### **Mining**

#### **Private entities are increasing mining now – US is key**

Robert **Garcia 18**, currently an LLM Candidate in Cornell Law School's Law, Entrepreneurship & Technology program at Cornell Tech in NYC., “Regulating International Space Mining, an Enormous Industry,” Pacific Council on International Policy, 10-23-2018, https://www.pacificcouncil.org/newsroom/regulating-international-space-mining-enormous-industry

In 2015, the United States passed the U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act. The law’s passage has caused some consternation in the international space exploration community, as it specifically contemplates U.S. citizens performing commercial recovery in what would be a clear appropriation of asteroid and space resources. The law in pertinent part states that such U.S. citizens: shall be entitled to any asteroid resource or space resource obtained, including to possess, own, transport, use and sell the asteroid resource or space resource obtained in accordance with applicable law, including the international obligations of the United States (emphasis added). Luxembourg was quick to follow suit, and it passed its own national space mining law styled the Law of 20 July 2017 on the Exploration and Use of Space Resources. This law seeks to parallel U.S. law. However, according to a spokesman for the Luxembourg Ministry of Economy, there is one significant expansion over U.S. law, in that "in the U.S. law, a majority of a company's stakeholders must be in the United States, while the Luxembourg law places no restrictions on stakeholder locations." Critics state that the controlling international law is to be found in the United Nations treaties on space exploration. There are five major space treaties, but two specifically address exploitation of outer space resources. The first is the "Outer Space Treaty" (OST). One hundred nations, including the major spacefaring nations-the United States, China, Japan, and the Russian Federation-have ratified it. A subsequent treaty-the Moon Agreement-provides in a relevant part in Article 11, Paragraph 2, that "[t]he moon is not subject to national appropriation by any claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means." As of January 2018, relatively few states (18 total) had ratified the Moon Agreement and four additional states had signed but not ratified the agreement. However, of these 22 states, perhaps only Australia, France, and India have the capability to launch space vehicles. The Moon Agreement could have provided some guidance on exploitation of space resources, as it ostensibly prohibits claiming lunar natural resources for private ownership. However, the United States and Luxembourg are not parties to the Moon Agreement, and in consequence the treaty has no "governing effect." Nonetheless, some legal scholars contend that the United States would be in breach of its international obligations if it were to "unilaterally pretend" that its citizens may exercise ownership over extracted space resources, given the absence of recognition of such rights under international law. Clearly it is the stated aim of both the United States and Luxembourg to promote the commercial exploitation of space resources. The two nations’ respective pieces of legislation attempt to provide a legal basis for private citizens to engage in such activities, **which some critics would characterize as prohibited "appropriation" under international law. The international community would be well-served by resolving the issue conclusively with an appropriate body of rules**. As the technologies advance, we are inexorably headed toward space mining becoming a reality. Whether it will lead to increased resources, providing a net benefit for all people on earth, or serve to increase economic inequality by disproportionately favoring the spacefaring nations remains to be seen.

#### **It causes dangerous space mining and deregulation globally – multilateralism solves.**

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

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

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

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

NASA chose the second option for its Asteroid Redirect Mission, which aims to pluck a boulder from an asteroid’s surface and relocate it to a stable orbit around the moon. But an asteroid’s gravity is so weak that it’s not hard for surface particles to escape into space. **Now a new model warns that debris shed by such transplanted rocks could intrude where many defence and communication satellites live** – in geosynchronous orbit. According to Casey Handmer of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena and Javier Roa of the Technical University of Madrid in Spain, 5 per cent of the escaped debris will end up in regions traversed by satellites. Over 10 years, it would cross geosynchronous orbit 63 times on average. **A satellite in the wrong spot at the wrong time will suffer a damaging high-speed collision with that dust.** The study also looks at the “catastrophic disruption” of an asteroid 5 metres across or bigger. Its total break-up into a pile of rubble would increase the risk to satellites by more than 30 per cent (arxiv.org/abs/1505.03800). That may not have immediate consequences. But as Earth orbits get more crowded with spent rocket stages and satellites, we will have to worry about cascades of collisions like the one depicted in the movie Gravity. Handmer and Roa want to point out the problem now so that we can find a solution before any satellites get dinged. **“It is possible to quantify and manage the risk**,” says Handmer. “**A few basic precautions will prevent harm due to stray asteroid material.”**

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

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

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

#### **Debris cascades cause global nuke war**

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

Whatever the initial cause, the result may be the same. A **sat**ellite 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 **begin**s. 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, **destroy**ing every **sat**ellite in **l**ow **E**arth **o**rbit. 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 [weakening] ~~crippling~~ of the US military who now depend up**on** 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 **ag**riculture 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 **sat**ellite**s** 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 **info**rmation to the military, and it is now in common use by individuals and industry. The network, which became fully operational in 1993, allows our armed forces to know their exact locations anywhere in the world. It is used to guide bombs to their targets with unprecedented accuracy, requiring that only one bomb be used to destroy a target that would have previously required perhaps hundreds of bombs to destroy in the pre-GPS world (which, incidentally, has resulted in us reducing our stockpile of non-GPS-guided munitions dramatically). It allows soldiers to navigate in the dark or in adverse weather or sandstorms. Without GPS, our **military advantage** over potential adversaries would be dramatically reduced or **eliminated**.

