt philosophy of selfishness, that message promotes the theme that those who have power to ignore** their **harmful effects on others need not-indeed should not-be induced by law to care about this harm**, because this caring is what is harmful. One right-wing think tank has recently made this moral message more explicit with an economic values campaign suggesting that the intentional pursuit of economic equality is a problem of the immoral envy of those whose economic success proves they are more deserving.169 **Legal scholars and advocates who intend to put intellectual rigor and justice ahead of service to** financial **elites should reject stories of "unintended consequences" and instead scrutinize the power and laws that have so effectively achieved the intention of making devastating losses to so many of us seem natural, inevitable, and beneficial**.

#### 4. Reducing existential risks is the top priority in any coherent moral theory

Plummer, PhD, 15

(Theron, Philosophy @St. Andrews http://blog.practicalethics.ox.ac.uk/2015/05/moral-agreement-on-saving-the-world/)

There appears to be lot of disagreement in moral philosophy. Whether these many apparent disagreements are deep and irresolvable, I believe there is at least one thing it is reasonable to agree on right now, whatever general moral view we adopt: that it is very important to reduce the risk that all intelligent beings on this planet are eliminated by an enormous catastrophe, such as a nuclear war. How we might in fact try to reduce such existential risks is discussed elsewhere. My claim here is only that we – whether we’re consequentialists, deontologists, or virtue ethicists – should all agree that we should try to save the world. According to consequentialism, we should maximize the good, where this is taken to be the goodness, from an impartial perspective, of outcomes. Clearly one thing that makes an outcome good is that the people in it are doing well. There is little disagreement here. If the happiness or well-being of possible future people is just as important as that of people who already exist, and if they would have good lives, it is not hard to see how reducing existential risk is easily the most important thing in the whole world. This is for the familiar reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. There are so many possible future people that reducing existential risk is arguably the most important thing in the world, even if the well-being of these possible people were given only 0.001% as much weight as that of existing people. Even on a wholly person-affecting view – according to which there’s nothing (apart from effects on existing people) to be said in favor of creating happy people – the case for reducing existential risk is very strong. As noted in this seminal paper, this case is strengthened by the fact that there’s a good chance that many existing people will, with the aid of life-extension technology, live very long and very high quality lives. You might think what I have just argued applies to consequentialists only. There is a tendency to assume that, if an argument appeals to consequentialist considerations (the goodness of outcomes), it is irrelevant to non-consequentialists. But that is a huge mistake. Non-consequentialism is the view that there’s more that determines rightness than the goodness of consequences or outcomes; it is not the view that the latter don’t matter. Even John Rawls wrote, “All ethical doctrines worth our attention take consequences into account in judging rightness. One which did not would simply be irrational, crazy.” Minimally plausible versions of deontology and virtue ethics must be concerned in part with promoting the good, from an impartial point of view. They’d thus imply very strong reasons to reduce existential risk, at least when this doesn’t significantly involve doing harm to others or damaging one’s character. What’s even more surprising, perhaps, is that even if our own good (or that of those near and dear to us) has much greater weight than goodness from the impartial “point of view of the universe,” indeed even if the latter is entirely morally irrelevant, we may nonetheless have very strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Even egoism, the view that each agent should maximize her own good, might imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. It will depend, among other things, on what one’s own good consists in. If well-being consisted in pleasure only, it is somewhat harder to argue that egoism would imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk – perhaps we could argue that one would maximize her expected hedonic well-being by funding life extension technology or by having herself cryogenically frozen at the time of her bodily death as well as giving money to reduce existential