### Advantage

#### The advantage is Debris:

#### Privatization of space is unsustainable and increases debris – triggers the Kessler Syndrome

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* Kessler syndrome: objects outside Earth’s immediate orbit causing more damage the longer it’s allowed to orbit

Back in 1978, the astrophysicist Donald Kessler made an alarming prediction: Space junk could wreck our ability to keep satellites aloft. In a fascinating paper, Kessler noted that “low earth orbit” — a region between 99 miles and 1,200 miles up — was getting pretty crowded. In 1978 there were already 3,866 objects being tracked in space. That included satellites used by scientists (say, to monitor weather) or spy agencies. It also included a lot of debris: Every time a rocket launches a satellite into orbit, it tends to leave stray bits of material. The thing is, when objects are zooming through space about 2 km/s, even something as tiny as a chip of paint can smash through glass or steel. Pieces of debris become bullets. What Kessler predicted is that sooner or later, objects in low-earth orbit would start colliding, and produce chain effects, like billiard balls colliding on a crowded pool table. If a piece of debris hit a satellite, it would produce more debris, which would to increase the risk of other collisions … and so on, and so on. At some point, you could reach a tipping point. There’d be so many chunks of debris that collisions would be inevitable, leaving low-earth orbit a junkyard where no satellites could survive. Remember the scene in Wall-E where they blast off Earth, and the planet is utterly ringed with crap? That’s what Kessler worried about. Except in our situation the pieces of junk could be quite small — billions of objects the size of grains of sand, which is actually a lot harder to deal with, because you can’t see it coming. In essence, Kessler predicted we could create an artificial asteroid belt of junk: The result would be an exponential increase in the number of objects with time, creating a belt of debris around the earth. This process of mutual collisions is thought to have been responsible for creating most of the astroids from larger planetlike bodies. Space folks began calling this the “Kessler Syndrome”. It was hard to predict when this might start happening. Kessler worried that conditions could be ripe by as early as 2000. Thankfully, that estimate turned out to be premature. But wow, it looks like it might happen soon. What’s happened recently that makes the “Kessler Syndrome” more likely? A couple of things: Way more satellites are going up The pace at which satellites are going up in the sky is simply exploding. Back when Kessler wrote his paper in 1978, we humans were launching about 53 new satellites a year. Going to space was hard. But now launches are an order of magnitude more common, and they’re increasing in pace rapidly. SpaceX in particular is launching oodles of satellites as it builds its orbital Internet-access service Starlink. In the last two years, it has put 1,740 satellites in low-earth orbit, with plans to eventually shoot 30,000 up there. This is part of a larger trend, which is … The privatization of outer space The private sector is rapidly becoming the dominant actor in space. There’s a huge demand for satellite data — everyone wants better info about weather, crops, traffic patterns, tree coverage, emissions, you name it, on top of the explosive use of satellites for communication and Internet. SpaceX’s remarkable innovations in rocketry (the leading folks, though others are following in their footsteps) have made it cheaper than ever to get a satellite into orbit. It is unlocking a huge pent-up demand for near-earth-orbit tech. More launches mean not only more intentional objects in orbit but unintentional ones — bits of rocket parts and detritus from launches.

#### Privatization exponentially increases the curve but ending dangerous missions prevents it.

Bernat 20 [Pawel, 2020, Military University of Aviation, “ORBITAL SATELLITE CONSTELLATIONS AND THE GROWING THREAT OF KESSLER SYNDROME IN THE LOWER EARTH ORBIT,” SAFETY ENGINEERING OF ANTHROPOGENIC OBJECTS, Volume 4, PDF] Justin

5. Orbital satellite constellations and the growing threat of the Kessler syndrome Space 2.0 – the new era of space exploration that we witness now in the 21st century means, in words of Buzz Aldrin, “moving human enterprise into space” (Pyle, 2019, p. xiv). The process of commercialization of outer space has already begun and is not limited to private companies providing technologies and services for national or international space agencies, as it was in the past. On the contrary, private companies from the space sector have now matured to carry out their own independent projects. As for 2020, SpaceX is a company that serves as the best example – it launches satellites to the orbit, both for state and private contractors, it successfully realized two crew missions to the International Space Station, and is in the process of constructing Starlink satellite constellation that will provide high-speed internet access across the planet. Each satellite weighs around 260 kg, is equipped with an ion propulsion system, autonomous collision avoidance system, and orbits Earth at approximately 540-560 km altitude (Starlink, 2020). At the beginning of November 2020, more than 860 Starlink satellites were orbiting the Earth (Jewett, 2020). Immediate plans include launching 12,000 satellites, but they assume a potential later extension to 42,000 (Henry, 2019a). Of course, SpaceX has employed, at least declaratively, all necessary measures to keep the space clean – the satellites are equipped with the deorbiting system, and in the event of inoperability of the propulsion system (Starlink, 2020). The orbital collisions are, however, inevitable. As it was shown before, the possibility of collisions grows with the number of orbital objects. Bastida Virgili with the team compared (2016, p. 154-155) orbital debris environment development without and with a large hypothetical constellation consisting of merely 1080 satellites, distributed across 20 orbital planes at 1,100 km altitude (Fig. 5).