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

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

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

#### **Independently, unregulated mining causes space war**

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

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

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

Laura **Grego 18**, Senior Scientist in the Global Security Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, PhD in Experimental Physics at the California Institute of Technology, Space and Crisis Stability, Union of Concerned Scientists, 3-19-18, <https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/files/7804-grego-space-and-crisis-stabilitypdf>

Why **space is a particular problem for crisis stability**

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

The vulnerability of satellites and first strike incentives

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

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

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

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

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

Short timelines and difficulty of attribution

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

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

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

Entanglement of strategic and tactical missions

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

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

Misperception and dual-use technologies

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

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

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

Discrimination

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

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

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

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

Lack of shared understanding of consequences/proportionality

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

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

### **Multilat**

#### **Private appropriation by US entities risks unraveling multilateral space governance.**

Mike **Wall 20**, Senior Space Writer, “US policy could thwart sustainable space development, researchers say,” Space, 10-8-2020, https://www.space.com/us-space-policy-mining-artemis-accords

The United States' space policy threatens the safe and sustainable development of the final frontier, two researchers argue. **The U.S. is pushing national rather than multilateral regulation of space mining, an approach that could have serious negative consequences**, astronomer Aaron Boley and political scientist Michael Byers, both of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, write in a "Policy Forum" piece that was published online today (Oct. 8) in the journal Science. Boley and Byers cite the 2015 passage of the Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act, which explicitly granted American companies and citizens the right to mine and sell space resources. That right was affirmed this past April in an executive order signed by President Donald Trump, they note. The researchers also point to NASA's announcement last month that it intends to buy moon dirt and soil collected by private companies, and its plan to sign bilateral agreements with international partners that want to participate in the agency's Artemis program of crewed lunar exploration. Artemis, one of NASA's highest-profile projects, aims to return astronauts to the moon in 2024 and establish a long-term, sustainable human presence on and around Earth's nearest neighbor by the end of the decade. Making all of this happen will require the extensive use of lunar resources, such as the water ice that lurks on the permanently shadowed floors of polar craters, NASA officials have said. Boley and Byers take special aim at the planned bilateral agreements, known as the Artemis Accords. In promoting them, the U.S. "is overlooking best practice with regard to the sustainable development of space," the researchers write. "**Instead of pressing ahead unilaterally and bilaterally, the United States** should support negotiations on space mining within the UN [United Nations] Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the same multilateral body that drafted the five major space treaties of the 1960s and '70s," they write in the Science piece. (The most important of the five is the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which forms the basis of international space law.) "Meanwhile, NASA’s actions must be seen for what they are — a concerted, strategic effort to redirect international space cooperation in favor of short-term U.S. commercial interests, with little regard for the risks involved," Boley and Byers add. **The researchers worry that the U.S. is setting an unfortunate precedent for other countries to follow, and that space mining and other exploration activities may therefore proceed in a somewhat careless and chaotic fashion in the not-too-distant future**. "That's kind of our worst-case scenario — that you have all of these different national regulations, and they can vary greatly, they allow for 'flag of convenience,' they cause disregard of the environment, large-scale pollution of orbital environments, of the surface of the moon in terms of waste materials and so forth," Boley told Space.com. "That's what we're worried about." He cited the growing space-junk problem as a cautionary tale. For decades, spacefaring nations have been licensing launches internally, without much international coordination, cooperation or long-term planning. In recent years, low-Earth orbit has become crowded enough with satellites and hunks of debris that collisions are a real concern. For example, the International Space Station has had to maneuver itself away from potential impacts three times so far in 2020 alone.

#### **Pursuing mining multilaterally to the benefit of all is key to solve future space governance.**

Jack M. **Beard 17**, Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Nebraska College of Law, Space, Cyber & Telecommunications Law Program, LLM from Georgetown University, JD from the University of Michigan School of Law, and Former Associate Deputy General Counsel (International Affairs) at the Department of Defense, Former Lieutenant Colonel in the Judge Advocate General's Corps in the U.S. Army Reserve, “Soft Law's Failure on the Horizon: The International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities”, University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law, Spring 2017, 38 U. Pa. J. Int'l L. 335, Lexis

Russia and China thus continue to lie beyond the reach of the Code, defeating efforts by proponents to make the Code a widely subscribed and broadly accepted instrument and greatly diminishing its purported "norm-setting" capabilities. Whatever benefits soft law instruments are asserted to have in addressing security matters, participation by only a **fraction of states** in the Code, particularly a fraction that fails to include all the major space-faring countries, will **not** provide a **sound basis** for establishing new **norms** or help to **identify or isolate aggressors** and other **non-participating**, misbehaving states. Furthermore, states facing perceived security threats in space are **not likely to be assured** by a **fractional version** of the Code in which their **potential adversaries do not even participate**.

