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#### International Relations is the royal science of empire – the aff engineers “sustainable warfare” through a mutating geopolitics of violence.

Grove ‘19

[Jarius, PoliSci at the University of Hawai’i. 2019. “Savage Ecology: War and Geopolitics in the Anthropocene.”] pat – ask me for the PDF!

Because I wanted this book to inspire curiosity beyond the boundaries of international relations (ir), I considered ignoring the field altogether, removing all mentions of ir or ir theory. However, upon closer reflection, I have decided to keep these references as I think they are relevant for those outside the discipline and for those who, like myself, often feel alienated within its disciplinary boundaries. In the former case, it is important to know that, unlike some more humble fields, ir has always held itself to be a kind of royal science. Scholarship in ir, particularly in the United States, is half research, and half biding time until you have the prince’s ear. The hallowed names in the mainstream of the field are still known because they somehow changed the behavior of their intended clients—those being states, militaries, and international organizations. Therefore, some attention to ir is necessary because it has an all-too-casual relationship with institutional power that directly impacts the lives of real people, and ir is all too often lethal theory. As an American discipline, the political economy of the field is impossible without Department of Defense money, and its semiotic economy would be equally dwarfed without contributory figures like Woodrow Wilson, Henry Kissinger, and Samuel Huntington. The ubiquity of Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” thesis and Kissinger’s particular brand of realpolitik are undeniable throughout the field, as well as the world. Each, in their own way, has saturated the watchwords and nomenclature of geopolitics from an American perspective so thoroughly that both political parties in the United States fight over who gets to claim the heritage of each. Although many other fields such as anthropology and even comparative literature have found themselves in the gravitational pull of geopolitics, international relations is meant to be scholarship as statecraft by other means. That is, ir was meant to improve the global order and ensure the place of its guarantor, the United States of America. Having spent the better part of a decade listening to national security analysts and diplomats from the United States, South Korea, Japan, Europe, China, Brazil, and Russia, as well as military strategists around the planet, I found their vocabulary and worldview strikingly homogeneous.

If this seems too general a claim, one should take a peek at John Mearsheimer’s essay “Benign Hegemony,” which defends the Americanness of the ir field. What is most telling in this essay is not a defense of the U.S. as a benign hegemonic power, which Mearsheimer has done at length elsewhere. Rather, it is his vigorous defense that as a field, ir theory has done well by the world in setting the intellectual agenda for global challenges, and for creating useful theoretical approaches to addressing those problems. For Mearsheimer, the proof that American scholarly hegemony has been benign is that there is nothing important that has been left out. A quick scan of the last ten or twenty International Studies Association conferences would suggest otherwise.

That issues like rape as a weapon of war, postcolonial violence, global racism, and climate change are not squarely in the main of ir demonstrates just how benign American scholarly hegemony is not. As one prominent anthropologist said to me at dinner after touring the isa conference in 2014, “it was surreal, like a tour through the Cold War. People were giving papers and arguing as if nothing had ever changed.” These same provincial scholars aspire and succeed at filling the advisory roles of each successive American presidency. One cannot help but see a connection between the history of the ir field, and the catastrophes of U.S. foreign policy during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. One could repeat the words of the anthropologist I mentioned to describe the 2016 presidential campaign debates over the future of U.S. foreign policy: it is as if “nothing had ever changed.” And yet these old white men still strut around the halls of America’s “best” institutions as if they saved us from the Cold War, even as the planet crumbles under the weight of their failed imperial dreams.

If international relations was meant to be the science of making the world something other than what it would be if we were all left to our own worst devices, then it has failed monumentally. The United States is once again in fierce nuclear competition with Russia. We are no closer to any significant action on climate change. We have not met any of the Millennium Development Goals determined by the United Nations on eradicating poverty. War and security are the most significant financial, creative, social, cultural, technological, and political investments of almost every nation-state on Earth. The general intellect is a martial intellect.

Despite all this failure, pessimism does not exist in international relations, at least not on paper. The seething doom of our current predicament thrives at the conference bar and in hushed office conversations but not in our research. In public, the darkness disavowed possesses and inflames the petty cynicisms and hatreds that are often turned outward at tired and predictable scapegoats.

After the fury of three decades of critique, most ir scholars still camp out either on the hill of liberal internationalism or in the dark woods of political realism. Neither offers much that is new by way of answers or even explanations, and each dominant school has failed to account for our current apocalyptic condition. One is left wondering what it is exactly that they think they do. Despite the seeming opposition between the two, one idealistic about the future of international order (liberals) and the other self-satisfied with the tragedy of cycles of war and dominance (realists), both positions are optimists of the positivist variety.

For both warring parties, ir optimism is expressed through a romantic empiricism. For all those who toil away looking for the next theory of international politics, order is out there somewhere, and dutifully recording reality will find it—or at least bring us closer to its discovery. For liberal internationalism, this will bring the long-heralded maturity of Immanuel Kant’s perpetual peace. For second-order sociopaths known as offensive realists, crumbs of “useful strategic insight” and the endless details that amplify their epistemophilia for force projection and violence capability represent a potential “advantage,” that is, the possibility to move one step forward on the global political board game of snakes and ladders. Still, the cynicism of ir always creeps back in because the world never quite lives up to the empirical findings it is commanded to obey. Disappointment here is not without reason, but we cynically continue to make the same policy recommendations, catastrophe after catastrophe.

I have an idea about where ir’s recent malaise comes from. I think it is a moment, just before the awareness of the Anthropocene, after the Cold War and before September 11, when the end of everything was only a hypothetical problem for those of a certain coddled and privileged modern form of life. The catastrophe of the human predicament was that there was no catastrophe, no reason, no generation-defining challenge or war. Now the fate of this form of life is actually imperiled, and it is too much to bear. The weird denial of sexism, racism, climate change, the sixth extinction, and loose nukes, all by a field of scholars tasked with studying geopolitics, is more than irrationalism or ignorance. This animosity toward reality is a deep and corrosive nihilism, a denial of the world. Thus ir as a strategic field is demonstrative of a civilization with nothing left to do, nothing left to destroy. All that is left is to make meaning out of being incapable of undoing the world that Euro-American geopolitics created. Emo geopolitics is not pretty, but it is real. The letdown, the failure, the apocalypse-that-was-not finally arrived, and we are too late.

Still, the United States of America continues to follow the advice of “the best and the brightest,” testing the imperial waters, not quite ready to commit out loud to empire but completely unwilling to abandon it. Stuck in between, contemporary geopolitics—as curated by the United States—is in a permanent beta phase. Neuro-torture, algorithmic warfare, drone strikes, and cybernetic nation-building are not means or ends but rather are tests. Can a polis be engineered? Can the human operating system be reformatted? Can violence be modulated until legally invisible while all the more lethal? Each incursion, each new actor or actant, and new terrains from brains to transatlantic cables—all find themselves part of a grand experiment to see if a benign or at least sustainable empire is possible. There is no seeming regard for the fact that each experiment directly competes with Thomas Jefferson’s democratic experiment. One wonders if freedom can even exist anywhere other than temporarily on the fringe of some neglected order. Is this some metaphysical condition of freedom, or is the world so supersaturated with martial orders that the ragged edges between imperial orders are all that we have left? It feels like freedom’s remains persist only in the ruins of everything else. No space is left that can be truly indifferent to the law, security, or economy. Such is the new life of a human in debt. The social contract has been refinanced as what is owed and nothing more: politics without equity. Inequity without equality.

What about the impending collapse of the post–World War II order, the self-destruction of the United States, the rise of China and a new world order? If humanity lasts long enough for China to put its stamp on the human apocalypse, I will write a new introduction. Until then, we live in the death rattle of Pax Americana. While I think the totality of this claim is true, I do not want to rule out that many of us throughout the world still make lives otherwise. Many of us even thrive in spite of it all. And yet, no form of life can be made that escapes the fact that everything can come to a sudden and arbitrary end thanks to the whim of an American drone operator, nuclear catastrophe, or macroeconomic manipulation like sanctions. There are other ways to die and other organized forms of killing outside the control of the United States; however, no other single apparatus can make everyone or anyone die irrespective of citizenship or geographic location. For me, this is the most inescapable philosophical provocation of our moment in time.

The haphazard and seemingly limitless nature of U.S. violence means that even the core principles of the great political realist concepts like order and national interest are being displaced by subterranean violence entrepreneurs that populate transversal battlefields, security corridors, and border zones. Mercenaries, drug lords, chief executive officers, presidents, and sports commissioners are more alike than ever. Doomsayers like Paul Virilio, Lewis Mumford, and Martin Heidegger foretold a kind of terminal and self-annihilating velocity for geopolitics’ technological saturation, but even their lack of imagination appears optimistic. American geopolitics does not know totality or finality; it bleeds, mutates, and reforms. Furthermore, the peril of biopolitics seems now almost romantic. To make life live? Perchance to dream. The care and concern for life’s productivity is increasingly subsumed by plasticity—forming and reforming without regard to the telos of productivity, division, or normative order.