risk (so that there is a world for her to live in!). I am not sure, however, how strong the reasons to do this would be. But views which imply that, if I don’t care about other people, I have no or very little reason to help them are not even minimally plausible views (in addition to hedonistic egoism, I here have in mind views that imply that one has no reason to perform an act unless one actually desires to do that act). To be minimally plausible, egoism will need to be paired with a more sophisticated account of well-being. To see this, it is enough to consider, as Plato did, the possibility of a ring of invisibility – suppose that, while wearing it, Ayn could derive some pleasure by helping the poor, but instead could derive just a bit more by severely harming them. Hedonistic egoism would absurdly imply she should do the latter. To avoid this implication, egoists would need to build something like the meaningfulness of a life into well-being, in some robust way, where this would to a significant extent be a function of other-regarding concerns (see chapter 12 of this classic intro to ethics). But once these elements are included, we can (roughly, as above) argue that this sort of egoism will imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Add to all of this Samuel Scheffler’s recent intriguing arguments (quick podcast version available here) that most of what makes our lives go well would be undermined if there were no future generations of intelligent persons. On his view, my life would contain vastly less well-being if (say) a year after my death the world came to an end. So obviously if Scheffler were right I’d have very strong reason to reduce existential risk. We should also take into account moral uncertainty. What is it reasonable for one to do, when one is uncertain not (only) about the empirical facts, but also about the moral facts? I’ve just argued that there’s agreement among minimally plausible ethical views that we have strong reason to reduce existential risk – not only consequentialists, but also deontologists, virtue ethicists, and sophisticated egoists should agree. But even those (hedonistic egoists) who disagree should have a significant level of confidence that they are mistaken, and that one of the above views is correct. Even if they were 90% sure that their view is the correct one (and 10% sure that one of these other ones is correct), they would have pretty strong reason, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, to reduce existential risk. Perhaps most disturbingly still, even if we are only 1% sure that the well-being of possible future people matters, it is at least arguable that, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, reducing existential risk is the most important thing in the world. Again, this is largely for the reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. (For more on this and other related issues, see this excellent dissertation). Of course, it is uncertain whether these untold trillions would, in general, have good lives. It’s possible they’ll be miserable. It is enough for my claim that there is moral agreement in the relevant sense if, at least given certain empirical claims about what future lives would most likely be like, all minimally plausible moral views would converge on the conclusion that we should try to save the world. While there are some non-crazy views that place significantly greater moral weight on avoiding suffering than on promoting happiness, for reasons others have offered (and for independent reasons I won’t get into here unless requested to), they nonetheless seem to be fairly implausible views. And even if things did not go well for our ancestors, I am optimistic that they will overall go fantastically well for our descendants, if we allow them to. I suspect that most of us alive today – at least those of us not suffering from extreme illness or poverty – have lives that are well worth living, and that things will continue to improve. Derek Parfit, whose work has emphasized future generations as well as agreement in ethics, described our situation clearly and accurately: “We live during the hinge of history. Given the scientific and technological discoveries of the last two centuries, the world has never changed as fast. We shall soon have even greater powers to transform, not only our surroundings, but ourselves and our successors. If we act wisely in the next few centuries, humanity will survive its most dangerous and decisive period. Our descendants could, if necessary, go elsewhere, spreading through this galaxy…. Our descendants might, I believe, make the further future very good. But that good future may also depend in part on us. If our selfish recklessness ends human history, we would be acting very wrongly.” (From chapter 36 of On What Matters)

