# 1NC vs Strake Jesuit KS

## **A2 Counterbalancing**

#### Zero warrant for Russia and China aligning – there are squo sources of tension between them like China taking over Russia’s former sphere of influence in central Asia

#### No reason why heg entails military overstretch – this assumes they’re winning an unsustainability argument

## 1NC

#### CP Text: States, except the United States, should establish a multilateral agreement that restricts asteroid mining done by private entities. The United States should fund the appropriation of outer space for the mining of rare earth metals from asteroids by private entities.

#### Asteroids have REMs

AP 21 “Mining A $10,000 Quadrillion Asteroid.” AP News, Feb 1, 2021, <https://apnews.com/press-release/accesswire/technology-business-science-utilities-electric-utilities-7bb32ecaac33bebef6e4b97ade588c57> TG

There are several million asteroids. They fall into three main types: carbonaceous asteroids, metallic asteroids, and mixed salicaceous-mineral-metallic asteroids. Many of the metallic asteroids are composed mainly of nickel and iron, but also contain sizeable quantities of important rare earth elements and precious metals including platinum and gold. A metallic asteroid just 25 meters across could contain as much as 30 tons of platinum valued around $1 billion. 16 Psyche is a staggering 226 kilometers (140 miles) wide and the most mineral rich asteroid so far detected. It is speculated that 16 Psyche could be worth about $10,000 quadrillion (or €8,240 quadrillion euros). To explore 16 Psyche in greater detail, NASA has approved the Psyche mission, which is scheduled to launch in August 2022. The spacecraft will orbit around 16 Psyche for 21 months while studying the asteroid using a number of different scientific instruments. Twenty four percent of all asteroids are thought to be composed of metals and rare minerals. While it is quite difficult to analyze asteroid composition from here on the earth’s surface, there are another 10 asteroids have been identified as likely cost-effective mining targets to date.

#### The PIC is key to beat China and protect against Chinese REM gatekeeping

Stavridis 21 [(James, retired US Navy admiral, chief international diplomacy and national security analyst for NBC News, senior fellow at JHU Applied Physics Library, PhD in Law and Diplomacy from Tufts) “U.S. Needs a Strong Defense Against China’s Rare-Earth Weapon,” Bloomberg Opinion, March 4, 2021, https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-03-04/u-s-needs-a-strong-defense-against-china-s-rare-earth-weapon] TDI

You could be forgiven if you are confused about what’s going on with rare-earth elements. On the one hand, news reports indicate that China may increase production quotas of the minerals this quarter as a goodwill gesture to the Joe Biden administration. But other sources say that China may ultimately ban the export of the rare earths altogether on “security concerns.” What’s really going on here?

There are 17 elements considered rare earths — lanthanum, cerium, praseodymium, neodymium, promethium, samarium, europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, holmium, erbium, thulium, ytterbium, lutetium, scandium and yttrium — and while many aren’t actually rare in terms of global deposits, extracting them is difficult and expensive. They are used across high-tech manufacturing, including smartphones, fighter aircraft and components in virtually all advanced electronics. Of particular note, they are essential to many of the clean-energy technologies expected to come online in this decade.

I began to focus on rare-earth elements when I commanded the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s presence in Afghanistan, known as the International Security Assistance Force. While Afghans live in an extremely poor country, studies have assessed that they sit atop $1 trillion to $3 trillion in a wide variety of minerals, including rare earths. Some estimates put the rare-earth levels alone at 1.4 million metric tons.

But every time I tried to visit a mining facility, the answer I got from my security team was, “It’s too dangerous right now, admiral.” Unfortunately, despite a great deal of effort by the U.S. and NATO, those security challenges remain, deterring the large foreign-capital investments necessary to harvest the lodes. Which brings us back to Beijing.

China controls roughly 80% of the rare-earths market, between what it mines itself and processes in raw material from elsewhere. If it decided to wield the weapon of restricting the supply — something it has repeatedly threatened to do — it would create a significant challenge for manufacturers and a geopolitical predicament for the industrialized world.

It could happen. In 2010, Beijing threatened to cut off exports to Japan over the disputed Senkaku Islands. Two years ago, Beijing was reportedly considering restrictions on exports to the U.S. generally, as well as against specific companies (such as defense giant Lockheed Martin Corp.) that it deemed in violation of its policies against selling advanced weapons to Taiwan.

President Donald Trump’s administration issued an executive order to spur the production of rare earths domestically, and created an Energy Resource Governance Initiative to promote international mining. The European Union and Japan, among others, are also aggressively seeking newer sources of rare earths.

Given this tension, it was superficially surprising that China announced it would boost its mining quotas in the first quarter of 2021 by nearly 30%, reflecting a continuation in strong (and rising) demand. But the increase occurs under a shadow of uncertainty, as the Chinese Communist Party is undertaking a “review” of its policies concerning future sales of rare earths. In all probability, the tactics of the increase are temporary, and fit within a larger strategy.

China will go to great lengths to maintain overall control of the global rare-earths supply. This fits neatly within the geo-economic approach of the One Belt, One Road initiative, which seeks to use a variety of carrots and sticks — economic, trade, diplomatic and security — to create zones of influence globally. In terms of rare earths, the strategy seems to be allowing carefully calibrated access to the elements at a level that makes it economically less attractive for competitors to undertake costly exploration and mining operations. This is similar to the oil-market strategy used by Russia and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries for decades.