Chart, line chart

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It has to be noted that although SpaceX’s Starlink is the only constellation that is being built in orbit, it is not the only one planned. There are at least a few initiatives aiming at the same goal – to construct internet infrastructure at the Earth’s orbit. The planned Kuiper Systems LLC, which is a subsidiary of Amazon and intends to place 3,236 broadband satellites in the LEO, is one of Starlink’s biggest competitors (Henry, 2019b). Now, there is even a rivalry between the two companies because Kuiper’s lowest orbital shell is planned to be 590 km, with a tolerance of 9 km either above or below (Cao, 2020), which is the altitude of Starlink satellites. Moreover, the race for space in orbit is now at the beginning. The outer space is vast. It increasingly becomes more cluttered with both operational satellites and space debris. The threat of collisions increases and no institution or body has enough power to license, coordinate and regulate what is sent to the orbit. The UNOOSA has not such power. National states decide what the companies from the space industry can launch to space. In the United States, which is most advanced in the area of private constellations, it is the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that issues the appropriate approvals. The race to put broadband internet satellites bears similarities to the gold rush – there are no rules, at the global level, apart from first-come, first-served.

#### Debris triggers miscalculated war.

Peter Dockrill 16. Award-winning science & technology journalist. “Space Junk Accidents Could Trigger Armed Conflict, Study Finds.” <https://www.sciencealert.com/space-junk-accidents-could-trigger-armed-conflict-expert-warns>.

The increasingly crowded space in Earth's low orbit could set the stage for an international armed conflict, says a new study. Researchers from the Russian Academy of Sciences warn that accidents stemming from the steady rise in space junk floating around the planet could incite political rows and even warfare, with nations potentially mistaking debris-caused incidents as the results of intentional aggressive acts by others. In a paper published in Acta Astronautica, the team suggests that space debris in the form of spent rocket parts and other fragments of hardware hurtling at high speed pose a "special political danger" that could dangerously escalate tensions between nations. According to the study, destructive impacts caused by random space junk cannot easily be told apart from military attacks. "The owner of the impacted and destroyed satellite can hardly quickly determine the real cause of the accident," the authors write. The risks of such an event occurring are compounded by the sheer volume of debris now orbiting Earth. Recent figures from NASA indicate that there are more than 500,000 pieces of space junk currently being tracked in orbit, travelling at speeds up to 28,160 km/h (17,500 mph). The majority of those objects are small – around the size of a marble – but some 20,000 of them are bigger than a softball. In addition to these 500,000 or so fragments – which are big enough for scientists to know about them – NASA estimates that there are millions of undetectable pieces of debris in orbit that are too small to be monitored. But even extremely small fragments such as these pose a threat – in fact, they're considered a greater risk than trackable debris, as their invisible status means spacecraft and satellites can't do anything to avoid them until it's too late. As NASA observed in 2013: "Even tiny paint flecks can damage a spacecraft when travelling at these velocities. In fact a number of space shuttle windows have been replaced because of damage caused by material that was analysed and shown to be paint flecks… With so much orbital debris, there have been surprisingly few disastrous collisions." While we may have been lucky in the past, we can't rely on that to continue. The study by the Russian team cites the repeated sudden failures of defence satellites in past decades that were never explained. The researchers attribute two possible causes: either unrecorded collisions with space junk, or aggressive actions from adversaries. "This is a politically dangerous dilemma," the authors write.

#### **Goes nuclear.**

Les Johnson 14. Baen science fiction author, popular science writer, and NASA technologist. “Living without satellites”. <https://www.baen.com/living_without_satellites>.

Satellite imagery is used by the military and our political leaders to maintain the peace. When your potential adversaries can’t hide what they’re doing, where their armies are moving and what they are doing with their civilian and military infrastructure, then the danger of surprise attack is diminished. In our nuclear age with instant death only minutes away by missile attack, the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) only works if both sides know whether or not they are being attacked. The launch of missiles or a bomber fleet can easily be seen from space far in advance of either reaching their potential targets halfway around the globe. The danger of surprise attack is therefore small, making an accidental war far less likely. So what does all this mean? And what do we do about it? First of all, it means that the advocates of space development, exploration and commercialization have succeeded far beyond their initial expectations and dreams. The economies and security of countries in the developed world are now dependent on space satellites. We space advocates should celebrate our success and be terrified of it at the same time. Should we lose these fragile assets in space, our economy would experience a disruption like no other: ship, air and train travel would stop and only restart/operate in a much-reduced capacity for years (GPS loss). Many banking and retail transactions would cease (VSAT loss). Distribution of news and vital national information would be crippled (communications satellite loss). Lives would be put at risk and the productivity of our farming would dramatically decrease (weather satellite loss). The risk of war, including nuclear war, would increase (loss of spy satellites) and our military’s ability to react to crises would be significantly reduced (loss of military logistics and intelligence gathering satellites).