In **some areas** of international cooperation, such as the protection of human rights, persuading only a fraction of states to initially sign multilateral instruments may be viewed as a **positive, progressive** [\*394] **step** of achievement (particularly since human rights agreements are not focused on reciprocal obligations). 240 As an **arms control** initiative **for space**, however, the Code's failure to include Russia **and** China **and other major space stakeholders** is a **fundamental flaw**. The absence of powerful, potential adversaries makes multilateral conventions addressing arms control or disarmament issues **highly problematic** for those states contemplating joining such regimes and making potentially dangerous, non-reciprocal commitments. 241

[FOOTNOTE]

241 Richard L. Williamson Jr., Hard Law, Soft Law, and Non-Law in Multilateral Arms Control: Some Compliance Hypotheses, 4 Chi. J. Int'l L 59, 61-62 (2003) ("Other matters can affect a treaty's effectiveness, such as the degree to which essential nations become parties to the treaty. If **key parties** remain outside the treaty, it **increases pressure** on the other states to **withdraw** or **cheat**").

[END FOOTNOTE]

To the extent that soft law arrangements such as the proposed Code seek to **promote arms control measures** in the face of **severe security dilemmas** and the **threat of arms races**, the non-participation of powerful adversaries **clearly undermines such efforts**.

If the proposed Code is adopted by states in its current state of limited acceptance, a fractional soft law product will emerge which will present its own **particular disadvantages** and **problems** (beyond those associated with soft law arrangements generally). Not only would a fractionalized Code fail to identify aggressors and isolate rogue states, it could instead lead to **de facto competing legal regimes in space**, as subscribing states respect **their** own "rules of the road" while other non-participating states - especially major, non-participating space powers - seek to advance their own interests through **different or less restrictive approaches**. Attempts to **later** successfully persuade non-participating states to **accede** to the Code will be challenging, if not **impossible**, and could **risk further weakening rather than improving** the Code. 242

#### **Cooperative space governance solves existential threats**

Dr. Joseph N. **Pelton 17**, PhD in International Relations from Georgetown University, Director Emeritus of the Space and Advanced Communications Research Institute at George Washington University, The New Gold Rush: The Riches of Space Beckon!, p. 1-9

Are We Humans Doomed to Extinction?