There are, of course, still orders in our geoplastic age, but they are almost unrecognizable as such. When so many citizens and states are directly invested in sabotaging publicly stated strategic ends, then concepts like national interest seem equally quaint. We are witnessing creative and horrifying experiments in the affirmative production of dying, which also deprive those targeted and in some cases whole populations from the relief of death. To follow Rucker, I want to try to see the world for what it is. We can only say that tragedy is no longer a genre of geopolitics. Tragedy redeems. The occluded character of contemporary geopolitics shoehorned into experience produces the feeling that there is no relief, no reason, no victory, no defeats, and no exit within the confines of national security’s constricted world. This is not tragedy: it is horror. We live in an age of horror that, like the victims of gore movies who never quite die so that they can be tortured more, furthers our practice of collective violence and goes on for decades as a kind of sustainable warfare.

#### Framing China as an irresponsible power in space is tied to fear of loss of control over the “new American way of war” and the frontier of outer space – that creates new instantiations that force conflict.

Hunter ‘18

(Cameron Hunter, PhD from the University of Bristol, MA in International Security and Terrorism Studies from University of Nottingham, and MA in Research Methods from the University of Bristol. “The Rise of China in Space: Technopolitical Threat Construction in American Public Policy Discourse” PHD Dissertation. <https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/files/183271194/Final_Copy_2018_09_25_Hunter_C_PhD.pdf> )//RJG

As we have seen in this chapter, proponents of the “Chinese space threat” have attempted to overturn what they see as a dangerous lack of attention for space matters relating to military and economic issues. To do this, American policy elites have built up two fairly distinct, yet mutually supporting narratives of specific Chinese “threats” to specific aspects of the American national Self. Together these narratives provide the linguistic elements that could be deployed in debates on the technological decisions the US faced in response to China’s “rise” in space. The most important aspect of the national Self which the “Chinese space threat” is positioned as jeopardising was the new, clean and ‘virtuous’ (Der Derian 2009) “American way of war.” American policy elites have built on existing, prevailing formulations of “the new American way of war” in order to highlight the crucial roles of space technology in enabling the desirable practices of American warfighting. At times, this is done in a way which explicitly compared the ‘virtuous’ “new American way of war” with the old, undesirable practices of warfare during World War II (Der Derian 2009: 136). In matters of conventional war, they warn that China could destroy satellites and transport American back to a time when casualties were unavoidably high. Advancing a specific vision of how America should fight its wars did not always require direct comparison, however. Military and political elites also warned that the US would not be able to project power wherever it wanted and needed. Their most catastrophic visions of all warned that Chinese space technology jeopardised the President’s ability to control the nuclear stockpile, and therefore by extension the stability of American nuclear deterrence and the existence of the American homeland. All of these claims involved complex, mutual relationships between identity and technical artefacts. The overall effect was the successful supplanting of the prior discursive representation of unchallenged American military space power, with constructions of an America reliant on space but with no defense against the new “Chinese space threat.” These struggles over the meaning of space technologies and national identities also played into debates on military technology procurement, explored in the next chapter. The second major component of the technopolitical identity politics of the “Chinese space threat” related to notions of American “exceptionalism.” This manifested under two main themes: national prestige, particularly around the legacy of the Moon landings, and utopian economic visions under the rubric of the American “frontier.” Although less dominant than the discourse positioning China as a “threat” to the “new American way of war,” the “Chinese space threat” to American “exceptionalism” was an important supporting component of narrative of a threatening “rise” of China in space. In matters of economics and prestige, the “threat” advocates had some moderate success. The conventional, prevailing understandings of Apollo as an unassailable national achievement was a powerful opponent for the “Chinese space threat” advocates to overturn with their countervailing visions of Chinese flags on the Moon. The greatest success, built not only on the discourse of the utopian vision of an endless American “frontier,” but also favourably positioned to draw on the strength of the military and prestige components of the wider “Chinese space threat,” was in the implementation of specific anti-Chinese trade regulations for space technology. Much as in the case of the military threat, the threat to “exceptionalism” was also significant because it played directly into debates about grand national technological programs such as the Space Shuttle, Constellation, and Orion. By simultaneously problematising the concepts of technology and culture, it is possible to recognise in these debates over identity that, at least on one level, those sounding the alarm on China are “correct.” The “new American way of war” does indeed require certain technical affordances in order to be realised, and China possesses the capability to destroy or disable those artefacts. What is missing from this argument is the recognition that this position also relies on technopolitical constructions of both China and America, and crucially that these constructions are socially contingent. Whether it was the military, prestige, or economic components of the American national Self which was supposedly threatened by China’s space program, analysis of the discourse reveals that these linguistic moves were attempts to contest or reproduce wider, powerful discourses constituting national identity. Collectively they portray a nation that is much more fragile than their imagined audiences realised. Proponents of the “Chinese space threat” are therefore involved in creating new technopolitical relationships between China, the US, and their space technologies. While we can see their attempts at supplanting older representations of the state and space technology as broadly successful, the question remains of how successful they are in translating this success in rhetoric into transformations of American technics themselves. It is this question of the power of the “Chinese space threat” discourse on the American ‘social battlefield of technology’ which must be addressed.

#### Hegemony never failing, strangely enough, makes its failure inevitable.

“Pathology of power” – cool Nietzsche thing.

* Systems learn from failure, but power prevents failure from being pointed out
  + Gulf War 1 sucked, but we pretended it didn’t, so Gulf War 2 also sucked – “institutions become stupid”
* Hegemony is self-defeating because it precludes the impact of failures on the system – makes it unsustainable because failures never impact strategy
  + Changing now because apocalypse is coming home – “crisis of meaning” – why do we even want hegemony anymore? What does our world order look like?
  + Also probably bad for the global south along the way lol

Grove ‘20

[Jarius, polisci at University of Hawai’i. 12/03/2020. Seminar hosted/sponsored by the University of Michigan Debate Team. “Dr. Jarius Grove on CJR, Debate and ‘Savage Ecology,’” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-Gcwj_rg_0>] pat – transcription is from ~21:40-29:00, removed “uhs” and other verbal tics.

And in part, this is from a theory which I borrowed from an old social scientist – and I’m probably gonna skip ahead a little bit and take some questions – but this guy named Carl Deutsch developed this theory, “the pathology of power,” which is sort of throughout the book. I think this is a really interesting theory. It’s a reason why it puts, sort of, Nietzsche to the policy table, which is that, unfortunately, strength prevents learning. So, in cybernetics, we tend to think that learning comes from failure and the ability to remember or incorporate failure. The problem with the Eurocene and the way geopolitics work is it amassed so much material power, so much capability was drawn through it’s chance encounter with technology that it was able to just basically eliminate dissent. It was able to eliminate those who rebelled or pointed failure out. And as a result, it made large institutions incredibly stupid.

When you can leverage power as a way not to learn – meaning, when you make mistakes, you destroy the capability to have the failure follow you home – your system doesn’t learn. And I think maybe one of the best examples of this is the difference between the first Gulf War and the second Gulf War. The first Gulf War is declared an immense success, we take all the data from it, Elliot Cohen takes that data and tries to build this big dataset out of it so we can define how airpower works. We use that dataset and say “Oh! We can go back into Iraq and have exactly the same success.” The reality is that the first Iraqi conflict was not a success. In fact, it strengthened Saddam Hussein’s hold, it limited the rebellions that were against him, it nearly wiped out the Kurds, and it left hundreds of thousands of Iraqis starving as a result of sanctions. But we didn’t learn that lesson, because none of those lessons came to American shores. And so, we had a level of confidence and hubris going into the second war which made us think that the Iraq war would end very quickly. And that time we didn’t quite have the overwhelming authority or overwhelming resolve to eliminate failure, as it were, and as a result we were starting to see already, even now, more than a decade after, the long-term consequences of those kinds of failure.

So that’s kind of a core theme or concept – I mean, that’s the link argument for debate – which is the pathology of power, the degree to which actually strengthening hegemony caused the state to corrode. It caused leadership in democratic institutions to corrode. Order and security reinforces stupidity. When you can’t learn from your mistakes because you try to pretend they don’t exist, or you destroy them, or you vaporize them you get very stupid. And so as a result we’ve ended up in a kind of slow-motion catastrophe where, while the people most privileged in institutions haven’t borne the brunt of the last 500 years of failure, they are starting to come home. Right? They’re starting to show up in the forms of things like climate change, in the inability to negotiate international order in a way that would be more just or humane, in the incapacity to move towards trying to address things like indigenous genocide or slavery. Those incapacities – which really aren’t technical problems, they’re first and foremost political problems – are reaching the state of apocalypse, catastrophe, precisely because of the inability to learn.