Some free-market advocates believe that China will not take aggressive action choking off supply because that could precipitate retaliation or accelerate the search for alternate sources in global markets. What seems more likely is a series of targeted shutdowns directed against specific entities such as U.S. defense companies, Japanese consumer electronics makers, or European industrial concerns that have offended Beijing.

The path to rare-earth independence for the U.S. must include: Ensuring supply chains of rare earths necessary for national security; promoting the exploitation of the elements domestically (and removing barriers to responsibly doing so); mandating that defense contractors and other critical-infrastructure entities wean themselves off Chinese rare earths; sponsoring research and development to find alternative materials, especially for clean energy technology; and creating a substantial stockpile of the elements in case of a Chinese boycott.

This is a bipartisan agenda. The Trump administration’s strategic assessment of what needs to be done (which goes beyond just 17 rare earths to include a total of 35 critical minerals) is thoughtful, and should serve as a basis for the Biden administration and Congress.

#### REM access key to military primacy and tech advancement – alternatives fail

Trigaux 12 (David, University Honors Program University of South Florida St. Petersburg) “The US, China and Rare Earth Metals: The Future Of Green Technology, Military Tech, and a Potential Achilles‟ Heel to American Hegemony,” USF St. Petersberg, May 2, 2012, https://digital.stpetersburg.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1132&context=honorstheses] TDI

The implications of a rare earth shortage aren’t strictly related to the environment, and energy dependence, but have distinct military implications as well that could threaten the position of the United States world’s strongest military. The United States place in the world was assured by powerful and decisive deployments in World War One and World War Two. Our military expansion was built upon a large, powerful industrial base that created more, better weapons of war for our soldiers. During the World Wars, a well-organized draft that sent millions of men into battle in a short amount of time proved decisive, but as the war ended, and soldiers drafted into service returned to civilian life, the U.S. technological superiority over its opponents provided it with sustained dominance over its enemies, even as the numerical size of the army declined. New technologies, such as the use of the airplane in combat, rocket launched missiles, radar systems, and later, GPS, precision guided missiles, missile defense systems, high tech tanks, lasers, and other technologies now make the difference between victory and defeat.

The United States military now serves many important functions, deterring threats across the world. The United States projects its power internationally, through a network of bases and allied nations. Thus, the United States is a powerful player in all regions of the world, and often serves as a buffer against conflict in these regions. US military presence serves as a buffer against Chinese military modernization in Eastern Asia, against an increasingly nationalist Russia in Europe, and smaller regional actors, such as Venezuela in South America and Iran in the Middle East. The U.S. Navy is deployed all over the world, as the guarantor of international maritime trade routes. The US Navy leads action against challenges to its maritime sovereignty on the other side of the globe, such as current action against Somali piracy. Presence in regions across the world prevents escalation of potential crisis. These could result in either a larger power fighting a smaller nation or nations (Russia and Georgia, Taiwan and China), religious opponents (Israel and Iran), or traditional foes (Ethiopia and Eretria, Venezuela and Colombia, India and Pakistan). US projection is also key deterring emerging threats such as terrorism and nuclear proliferation. While not direct challenges to US primacy, both terrorism and nuclear proliferation can kill thousands.

The US Air Force has a commanding lead over the rest of the world, in terms of both numbers and capabilities. American ground forces have few peers, and are unmatched in their ability to deploy to anywhere in the world at an equally unmatched pace.

The only perceived challenge to the United States militarily comes from the People’s Republic of China.76 While the United States outspends all other nations in the world put together in terms of military spending, China follows as a close second, and has begun an extensive modernization program to boot.77 The Chinese military however, is several decades behind the United States in air power and nuclear capabilities.78 To compensate, China has begun the construction of access-denial technology, preventing the US from exercising its dominance in China’s sphere of influence.79 Chinese modernization efforts have a serious long-term advantage over the United States; access to rare earth metals, and a large concentration of rare earth chemists doing research.80 This advantage, coupled with the U.S. losing access to rare earth metals, will even the odds much quicker than policymakers had previously anticipated. 81

The largest example is US airpower. With every successive generation of military aircraft, the U.S. Air Force becomes more and more dependent on Rare Earth Metals.82 As planes get faster and faster, they have to get lighter and lighter, while adding weight from extra computers and other features on board.83 To lighten the weight of the plane, scandium is used to produce lightweight aluminum alloys for the body of the plane. Rare Earth metals are also useful in fighter jet engines, and fuel cells.84 For example, rare earths are required to producing miniaturized fins, and samarium is required to build the motors for the F-35 fighter jet.85 F-35 jets are the next generation fighter jet that works together to form the dual plane combination that cements U.S. dominance in air power over the Russian PAK FA.86

Rare earth shortages don’t just affect air power, also compromising the navigation system of Abrams Tanks, which need samarium cobalt magnets. The Abrams Tank is the primary offensive mechanized vehicle in the U.S. arsenal. The Aegis Spy 1 Radar also uses samarium.87 Many naval ships require neodymium. Hell Fire missiles, satellites, night vision goggles, avionics, and precision guided munitions all require rare earth metals. 88

American military superiority is based on technological advancement that outstrips the rest of the world. Command and control technology allows the U.S. to fight multiple wars at once and maintain readiness for other issues, as well as have overwhelming force against rising challengers. This technology helps the U.S. know who, where, and what is going to attack them, and respond effectively, regardless of the source of the threat.