What will we do when Earth’s resources are used up by humanity? The world is now hugely **over populated**, with billions and billions crammed into our overcrowded cities. By 2050, we may be 9 billion strong, and by 2100 well over 11 billion people on Planet Earth. Some at the United Nations say we might even be an amazing 12 billion crawling around this small globe. And over 80 % of us will be living in congested cities. These cities will be ever more vulnerable to **terrorist attack**, **natural disaster**, and other plights that come with overcrowding and a dearth of jobs that will be fueled by rapid automation and the rise of **a**rtificial **i**ntelligence across the global economy. We are already rapidly running out of **water** and **minerals**. **Climate** change is threatening **our very existence**. Political leaders and even the Pope have cautioned us against inaction. Perhaps the naysayers are right. **All humanity is at tremendous risk**. Is there no hope for the future? This book is about hope. We think that there is literally heavenly hope for humanity. But we are not talking here about divine intervention. We are envisioning a new space economy that recognizes that there is more water in the skies that all our oceans. Th ere is a new wealth of natural resources and clean energy i n the reaches of outer space—more than most of us could ever dream possible. There are those that say why waste money on outer space when we have severe problems here at home? Going into space is not a waste of money. It is our future. It is our hope for new jobs and resources. The great challenge of our times is to reverse public thinking to see space not as a resource drain but as the doorway to opportunity. The new space frontier can literally open up a “gold rush in the skies.” In brief, we think there is new hope for humanity. We see a new a pathway to the future via new ventures in space. For too long, space programs have been seen as a money pit. In the process, we have overlooked the great abundance available to us in the skies above. It is important to recognize there is already the beginning of a new gold rush in space—a pathway to astral abundance. “New Space” is a term increasingly used to describe radical new commercial space initiatives—many of which have come from Silicon Valley and often with backing from the group of entrepreneurs known popularly as the “space billionaires.” New space is revolutionizing the space industry with lower cost space transportation and space systems that represent significant cost savings and new technological breakthroughs. “New Commercial Space” and the “New Space Economy” represent more than a new way of looking at outer space. These new pathways to the stars could prove **vital** to **human survival**. If one does not believe in spending money to probe the mysteries of the universe then perhaps we can try what might be called “calibrated greed” on for size. One only needs to go to a cubesat workshop, or to Silicon Valley or one of many conferences like the “Disrupt Space” event in Bremen, Germany, held in April 2016 to recognize that entrepreneurial New Space initiatives are changing everything [ 1 ]. In fact, the very nature and dimensions of what outer space activities are today have changed forever. It is no longer your grandfather’s concept of outer space that was once dominated by the big national space agencies. Th e entrepreneurs are taking over. The hopeful statements in this book and the hard economic and technical data that backs them up are more than a minority opinion. It is a topic of growing interest at the World Economic Forum, where business and political heavyweights meet in Davos, Switzerland, to discuss how to stimulate new patterns of global economic growth. It is even the growing view of a group that call themselves “space ethicists.” Here is how Christopher J. Newman, at the University of Sunderland in the United Kingdom has put it: Space ethicists have offered the view that space exploration is not only desirable; it is a duty that we, as a species, must undertake in order to secure the survival of humanity over the longer term. Expanding both the resource base and, eventually, the habitats available for humanity means that any expenditure on space exploration, far from being viewed as frivolous, can legitimately be rationalized as an ethical investment choice. (Newman) On the other hand there are space ethicists and space exobiologists who argue that humans have created ecological ruin on the planet—and now space debris is starting to pollute space. Th ese countervailing thoughts by the “no growth” camp of space ethicists say we have no right to colonize other planets or to mine the Moon and asteroids—or at least no right to do so until we can prove we can sustain life here on Earth for the longer term. However, for most who are planning for the new space economy the opinion of space philosophers doesn’t really fl oat their boat. Legislators, bankers, and aspiring space entrepreneurs are far more interested in the views of the super-rich capitalists called the space billionaires. A number of these billionaires and space executives have already put some very serious money into enterprises intent on creating a new pathway to the stars. No less than fi ve billionaires with established space ventures—Elon Musk, Paul Allen, Jeff Bezos, Sir Richard Branson, and Robert Bigelow—have invested millions if not billions of dollars into commercializing space. Th ey are developing new technologies and establishing space enterprises that can bring the wealth of outer space down to Earth. Th is is not a pipe dream, but will increasingly be the economic reality of the 2020s. Th ese wealthy space entrepreneurs see major new economic opportunities. To them space represents the last great frontier for enterprising pioneers. Th us they see an ever-expanding space frontier that off ers opportunities in low-cost space transportation, satellite solar power satellites to produce clean energy 24 h a day, space mining, space manufacturing and production, and eventually space habitats and colonies as a trajectory to a better human future. Some even more visionary thinkers envision the possibility of terraforming Mars, or creating new structures in space to protect our planet from cosmic hazards and even raising Earth’s orbit to escape the rising heat levels of the Sun in millennia to come. Some, of course, will say this is sci-fi hogwash. It can’t be done. We say that this is what people would have said in 1900 about airplanes, rocket ships, cell phones and nuclear devices. The skeptics laughed at Columbus and his plan to sail across the oceans to discover new worlds. When Thomas Jefferson bought the Louisiana Purchase from France or Seward bought Alaska, there were plenty of naysayers that said such investment in the unknown was an extravagant waste of money. A healthy skepticism is useful and can play a role in economic and business success. Before one dismisses the idea of an impending major new space economy and a new gold rush, it might useful to see what has already transpired in space development in just the past fi ve decades. Th e world’s fi rst geosynchronous communications satellite had a throughput capability of about 500 kb / s. In contrast, today’s state of the art Viasat 2 —a half century later— has an impressive throughput of some 140 Gb/s. Th is means that the relative throughput is nearly 300,000 greater, while its lifetime is some ten times longer (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2 ). Each new generation of communications satellite has had more power, better antenna systems, improved pointing and stabilization, and an extended lifetime. And the capabilities represented by remote sensing satellites , meteorological satellites , and navigation and