So I need to skip a couple of things… and get to the end. So, the end of the book, I say that’s because we’ve been so invested trying to make the world what we want rather than believing in this world, is how Gilles Deleuze put it. The thing that’s most important we can do is believe in this world. So, in the book, I say that it’s more important to think about how we should live than if we live, and that this, sort of, attempt to get out of a world where the future is what disciplines the present, and how to think about that as a crisis of meaning rather than a crisis of technology or politics. We have a crisis of meaning! We don’t know even why we want hegemony anymore. And you see that, I mean… I wouldn’t have thought it in debate a million years ago, but I spend as much or more time with generals and members of NATO and the joint forces in South Korea than I do with the people who read the kind of French philosophy that I like to do when there’s nothing else to do. But it’s still even a crisis of meaning for them; they’re not sure what NATO’s for anymore, they’re not sure what we wanna build hegemony for. We’re not even really sure what kind of wars we want anymore. And I think that speaks a lot to the fact that there’s not a clear vision of what kind of order we’d even want if we could have it.

So, the book kind of ends with this idea that extinction is inevitable – like, the sun will burn out, humans will evolve into something else – but nihilism isn’t. Nihilism is a problem we can actually do something about. We can think about how to make more meaningful lives and less cruel lives even if those lives are not going to go on forever. So, in old-school debate terms – I have no idea if these apply anymore at all – that’s as close to an alternative as the book presents, which is how to formulate craft, practice, habits, forms of life which are not dependent upon homogenization or liquidation of other forms of life. How to, basically, find some joy in this world rather than investing all of our efforts in transforming the world into something which now we’re not even sure we want anymore. And certainly through a process of transformation that looks like it may kill the species.

So, that’s where it ends. It’s sort of an affirmative note, but I wouldn’t say a particularly happy note. And it ends with a question: if that’s the ethical move to make the world less cruel, then we have to ask the question “What if this future isn’t ours?” Right? What if humanity isn’t the punchline to the cosmic joke? What if there’s something else? What comes next? And maybe we should rethink who gets to decide what comes next, rather than presuming that those who are already in power, that already maintain the geopolitical institutions which currently define the agenda for planetary politics, who’ve done a lot of harm… maybe they should take a step back. And I think that’s the thing that makes people the most uncomfortable. People are willing to think about being critical, people are willing to think about incorporating climate change into security, people are willing to think about even incorporating human security or indigenous rights into a security framework. What they’re often not willing to do is to give up the sovereignty to decide what is included and what isn’t. And for me, that’s the most important thing for us to do, in positions of incredible privilege and incredibly destructive power, to be willing to put faith in those people we’ve basically tormented for 500 years and see what other kind of planet could be made. And that’s a big gamble, but I think that’s kind of where we are as a species.

#### Voting negative adopts failed IR for a healthy dose of pessimism – at the end of the world, all we can do is hope to be buried alive together.

Grove ‘19

[Jarius, PoliSci at the University of Hawai’i. 2019. “Savage Ecology: War and Geopolitics in the Anthropocene.”] pat – ask me for the PDF!

Failed ir affirms the power of this kind of negative thinking as an alternative to the endless rehearsing of moralizing insights and strategic foresight. The negative is not “against” or reacting to something. Rather, it is the affirmation of a freedom beyond the limits of life and death. That is, it is making a life by continuing to think about the world, even if that thinking is not recuperative, and even if nothing we think can save us. In the face of it all, one celebrates useless thinking, useless scholarship, and useless forms of life at the very moment we are told to throw them all under the bus in the name of survival at all costs. This is a logic referred to lately as hope and it is as cruel as it is anxiety inducing. Hope is a form of extortion. We are told that it is our obligation to bear the weight of making things better while being chided that the failure of our efforts is the result of not believing in the possibility of real change. In such an environment, pessimism is often treated as a form of treason, as if only neoliberals and moral degenerates give up—or so goes the op-ed’s insisting upon the renewed possibility of redemption.

In response to these exhortations, pessimism offers a historical atheism, both methodologically and morally. The universe does not bend toward justice. Sometimes the universe bends toward the indifference of gravity wells and black holes. Affirming negativity, inspired by Achille Mbembe, is grounds for freedom, even if that freedom or relief is only fleeting and always insecure. I am not arrogant enough to think a book can attain freedom of this sort, but this book is inspired by refusals of critique as redemption in favor of useless critique and critique for its own sake.

That the pursuit of knowledge without immediate application is so thoroughly useless, even profane, is a diagnosis of our current moment. The neoliberal assault on the university is evidence of this condition, as is the current pitch of American politics. Our indifference as intellectuals to maximizing value has not gone unnoticed. We are still dangerous, worthy of vilification, of attack, sabotage, and derision because we fail so decadently. We are parasites according to Scott Walker, Donald Trump, and the rest. So be it. We are and shall remain irascible irritants to a worldwide assault on thinking that is well underway and facing few obstacles in other jurisdictions.

What would failed scholarship do? Learn to die, learn to live, learn to listen, learn to be together, and learn to be generous. These virtues are useless in that they do not prevent or manage things. They do not translate into learning objectives or metrics. Virtues of this order are selfsame, nontransferable experiences. They are meaningful but not useful. These are luxurious virtues. Like grieving or joy, they are ends unto themselves. But how will these ideas seek extramural grants, contribute to an outcomes-based education system, or become a policy recommendation? They will not, and that is part of their virtue.

Even if there is no straight line to where we are and where we ought to be, I think we should get over the idea that somehow the U.S. project of liberal empire is conflicted, or “more right than it is wrong,” or pragmatically preferable to the alternatives. I hope this book can contribute to the urgent necessity to get out of the way by reveling in the catastrophic failure that should inspire humility but instead seems to embolden too many to seek global control yet again. Demolition may be an affirmative act if it means insurgents and others can be better heard. And yet this may fail too. If we can accomplish nothing at all, we can at least, as Ta-Nehisi Coates and other pessimists have said, refuse to suborn the lie of America any longer. Telling the truth, even if it cannot change the outcome of history, is a certain kind of solace. In Coates’s words, there is a kind of rapture “when you can no longer be lied to, when you have rejected the dream.” Saying the truth out loud brings with it the relief that we are not crazy. Things really are as bad as we think.

If there are those of us who want to break from this one-hundred-year-old race to be the next Henry Kissinger, then why do we continue to seek respect in the form of recognizable standards of excellence? I am not sure where the answer finally lies, but I do know that professionalization will not save us. To appear as normal and recognizably rigorous will not be enough to stave off the neoliberal drive to monetize scholarship, or to demand of us strategically useful insights. The least we can do in the face of such a battle is to find comfort in meaningful ideas and the friendships they build rather than try to perform for those we know are the problem. Some will ask, who is this “we” or is that “they”—where is your evidence? More will know exactly what I am talking about.

The virtues I seek are oriented toward an academy of refuge, a place we can still live, no matter how dire the conditions of the university and the classroom. It is not the think tank, boardroom, or command center. We are, those of us who wish to be included, the last of the philosophers, the last of the lovers of knowledge, the deviants who should revel in what Harney and Moten have called the undercommons.

In one of his final lectures, Bataille speaks of the remnants of a different human species, something not quite so doomed, something that wasted its newly discovered consciousness and tool-being on the art that still marks the walls of prehistoric caves. This lingering minor or vestigial heritage is philosophy’s beginning. Philosophy survives war, atrocity, famine, and crusades. Thinking matters in a very unusual way. Thinking is not power or emancipation. Thinking matters for a sense of belonging to the world, and for believing in the fecundity of the world despite evidence to the contrary.

How do you get all this from pessimism, from failure? Because willing failure is a temptation, a lure to think otherwise, to think dangerous thoughts. Pessimism is a threat to indifferentism and nihilism in the sense of the phenomenon of Donald Trump. Pessimism is a provocation and an enemy of skepticism, particularly of the metaphysical variety. It is not redemption from these afflictions, but in pessimism there is solace in the real. To put it another way, to study the world as it is means to care for it.

The exhortation that our care or interest should be contingent on how useful the world is and how much of it conforms to our designs is as much opposed to care as it is to empiricism. We can study airports, poetry, endurance races, borders, bombs, plastic, and warfare, and find them all in the world. To consider the depth of their existence can be an invitation to the world rather than a prelude to another policy report. One cannot make a successful political career out of such pursuits, but you might be able to make a life out of it, a life worth repeating even if nothing else happens.