#### Convergence of factors guarantee space escalation.

Thomas González Roberts 17. A space security researcher at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and host of [Moonstruck](https://www.moonstruckpodcast.com/), a podcast about humans in space. "Why We Should Be Worried about a War in Space ," 12-15-2017. Atlantic, <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/12/why-we-should-be-worried-about-a-war-in-space/548507/>

One hundred miles above the Earth’s surface, orbiting the planet at thousands of miles per hour, the six people aboard the International Space Station enjoy a perfect isolation from the chaos of earthly conflict. Outer space has never been a military battleground. But that may not last forever. The [debate in Congress](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1e6zH3AfZHs4hLpGaKwmxAVxR-LfWk0110THq9tIhgOU/edit?ts=5a2f95e8?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25) over whether to create a Space Corps comes at a time when governments around the world are engaged in a bigger international struggle over how militaries should operate in space. Fundamental changes are [already underway](https://www.csis.org/analysis/congress-creating-military-space-corps?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25). No longer confined to the [fiction shelf](https://best-sci-fi-books.com/23-best-military-science-fiction-books/?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25), space warfare is likely on the horizon. While agreements for how to operate in other international domains, like the open sea, airspace, and even cyberspace, have already been established, the major space powers—the United States, Russia, and China—have not agreed upon a rulebook outlining what constitutes bad behavior in space. It’s [presumed](http://intercrossblog.icrc.org/blog/twmzia1cp84kv2c29bi4iz6q4u03in?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25) that International Humanitarian Law would apply in outer space—protecting the civilian astronauts aboard the International Space Station—but it’s unclear whether damaging civilian satellites or the space environment itself is covered under the agreement. With only a limited history of dangerous behavior to study, and few, [outdated guidelines](http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/introouterspacetreaty.html?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25) in place, a war in space would be a war with potentially more consequences, but far fewer rules, than one on Earth. Although there has never been a military conflict in space, the history of human activity above our atmosphere is not entirely benign. In 1962, the United States [detonated a 1.4 megaton nuclear weapon](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/going-nuclear-over-the-pacific-24428997/?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25) 250 miles above the Earth’s surface. The blast destroyed approximately one third of satellites in orbit and poisoned the most used region of space with radiation that lasted for years. Although the United States, Russia, and others soon agreed to a treaty to prevent another nuclear test in space, China and North Korea never signed it. In 2007, China [tested an anti-satellite weapon](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/18/AR2007011801029.html?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25), a conventionally-armed missile designed to target and destroy a satellite in orbit. In the process, it annihilated an old Chinese weather satellite and created high-velocity shrapnel that still threatens other satellites. Even though demonstrations like this have consequences for everyone, countries are free to carry them out as they see fit. No treaties address this kind of test, the creation of space debris, or the endangerment of other satellites. The U.S. has the most to lose in a space-based conflict With by far the most satellites in orbit, the U.S. has the most to gain by establishing norms, but also the most to lose. Almost half of all operational satellites are owned and operated by the United States government or American commercial companies. That’s twice as many as Russia and China, combined. Space may seem distant, but what happens there affects our everyday lives on the ground. When we use our phones to plan a trip, we depend on American GPS satellites to guide us. When the U.S. military deploys troops overseas, satellite communications connect forces on the ground to control centers. When North Korea launches an intercontinental ballistic missile, the U.S. and its allies depend on early-warning satellites to detect it. On one hand, if the global space powers agreed to put limits on space-based weapons and other related technologies, it could make space safer for everyone. But because the U.S. may have spent time and resources [developing](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/05/why-so-secretive/525969/?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25) exactly the type of weapons that a code of conduct would ban**,** it could also curtail the most advanced space-based developments, erasing years of research and progress. There are more players in space—and less consensus In the [first space age](https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalation-and-deterrence-second-space-age?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25), from the launch of the first human-made satellite in 1957 through the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States and the USSR were responsible for over 90 percent of all satellites. Their race to perfect space technology, dominated by both national security interests and scientific discovery, far outpaced everyone else. The second space age, from 1990 to today, looks remarkably different. Now, more satellites are operated by private companies than militaries, and more space launches and new satellites come from countries other than the United States and Russia. More players in space—particularly more unpredictable players—means more opportunities for aggressive behavior, like developing anti-satellite technologies or hacking satellite communications. Countries like Iran or North Korea that are newer to space can choose to operate in a way we’ve never seen before. And if their nuclear programs on Earth are [any guide](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/iran-northk-korea-nuclear/542673/?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25), they could pose serious threats if left unchecked. Efforts have been made to create a modern-day space rulebook, but so far none have gained traction. In 2008, when Russia and China both proposed norms of behavior, the United States [refused to sign on](https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/04/space-war/521910/?utm_source=masthead-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=member-newsletter-20171213-20&silverid=%25%25RECIPIENT_ID%25%25). Similarly, when the United States supported a 2014 European Union proposal to govern the use of conventional weapons in orbit, Russia and China didn’t agree with the terms. Since the congressional debate about a Space Corps, people have been taking the prospect of a war in space seriously, in a way we haven’t seen before. Now we should start talking about how to avoid that war. To prevent conflict in the upper atmosphere, all potential adversaries—the United States, China, North Korea, Iran, Russia, the EU—need to align, and agree on norms of behavior. They need rules.