#### 5. Complacency goes neg – academics and the wider public actively discount the probability AND magnitude of existential risks – only giving them extra attention in debate solves – that means our impact outweighs even in we lose the rest of framing

Javorsky 18 [Emilia Javorsky is a Boston-based physician-scientist focused on the invention, development and commercialization of new medical therapies. She also leads an Artificial Intelligence in Medicine initiative with The Future Society at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Why Human Extinction Needs a Marketing Department. January 15, 2018. https://www.xconomy.com/boston/2018/01/15/why-human-extinction-needs-a-marketing-department/]

Experts at Oxford University and elsewhere have estimated that the risk of a global human extinction event this century—or at least of an event that wipes out 10 percent or more of the world’s population— is around 1 in 10. The most probable culprits sending us the way of the dinosaur are mostly anthropogenic risks, meaning those created by humans. These include climate change, nuclear disaster, and more emerging risks such as artificial intelligence gone wrong (by accident or nefarious intent) and bioterrorism. A recent search of the scientific literature through ScienceDirect for “human extinction” returned a demoralizing 157 results, compared to the 1,627 for “dung beetle.” I don’t know about you, but this concerns me. Why is there so little research and action on existential risks (risks capable of rendering humanity extinct)?

A big part of the problem is a lack of awareness about the real threats we face and what can be done about them. When asked to estimate the chance of an extinction event in the next 50 years, U.S. adults in surveys reported chances ranging from 1 in 10 million to 1 in 100, certainly not 10 percent. The awareness and engagement issues extend to the academic community as well, where a key bottleneck is a lack of talented people studying existential risks.

Developing viable risk mitigation strategies will require widespread civic engagement and concerted research efforts. Consequently, there is an urgent need to improve the communication of the magnitude and importance of existential risks. The first step is getting an audience to pay attention to this issue.

#### 6. Scenario planning is good pedagogy – inculcates IR education, deconstructs preexisting assumptions, and enables best research practices

**Mahnken and Junio 13** – (2013, Thomas, PhD, Jerome E. Levy Chair of Economic Geography and National Security at the U.S. Naval War College and a Visiting Scholar at the Philip Merrill Center for Strategic Studies at The Johns Hopkins University’s Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, and Timothy, Predoctoral Fellow, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, PhD in Political Science expected 2013, “Conceiving of Future War: The Promise of Scenario Analysis for International Relations,” International Studies Review Volume 15, Issue 3, pages 374–395, September 2013)

**This article introduces** political scientists to **scenarios**—future counterfactuals—**and demonstrates their value in tandem with other methodologies** and **across a wide range of research questions**. The authors describe best practices regarding the scenario method and argue that **scenarios contribute to theory building and development, identifying new hypotheses, analyzing** data-**poor research** topics, **articulating “world views,” setting** new **research agendas, avoiding cognitive biases, and teaching**. The article also establishes the low rate at which scenarios are used in the international relations subfield and situates scenarios in the broader context of political science methods. The conclusion offers two detailed examples of the effective use of scenarios.

In his classic work on scenario analysis, The Art of the Long View, Peter **Schwartz commented that “social scientists often have a hard time [building scenarios]; they have been trained to stay away** from ‘what if?’ questions **and concentrate on ‘what was?’”** (Schwartz 1996:31). While Schwartz's comments were impressionistic based on his years of conducting and teaching scenario analysis, his claim withstands empirical scrutiny. **Scenarios—counterfactual narratives about the future—are woefully underutilized among political scientists**. **The method is almost never taught** on graduate student syllabi, and a survey of leading international relations (IR) journals indicates that scenarios were used in only 302 of 18,764 sampled articles. **The low rate at which political scientists use scenarios**—less than 2% of the time—**is surprising**; **the method is popular in fields as disparate as business, demographics, ecology, pharmacology, public health, economics, and epidemiology** (Venable, Li, Ginter, and Duncan 1993; Leufkens, Haaijer-Ruskamp, Bakker, and Dukes 1994; Baker, Hulse, Gregory, White, Van Sickle, Berger, Dole, and Schumaker 2004; Sanderson, Scherbov, O'Neill, and Lutz 2004). **Scenarios also are a common tool employed by the policymakers whom political scientists study**.

**This article seeks to elevate the status of scenarios** in political science **by demonstrating their usefulness for theory building and pedagogy**. **Rather than constitute mere speculation regarding an unpredictable future**, **as critics might suggest**, **scenarios assist scholars with developing testable hypotheses, gathering data, and identifying a theory's** upper and lower **bounds**. Additionally, **scenarios are an effective way to teach students to apply theory to policy**. In the pages below, a “best practices” guide is offered to advise scholars, practitioners, and students, and an argument is developed in favor of the use of scenarios. The article concludes with two examples of how political scientists have invoked the scenario method to improve the specifications of their theories, propose falsifiable hypotheses, and design new empirical research programs.