At the end of Jack Halberstam’s The Queer Art of Failure, we are presented with the Fantastic Mr. Fox’s toast as an exemple of something meaningful in these dark times of ours.

They say all foxes are slightly allergic to linoleum, but it’s cool to the paw—try it. They say my tail needs to be dry cleaned twice a month, but now it’s fully detachable—see? They say our tree may never grow back, but one day, something will. Yes, these crackles are made of synthetic goose and these giblets come from artificial squab and even these apples look fake—but at least they’ve got stars on them. I guess my point is, we’ll eat tonight, and we’ll eat together. And even in this not particularly flattering light, you are without a doubt the five and a half most wonderful wild animals I’ve ever met in my life. So let’s raise our boxes—to our survival.

Halberstam says of this queer moment:

Not quite a credo, something short of a toast, a little less than a speech, but Mr. Fox gives here one of the best and most moving—both emotionally and in stop-motion terms—addresses in the history of cinema. Unlike Coraline, where survival is predicated upon a rejection of the theatrical, the queer, and the improvised, and like Where the Wild Things Are, where the disappointment of deliverance must be leavened with the pragmatism of possibility, Fantastic Mr. Fox is a queerly animated classic in that it teaches us, as Finding Nemo, Chicken Run, and so many other revolting animations before it, to believe in detachable tails, fake apples, eating together, adapting to the lighting, risk, sissy sons, and the sheer importance of survival for all those wild souls that the farmers, the teachers, the preachers, and the politicians would like to bury alive.

Although not as much fun as Halberstam’s monument to low theory, Savage Ecology is for all the other wild animals out there studying global politics. May we be buried alive together.

#### The Role of the Judge is to adopt martial empiricism.

Bousquet et al ‘20

[Antoine Bousquet, University of London, Jairus Grove, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, and Nisha Shah University of Ottawa. 2020. “Becoming war: Towards a martial empiricism,” <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619895660>] pat

Haunting the formations and deformations of global life, war confronts us as an abyss in the face of which cherished interpretative frameworks perilously buckle and warp. Indeed, Tarak Barkawi and Shane Brighton (2011: 129) accurately identify a ‘conceptual black hole surrounding the notion of war’ that has insistently gnawed at the study of the phenomenon. Locating the source of this lacuna in the absence of an ‘ontology of war’, they propose to ground one in ‘fighting’ (Barkawi and Brighton, 2011: 136). Although we concur on the diagnosis, we take issue with the suggested remedy. War does not obey any neat philosophical division between epistemology and ontology. For us, the resolute elusiveness of any definitive understanding of war is inherent in that very object. Every attempt to conceptually shackle war is undone by the creative advance of its new modes, residences and intensities. This speaks against the value of ontology per se less than it calls for a strange, paradoxical and provisional ontology that is consonant with the confounding mutability of war. Such an ontology, suspended between infinity and totality, being and nothingness, the sheer fecundity and utter catastrophe of war, may not be too uncanny for its object. In fairness, Barkawi and Brighton (2011: 133) gesture towards this in acknowledging ‘war’s recalcitrance as an object of knowledge’ and allowing for war to unmake any truth. Yet they seem unwilling to embrace the full force of their own insight, which Marc von Boemcken (2016: 239) ultimately declares: ‘even the statement that “war is fighting” may well be eventually undone by war. In a very fundamental manner, war escapes human intelligibility.’

This special issue on ‘Becoming War’ grapples with war as obdurate mystery. In its recurring persistence yet constant reinvention, its paradoxical ordering of life for the generation of death, or its stubborn affront to the better world we all purport to want, war never ceases to perplex us. Our world is one shot through by war, manifest in the nation-states we inhabit, the ecologies of technics that bind us to one another, and the very thoughts ricocheting through our communities of sense. And yet we still do not know war.

Rather than endeavour yet again to ‘say something fundamental about what war is’ (Barkawi and Brighton, 2011: 134, emphasis in original), we choose to explore how war becomes. This is not to say that we deny any durability or regularities in the phenomenon of war over time. Simply that, as Alfred Whitehead (1978: 35) puts it, ‘there is a becoming of continuity, but no continuity of becoming’. Accordingly, we seek to trace the lines of becoming that congeal into what comes to count as war, even as it continually frays at the edges and insolently defies habituated frames of reference. We do not, therefore, offer a theory of continuity, a formula for what all lines of becoming war might have in common, but instead sketch a style of investigation that encompasses both the enduring cohesion and the radical dispersion of war. We call this endeavour ‘martial empiricism’ to renounce attempts to devise a definitive theory of war. Instead, we favour an open-ended conceptual arsenal for following the trail of war wherever it leads us, as opposed to camping in the places where we already expect to find it.

Although we do not aim to circumscribe the remit of its investigations, martial empiricism is nonetheless inherently situational, spurred by the impulse to grasp the present martial condition we inhabit in all its calamity and promise. We would be far from the first to point out the growing inadequacy of the conceptual frameworks of war inherited from the Westphalian historical interval. Yet we still collectively flounder in the face of a combined and uneven landscape of armed conflict populated by metastasizing war machines encompassing overseas contingency operations, fullspectrum hybrid theatres, ethno-supremacist militias, crowd-sourced paramilitaries, Incel shooters and narco-state assassins. The game is definitely up when a task force led by the former head of United States Central Command can write that ‘basic categories such as “battlefield,” “combatant” and “hostilities” no longer have clear or stable meaning’ (Abizaid and Brooks, 2014: 35). Confronted with this reality and the persistent bewilderment it induces, we contend that a certain epistemic humility is in order. Rather than professing to know where war begins and ends, martial empiricism starts in the middle, with only the barest tentative intuitions necessary to explore the logistics, operations and embodiments that engender armed conflict as an unremitting condition of global life.

## Case

### 1NC – Util

#### Utilitarian calculus doesn’t account for the geopolitical structure of aggregate conceptions of the good – that makes it incapable of grappling with the causes of apocalypse.

Grove ‘19

[Jarius, PoliSci at the University of Hawai’i. 2019. “Savage Ecology: War and Geopolitics in the Anthropocene.”] pat – ask me for the PDF!

Rather than see these two career trajectories as opposed, I think Crutzen’s thinking displays a continuous concern for the Northern Hemisphere and a particular cartography, rather than a geography, of human survival. Crutzen, as well as the concept of the Anthropocene itself, cannot escape preceding geopolitical conceptions of the Earth. Crutzen and others who rush so quickly to the necessity to transition efforts from climate abatement to climate modification are unsurprisingly not moved by claims that artificial cooling will likely cause droughts and famines in the tropics and subtropical zones of the global south; nor are they moved by how such plans may accelerate ocean acidification. The utilitarian risk calculus that favors the greatest good for the greatest number has no geographical or historical sensibility of how unequally aggregate conceptions of the good are distributed around the planet.

Global thinking, even in its scientific and seemingly universalist claims to an atmosphere that “we” all share, belies the geopolitics that enlivens scientific concern, as well as the global public policy agenda of geoengineering that seeks to act on behalf of it. Saving humanity as an aggregate, whether from nuclear war, Styrofoam, or climate turbulence, has never meant an egalitarian distribution of survivors and sacrifices. Instead, our new cosmopolitanism—the global environment—follows almost exactly the drawn lines, that is, the cartography or racialized and selective solidarities and zones of indifference that characterize economic development, the selective application of combat, and, before that, the zones of settlement and colonization. More than a result of contemporary white supremacy or lingering white privilege, the territorialization of who lives and who dies, who matters and who must be left behind for the sake of humanity, represents a five-hundred-year geopolitical tradition of conquest, colonization, extraction, and the martial forms of life that made them all possible through war and through more subtle and languid forms of organized killing.

I am not suggesting that Crutzen and others are part of a vast conspiracy; rather, I want to outline how climate change, species loss, slavery, the elimination of native peoples, and the globalization of extractive capitalism are all part of the same global ordering. That is, all of these crises are geopolitical. The particular geopolitical arrangement of what others have called the longue durée, and what I am calling the Eurocene, is geologically significant but is not universally part of “human activity” despite the false syllogism at the heart of popular ecological thinking that a global threat to humanity must be shared in cause and crisis by all of humanity.