#### Any nuclear war causes extinction – ice age and famine.

Steven Starr 15 [Director of the University of Missouri’s Clinical Laboratory Science Program, as well as a senior scientist at the [Physicians for Social Responsibility](http://www.psr.org/). He has worked with the Swiss, Chilean, and Swedish governments in support of their efforts at the United Nations to eliminate thousands of high-alert, launch-ready U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons. “Nuclear War: An Unrecognized Mass Extinction Event Waiting To Happen.” Ratical. March 2015. <https://ratical.org/radiation/NuclearExtinction/StevenStarr022815.html>] TG

A war fought with 21st century strategic nuclear weapons would be more than just a great catastrophe in human history. If we allow it to happen, such a war would be a mass extinction event that [ends human history](https://ratical.org/radiation/NuclearExtinction/StarrNuclearWinterOct09.pdf). There is a profound difference between extinction and “an unprecedented disaster,” or even “the end of civilization,” because even after such an immense catastrophe, human life would go on. But extinction, by definition, is an event of utter finality, and a nuclear war that could cause human extinction should really be considered as the ultimate criminal act. It certainly would be the crime to end all crimes. The world’s leading climatologists now tell us that nuclear war threatens our continued existence as a species. Their studies predict that a large nuclear war, especially one fought with strategic nuclear weapons, would create [a post-war environment in which for many years it would be too cold and dark to even grow food](http://climate.envsci.rutgers.edu/pdf/RobockToonSAD.pdf). Their findings make it clear that not only humans, but most large animals and many other forms of complex life would likely vanish forever in a nuclear darkness of our own making. The environmental consequences of nuclear war would attack the ecological support systems of life at every level. Radioactive fallout, produced not only by nuclear bombs, but also by the destruction of nuclear power plants and their spent fuel pools, would poison the biosphere. Millions of tons of smoke would act to [destroy Earth’s protective ozone layer](https://www2.ucar.edu/atmosnews/just-published/3995/nuclear-war-and-ultraviolet-radiation) and block most sunlight from reaching Earth’s surface, creating Ice Age weather conditions that would last for decades. Yet the political and military leaders who control nuclear weapons strictly avoid any direct public discussion of the consequences of nuclear war. They do so by arguing that nuclear weapons are not intended to be used, but only to deter. Remarkably, the leaders of the Nuclear Weapon States have chosen to ignore the authoritative, long-standing scientific research done by the climatologists, research that predicts virtually any nuclear war, fought with even a fraction of the operational and deployed nuclear arsenals, will leave the Earth essentially uninhabitable.

### Advocacy

#### Thus I affirm, Resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust.

#### Revising the Outer Space Treaty curbs the impact of space debris – timeframe is crucial.

Shah 20 – Sachin, 8/30/20, [“Aug 30 The International Legal Regulation of Space Debris,” CORNELL UNDERGRADUATE LAW & SOCIETY REVIEW, Administrative, Policy, Technology, <https://www.culsr.org/articles/the-international-legal-regulation-of-space-debris>] Justin

In this article, I have demonstrated that the existing laws and regulations pertaining to space debris are best captured in the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. While many scholars do believe that Articles VII and IX of the Treaty does provide basic accountability for space debris, many also agree that its vague, non-technical legal language creates problems in mitigating the ever-growing problem of space debris in orbit around Earth. Despite this lack of legal clarity, some scholars have proposed solutions to the space debris issue. Some have simply called for a revised, specific version of the Outer Space Treaty. Others have recommended implementing an entire regulatory regime with the authority to create laws which specifically pertain to holding actors accountable for space debris production. While lawmakers have yet to update the existing regulations regarding space debris, more effective space debris mitigation techniques lie in the private sector. The profit-based incentives of private satellite companies ensure their responsibility in and around Earth's orbit. In the example of SpaceX, the loose legal regulations of satellite use by the FCC and the ITU have allowed the company to send thousands of satellites into orbit. We live in a different world today than we did in 1967. In order to maintain our current safety and our future ability to voyage outer space, stronger legal frameworks must be created to prevent the uncontrollable expansion of space debris around Earth. Used effectively, legal action can accomplish these goals, but lack thereof may result in disaster.