Rare Earth Elements make this technological superiority possible.

To make matters worse, the defense industrial base is often a single market industry, dependent on government contracts for its business. If China tightens the export quotas further, major US defense contractors will be in trouble.89 Every sector of the defense industrial base is dependent on rare earth metals. Without rare earths, these contractors can’t build anything, which collapses the industry.90

Rare Earth shortages are actually already affecting our military, with shortages of lanthanum, cerium, europium and gadolinium happening in the status quo. This prevents us not only from building the next generation of high tech weaponry, but also from constructing more of the weapons and munitions that are needed in the status quo. As current weapon systems age and they can’t be replaced, the US primacy will be undermined. Of special concern is that U.S. domestic mining doesn’t produce “heavy” rare earth metals that are needed for many advanced components of military technologies. Given the nature of many military applications, substitutions aren’t possible. 91

#### US leadership in this decade solves global war and results in a peaceful end to Chinese revisionism **Erickson and Collins 10/21** [(Andrew, A professor of strategy in the U.S. Naval War College’s China Maritime Studies Institute)(Gabriel, Baker Botts fellow in energy and environmental regulatory affairs at Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy) “A Dangerous Decade of Chinese Power Is Here,” Foreign Policy, 10/18/2021] **U.S. and allied policymakers are facing the most important foreign-policy challenge of the 21st century. China’s power is peaking; so is the political position of Chinese President Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) domestic strength. In the long term, China’s likely decline after this peak is a good thing. But right now, it creates a decade of danger from a system that increasingly realizes it only has a short time to fulfill some of its most critical, long-held goals.**

Within the next five years, China’s leaders are likely to conclude that its deteriorating demographic profile, structural economic problems, and technological estrangement from global innovation centers are eroding its leverage to annex Taiwan and achieve other major strategic objectives. As Xi internalizes these challenges, his foreign policy is likely to become even more accepting of risk, feeding on his nearly decadelong track record of successful revisionist action against the rules-based order. Notable examples include China occupying and militarizing sub-tidal features in the South China Sea, ramping up air and maritime incursions against Japan and Taiwan, pushing border challenges against India, occupying Bhutanese and Tibetan lands, perpetrating crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, and coercively enveloping Hong Kong.

The relatively low-hanging fruit is plucked, but Beijing is emboldened to grasp the biggest single revisionist prize: Taiwan.

Beijing’s actions over the last decade have triggered backlash, such as with the so-called AUKUS deal, but concrete constraints on China’s strategic freedom of action may not fully manifest until after 2030. It’s remarkable and dangerous that China has paid few costs for its actions over the last 10 years, even as its military capacities have rapidly grown.

Beijing will likely conclude that under current diplomatic, economic, and force postures for both “gray zone” and high-end scenarios, the 2021 to late 2020s timeframe still favors China—and is attractive for its 68-year-old leader, who seeks a historical achievement at the zenith of his career.

U.S. planners must mobilize resources, effort, and risk acceptance to maximize power and thereby deter Chinese aggression in the coming decade—literally starting now—and innovatively employ assets that currently exist or can be operationally assembled and scaled within the next several years. That will be the first step to pushing back against China during the 2020s—a decade of danger—before what will likely be a waning of Chinese power.

As Beijing aggressively seeks to undermine the international order and promotes a narrative of inevitable Chinese strategic domination in Asia and beyond, it creates a dangerous contradiction between its goals and its medium-term capacity to achieve them. China is, in fact, likely nearing the apogee of its relative power; and by 2030 to 2035, it will cross a tipping point from which it may never recover strategically. Growing headwinds constraining Chinese growth, while not publicly acknowledged by Beijing, help explain Xi’s high and apparently increasing risk tolerance. Beijing’s window of strategic opportunity is sliding shut.

China’s skyrocketing household debt levels exemplify structural economic constraints that are emerging much earlier than they did for the United States when it had similar per capita GDP and income levels. Debt is often a wet blanket on consumption growth. A 2017 analysis published by the Bank for International Settlements found that once the household debt-to-GDP ratio in a sample of 54 countries exceeded 60 percent, “the negative long-run effects on consumption tend to intensify.” China’s household debt-to-GDP ratio surpassed that empirical danger threshold in late 2020. Rising debt service burdens thus threaten Chinese consumers’ capacity to sustain the domestic consumption-focused “dual circulation” economic model that Xi and his advisors seek to build. China’s growth record during the past 30 years has been remarkable, but past exceptionalism does not confer future immunity from fundamental demographic and economic headwinds.

As debt levels continue to rise at an absolute level that has accelerated almost continuously for the past decade, China also faces a hollowing out of its working-age population. This critical segment peaked in 2010 and has since declined, with the rate from 2015 to 2020 nearing 0.6 percent annually—nearly twice the respective pace in the United States. While the United States faces demographic challenges of its own, the disparity between the respective paces of decline highlights its relative advantage compared to its chief geopolitical competitor. Moreover, the United States can choose to access a global demographic and talent dividend via immigration in a way China simply will not be able to do.

Atop surging debt and worsening demographics, China also faces resource insecurity. China’s dependence on imported food and energy has grown steadily over the past two decades. Projections from Tsinghua University make a compelling case that China’s oil and gas imports will peak between 2030 and 2035. As China grapples with power shortages, Beijing has been reminded that supply shortfalls equal to even a few percentage points of total demand can have outsized negative impacts.