timing satellites have also expanded their capabilities and performance in an impressive manner. When satellite applications fi rst started, the market was measured in millions of dollars. Today commercial satellite services exceed a quarter of a billion dollars. Vital services such as the Internet, aircraft traffi c control and management, international banking, search and rescue and much, much more depend on application satellites. Th ose that would doubt the importance of satellites to the global economy might wish to view on You Tube the video “If Th ere Were a Day Without Satellites?” [ 2 ]. Let’s check in on what some of those very rich and smart guys think about the new space economy and its potential. (We are sorry to say that so far there are no female space billionaires, but surely this, too, will come someday soon.) Of course this twenty-fi rst century breakthrough that we call the New Space economy will not come just from new space commerce. It will also come from the amazing new technologies here on Earth. Vital new terrestrial technologies will accompany this cosmic journey into tomorrow. Information technology, robotics, artifi cial intelligence and commercial space travel systems have now set us on a course to allow us humans to harvest the amazing riches in the skies—new natural resources, new energy, and even totally new ways of looking at the purpose of human existence. If we pursue this course steadfastly, it can be the beginning of a New Space renaissance. But if we don’t seek to realize our ultimate destiny in space, Homo sapiens can end up in the dustbin of history—just like literally millions of already failed species. In each and every one of the fi ve mass extinction events that have occurred over the last 1.5 billion years on Earth, some 50–80 % of all species have gone the way of the T. Rex, the woolly mammoth, and the Dodo bird along with extinct ferns, grasses and cacti. On the other hand, the best days of the human race could be just beginning. If we are smart about how we go about discovering and using these riches in the skies and applying the best of our new technologies, it could be the start of a new beginning for humanity. Konstantin Tsiokovsky, the Russian astronautics pioneer, who fi rst conceived of practical designs for spaceships, famously said: “A planet is the cradle of mankind, but one cannot live in a cradle forever.” Well before Tsiokovsky another genius, Leonardo da Vinci, said, quite poetically: “Once you have tasted fl ight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return.” Th e founder of the X-Prize and of Planetary Resources, Inc., Dr. Peter Diamandis, has much more brashly said much the same thing in quite diff erent words when he said: “Th e meek shall inherit the Earth. Th e rest of us will go to Mars.” The New Space Billionaires Peter Diamandis is not alone in his thinking. From the list of “visionaries” quoted earlier, Elon Musk, the founder of SpaceX; Sir Richard Branson, the founder of Virgin Galactic; and Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft and the man who fi nanced SpaceShipOne, the world’s fi rst successful spaceplane have all said the future will include a vibrant new space economy. Th ey, and others, have said that we can, we should and we soon shall go into space and realize the bounty that it can off er to us. Th e New Space enterprise is today indeed being led by those so-called space billionaires , who have an exciting vision of the future. Th ey and others in the commercial space economy believe that the exploitation of outer space may open up a new golden age of astral abundance. Th ey see outer space as a new frontier that can be a great source of new materials, energy and various forms of new wealth that might even save us from excesses of the past. Th is gold rush in the skies represents a new beginning. We are not talking about expensive new space ventures funded by NASA or other space agencies in Europe, Japan, China or India. No, these eff orts which we and others call New Space are today being forged by imaginative and resourceful commercial entrepreneurs. Th ese twenty-fi rst century visionaries have the fortitude and zeal to look to the abundance above. New breakthroughs in technology and New Space enterprises may be able to create an “astral life raft” for humanity. Just as Columbus and the Vikings had the imaginative drive that led them to discover the riches of a new world, we now have a cadre of space billionaires that are now leading us into this New Space era of tomorrow. Th ese bold leaders, such as Paul Allen and Sir Richard Branson, plus other space entrepreneurs including Jeff Bezos of Amazon and Blue Origin, and Robert Bigelow, Chairman of Budget Suites and Bigelow Aerospace, not only dream of their future in the space industry but also have billions of dollars in assets. Th ese are the bright stars of an entirely new industry that are leading us into the age of New Space commerce . Th ese space billionaires, each in their own way, are proponents of a new age of astral abundance. Each of them is launching new commercial space industries. Th ey are literally transforming our vision of tomorrow. Th ese new types of entrepreneurial aerospace companies—the New Space enterprises—give new hope and new promise of transforming our world as we know it today. The New Space Frontier What happens in space in the next few decades, plus corresponding new information technologies and advanced robotics, will change our world forever. Th ese changes will redefi ne wealth, change our views of work and employment and upend almost everything we think we know about economics, wealth, jobs, and politics. Th ese changes are about truly disruptive technologies of the most fundamental kinds. If you thought the Internet, smart phones, and spandex were disruptive technologies, just hang on. You have not seen anything yet. In short, if you want to understand a transition more fundamental than the changes brought to the twentieth century world by computers, communications and the Internet, then read this book. There are truly riches in the skies. Near-Earth asteroids largely composed of platinum and rare earth metals have an incredible value. Helium-3 isotopes accessible in outer space could provide clean and abundant energy. There is far more water in outer space than is in our oceans. In the pages that follow we will explain the potential for a cosmic shift in our global economy, our ecology, and our commercial and legal systems. These can take place by the end of this century. And if these changes do not take place we will be in trouble. Our conventional petro-chemical energy systems will fail us economically and eventually blanket us with a hydrocarbon haze of smog that will threaten our health and our **very survival**. Our rare precious metals that we need for modern electronic appliances will skyrocket in price, and the struggle between “haves” and “have nots” will grow increasingly ugly. A lack of affordable and readily available **water**, natural resources, **food**, health care and medical supplies, plus **systematic threats** to urban security and **systemic warfare** are the **alternatives** to astral abundance. The choices between astral abundance and a downward spiral in global standards of living are stark. Within the next few decades these problems will be increasingly real. By then the world may almost be begging for new, out of- the-box thinking. International peace and security will be an indispensable prerequisite for exploitation of astral abundance, as will good government for all. No one nation can be rich and secure when everyone else is poor and insecure. In short, global space security and strategic space defense, mediated by **global space agreements**, are part of this **new pathway** to the future.