#### Private entities are non-governmental.

Dunk 11 – Frans G. von der Dunk, 2011, [“The Origins of Authorisation: Article VI of the Outer Space Treaty and International Space Law,” University of Nebraska] Justin

4. Interpreting Article VI of the Outer Space Treaty One main novel feature of Article VI stood out with reference to the role of private enterprise in this context. Contrary to the version of the concept applicable under general international law, where “direct state responsibility” only pertained to acts somehow directly attributable to a state and states could only be addressed for acts by private actors under “indirect,” “due care”/“due diligence” responsibility,18 Article VI made no difference as to whether the activities at issue were the state’s own (“whether such activities are carried on by governmental agencies” . . .) or those of private actors (. . . “or by non-governmental entities”). The interests of the Soviet Union in ensuring that, whomever would actually conduct a certain space activity, some state or other could be held responsible for its compliance with applicable rules of space law to that extent had prevailed. However, the general acceptance of Article VI as cornerstone of the Outer Space Treaty unfortunately was far from the end of the story. Partly, this was the consequence of key principles being left undefined.

#### Exemptions destroy the coercive power of legal regimes – causes circumvention across the board.

Hickman and Dolman 2 – John and Everett, 2002, Associate professor in the Department of Government and International Studies at Berry College in Mt. Berry, [“Resurrecting the Space Age: A State–Centered Commentary on the Outer Space Regime,” Volume 21 Number 1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/014959302317350855>] Elmer Recut Justin

Thus a state party need merely announce its intention to withdraw and then wait one year. Withdrawal of a single state party to the treaty, however, would not necessarily terminate the treaty between the other state parties. Yet, the decision of an important state not to be bound by a regime–creating treaty obviously endangers the entire treaty. The decision of the United States or China to withdraw from the OST would have far greater implications for the survival of the international space regime than the same decision by Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, or Papua New Guinea—the equality of states under international law remains nothing more than a useful  ction. For the OST to remain good international law, it must be accepted as such by the major space faring states of the 21st Century: the United States, Russia, the European Union, Japan, and China. One defection from the regime by a member of this group would no doubt lead to its effective collapse, as the remaining space faring states are unlikely to use the kind of coercion necessary to enforce the regime. A more likely response to such a defection is a scramble to make similar claims to sovereignty, based on historical precedent and effective occupation. Similar rushes to stake claims for territory sovereignty in other celestial bodies might follow.

#### Space appropriation is a *re-entrenchment* of settler colonialism built on the lens of *‘conservation’* representing yet another *‘unknown’* to be conquered.

Smiles 20[ Deondre Smiles is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria, in B.C., Canada. Society Space October 26, 2020, SETTLER COLONIAL AND INDIGENOUS GEOGRAPHIES “The Settler Logics of (Outer) Space”] //aaditg