Domestic resource insufficiency by itself does not hinder economic growth—as the Four Asian Tigers’ multi-decade boom attests. But China is in a different position. Japan and South Korea never had to worry about the U.S. Navy interdicting inbound tankers or grain ships. In fact, the United States was avowedly willing to use military force to protect energy flows from the Persian Gulf region to its allies. Now, as an increasingly energy-secure United States pivots away from the Middle East toward the Indo-Pacific, there is a substantial probability that energy shipping route protection could be viewed in much more differentiated terms—with oil and liquefied natural gas cargoes sailing under the Chinese flag viewed very differently than cargoes headed to buyers in other regional countries.

Each of these dynamics—demographic downshifts, rising debts, resource supply insecurity—either imminently threatens or is already actively interfering with the CCP’s long-cherished goal of achieving a “moderately prosperous society.” Electricity blackouts, real estate sector travails (like those of Evergrande) that show just how many Chinese investors’ financial eggs now sit in an unstable $52 trillion basket, and a solidifying alignment of countries abroad concerned by aggressive Chinese behavior all raise questions about Xi’s ability to deliver. With this confluence of adverse events only a year before the next party congress, where personal ambition and survival imperatives will almost drive him to seek anointment as the only Chinese “leader for life” aside from former leader Mao Zedong, the timing only fuels his sense of insecurity. Xi’s anti-corruption campaigns and ruthless removal of potential rivals and their supporters solidified his power but likely also created a quiet corps of opponents who may prove willing to move against him if events create the perception he’s lost the “mandate of heaven.” Accordingly, the baseline assumption should be that Xi’s crown sits heavy and the insecurity induced is thereby intense enough to drive high-stake, high-consequence posturing and action.

While Xi is under pressure to act, the external risks are magnified because so far, he has suffered few consequences from taking actions on issues his predecessors would likely never have gambled on. Reactions to party predations in Xinjiang and Hong Kong have been restricted to diplomatic-signaling pinpricks, such as sanctioning responsible Chinese officials and entities, most of whom lack substantial economic ties to the United States. Whether U.S. restraint results from a fear of losing market access or a belief that China’s goals are ultimately limited is not clear at this time.

While the CCP issues retaliatory sanctions against U.S. officials and proclaims a triumphant outcome to its hostage diplomacy, these tactical public actions mask a growing private awareness that China’s latitude for irredentist action is poised to shrink. Not knowing exactly when domestic and external constraints will come to bite—but knowing that when Beijing sees the tipping point in its rearview mirror, major rivals will recognize it too—amplifies Xi and the party’s anxiety to act on a shorter timeline. Hence the dramatic acceleration of the last few years.

Just as China is mustering its own strategic actions, so the United States must also intensify its focus and deployment of resources. The United States has taken too long to warm up and confront the central challenge, but it retains formidable advantages, agility, and the ability to prevail—provided it goes all-in now. Conversely, if Washington fails to marshal its forces promptly, its achievements after 2030 or 2035 will matter little. Seizing the 2020s would enable Beijing to ~~cripple~~ [destroy] the free and open rules-based order and entrench its position by economically subjugating regional neighbors (including key U.S. treaty allies) to a degree that could offset the strategic headwinds China now increasingly grapples with.

Deterrence is never certain. But it offers the highest probability of avoiding the certainty that an Indo-Pacific region dominated by a CCP-led China would doom treaty allies, threaten the U.S. homeland, and likely set the stage for worse to come. Accordingly, U.S. planners should immediately mobilize resources and effort as well as accept greater risks to deter Chinese action over the critical next decade.

The greatest threat is armed conflict over Taiwan, where U.S. and allied success or failure will be fundamental and reverberate for the remainder of the century. There is a high chance of a major move against Taiwan by the late 2020s—following an extraordinary ramp-up in People’s Liberation Army capabilities and before Xi or the party state’s power grasp has ebbed or Washington and its allies have fully regrouped and rallied to the challenge.

So how should policymakers assess the potential risk of Chinese action against Taiwan reaching dangerous levels by 2027 or possibly even earlier—as emphasized in the testimonies of Adms. Philip Davidson and John Aquilino? In June, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Mark Milley testified to the House of Representatives that Xi had “challenged the People’s Liberation Army to accelerate their modernization programs to develop capabilities to seize Taiwan and move it from 2035 to 2027,” although China does not currently have the capabilities or intentions to conduct an all-out invasion of mainland Taiwan.

U.S. military leaders’ assessments are informed by some of the world’s most extensive and sophisticated internal information. But what’s striking is open-source information available to everyone suggests similar things. Moving forward, a number of open-source indicators offer valuable “early warning lights” that can help policymakers more accurately calibrate both potential timetables and risk readings as the riskiest period of relations—from 2027 onward—approaches.

Semiconductors supply self-sufficiency. Taiwan is the “OPEC+” of semiconductors, accounting for approximately two-thirds of global chip foundry capacity. A kinetic crisis would almost certainly disrupt—and potentially even completely curtail—semiconductor supplies. China presently spends even more each year on semiconductor imports (around $380 billion) than it does on oil, but much of the final products are destined for markets abroad. Taiwan is producing cutting-edge 5-nanometer and 7-nanometer chips, but China produces around 80 percent of the rest of the chips in the world. The closer China comes to being able to secure “good enough” chips for “inside China-only” needs, the less of a constraint this becomes.