Departing from Sloterdijk, I am hesitant to so easily locate modernity or explication as the root or cause of the global catastrophe. No single strategy, war, act of colonization, technological breakthrough, or worldview fully explains the apocalypse before us. However, there is something like what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call a refrain that holds the vast assemblage together, a geopolitical melody hummed along with the global expansion of a form of life characterized by homogenization rather than diversification. Accordingly, if we are to make some sense of such a vast world that is, even for Crutzen and Birks, “quite complex and difficult to model,” I think we must consider the particular refrain of geopolitics that is capable of, by scientific as well as more humbly embodied standards, destroying worlds along with the world. To eschew geopolitics simply because, as a refrain, it is too big, too grand, or too universal would ignore the conditions of possibility for nuclear weapons, power politics, and carbon-based globalization, and would greatly impoverish the explanatory capability of even the best climate models. So maybe it is not so strange that Crutzen and others’ attention to the nuclear threat of great powers has all but disappeared despite the fact that Russia and the United States still possess thousands of nuclear weapons, and as of late have been all too vocal about using them. Instead, the Anthropocene, as envisioned by Crutzen as a universal concern, requires with it a depoliticization of the causes of that concern.

#### Moen – proves consequentialism, not util – only the K can analyze the structures that create their impacts in the first place. Not only pain and pleasure matter – the alternative evidence proves that the ability to find community and value in living is also intrinsically value and the primary question in crisis.

#### Grove answers the extinction first block – their analysis of catastrophe as a one off event in the future is wrong and abstracts away from the ongoing ecological extinctions of the status quo – their crisis oriented politics are the link

#### Moral uncertainty is fake – we’ll win that we’re right so there’s no impact to it

#### Don’t hold the status quo hostage for future generations – it’s the same logic as banning abortions to protect possible future lives

### 1NC – Space War

#### No miscalc or escalation

James Pavur 19, Professor of Computer Science Department of Computer Science at Oxford University and Ivan Martinovic, DPhil Researcher Cybersecurity Centre for Doctoral Training at Oxford University, “The Cyber-ASAT: On the Impact of Cyber Weapons in Outer Space”, 2019 11th International Conference on Cyber Conflict: Silent Battle T. Minárik, S. Alatalu, S. Biondi, M. Signoretti, I. Tolga, G. Visky (Eds.), <https://ccdcoe.org/uploads/2019/06/Art_12_The-Cyber-ASAT.pdf>

A. Limited Accessibility Space is difficult. Over 60 years have passed since the first Sputnik launch and only nine countries (ten including the EU) have orbital launch capabilities. Moreover, a launch programme alone does not guarantee the resources and precision required to operate a meaningful ASAT capability. Given this, one possible reason why space wars have not broken out is simply because only the US has ever had the ability to fight one [21, p. 402], [22, pp. 419–420]. Although launch technology may become cheaper and easier, it is unclear to what extent these advances will be distributed among presently non-spacefaring nations. Limited access to orbit necessarily reduces the scenarios which could plausibly escalate to ASAT usage. Only major conflicts between the handful of states with ‘space club’ membership could be considered possible flashpoints. Even then, the fragility of an attacker’s own space assets creates de-escalatory pressures due to the deterrent effect of retaliation. Since the earliest days of the space race, dominant powers have recognized this dynamic and demonstrated an inclination towards de-escalatory space strategies [23]. B. Attributable Norms There also exists a long-standing normative framework favouring the peaceful use of space. The effectiveness of this regime, centred around the Outer Space Treaty (OST), is highly contentious and many have pointed out its serious legal and political shortcomings [24]–[26]. Nevertheless, this status quo framework has somehow supported over six decades of relative peace in orbit. Over these six decades, norms have become deeply ingrained into the way states describe and perceive space weaponization. This de facto codification was dramatically demonstrated in 2005 when the US found itself on the short end of a 160-1 UN vote after opposing a non-binding resolution on space weaponization. Although states have occasionally pushed the boundaries of these norms, this has typically occurred through incremental legal re-interpretation rather than outright opposition [27]. Even the most notable incidents, such as the 2007-2008 US and Chinese ASAT demonstrations, were couched in rhetoric from both the norm violators and defenders, depicting space as a peaceful global commons [27, p. 56]. Altogether, this suggests that states perceive real costs to breaking this normative tradition and may even moderate their behaviours accordingly. One further factor supporting this norms regime is the high degree of attributability surrounding ASAT weapons. For kinetic ASAT technology, plausible deniability and stealth are essentially impossible. The literally explosive act of launching a rocket cannot evade detection and, if used offensively, retaliation. This imposes high diplomatic costs on ASAT usage and testing, particularly during peacetime. C. Environmental Interdependence A third stabilizing force relates to the orbital debris consequences of ASATs. China’s 2007 ASAT demonstration was the largest debris-generating event in history, as the targeted satellite dissipated into thousands of dangerous debris particles [28, p. 4]. Since debris particles are indiscriminate and unpredictable, they often threaten the attacker’s own space assets [22, p. 420]. This is compounded by Kessler syndrome, a phenomenon whereby orbital debris ‘breeds’ as large pieces of debris collide and disintegrate. As space debris remains in orbit for hundreds of years, the cascade effect of an ASAT attack can constrain the attacker’s long-term use of space [29, pp. 295– 296]. Any state with kinetic ASAT capabilities will likely also operate satellites of its own, and they are necessarily exposed to this collateral damage threat. Space debris thus acts as a strong strategic deterrent to ASAT usage.

#### No Sino-Russian alliance---too many conflicting interests

Beckley 18—Assistant professor of political science at Tufts University and an associate in the International Security Program at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School [Michael, 2018, *Unrivaled Why America Will Remain the World’s Sole Superpower*, Chapter 5: Future Prospects, pgs 106-7, Cornell University Press, Accessed through the Wake Forest Library] AMarb

Russia and China currently maintain a “strategic partnership,” but this relationship is unlikely to become a genuine alliance, because the two countries share a 2,600-mile border and a desire to dominate Eurasia—a goal that one side can accomplish only by subjugating the other. Perhaps a shared hatred of the United States will bring Russia and China together, but history suggests otherwise. 35 At the start of the Cold War, China initially aligned with the Soviet Union, but by the 1960s the two Communist powers were literally at war with each other, and in the 1970s China offi - cially switched sides and aligned with the United States. 36 Today, many Russian and Chinese strategists warn their respective governments not to place too much faith in a sustainable partnership. 37 Foreign analysts come to similar conclusions. As one study explains: “[SinoRussian] cooperation is limited to areas where their interests already overlap, like bolstering trade. In the parts of the world that matter most to them, Russia and China are more rivals than allies.” 38 For every example of Sino-Russian cooperation, there is a counterexample of competition. For instance, Russia sells weapons to China, but it recently reduced sales to China while increasing sales to China’s rivals, most notably India and Vietnam. 39 Russia and China conduct joint military exercises, but they also train with each other’s enemies and conduct unilateral exercises simulating a Sino-Russian war. 40 The two countries share an interest in developing Central Asia, but Russia wants to tether the region to Moscow via the Eurasian Economic Union whereas China wants to reconstitute the Silk Road and link China to the Middle East and Europe while bypassing Russia. 41 Collectively, these confl icting interests have placed Russia and China “on a trajectory toward intensifying competition from latent to emergent rivalry.” 42

#### Space hotlines check miscalc – specifically with China.

Roman 15—freelance writer at Tech Times [Julienne, 11/24/2015, “US, China Set Up Space Hotline To Avoid Satellite Warfare”, Tech Times, <http://www.techtimes.com/articles/109998/20151124/us-china-set-up-space-hotline-to-avoid-satellite-warfare.htm>] AMarb

The United States and China have set up a space hotline between them. This connection will be used to facilitate the exchange of information between the two countries and prevent satellite-related conflicts and misunderstandings. There have been fears of the possibility of warfare in space after China blew up a satellite during one of its test runs of its anti-satellite technology back in 2007. Military operations and intelligence-gathering efforts that are dependent on satellites could be severely derailed by such weapons. The two powerhouse nations have been investing in weaponry that can destroy satellites that can be used during military operations. Frank Rose, U.S. assistant secretary of state, said that China has been testing out anti-satellite weapons. In order to prevent the space tests from causing misunderstandings that would then result into space wars, the new hotline will provide quick access between authorities in China and the United States. The direct link will make it easier to convey certain necessary information to prevent any conflicts.

#### No one’s going to war over a downed satellite

Bowen 18 [Bleddyn Bowen, Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Leicester. The Art of Space Deterrence. February 20, 2018. https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/the-art-of-space-deterrence/]

Space is often an afterthought or a miscellaneous ancillary in the grand strategic views of top-level decision-makers. A president may not care that one satellite may be lost or go dark; it may cause panic and Twitter-based hysteria for the space community, of course. But the terrestrial context and consequences, as well as the political stakes and symbolism of any exchange of hostilities in space matters more. The political and media dimension can magnify or minimise the perceived consequences of losing specific satellites out of all proportion to their actual strategic effect.