‍“In reaffirming our heritage as a free nation, we must always remember that America has always been a frontier nation. Now we must embrace the next frontier. America’s Manifest Destiny in the stars…The American nation was carved out of the vast frontier by the toughest, strongest, fiercest and most determined men and women ever to walk on the face of the Earth… Our ancestors braved the unknown, tamed the wilderness, settled the Wild West…This is our glorious and magnificent inheritance. We are Americans. We are pioneers. We are the pathfinders. We settled the New World. We built the modern world.” -President Donald J. Trump, 2020 State of the Union address T o most scholars, and certainly to the virtual majority of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island, it is no secret that the country we call the United States of America was built upon the brutal subjugation of Indigenous people and Indigenous lands. Fueled by the American settler myths of terra nullius (no man’s land) and Manifest Destiny, the American settler state proceeded upon a project of cultural and physical genocide, with lasting effects that endure to the present day. The ‘settler myth’ permeates American culture. Words such as ‘pioneer’, the ‘West’, ‘Manifest Destiny’ grab the imagination as connected to the growth of the country in its early history. America sprang forth from a vast open ‘wilderness’. Of course, for Indigenous people, we know differently—these lands had complex cultural frameworks and political entities long before colonization. Words like ‘pioneer’ and ‘Manifest Destiny’, have deep meanings for us too, as they are indicative of the very real damage dealt against our cultures and nations, damage that we have had to work very hard to undo. Trump’s address raises key insights into the continuing logics of settler colonialism, as well as questions of its future trajectories. Trump’s invocation of ideas such as the ‘frontier’ and ‘taming the wilderness’ draws attention to the brutal violence that accompanied the building of the American state. Scholars such as Greg Grandin (2019) make the case that the frontier is part of what America is—whether it is the ‘Wild West’, or the U.S.-Mexican border, America is always contending with a frontier that must be defined. Language surrounding ‘frontier’ is troubling because it perpetuates the rationale of why the American settler state even exists—it could make better use of the land than Native people would, after all, they lived in wilderness. This myth tells us that what we know as the modern world was built through the hard work of European settlers; Indigenous people had nothing to offer or contribute. For someone like Mr. Trump, whose misgivings and hostility towards Native people have been historically documented, this myth fits well with his narrative as President—he is building a ‘new’ America, one that will return to its place of power and influence. The fact that similar language is being used around the potential of American power being extended to space could reasonably be expected, given the economic and military potential that comes from such a move. Space represents yet another ‘unknown’ to be conquered and bent to America’s will. However, such interplanetary conquest does not exist solely in outer space. I wish to situate the very real colonial legacies and violence associated with the desire to explore space, tracing the ways that they are perpetuated and reified through their destructive engagements with Indigenous peoples. I argue that a scientific venture such as space exploration does not exist in a vacuum, but instead draws from settler colonialism and feeds back into it through the prioritization of ‘science’ over Indigenous epistemologies. I begin by exploring the ways that space exploration by the American settler state is situated within questions of hegemony, imperialism, and terra nullius, including a brief synopsis of the controversy surrounding the planned construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea. I conclude by exploring Indigenous engagement with ‘space’ in both its Earthbound and beyond-earth forms as it relates to outer space, and what implications this might have for the ways we think about our engagement with space as the American settler state begins to turn its gaze skyward once again. I position this essay alongside a growing body of academic work, as well as journalistic endeavors (Haskins, 2020; Koren, 2020) that demands that the American settler colonial state exercise self-reflexivity as to why it engages with outer space, and who is advantaged and disadvantaged here on Earth as a result of this engagement. Settler Colonialism and ‘Space’ A brief exploration of what settler colonialism is, and its engagement with ‘space’ here on Earth is necessary to start. Settler colonialism is commonly understood to be a form of colonialism that is based upon the permanent presence of colonists upon land. This is a distinction from forms of colonialism based upon resource extraction (Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2013). What this means is that the settler colony is intimately tied with the space within which it exists—it cannot exist or sustain itself without settler control over land and space. This permanent presence upon land by ‘settlers’ is usually at the expense of the Indigenous, or original people, in a given space or territory. To reiterate: control over space is paramount. As Wolfe states, “Land is life—or at least, land is necessary for life. Thus, contests for land can be—indeed, often are—contests for life” (2006: 387). Without land, the settler state ‘dies’; conversely, deprivation of land from the indigenous population means that in settler logic, indigeneity dies (Povinelli, 2002; Wolfe, 2006.) The ultimate aims of settler colonialism is therefore the occupation and remaking of space. As Wolfe (2006) describes, the settler state seeks to make use of land and resources in order to continue on; whether that is through homesteading/residence, farming and agriculture, mining, or any number of activities that settler colonial logic deems necessary to its own survival. These activities are tied to a racist and hubristic logic that only settler society itself possesses the ability to make proper use of land and space (Wolfe, 2006). This is mated with a viewpoint of landscapes prior to European arrival as terra nullius, or empty land that was owned by no one, via European/Western conceptions of land ownership and tenure (Wolfe, 1994). Because of this overarching goal of space, there is an inherent anxiety in settler colonies about space, and how it can be occupied and subsequently rewritten to remove Indigenous presence. In Anglo settler colonies, this often takes place within a lens of conservation. Scholars such as Banivanua Mar (2010), Lannoy (2012), Wright (2014) and Tristan Ahtone (2019) have written extensively on the ways