#### **Nuke Terror — Extinction**

Elizabeth **Borgwardt 16**, History Professor at Washington University and Author of The Nuremberg Idea, forthcoming from Knopf, 9/11: What Would Trump Do?, Politico, March 2016, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/03/donald-trump-2016-terrorist-attack-foreign-policy-213784

Donald Trump’s March 21 interview with the Washington **Post** editorial board should make every potential voter’s **blood run cold**. After noting that ISIS should be knocked out flat, yet indicating that large numbers of U.S. troops should not be involved, Mr. Trump suggested that it was better to be “**unpredictable**” in the face of U.S. enemies, before **twice dodging** a question about whether he would advocate the use of tactical **nuclear weapons against ISIS**. (To be fair, the interview transcript indicates that much more time was spent discussing Mr. Trump’s hand size than anything to do with nuclear weapons.)

All this was before the attacks in Belgium; my sense is that a 9/11-style attack on U.S. soil would mean that any remaining **restraints** to the use of **weapons of mass destruction**—including **nuclear** weapons—would likely be swiftly **swept aside**.

General Douglas MacArthur had notoriously floated the idea of using nuclear weapons against China in the Korean conflict (1950-53) when he was concerned about Chinese moves to support North Korean aggression. In posthumously published interviews, MacArthur said that he could have won the war in ten days: “I would have dropped 30 or so atomic bombs … strung across the neck of Manchuria. For at least 60 years there could have been no land invasion of Korea from the North.”

Part of MacArthur’s logic was that the United States would have needed to fight communist China eventually, so it would be best to nuke them while they were still weak, recovering from World War II and the Chinese Revolution (1949), as opposed to fighting them later after they had become much stronger. “That makes sense to me!” opined a Trump backer with whom I recently spoke on this topic. And yet, I offered, most Americans today are probably pretty happy that we didn’t use nuclear weapons against China in the Korean war, or would be if they knew anything about that historical interlude. “I guess,” he said. “But why not press your advantage when you have one?”

I offer this example because my sense is that in a putative Trump administration, “**the gloves would be off**” and all barriers—including public opinion—to the **first use** of various kinds of **weapons** of **mass destruction** would likely be at an **all-time low**. Bruce Cumings, the leading U.S. historian of Korea, has commented on the MacArthur incident in an analysis from back in 2004. Cumings noted that “MacArthur sounds like a warmongering lunatic” for advocating the use of nuclear weapons, but also explained that, astonishing as it might seem, the general actually had some support for his outlandish proposal.

#### **Resource shortages — nuclear war**

Frosty **Woolridge 9**, Former Officer at the US Army Medical Service Corps, “America Galloping Toward Its Greatest Crisis in the 21st Century”, The Examiner, 5-22, http://www.examiner.com/examiner/x-3515-Denver-Political-Issues-Examiner~y2009m5d22-America-galloping-toward-its-greatest-crisis-in-the-21st-century

“It is clear that most politicians and most citizens do not recognize that returning to “more of the same” is a recipe for promoting the first **collapse of a global civilization**. The required changes in energy technology, which would benefit not only the environment but also national security, public health, and the economy, would demand a World War II type mobilization -- and even that might not prevent a global climate disaster. Without transitioning away from use of fossil fuels, humanity will move further into an era of resource wars (remember, Africom has been added to the Pentagon’s structure -- and China has noticed), clearly with intent to protect US “interests” in petroleum reserves. The consequences of more resource wars, many **likely triggered** over water supplies stressed by climate disruption, are likely to include **increased unrest in poor nations**, a **proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**, **widening inequity** within and between nations, and in the worst (and **not unlikely**) case, a **nuclear war ending civilization**.

#### **Space governance forges a framework to deal with multiple existential threats---U.S. lead is key**

Dr. Nancy **Gallagher 13**. Ph.D., Associate Director for Research at the Center for International and Security Studies and Senior Research Scholar at the University of Maryland’s School of Public Policy. 02/11/2013. “International Cooperation and Space Governance Strategy.” Space Strategy in the 21st Century: Theory and Policy, Routledge.

The **U**nited **S**tates’ space community has long understood the importance of having an inspirational **vision** to **mobilize and sustain** the high levels of public **support** and private investment needed for major space accomplishments.40 Instead of trumping up a new space race with China, or setting a multi-decade goal of going to a new planet in hopes of gaining unspecified insights into existential questions, technology and education spin-offs, and national prestige, it would be more realistic and compelling to frame a positive vision around using space cooperation to address urgent current terrestrial challenges. The 1999 Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development highlighted how greater international cooperation and investment in space **tech**nologies could be leveraged to promote **sustainable development**, spread the benefits of global **comm**unication**s**, enhance **natural disaster**s **response**, and improve **health care** and **education** in underserved regions.41 But, progress on this agenda has been slow because the countries with the most space assets and investment resources do not see such development projects as having a significant impact on their own well-being. A more persuasive case for space cooperation would be framed in terms of the positive contributions it could make to promote the security, prosperity, and values of the United States, and of the other countries whose support will be essential for success.

The 2010 National Security Strategy makes passing references to U.S. dependence on space systems that are **vulnerable** to disruption and attack, and to the need for strong multilateral **coop**eration to safeguard and optimize the use of space as a global commons. But space cooperation **could** be used more ambitiously in the overall strategy if it were conceived as a **leading opportunity** to **build** the **global governance institutions** needed to accomplish that strategy’s goal of creating a “just and sustainable **i**nternational **o**rder that can foster **collective action to confront common challenges**.”42

The **central strategic challenge** facing the **U**nited **S**tates is that the very elements on which its security, prosperity, and way of **life depend** – rapid technological **innovation**, a tightly interconnected **global economy**, and the free flow of people, goods, services, and ideas across borders – also increase its **vulnerabilities** both to deliberate attack and to unintentional **dangers**, such as a collapse in financial **markets**, **pandemic** disease, or **climate** change. To promote the positive aspects of globalization while minimizing the risks, the National Security Strategy calls for using all elements of U.S. power to build a “rules**-based** international **system** that can advance our own interests by serving **mutual interests**.” As the most powerful player in the system, the **U**nited **S**tates **wants** rules to provide **reassur**ance that **weak**er players will not **exploit U.S. vulnerabilities** for **asymmetrical attacks**, that developing countries will behave responsibly rather than cut corners and cause problems for others, and that rising powers will want to join rather than change the status quo. But for this rule-based order to attract **wide**spread **support** and sustained compliance, the **U**nited **S**tates must also provide credible reassurance that it will **follow** the **rules itself**, that it will not use its military and technological advantages in ways that harm others’ interests, and that it will **support international governance** arrangements that give others a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their security, prosperity, and way of life.