Crude oil, grain, strategic metals stockpiles—the commercial community (Planet Labs, Ursa Space Systems, etc.) has developed substantial expertise in cost-effectively tracking inventory changes for key input commodities needed to prepare for war.

Electric vehicle fleet size—the amount of oil demand displaced by electric vehicles varies depending on miles driven, but the more of China’s car fleet that can be connected to the grid (and thus powered by blockade-resistant coal), the less political burden Beijing will face if it has to weather a maritime oil blockade imposed in response to actions it took against Taiwan or other major revisionist adventures. China’s passenger vehicle fleet, now approximately 225 million units strong, counts nearly 6.5 million electric vehicles among its ranks, the lion’s share of which are full-battery electrics. China’s State Council seeks to have 20 percent of new vehicles sold in China be electric vehicles by 2025. This target has already basically been achieved over the last few months, meaning at least 3.5 to 4 million (and eventually many more) new elective vehicles will enter China’s car fleet each year from now on.

Local concentration of maritime vessels—snap exercises with warships, circumnavigations, and midline tests with swarms of aircraft highlight the growing scale of China’s threat to Taiwan. But these assets alone cannot invade the island. To capture and garrison, Beijing would need not only air, missile, naval, and special operations forces but also the ability to move lots of equipment and—at the very least—tens of thousands of personnel across the Taiwan Strait. As such, Beijing would have to amass maritime transport assets. And given the scale required, this would alter ship patterns elsewhere along China’s coast in ways detectable with artificial intelligence-facilitated imagery analysis from firms like Planet Labs (or national assets).

Only the most formidable, agile American and allied deterrence can kick the can down the road long enough for China’s slowdown to shut the window of vulnerability. Holding the line is likely to require frequent and sustained proactive enforcement actions to disincentivize full-frontal Chinese assaults on the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. Chinese probing behavior and provocations must be met with a range of symmetric and asymmetric responses that impose real costs, such as publishing assets owned by Chinese officials abroad, cyber interference with China’s technological social control apparatus, “hands on” U.S. Navy and Coast Guard enforcement measures against Maritime Militia-affiliated vessels in the South China Sea, intensified air and maritime surveillance of Chinese naval bases, and visas and resettlement options to Hong Kongers, Uyghurs, and other threatened Chinese citizens—including CCP officials (and their families) who seek to defect and/or leave China. U.S. policymakers must make crystal clear to their Chinese counterparts that the engagement-above-all policies that dominated much of the past 25 years are over and the risks and costs of ongoing—and future—adventurism will fall heaviest on China.

Bombastic Chinese reactions to emerging cohesive actions verify the approach’s effectiveness and potential for halting—and perhaps even reversing—the revisionist tide China has unleashed across the Asian region. Consider the recent nuclear submarine deal among Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Beijing’s strong public reaction (including toleration of nuclear threats made by the state-affiliated *Global Times*) highlights the gap between its global information war touting China’s irresistible power and deeply insecure internal self-perception. Eight nuclear submarines will ultimately represent formidable military capacity, but for a bona fide superpower that believes in its own capabilities, they would not be a game-changer. Consider the U.S.-NATO reaction to the Soviet Union’s commissioning of eight Oscar I/II-class cruise missile subs during the late Cold War. These formidable boats each carried 24 SS-N-19 Granit missiles specifically designed to kill U.S. carrier battle groups, yet NATO never stooped to public threats.

With diplomatic proofs of concepts like the so-called AUKUS deal, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, and hard security actions like the Pacific Deterrence Initiative now falling into place, it is time to comprehensively peak the non-authoritarian world’s protective action to hold the line in the Indo-Pacific. During this decade, U.S. policymakers must understand that under Xi’s strongman rule, personal political survival will dictate Chinese behavior. Xi’s recreation of a “one-man” system is a one-way, high-leverage bet that decisions he drives will succeed.

If Xi miscalculates, a significant risk given his suppression of dissenting voices while China raises the stakes in its confrontation with the United States, the proverbial “leverage” that would have left him with outsized returns on a successful bet would instead amplify the downside, all of which he personally and exclusively signed for. Resulting tensions could very realistically undermine his status and authority, embolden internal challengers, and weaken the party. They could also foreseeably drive him to double down on mistakes, especially if those led to—or were made in the course of—a kinetic conflict. Personal survival measures could thus rapidly transmute into regional or even global threats.

If Xi triggered a “margin call” on his personal political account through a failed high-stakes gamble, it would likely be paid in blood. Washington must thus prepare the U.S. electorate and its institutional and physical infrastructure as well as that of allies and partners abroad for the likelihood that tensions will periodically ratchet up to uncomfortable levels—and that actual conflict is a concrete possibility. Si vis pacem, para bellum (“if you want peace, prepare for war”) must unfortunately serve as a central organizing principle for a variety of U.S. and allied decisions during the next decade with China.

Given these unforgiving dynamics and stakes, implications for U.S. planners are stark: Do whatever remains possible to “peak” for deterrent competition against China by the mid-to-late 2020s, and accept whatever trade-offs are available for doing so.

Nothing we might theoretically achieve in 2035 and beyond is worth pursuing at the expense of China-credible capabilities we can realistically achieve no later than the mid-to-late 2020s.