that settler reinscription of space can be extremely damaging to Indigenous people from a lens of ‘conservation’. However, dispossession of Indigenous space in favor of settler uses can also be tied to some of the most destructive forces of our time. For example, Aboriginal land in the Australian Outback was viewed as ‘empty’ land that was turned into weapons ranges where the British military tested nuclear weapons in the 1950s, which directly led to negative health effects upon Aboriginal communities downwind from the testing sites (Vincent, 2010). Indigenous nations in the United States have struggled with environmental damage related to military-industrial exploitation as well. Saturn V rocket. (Image credit: NASA) But, what does this all look like in regard to outer space? In order to really understand the potential (settler) colonial logics of space exploration, we must go back and explore the ways in which space exploration became inextricably tied with questions of state hegemony and geopolitics during the Cold War. US and Soviet space programs were born partially out of military utility, and propaganda value—the ability to send a nuclear warhead across a great distance to strike the enemy via a ICBM and the accompanying geopolitical respect that came with such a capability was something that greatly appealed to the superpowers, and when the Soviets took an early lead in the ‘Space Race’ with Sputnik and their Luna probes, the United States poured money and resources into making up ground (Werth, 2004). The fear of not only falling behind the Soviets militarily as well as a perceived loss of prestige in the court of world opinion spurred the US onto a course of space exploration that led to the Apollo moon landings in the late 1960s and the early 70s (Werth, 2004; Cornish, 2019). I argue that this fits neatly into the American settler creation myth referenced by Trump—after ‘conquering’ a continent and bringing it under American dominion, why would the United States stop solely at ‘space’ on Earth? To return to Grandin (2019), space represented yet another frontier to be conquered and known by the settler colonial state; if not explicitly for the possibility of further settlement, then for the preservation of its existing spatial extent on Earth. However, scholars such as Alan Marshall (1995) have cautioned that newer logics of space exploration such as potential resource extraction tie in with existing military logics in a way that creates a new way of thinking about the ‘openness’ of outer space to the logics of empire, in what Marshall calls res nullius (1995: 51)[i]. Telescopes on Mauna Kea. (Photo credit: University of Hawaii-Hilo) But we cannot forget the concept of terra nullius and how our exploration of the stars has real effects on Indigenous landscapes here on Earth. We also cannot forget about forms of space exploration that may not be explicitly tied to military means. Doing so deprives us of another lens through which to view the tensions between settler and Indigenous views of space and to which end is useful. Indeed, even reinscribing of Indigenous space towards ‘peaceful’ settler space exploration have very real consequences for Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous spaces. Perhaps the most prominent example of the fractures between settler space exploration and Indigenous peoples is the on-going controversy surrounding the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea, on the island of Hawaii. While an extremely detailed description of the processes of construction on the TMT and the opposition presented to it by Native Hawai’ians and their allies is beyond the scope of this essay, and in fact is already expertly done by a number of scholars[ii], the controversy surrounding TMT is a prime example of the logics presented towards ‘space’ in both Earth-bound and beyond-Earth contexts by the settler colonial state as well as the violence that these logics place upon Indigenous spaces, such as Mauna Kea, which in particular already plays host to a number of telescopes and observatories (Witze, 2020). In particular, astronomers such as Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, Lucianne Walkowicz, and others have taken decisive action to push back against the idea that settler scientific advancement via space exploration should take precedence over Indigenous sovereignty in Earth-space. Prescod-Weinstein and Walkowicz, alongside Sarah Tuttle, Brian Nord and Hilding Neilson (2020) make clear that settler scientific pursuits such as building the TMT are simply new footnotes in a long history of colonial disrespect of Indigenous people and Indigenous spaces in the name of science, and that astronomy is not innocent of this disrespect. In fact, Native Hawai’ian scholars such as Iokepa Casumbal-Salazar strike at the heart of the professed neutrality of sciences like astronomy: One scientist told me that astronomy is a “benign science” because it is based on observation, and that it is universally beneficial because it offers “basic human knowledge” that everyone should know “like human anatomy.” Such a statement underscores the cultural bias within conventional notions of what constitutes the “human” and “knowledge.” In the absence of a critical self-reflection on this inherent ethnocentrism, the tacit claim to universal truth reproduces the cultural supremacy of Western science as self-evident. Here, the needs of astronomers for tall peaks in remote locations supplant the needs of Indigenous communities on whose ancestral territories these observatories are built (2017: 8). As Casumbal-Salazar and other scholars who have written about the TMT and the violence that has been done to Native Hawai’ians (such as police actions designed to dislodge blockades that prevented construction) as well as the potential violence to come such as the construction of the telescope have skillfully said, when it comes to the infringement upon Indigenous space by settler scientific endeavors tied to space exploration, there is no neutrality to be had—dispossession and violence are dispossession and violence, no matter the potential ‘good for humanity’ that might come about through these things. Such contestations over outer space and ethical engagement with previously unknown spaces will continue to happen. Outer space is not the first ‘final frontier’ (apologies to Gene Roddenberry) that has been discussed in settler logics and academic spaces. In terms of settler colonialism, scholars have written about how Antarctica was initially thought of as the ‘perfect’ settler colony—land that could be had without the messy business of pushing Indigenous people off of it (see Howkins 2010). Of course, we know now that engagement with Antarctica should be constrained by ecological concern—who is to say that these concerns will be heeded in ‘unpopulated’ space? What can be done to push back against these settler logics?