#### Won’t go nuclear – seen as a normal conventional attack because of integration with ground forces – they have read zero evidence that space war goes nuclear

Firth 7/1/19 [News Editor at MIT Technology Review, was Chief News Editor at New Scientist. How to fight a war in space (and get away with it). July 1, 2019. MIT Technology Review]

Space is so intrinsic to how advanced militaries fight on the ground that an attack on a satellite need no longer signal the opening shot in a nuclear apocalypse. As a result, “deterrence in space is less certain than it was during the Cold War,” says Todd Harrison, who heads the Aerospace Security Project at CSIS, a think tank in Washington, DC. Non-state actors, as well as more minor powers like North Korea and Iran, are also gaining access to weapons that can bloody the noses of much larger nations in space.

### 1NC – Hegemony

#### Why does an aging population deter Chinese ability to become a global hegemon? Erickson says literally nothing – China has credibility, tech leadership, and are already moving into a leadership role.

#### Their suspicion argument is super racist – our authors are not CCP hacks and proves our argument that they have constructed non Western scholarship as a dangerous Oriental other that creates warhawking.

#### Heg sucks – their authors are hacks, Covid killed it, history concludes neg, and overstretch makes it unsustainable – it incentivizes interventionism and causes, rising challengers.

**Roussinos ‘21** – Aris Roussinos is a former war reporter and a contributing editor at UnHerd

Aris Roussinos, ”Twilight of the American Empire” Unherd, March 3rd, 2021 <https://unherd.com/2021/03/twilight-of-the-american-empire/> // sam + pat

When Joe Biden announced to the Munich Security Conference last week that “America was back” at the centre of the Atlantic alliance, his European virtual audience responded with a collective shrug. For all their protestations of fealty, Europe’s leaders, defiantly pushing ahead with trade and energy deals with America’s rivals, are not interested in any great ideological crusade on the hegemon’s behalf. As Nathalie Tocci, chief advisor to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell Fontelles, notes in a recent paper, “the European project developed under… an order made up of international organisations, laws, norms, regimes and practices premised on US power”. Yet today, “that world is fast fading”. While the US remains the only state able to project power globally, it “no longer represents the undisputed hegemon of the international system”. Indeed, as Tocci observes, China’s rise “suggests that we can no longer claim with confidence that economic prosperity and political freedoms can only go hand in hand”. Moreover, our dramatically different experiences of Covid “suggests that the jury is out on which governance system is perceived as best addressing the pandemic crisis, prompting questions about the management of other global challenges too”. To his credit, Biden squarely addressed these pressing questions. Summoning up the ghosts of past confrontations, he declared that “we’re at an inflection point” between those who believe that “autocracy is the best way forward… and those who understand that democracy is essential to meeting those challenges”. For the President, “Democracy will and must prevail… We have to prove that our model isn’t a relic of our history.” Yet this justificatory emphasis on democracy as the foundation of empire is a relic of a very specific moment in world history. As the historian Stephen Wertheim observes in his book Tomorrow the World, following the fall of France in 1940, American foreign policy elites feared that a Nazi victory would see the United States hemmed into the Western Hemisphere. But the British victory in the Battle of Britain opened up a new prospect, hitherto undreamed of by American politicians: first of an Anglo-American imperial condominium, dividing up the post-war world between them; and then, as Britain’s relative decline became apparent, a vision of total global hegemony. “Americans ever since, from experts to ordinary citizens, have considered world dominance to be their nation’s natural role,” Wertheim notes. It is an ideology which “holds that the superior coercive power of the United States is required to underwrite a decent world order” — one which “assumes that in order to prevent the international realm from descending into chaos or despotism, a benign hegemon must act as the world’s ordering agent,” with that onerous burden falling upon themselves. To turn its wary populace into eager participants in this imperial project, American intellectual and foreign policy elites framed global expansion as the establishment of a universal liberal-democratic order, guided and protected rather than ruled by Washington. As Wertheim notes in a passage that is as true of American liberal commentators today as those of the 1940s, “anything less [than global supremacy] would be an abdication, tantamount to inactivity, absence, and head-in-the-sand disregard for the fate of the world.” America’s pursuit of global hegemony was not a sordid, self-aggrandising imperial project like that of the fading European powers; instead, it was a moral duty, a noble sacrifice undertaken for the benefit of the rest of the world. In such a way, Wertheim writes, “the country jumped from ‘isolationism’ to ‘imperialism’, acquiring a taste for unilateral intervention everywhere in order to remake the world in the image of the United States”. In doing so, they constructed the global order whose waning days we now inhabit. Yet by making the Second World War the founding myth of the American-led order, certain pathologies were built into the system which now threaten its survival. As a useful myth became liberal dogma, the neurotic belief that the end of American hegemony would mean the return of dark forces has become so entrenched that it constrains America’s ability to negotiate reality. In the same way US political radicals appear doomed to endlessly replay the ideological battles of 1930s Germany in the streets of America’s cities, it is always 1933 in the world of the D.C. liberal hawk: American hegemony is all that stands between the free world and the rise of new Hitlers, destined to crop up from the blood-soaked soil of the Old World without regular American pruning. The increasing salience since the 1990s of a Hollywood-esque understanding of the Second World War exemplifies this distortion of reality in the pursuit of a grand, moralising origin myth. It is a worldview shorn of moral compromises, such as the necessary alliance with Stalin’s murderous regime, in which every challenger to US hegemony magically becomes a new Hitler. Complex and intractable ethnic, tribal and sectarian conflicts — literally inexplicable in such a moral framework — are either reduced to the evil deeds of individual dictators, whose removal will lead automatically to the flourishing of liberal democracy, or ignored as too difficult to comprehend. The results are plain to see. As Tocci notes, more in sorrow than censure, “the last war which the US led and unequivocally won both militarily and politically was over Kosovo 22 years ago.” In the ever-expanding wars since then, the US has “won militarily, but (abysmally) lost politically.” The result, as she observes, is that “the outcomes of the many wars that have been fought in China’s absence during the decades of its economic rise have been, in one way or another, to China’s strategic advantage.” The danger for America, then, is that its leaders have become high on their own ideological supply, overlaying their fantasy map on the real world. It seems, at times, that by fusing the Realist desire for hegemony with an idealistic mission to remake the world, America’s elites believe they have secured the mandate of heaven for their project. Challengers, from Putin to Gaddafi to Assad, are not merely opponents; they are rebels against the arc of history, individual reincarnations of the 1930s whose very existence, let alone survival, is morally unbearable. Indeed, there are worrying intimations that America’s leaders believe the victory of liberal democracy is predestined, purely through its own perceived moral virtue: as if the victories of the Second World War and the Cold War were won by holding the correct ideology, and not through the possession of stronger industrial bases and amoral political alliances. The rise of China, concomitant with America’s decline, is largely the unintended product of such a dangerously idealistic worldview. Yet like the American millennials role-playing Weimar, their elders continue to re-enact the sacred myth on the global sphere, invoking the litanies of another time, on another continent, for their magical power. By intoning the sacred word democracy over and over again at the Munich conference — including three times in his concluding sentence — Biden echoed the themes of his first domestic foreign policy speech: that he will “host the summit of democracies early in my administration to rally the nations of the world to defend democracy globally” and that “there’s no longer a bright line between foreign and domestic policy”. The riot at the Capitol and the future confrontation in east Asia are now part of the same Manichean struggle, a worldview we could term the true D.C. cinematic universe. Of course, Biden’s framing is not true in a literal sense: the same speech contained a pledge to defend Saudi Arabia — which is not noted for its liberal governance — even as he announced the welcome end of American military support for the Saudi kingdom’s bloody and disastrous war in Yemen. Likewise to confront China, the US will need to enhance alliances with authoritarian or dubiously democratic South East Asian states, with even India’s commitment to “liberal democracy” in the American sense increasingly debatable. Even in Europe, Poland, the most eager cheerleader for America’s continued military dominance on our continent, displays a far more equivocal approach to both liberalism and democracy than Biden’s framing suggests. As in the first Cold War, America can either promote global democracy or preserve its imperial reach, but not both. Nevertheless, the democratic ideal retains immense rhetorical power for defenders of the American-led global order. Thus the openly imperialist writer Robert Kagan argued recently that Americans must “accept the role that fate and their own power have thrust upon them”, because “the only hope for preserving liberalism at home and abroad is the maintenance of a world order conducive to liberalism, and the only power capable of upholding such an order is the United States”. In starker terms than Biden, Kagan argues that the empire is necessary to preserve democracy at home: an America that retreats from global hegemony would no longer be America. But as the Realist professors of International Relations David Blagden and Patrick Porter observe in a recent paper arguing for a strategic withdrawal from the Middle East, the precise opposite case can be made. The pursuit of global hegemony since the end of the Cold War has seen the United States overstretch itself, taken on unsustainable levels of debt to fund its military expansion, eroded the country’s image abroad, militarised policing at home, enabled the rise of China and fostered disillusionment and political radicalism in America. The Trump era, they note, was not so much a threat to America’s global mission as its product, a marker of growing popular dissent to imperial overreach now observable on both the Left and Right of the American political system. As they observe, America’s “position as ‘global leader’ is premised on a set of impermanent and atypical conditions from an earlier post-war era”, but “the days of incontestable unipolarity are over, and cannot be wished back”. The result is that “overextension abroad, exhaustion and fiscal strain at home, and political disorder feed off one another in a downward spiral, cumulatively threatening the survival of the republic”. The US empire is, then, at an impasse. Its moral and political justification of overseeing a global order of universal liberal democracy — the closest real-world equivalent to the Kantian perpetual peace that has both motivated and eluded liberal idealists for the past two centuries — is now beyond its capabilities to maintain. Yet to return to its core imperial concerns of the Western Hemisphere, Europe and Northeast Asia, as Blagden & Porter counsel, would tarnish the imperial crown. Without the idealistic universalism that has justified America’s global mission since the Second World War, the US empire would be an empire like any other: self-interested, amoral, and hostage to the cycle of rise and fall that has seen every other empire pass into history. Kagan is in this sense correct: without the justifying myth to organise the empire around, the moral logic of the entire enterprise falls apart. Even within the heart of the Nato alliance, European strategic autonomy therefore represents a dilemma for America, which, as Blagden & Porter note, has always “displayed a longstanding preference for preventing even its major allies in Europe and Asia from exercising true strategic autonomy”. A more autonomous Europe lessens the strategic burden on the United States, allowing America to refocus its forces on confronting China; yet a more autonomous Europe will also be less constrained by American pressure, and more inclined to pursue its own interests. How does this end for America? Biden and the presidents after him will be forced to make a hard choice: whether to retrench to a smaller and more manageable empire, or to risk a far greater and more dramatic collapse in defence of global hegemony. In the meantime, perhaps our European allies are correct in discerning a greater opportunity to rebalance the Atlantic alliance in our favour for the first time in decades. A more modest American commitment to a limited democratic order, rather than an unsustainable global one, can only enhance European influence, including ours, especially as the bloody distractions of the Middle East, America’s self-defeating imperial burden, fade from prominence. American leaders will soon be forced to choose between realism and idealism; the same is also true of us.