Space **epitomizes** these current strategic challenges. It serves functions of **vital importance** for high-technology **military** operations, electronic **financial** transactions, **power-grid** operations, and countless other aspects of life in the information age. Yet, the space technologies needed for these beneficial purposes can also be deliberately or inadvertently misused in ways that threaten inherently vulnerable satellites, and those who depend on them. Space is central to U.S. military, economic, and technological predominance; it matters greatly to countries who aspire to interact as equals with the United States; and it offers hope to those who have not yet benefitted much from globalization. Thus, **there are both practical and symbolic reasons to choose space cooperation as a leading opportunity to provide mutual reassurance and to build effective global governance** institutions.

#### **Extinction’s inevitable without multilateral balanced space governance**

Duncan **Blake 17** & Steven Freeland. Blake, PhD Candidate, Law and Military Uses of Outer Space, University of Adelaide; Steven Freeland, Dean, School of Law and Professor of International Law, Western Sydney University. 7-17-2017. "As the World Embraces Space, the 50-Year-Old Outer Space Treaty Needs Adaptation." Space. https://www.space.com/37500-outer-space-treaty-needs-adaptation.html

It is **future generations** who have the strongest claim to preserve and even improve the benefits from the peaceful exploration and use of outer space over the coming decades. They have at least a moral – and, arguably, legal – **mandate** to insist that states seriously consider **supplement**ing **the OST**. And the opportunity for the next generation to state their claim is **right here, right now**. At the SGC, a group of young Australians will lead a working group of delegates from across the globe, to develop and propose a set of supplementary protocols to the OST, in order to adapt global space governance to the needs of the next 50 years.In late September 2017, Adelaide will host the largest space-related meeting on the annual calendar – the 68th International Astronautical Congress (IAC). In more recent years, there has been a companion conference just prior to the IAC – the Space Generation Congress (SGC). This was initiated on the request of states through the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to represent the interests of the next generation in outer space. Existential challenges Crafting instruments that address the current and foreseeable **future challenges in global space governance** will **not be easy**. The **challenges are not just big, they're existential**. Stephen Hawking recently suggested that humanity must become an inter-planetary species to escape **climate change** on this planet, which threatens to make the Earth environment increasingly **incompatible with human existence.** Climate change is not the only threat – an **asteroid** impact could wipe out our species, and one of the regular **solar events** in the life of our Sun could severely **disrupt satellites** and **terrestrial networks and electronics**. We can’t control that, although we could do something about human-generated space debris, which may make valuable Earth orbits unusable for millennia to come. But **who should be responsible** for space debris and how**?** What **laws** should apply to humans living on another planet? Who has **legal authority** to take **timely action** to divert an asteroid on behalf of the **whole planet?** Furthermore, if states continue to develop means of space warfare, in addition to the many pre-existing means of warfare on Earth, we **might still be the authors of our own demise**. But how do you regulate "space weapons" without undermining "the great prospects opening up before mankind as a result of man's entry into outer space" (the opening words of the OST)?

### **Plan**

#### **Space faring nations should establish a multilateral agreement that restricts asteroid mining done by private entities**

#### **Key to solve conflict and space debris.**

Ramin **Skibba 18**, science writer and astrophysicist based in Santa Cruz and San Diego., “ Mining in Space Could Lead to Conflicts on Earth,” Nautilus, 5-2-2018, https://nautil.us/blog/-mining-in-space-could-lead-to-conflicts-on-earth