## 1NC

#### Climate change makes water shortages inevitable – that causes hydro-political conflict escalation which goes nuclear

Jamail 19 [(Dahr, writes for *Truthout* about climate change issues, recipient of the 2008 Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism, frequent guest on *Democracy Now!*) “The World Is on the Brink of Widespread Water Wars,” Truth Out, 2/11/2019] JL

Mark’s words should be a call to attention, and a call to action. The plight of farmers in Australia illustrates a larger reality: As planetary temperatures continue to increase and rainfall patterns shift due to human-caused climate disruption, our ability to grow crops and have enough drinking water will become increasingly challenged, and the outlook is only going to worsen.

The most recent United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report warned of increasingly intense droughts and mass water shortages around large swaths of the globe.

But even more conservative organizations have been sounding the alarm. “Water insecurity could multiply the risk of conflict,” warns one of the World Bank’s reports on the issue. “Food price spikes caused by droughts can inflame latent conflicts and drive migration. Where economic growth is impacted by rainfall, episodes of droughts and floods have generated waves of migration and spikes in violence within countries.”

Meanwhile, a study published in the journal Global Environmental Change, looked at how “hydro-political issues” — including tensions and potential conflicts — could play out in countries expected to experience water shortages coupled with high populations and pre-existing geopolitical tensions.

The study warned that these factors could combine to increase the likelihood of water-related tensions — potentially escalating into armed conflict in cross-boundary river basins in places around the world by 74.9 to 95 percent. This means that in some places conflict is practically guaranteed.

These areas include regions situated around primary rivers in Asia and North Africa. Noted rivers include the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus, the Nile, and the Ganges-Brahmaputra.

Consider the fact that 11 countries share the Nile River basin: Egypt, Burundi, Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo. All told, more than 300 million people already live in these countries, — a number that is projected to double in the coming decades, while the amount of available water will continue to shrink due to climate change.

For those in the US thinking these potential conflicts will only occur in distant lands — think again. The study also warned of a very high chance of these “hydro-political interactions” in portions of the southwestern US and northern Mexico, around the Colorado River.

Potential tensions are particularly worrisome in India and Pakistan, which are already rivals when it comes to water resources. For now, these two countries have an agreement, albeit a strained one, over the Indus River and the sharing of its water, by way of the 1960 Indus Water Treaty.

However, water claims have been central to their ongoing, burning dispute over the Kashmir region, a flashpoint area there for more than 60 years and counting.

The aforementioned treaty is now more strained than ever, as Pakistan accuses India of limiting its water supply and violating the treaty by placing dams over various rivers that flow from Kashmir into Pakistan.

In fact, a 2018 report from the International Monetary Fund ranked Pakistan third among countries facing severe water shortages. This is largely due to the rapid melting of glaciers in the Himalaya that are the source of much of the water for the Indus.

To provide an idea of how quickly water resources are diminishing in both countries, statistics from Pakistan’s Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry from 2018 show that water availability (per capita in cubic meters per year) shrank from 5,260 in 1951, to 940 in 2015, and are projected to shrink to 860 by just 2025.

In India, the crisis is hardly better. According to that country’s Ministry of Statistics (2016) and the Indian Ministry of Water Resources (2010), the per capita available water in cubic meters per year was 5,177 in 1951, and 1,474 in 2015, and is projected to shrink to 1,341 in 2025.

Both of these countries are nuclear powers. Given the dire projections of water availability as climate change progresses, nightmare scenarios of water wars that could spark nuclear exchanges are now becoming possible.

#### Asteroid mining solves water access – only NEOs are sufficiently proximate and hydrated – independently, storing launch fuel on asteroids reduces space debris – turns case

Tillman 19 [(Nola Taylor, has been published in Astronomy, Sky & Telescope, Scientific American, New Scientist, Science News (AAS), Space.com, and Astrobiology magazine, BA in Astrophysics) “Tons of Water in Asteroids Could Fuel Satellites, Space Exploration,” Space, 9/29/2019] JL

When it comes to mining space for water, the best target may not be the moon: Entrepreneurs' richest options are likely to be asteroids that are larger and closer to Earth.

A recent study suggested that roughly 1,000 water-rich, or hydrated, asteroids near our planet are easier to reach than the lunar surface is. While most of these space rocks are only a few feet in size, more than 25 of them should be large enough to each provide significant water. Altogether, the water locked in these asteroids should be enough to fill somewhere around 320,000 Olympics-size swimming pools — significantly more than the amount of water locked up at the lunar poles, the new research suggested.

Because asteroids are small, they have less gravity than Earth or the moon do, which makes them easier destinations to land on and lift off from. If engineers can figure out how to mine water from these space rocks, they could produce a source of ready fuel in space that would allow spacecraft designers to build refuelable models for the next generation of satellites. Asteroid mining could also fuel human exploration, saving the expense of launching fuel from Earth. In both cases, would-be space-rock miners will need to figure out how to free the water trapped in hydrated minerals on these asteroids.

"Most of the hydrated material in the near-Earth population is contained in the largest few hydrated objects," Andrew Rivkin, an asteroid researcher at Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Research Laboratory in Maryland, told Space.com. Rivkin is the lead author on the paper, which estimated that near Earth asteroids could contain more easily accessible water than the lunar poles.

According to the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, more than 5,200 of the objects launched into space are still in orbit today. While some continue to function, the bulk of them buzz uselessly over our heads every day. They carry fuel on board, and when they run out, they are either lowered into destructive orbits or left to become space junk, useless debris with the potential to cause enormous problems for working satellites. Refueling satellites in space could change that model, replacing it with long-lived, productive orbiters.