#### Transition is peaceful and equitable – it’s already happening, but trying to reverse it only makes instability worse.

McKeil ‘21, Aaron. “On the Concept of International Disorder.” International Relations, vol. 35, no. 2, June 2021, pp. 197–215, doi:10.1177/0047117820922289. |ava if your heg evidence was better I wouldn’t be up at 7 am cutting this ev but I guess I’ll do it anyway|

The new international disorder Growing interest in international disorder today is mainly but not exclusively a response to the emergence of the Trump Presidency and its deliberate disruption of the post-Cold War order. What clarity can a refined conception of international disorder bring to this? First, an analytical definition of international disorder helps specify and clarify the scope of disorder arising in international affairs today. The Trump administration’s withdrawal from international treaties, combined with the diplomatic alienation of US allies by President Trump’s remarks has created a condition of uncertainty and unpredictability in international affairs, not least because it is unclear to many how these actions are within the United States’ interests and that it is alarming to many observers that the United States is unmaking many of the institutions it had been a principal supporter of.53 There has also been a rise in instability, particularly with the Trump administration’s withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Iran nuclear agreement. This disorder is not caused by the centrality of the United States in the post-Cold War order, but the outsized relative power of the United States and its central role in ordering institutions makes its disordering conduct simultaneously undermining both of the order’s principal support and virtually impossible for other powers to constrain. Crucially, however, while the Trump administration has threatened to, it has not withdrawn the United States from some of the more significant institutions such as NATO and the WTO, thus the degree of disorder has not as yet been sufficient to overturn the post-Cold War order. Nevertheless, the disordering conduct of the Trump administration has undermined and challenged the assumption of the United States’ support for the postCold War order, questioning its viability.54 Second, closer attention to the concept of disorder and its relation to order raises interesting and important questions about what reordering impulses that the experience of contemporary disorder may be generating. Interestingly, the response of many middle powers such as Canada, Australia and Germany has been an attempt to preserve the post-Cold War ‘rules-based-order’, albeit with admissions of a need for some modifications.55 These powers are seemingly hoping to preserve the order until the United States returns to a more predictable and cooperative foreign policy, although it is unclear if the United States will.56 In this respect, there is also a sense that if this disorder continues and worsens (thereby increasing instability and deepening unpredictability in international affairs), this may generate a move towards greater reordering initiatives to minimize vulnerability (at least as much as possible) to this kind of disorderly US conduct. These new insulating institutions could take on three broad forms: (a) the abandonment of current US-centric institutions in favour of new regional and global security and economic institutions to eliminate reliance upon US hegemony or (b) the duplication of current US-centric institutions in new regional and global security and economic institutions as institutional insurance that may be turned to and relied on in times of errant hegemony or (c) a combination of (a) and (b). Due to the virtual unavoidability of the outsized United States in international affairs and because many of the major institutions of the contemporary order are long-standing and not being dismantled by the United States, it is more likely that states will duplicate economic and security institutions to insulate their vital interests from vulnerability to the ill effects of errant hegemony. Small and middle powers cannot ignore or effectively resist hegemonic states, but they can build new additional institutions to limit and prevent complete vulnerability to them. This means institutions like NATO and the WTO will likely endure but, depending on the depth and persistence of US unilateralism, they will likely become increasingly nested in webs of additional overlapping regional and global security and economic institutions. Third, however, it is at least worth noting that the endurance of existing institutions depends on the international system avoiding more severe manifestations of international disorder, chiefly great power war. Such a war is improbable but therefore not impossible.57 If such a war were to occur, and if humankind survived at all, it would generate radically broader and deeper international institutional reform. Such a war would manifest disorder of sufficient magnitude to erase and permanently invalidate the prevailing international order. As such, the kind of institutions that such disorder would generate is hard to anticipate because they would essentially be constructed to establish an entirely new international order. If, instead, such conflict is avoided, as is more likely, several world order observers suggest the current period of disorder is generating a reordering of the international system in a potentially more diffuse or equitable distribution of power and authority over rule-making, a decentred globalist or ‘multiplex’ world order of multiple nested regional orders.58 There is some plausibility to this because order-negligent US foreign policy is making US allies increasingly wary of overreliance on US power, while rising powers advance alternative visions of multipolar and polycentric order. China’s aims and interests, for instance, are increasingly to limit its reliance on the United States and to limit the ill effects of errant US hegemony on China by building up a network of alternative institutions, while not dismantling the institutions that already exist.59 As such, the institutions comprising the post-Cold War order will survive, but depending on the depth and persistence of contemporary disorder, they will also likely become increasingly nested in further regional and global institutions, as hedges generated in response disordering US policy.60

#### China is peaceful – the transition is over, but aggressive overreaction causes war – best data.

Kang & Ma ‘18

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Yet after that century of chaos, China has once again already completed a regional power transition. It has done so astonishingly quickly, and it has done so peacefully. China’s share of regional GDP grew from 8 percent in 1990 to 51 percent in 2014, while Japan’s share fell from 72 percent in 1990 to 22 percent today (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Share of Total East Asian GDP, 1990-2014

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators. (Countries: China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Australia)

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

As China has grown richer and more integrated within East Asia itself, East Asian defense spending has steadily declined. The proportion of the economy devoted to defense spending is now almost half of what it was in 1990 and shows no sign of increasing (Figure 2). Specifically, the defense spending of eleven main East Asian states (the same 11 countries cited in Figure 1) declined from an average of 3.35 percent of GDP in 1990 to an average of 1.84 percent in 2015.

Figure 2: East Asian Defense Spending, 1990-2015

Source: Stockholm Institute of Peace Research, 2016

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

These two figures tell an accurate, enduring, and often overlooked story about East Asia. China has already managed a head-spinningly fast regional power transition. The only question is how much larger the gap between China and its neighbors will become. Countries are rapidly increasing their economic ties to China and each other. And East Asian countries have steadily reduced their defense spending, which suggests these countries think most of the region’s unresolved issues are not worth fighting over. All countries in the region have to coexist with each other—none are picking up and moving somewhere else. Countries are dealing with that reality and seeking diplomatic rather than military solutions with each other.