Space mining is no longer science fiction. By the 2020s, Planetary Resources and Deep Space Industries—for-profit space-mining companies cooperating with NASA—will be sending out swarms of tiny satellites to assess the composition of hurtling hunks of cosmic debris, identify the most lucrative ones, and harvest them. They’ve already developed prototype spacecraft to do the job. Some people—like Massachusetts Institute of Technology planetary scientist Sara Seager, former NASA deputy administrator Lori Garver, and science writer Phil Plait—argue that, to continue advancing as a space-faring species, we need to embrace this commercial space mining industry, and perhaps even facilitate it, too. But should we? This question concerns me, as both an astrophysicist and a space enthusiast. Before becoming a science communicator, I worked for 15 years researching the evolution of galaxies, the properties of dark matter, and the expansion of the universe. From that perspective, the distance from us to the asteroid belt is actually rather small, so the question of whether to mine it, and in what way, hits close to home. The Space Act of 2015 authorizes the U.S. president “to facilitate the commercial exploration and utilization of space resources to meet national needs.” It’s an exciting prospect, to be sure, but also a troubling one. **For one thing, it appears to violate international law**, according to Congressional testimony by Joanne Gabrynowicz, a space law expert at the University of Mississippi. Before NASA’s moon landing, the United States—along with other United Nations Security Council members and many other countries—signed the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. “Outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies,” it states, “is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means.” The 1979 Moon Agreement went further, declaring outer space to be the “common heritage of mankind” and explicitly forbidding any state or organization from annexing (non-Earth) natural resources in the solar system. 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. For example, Seager advocated for space mining at a science writing conference I attended in 2015. She’s part of a motley group of advisors for Planetary Resources, including the movie director James Cameron, a lawyer for a prominent Washington D.C. firm, and Dante Lauretta, another astronomer whom I respect. Seager seems to believe that encouraging private space mining will lead to more investments and technological innovation that would enable more scientific research. In a 2012 interview with The Atlantic, for instance, she said, “The bottom line is that NASA is not working the best that it could for space science right now, and so in order for people like me to succeed with my own research goals, the commercial space industry needs to be able to succeed independently of government contracts.” But if the U.S. and U.S.-based companies lay claim to the richest and most easily accessible prospecting sites, not allowing other companies and nations to share in the wealth, **economic and political relations could be damaged**. That’s why this seems to be a dangerous path for space explorers. Once you’re on board with the commercial space industry, then you as a researcher must accept, if not support, everything that comes with it. Seager and a few other researchers may be willing to take this risk, but what about the rest of the space science community? Moreover, to succeed, these businesses will seek profitable missions, while science, exploration, and discovery—goals that stimulate public interest—will inevitably have lower priority. (Other commercial spaceflight companies, like Elon Musk’s SpaceX, do generate public interest, but they’re not directly involved in mining asteroids.) NASA may have its shortcomings, but at least its missions and research goals answer to the public. It’s not exactly a welcome thought to imagine more and more of our presence and activity in space being ceded, with NASA’s help, to private industry. What should happen instead? Commercial space mining and science would both be served well by decoupling from each other. We should treat outer space like we do Antarctica. That icy landscape is humankind’s common heritage, where we encourage scientific investigations and conservation and forbid territorial claims. **If some organizations want to mine asteroids, then we should take the time to develop and establish an international framework to regulate it properly.** Space-mining is an exciting opportunity to articulate our species’ role in our little galactic fragment. But it’s not just about sustainably managing limited or dwindling resources. It’s about our interactions with the nature beyond our humble world. We should explore the solar system as its steward without repeating our economically rapacious past.

#### **Agreement is enforceable and solves.**

James **McSweeney 20**, J.D. Candidate, May 2020, University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law, “LIVE LONG AND PROSPER: THE NEED FOR A NEW MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT GOVERNING ASTEROID MINING,” lexis

Third, a substantial drawback is the inability to enforce punishment against countries who violate the treaty. If a case was to proceed to the ICJ, and a decision was reached, the judgement is only binding upon the parties in the case.' 90 The ability to be bound is located in the Charter of the United Nations, which every nation must agree to before joining the U.N.' 9 However, if a party fails to perform the obligations required by the ICJ's judgment, then "the opposing party may have recourse to the Security Council, which may, if it deems necessary, make recommendations or decide upon measures to be taken to give effect to the judgment."' 92 This means that a country could theoretically lose a case in front of the ICJ, with no ability to appeal,' 93 and may suffer no punishments for refusing to comply with the ICJ's decree. A multilateral agreement may flourish in this aspect .because it may explicitly certify that any legal disputes are binding to all members when litigating the same issue, similar to the concept of collateral estoppel. Additionally, provisions inside of the agreement may already specify the punishment or procedures for violations of the agreements. These provisions could limit the internal debates about legal issues, providing equal and fair judgments using the same law for all disputes, and would limit the ability for countries to avoid punishment for violations. Another added benefit to a multilateral agreement when drafting punishments for violating the terms is commercial certainty. Corporations, as generally viewed, are risk averse.1 94 Being risk averse means.that when faced with multiple options, corporate investors will typically prefer the option that denotes the lowest measure of risk.'9 With the potential of violating parties not being punished under a U.N. treaty, corporate investors might be unlikely to become involved in spacefaring operations, or, at the very least, have corporate decisions become increasingly lengthy.1 9 6 As corporate decision-making becomes ever-more lengthy, the overall growth rate of corporations focused on space-faring operations will suffer.' 9 7 **With a multilateral agreement, and an anticipation of punishment for violations, some of the worries of corporate investors would be alleviated by a multilateral agreement**

## **Framework**

#### **The standard is maximizing expected well being**

**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.**

#### **Thus, the standard is maximizing expected wellbeing. Prefer:**

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

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

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

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

#### **D] Extinction comes first under any framework**

**Pummer 15** [Theron, Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford. “Moral Agreement on Saving the World” Practical Ethics, University of Oxford. May 18, 2015] AT

**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 ndermined 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)