"It's easier to bring fuel from asteroids to geosynchronous orbit than from the surface of the Earth," Rivkin said. "If such a supply line could be established, it could make asteroid mining very profitable."

Hunting for space water from the surface of the Earth is challenging because the planet's atmosphere blocks the wavelength of light where water can be observed. The asteroid warming as it draws closer to the sun can also complicate measurements.

Instead, Rivkin and his colleagues turned to a class of space rocks called Ch asteroids. Although these asteroids don't directly exhibit a watery fingerprint, they carry the telltale signal of oxidized iron seen only on asteroids with signatures of water-rich minerals, which means the authors felt confident assuming that all Ch asteroids carry this rocky water.

Based on meteorite falls, a previous study estimated that Ch asteroids could make up nearly 10% of the near-Earth objects (NEOs). With this information, the researchers determined that there are between 26 and 80 such objects that are hydrated and larger than 0.62 miles (1 km) across.

Right now, only three NEOs have been classified as Ch asteroids, although others have been spotted in the asteroid belt. Most NEOs are discovered and observed at wavelengths too short to reveal the iron band that marks the class. Carbon-rich asteroids, which include Ch asteroids and other flavors, are also darker than the more common stony asteroids, making them more challenging to observe.

Although Ch asteroids definitely contain water-rich minerals, that doesn’t necessarily mean that they will always be the best bet for space mining. It comes down to risk. Would an asteroid-mining company rather visit a smaller asteroid that definitely has a moderate amount of water, or a larger one that could yield a larger payday but could also come up dry?

"Whether getting sure things with no false positives, like the Ch asteroids, is more important or if a greater range of possibilities is acceptable with the understanding that some asteroids will be duds is something the miners will have to decide," Rivkin said.

In addition to estimating the number of large, water-rich asteroids might be available, the study also found that as many as 1,050 smaller objects, roughly 300 feet (100 meters) across, may also linger near Earth. Their small bulk will make them easier to mine because their low gravity will require less fuel to escape from, but they will produce less water overall, and Rivkin expects that the handful of larger space rocks will be the first targets.

"It seems likely that the plan for these companies will be to find the largest accessible asteroid with mineable material with the expectation that it will be more cost-effective than chasing down a large number of smaller objects," Rivkin said. "How 'accessible' and 'mineable material' and 'cost-effective' are defined by each company is to be seen."

## 1NC

**The standard is maximizing expected wellbeing**

**First, pleasure and pain are intrinsically valuable. People consistently regard pleasure and pain as good reasons for action, despite the fact that pleasure doesn’t seem to be instrumentally valuable for anything.**

**Moen 16** [Ole Martin Moen, Research Fellow in Philosophy at University of Oslo “An Argument for Hedonism” Journal of Value Inquiry (Springer), 50 (2) 2016: 267–281] SJDI

Let us start by observing, empirically, that a widely shared judgment about intrinsic value and disvalue is that pleasure is intrinsically valuable and pain is intrinsically disvaluable. On virtually any proposed list of intrinsic values and disvalues (we will look at some of them below), pleasure is included among the intrinsic values and pain among the intrinsic disvalues**.** This inclusion makes intuitive sense, moreover, for there is something undeniably good about the way pleasure feels and something undeniably bad about the way pain feels, and neither the goodness of pleasure nor the badness of pain seems to be exhausted by the further effects that these experiences might have. “Pleasure” and “pain” are here understood inclusively, as encompassing anything hedonically positive and anything hedonically negative.2 The special value statuses of pleasure and pain are manifested in how we treat these experiences in our everyday reasoning about values**.** If you tell me that you are heading for the convenience store, I might ask: “What for?” This is a reasonable question, for when you go to the convenience store you usually do so, not merely for the sake of going to the convenience store, but for the sake of achieving something further that you deem to be valuable**.** You might answer, for example: “To buy soda.” This answer makes sense, for soda is a nice thing and you can get it at the convenience store. I might further inquire, however: “What is buying the soda good for?” This further question can also be a reasonable one, for it need not be obvious why you want the soda. You might answer: “Well, I want it for the pleasure of drinking it.” If I then proceed by asking “But what is the pleasure of drinking the soda good for?” the discussion is likely to reach an awkward end. The reason is that the pleasure is not good for anything further; it is simply that for which going to the convenience store and buying the soda is good.3 As Aristotle observes**:** “We never ask [a man] what his end is in being pleased, because we assume that pleasure is choice worthy in itself.”4 Presumably, a similar story can be told in the case of pains, for if someone says “This is painful!” we never respond by asking: “And why is that a problem?” We take for granted that if something is painful, we have a sufficient explanation of why it is bad. If we are onto something in our everyday reasoning about values, it seems that pleasure and pain are both places where we reach the end of the line in matters of value.