The standard response to more than a quarter-century of stability is to credit the United States: all Asian countries “must be” free-riding on a U.S. commitment to the region. However, this runs counter to the evidence that over the same time period, the U.S. military commitment has declined U.S. attention has wavered, and indeed the perception of U.S. inattention over the past few decades even prompted the Obama administration to claim it was “pivoting” to Asia. These two trends are hard to square: if East Asian countries did not respond even to reductions in U.S. deployments and attention, then perhaps they do not see the remaining issues worth fighting over. After all, these countries show no signs of hedging, in either their economic relations with China or in their military expenditures. If countries were worried and thought the United States might leave, they would presumably be preparing at least in part for that possibility. Instead, the defense spending trends show powerfully a steady, decades-long reduction, even in the face of massive increases in Chinese power and wavering U.S. commitment to the region.

This East Asian reality runs counter to a largely Western narrative of threat inflation that views China’s rise as dangerous and the region as increasingly unstable. Indeed, for over a quarter century, some scholars have made dire and continued predictions that East Asia is going to experience an arms race, that the regional security dilemma is intensifying, and that dangerous instability driven by China is just around the corner.31 In recent years, perceptions of increased Chinese assertiveness, regional fears, and a muscular U.S. rebalancing effort toward the Pacific have increased concern among some observers that the region may be drifting toward rivalry and containment blocs. However, there is little evidence that East Asian states are engaged in an arms race, and few states are sending costly signals about their resolve to suffer the costs of war. The lessons and implications for power transition theory from late sixteenth and early seventeenth century East Asia are instructive for today. Indeed, being more aware of the nuanced view of power transitions leads to three observations about contemporary East Asian security.

First, the Ming crumbled from within—surely a cautionary tale to any declining power that a healthy domestic political situation and economy are key elements of any enduring grand strategy or hegemonic status. The lessons of the Ming-Qing transition from history point us to examine closely the domestic politics and economic vibrancy of the United States and China today, and to look for clues as to whether these countries and their leaders have internal stability and vision. Self-inflicted wounds may be more dangerous than actual ones.

For example, in 1990 it was widely believed that Japan was the next peer competitor to the United States. Today, that is not the case, not because of any war, but because Japan never recovered from the economic malaise of the 1990s. Domestic challenges removed Japan as a peer competitor of the United States. For China as well, immense internal problems may limit its immediate ability to challenge the United States.32 Chinese dreams of regional or even global leadership will depend as much or perhaps more on how it manages the domestic social, environmental, economic, and political issues within China than it will on how China deals with its external relations. Susan Shirk has argued that China is “strong abroad but fragile at home.”33 China expert David Shambaugh argued in 2015 that, “China’s political system is badly broken,” writing that political censorship and repression has skyrocketed under Xi Jinping, money and elites are fleeing the country, corruption is endemic, and economic reforms are blocked by powerful interests.34 It is widely reported that China spends more on internal security than it does on external defense.35

We make no predictions as to whether or not those internal problems will be solved. After all, China has continued its economic, social, and political development much farther and faster than almost anyone thought possible a few decades ago. Certainly, pessimists have consistently overstated the problems facing China—author Gordon Chang has been confidently predicting the collapse of the Chinese Communist Party for over fifteen years, although the party appears stronger than ever in 2018.36 Whether or not the Chinese regime is about to collapse or whether the economy is about to stall is not our point. Rather, more important is to point out that domestic issues may be more consequential for the future of China, and for China’s place in the world, than would be any titanic struggle with the United States over global dominance.

This same observation is true for the United States. As many have pointed out, the key issue for the United States is not some challenge from China that may occur in the abstract, nor Chinese challenge in the South China Seas that lies at the margins of U.S. interests. Rather, many observers believe that the central challenge to American hegemony arises from political, economic, and social issues within the United States itself.37 From a massive financial crisis to a civil society that is fracturing in ways not seen in a half-century, the United States may inflict far more damage on itself than any external competitor could.38

The second lesson for East Asian security is that power vacuums are often more dangerous than power transitions. The Qing succeeded largely because the Ming collapsed, not because the two engaged in a titantic battle for dominance and survival. In the twenty-first century, there is increasing debate and concern that the United States is ceding its leadership position in East Asia. Regional leadership involves soft power, and attractive power, as much as it does hard military power and bullying.39

#### Biden’s too passive to make power projection credible – laundry list of thumpers.

Means ‘8/30

[Grady, Grady Means is a writer and former corporate strategy consultant. He served in the White House as a policy assistant to Vice President Nelson Rockefeller. “Biden brings the world closer to nuclear war,” <https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/569732-biden-brings-the-world-closer-to-nuclear-war?rl=1>] pat

The danger lies in the growing global perception of weakness and incompetence in the Biden administration, combined with claims of the politicized weakening of the FBI, CIA, State Department and Defense Department. This has crystallized in Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s unsure Anchorage meeting with the Chinese, Biden’s wooden Geneva summit with Russia’s Vladimir Putin, the colossal failure of the Afghan withdrawal, which may devolve into a humiliating hostage crisis for America, and the budget- and inflation-based defunding of Defense. In addition, the fully politicized Intelligence and Armed Services committees on Capitol Hill add to the danger. Our enemies may decide that now is the time to move.

#### No Taiwan invasion – geography, and no heg solves because it removes the US from the war which keeps it conventional

Michael A. Cohen, MA, 21 [Fellow @ The Century Foundation, Adjunct Lecturer in School of International and Public Affairs @ Columbia], "No, Neocons, China Is Not About to Invade Taiwan," New Republic, 11-19-2021 <https://newrepublic.com/article/164485/why-china-will-not-invade-taiwan> C.VC

Earlier this month, the Defense Department released its annual report to Congress on “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China.” While the report lays out the ways in which China’s “People’s Liberation Army” is seeking to modernize its forces, the threat to Taiwan of armed invasion is still minimal at best:

Large-scale amphibious invasion is one of the most complicated and difficult military operations, requiring air and maritime superiority, the rapid buildup and sustainment of supplies onshore, and uninterrupted support. An attempt to invade Taiwan would likely strain PRC’s armed forces and invite international intervention. These stresses, combined with the PRC’s combat force attrition and the complexity of urban warfare and counterinsurgency, even assuming a successful landing and breakout, make an amphibious invasion of Taiwan a significant political and military risk.

One might expect that a country intent on launching the largest and most difficult amphibious invasion in history would be making intense preparations. That’s not happening.

As the Pentagon report notes, Chinese naval investments have focused on building up the capacity to launch “regional and eventually global expeditionary missions rather than the large number of landing ship transports and medium landing craft that would be necessary for a large-scale direct beach assault.” The Pentagon also finds that while China is focusing on conducting joint operations that involve forces from the army, navy, and air force, as of present it currently lacks such capabilities.

That the Chinese military enjoys vast military superiority vis-à-vis Taiwan is not in doubt. But that such resources can be used to mount an amphibious assault is something else altogether. The Chinese military last fought a war in 1979 against Vietnam, and the PLA was badly bloodied. That means that the soldiers and officers who make up China’s military today have virtually no direct combat experience.

China’s own media outlets have, according to the Pentagon, noted the PLA’s shortcomings, which include that “commanders cannot (1) judge situations; (2) understand higher authorities’ intentions; (3) make operational decisions; (4) deploy forces; and, (5) manage unexpected situations.” These problems would be challenging enough in a conventional conflict. For a complex invasion of Taiwan, they would render such efforts virtually impossible.

One big reason is that Taiwan is about as inhospitable an environment as can be imagined for an amphibious invasion. Ian Easton, a defense expert who has written extensively about Taiwan defense strategy, wrote earlier this year that the country’s “coastal terrain … is a defender’s dream come true. Taiwan has only 14 small invasion beaches, and they are bordered by cliffs and urban jungles.” Easton also notes that “many of Taiwan’s outer islands bristle with missiles, rockets, and artillery guns. Their granite hills have been honeycombed with tunnels and bunker systems.”

#### Atlantic Council is funded by weapons contractors, NATO, and big oil.

Shirazi & Johnson 20, Nima Shirazi: Editor at Muftah, a digital foreign affairs magazine, and co-host of the media criticism podcast, Citations Needed. Adam Johnson: Host, The Appeal podcast. Media analyst at FAIR.org and host of the Citations Needed podcast (September 9th, “Episode 117: The Always ‘Lagging’ U.S. War Machine,” *Citations Needed*, <https://citationsneeded.medium.com/episode-117-the-sl-lagging-u-s-war-machine-52b8960aedc3>, Accessed 09-23-2021)

CNBC, the next year, the headline read, “The US is falling behind China in crucial race for AI dominance.” This was written by Frederick Kempe, President and CEO of the Atlantic Council who was the main source of the previous article we mentioned. The Atlantic Council, of course their major funders are, aside from oil companies and US and state governments are very much weapons contractors. Major donors include Lockheed Martin, Boeing, BAE Systems, Raytheon, Palantir, as well as direct financing from NATO itself.