**Moreover, *only* pleasure and pain are intrinsically valuable. All other values can be explained with reference to pleasure; Occam’s razor requires us to treat these as instrumentally valuable.**

**Moen 16** [Ole Martin Moen, Research Fellow in Philosophy at University of Oslo “An Argument for Hedonism” Journal of Value Inquiry (Springer), 50 (2) 2016: 267–281] SJDI

I think several things should be said in response to Moore’s challenge to hedonists. First, **I do not think the burden of proof lies on hedonists to explain why the additional values are not intrinsic values. If someone claims that X is intrinsically valuable, this is a substantive, positive claim, and it lies on him or her to explain why we should believe that X is in fact intrinsically valuable.** Possibly, this could be done through thought experiments analogous to those employed in the previous section. Second, **there is something peculiar about the list of additional intrinsic values** that counts in hedonism’s favor**: the listed values have a strong tendency to be well explained as things that help promote pleasure and avert pain.** To go through Frankena’s list, life and consciousness are necessary presuppositions for pleasure; activity, health, and strength bring about pleasure; and happiness, beatitude, and contentment are regarded by Frankena himself as “pleasures and satisfactions.” The same is arguably true of beauty, harmony, and “proportion in objects contemplated,” and also of affection, friendship, harmony, and proportion in life, experiences of achievement, adventure and novelty, self-expression, good reputation, honor and esteem. Other things on Frankena’s list, such as understanding, **wisdom, freedom, peace, and security, although they are perhaps not themselves pleasurable, are important means to achieve a happy life, and as such, they are things that hedonists would value highly.** **Morally good dispositions and virtues, cooperation, and just distribution of goods and evils, moreover, are things that, on a collective level, contribute a happy society, and thus the traits that would be promoted and cultivated if this were something sought after.** To a very large extent, the intrinsic values suggested by pluralists tend to be hedonic instrumental values. Indeed, pluralists’ suggested intrinsic values all point toward pleasure, for while the other values are reasonably explainable as a means toward pleasure, pleasure itself is not reasonably explainable as a means toward the other values. Some have noticed this. Moore himself, for example, writes that though his pluralistic theory of intrinsic value is opposed to hedonism, its application would, in practice, look very much like hedonism’s: “Hedonists,” he writes “do, in general, recommend a course of conduct which is very similar to that which I should recommend.”24 Ross writes that “[i]t is quite certain that by promoting virtue and knowledge we shall inevitably produce much more pleasant consciousness. These are, by general agreement, among the surest sources of happiness for their possessors.”25 Roger Crisp observes that “those goods cited by non-hedonists are goods we often, indeed usually, enjoy.”26 What Moore and Ross do not seem to notice is that their observations give rise to two reasons to reject pluralism and endorse hedonism. The first reason is that if **the suggested non-hedonic intrinsic values are potentially explainable by appeal to just pleasure and pain** (which, following my argument in the previous chapter, we should accept as intrinsically valuable and disvaluable), **then—by appeal to Occam’s razor—we have at least a pro tanto reason to resist the introduction of any further intrinsic values and disvalues. It is ontologically more costly to posit a plurality of intrinsic values and disvalues, so in case all values admit of explanation by reference to a single intrinsic value and a single intrinsic disvalue, we have reason to reject more complicated accounts.** **The fact that suggested non-hedonic intrinsic values tend to be hedonistic instrumental values does not, however, count in favor of hedonism solely in virtue of being most elegantly explained by hedonism; it also does so in virtue of creating an explanatory challenge for pluralists.** The challenge can be phrased as the following question: **If the non-hedonic values suggested by pluralists are truly intrinsic values in their own right, then why do they tend to point toward pleasure and away from pain?**27

**Moral uncertainty means preventing extinction should be our highest priority.  
Bostrom 12** [Nick Bostrom. Faculty of Philosophy & Oxford Martin School University of Oxford. “Existential Risk Prevention as Global Priority.” Global Policy (2012)]  
These reflections on **moral uncertainty suggest** an alternative, complementary way of looking at existential risk; they also suggest a new way of thinking about the ideal of sustainability. Let me elaborate.¶ **Our present understanding of axiology might** well **be confused. We may not** nowknow — at least not in concrete detail — what outcomes would count as a big win for humanity; we might not even yet **be able to imagine the best ends** of our journey. **If we are** indeedprofoundly **uncertain** about our ultimate aims,then we should recognize that **there is a great** option **value in preserving** — and ideally improving — **our ability to recognize value and** to **steer the future accordingly. Ensuring** that **there will be a future** version of **humanity** with great powers and a propensity to use them wisely **is** plausibly **the best way** available to us **to increase the probability that the future will contain** a lot of **value.** To do this, we must prevent any existential catastrophe.

**Reducing the risk of extinction is always priority number one.   
Bostrom 12** [Faculty of Philosophy and Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford.], Existential Risk Prevention as Global Priority.  Forthcoming book (Global Policy). MP. http://www.existenti...org/concept.pdfEven if we use the most conservative of these estimates, which entirely ignores the   possibility of space colonization and software minds, **we find that the expected loss of an existential   catastrophe is greater than the value of 10^16 human lives**.  **This implies that the expected value of   reducing existential risk by a mere one millionth of one percentage point is at least a hundred times the   value of a million human lives.**  The more technologically comprehensive estimate of 10  54 humanbrain-emulation subjective life-years (or 10  52  lives of ordinary length) makes the same point even   more starkly.  Even if we give this allegedly lower bound on the cumulative output potential of a   technologically mature civilization a mere 1% chance of being correct, we find that the expected   value of reducing existential risk by a mere one billionth of one billionth of one percentage point is worth   a hundred billion times as much as a billion human lives. **One might consequently argue that even the tiniest reduction of existential risk has an   expected value greater than that of the definite provision of any ordinary good, such as the direct   benefit of saving 1 billion lives.**  And, further, that the absolute value of the indirect effect of saving 1  billion lives on the total cumulative amount of existential riskâ€”positive or negativeâ€”is almost   certainly larger than the positive value of the direct benefit of such an action.