### **Framework**

#### The standard is maximizing life. Prefer it:

#### [1] Actor spec: util is the best for governments, which is the actor in the rez – multiple warrants:

#### [a] Governments must aggregate since every policy benefits some and harms others, which also means side constraints freeze action.

#### [b] Actor-spec comes first since different agents have different ethical standings. Takes out util calc indicts since they’re empirically denied and link turns them because the alt is no action.

#### [c] Evolutionary analysis proves only states can limit power.

Johnson and Thayer 16 – Dominic D. P. Johnson, D.Phil., Ph.D.\* and Bradley A. Thayer, Ph.D., “The evolution of offensive realism Survival under anarchy from the Pleistocene to the present,” https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/56B778004187F70B8E59609BE7FEE7A4/S073093841600006Xa.pdf/div-class-title-the-evolution-of-offensive-realism-div.pdf

Few principles unite the discipline of international relations, but one exception is anarchy—the absence of government in international politics. Anarchy is, ironically, the ‘‘ordering’’ principle of the global state system and the starting point for most major theories of international politics, such as neoliberalism and neorealism.42,43,44,45 Other theoretical approaches, such as constructivism, also acknowledge the impact of anarchy, even if only to consider why anarchy occurs and how it can be circumvented.46,47 Indeed, the anarchy concept is so profound that it defines and divides the discipline of political science into international politics (politics under conditions of anarchy) and domestic politics (politics under conditions of hierarchy, or government). Given the prominence of the concept in present-day international relations theory, it is striking that anarchy only took hold as a central feature of scholarship in recent decades, since the publication of Kenneth Waltz’s Theory of International Politics in 1979. In fact, however, **anarchy has been a constant feature of the entire multimillion year history of the human lineage (and indeed the 3.5 billion–year history of the evolution of all life on Earth before that). It is not just that we lack a global Leviathan today; humans never had such a luxury. The fact that human evolution occurred under conditions of anarchy, that we evolved as hunter-gatherers in an ecological setting of predation, resource competition, and intergroup conflict, and that humans have been subject to natural selection** for millions of years **has profound consequences for understanding human behavior**, not least how humans perceive and act toward others. Scholars often argue over whether historically humans experienced a Hobbesian ‘‘state of nature,’’ but—whatever the outcome of that debate—it is certainly a much closer approximation to the prehistoric environment in which human brains and behavior evolved. **This legacy heavily influences our decision-making and behavior today, even—perhaps especially—in the anarchy of international politics**. We argue that **evolution under conditions of anarchy has predisposed human nature toward the behaviors predicted by offensive realism: Humans**, particularly men, **are strongly self-interested, often fear other groups, and seek more resources, more power, and more influence** (as we explain in full later). **These strategies** are not unique to humans and, in fact, **characterize a much broader trend in behavior among mammals as a whole—especially primates**—as well as many other major vertebrate groups, including birds, fish, and reptiles. **This recurrence of behavioral patterns** across different taxonomic groups **suggests that the behaviors characterized by offensive realism have broad and deep evolutionary roots**. This perspective does not deny the importance of institutions, norms, and governance in international politics. On the contrary, it provides or adds to the reasons why we demand and need them, and indeed why they are so hard to establish and maintain. Until recently, **international relations theorists rarely used insights from the life sciences to inform their understanding of human behavior**. However, **rapid advances in the life sciences offer increasing theoretical and empirical challenges to scholars in** the social sciences in general and **international relations** in particular, who are therefore under increasing pressure to address and integrate this knowledge rather than to suppress or ignore it. Whatever one’s personal views on evolution, **the time has come to explore the implications of evolutionary theory for mainstream theories of international relations**. **The most obvious challenge that evolutionary theory presents to international relations concerns our understanding of human nature**. Theories purporting to explain human behavior make explicit or implicit assumptions about preferences and motivations, and mainstream theories in international politics are no exception. Many **criticisms of international relations theories focus on these unsubstantiated or contested assumptions about underlying human nature. The parsimony of general theories depends on how well they explain phenomena across space and time**; in other words, the more closely they coincide with empirical observations across cultures and throughout history. The most enduring theories of international relations, therefore, will be ones that are able to incorporate (or at least do not run against the grain of) evolutionary theory. Although Thomas Hobbes claimed to have deduced Leviathan scientifically from ‘‘motion’’ and the physical senses, he was writing two hundred years before Darwin and so had no understanding of evolution. International relations scholars have tended to claim to deduce their own theories from Hobbes, or subsequent philosophers who followed him, and we suggest it is time to revisit the idea of foundational scientific principles. **Starting with biology, or with human evolutionary history, has never been typical in international relations scholarship**, but this approach is now less exotic than it once seemed as innovators in a range of social sciences, including economics, psychology, sociology, and political science, pursue this line of inquiry. **International relations stands to gain from** similar **interdisciplinary insights**. At the dawn of the 21st century, an era that will be dominated by science at least as much as philosophy, **we have the opportunity to move away from untested assumptions about human nature. Instead, we can make more concrete predictions about how humans tend to think and act in different conditions, based on new scientific knowledge about human cognition** and behavior, **and in particular a greater understanding of the social and ecological context in which human brains and behaviors evolved**. But what was that context?

#### 2] Extinction outweighs 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 undermined if there were no future generations of intelligent persons. On his view, my life would contain vastly less well-being if (say) a year after my death the world came to an end. So obviously if Scheffler were right I’d have very strong reason to reduce existential risk. We should also take into account moral uncertainty. What is it reasonable for one to do, when one is uncertain not (only) about the empirical facts, but also about the moral facts? I’ve just argued that there’s agreement among minimally plausible ethical views that we have strong reason to reduce existential risk – not only consequentialists, but also deontologists, virtue ethicists, and sophisticated egoists should agree. But even those (hedonistic egoists) who disagree should have a significant level of confidence that they are mistaken, and that one of the above views is correct. Even if they were 90% sure that their view is the correct one (and 10% sure that one of these other ones is correct), they would have pretty strong reason, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, to reduce existential risk. Perhaps most disturbingly still, even if we are only 1% sure that the well-being of possible future people matters, it is at least arguable that, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, reducing existential risk is the most important thing in the world. Again, this is largely for the reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. (For more on this and other related issues, see this excellent dissertation). Of course, it is uncertain whether these untold trillions would, in general, have good lives. It’s possible they’ll be miserable. It is enough for my claim that there is moral agreement in the relevant sense if, at least given certain empirical claims about what future lives would most likely be like, all minimally plausible moral views would converge on the conclusion that we should try to save the world. While there are some non-crazy views that place significantly greater moral weight on avoiding suffering than on promoting happiness, for reasons others have offered (and for independent reasons I won’t get into here unless requested to), they nonetheless seem to be fairly implausible views. And even if things did not go well for our ancestors, I am optimistic that they will overall go fantastically well for our descendants, if we allow them to. I suspect that most of us alive today – at least those of us not suffering from extreme illness or poverty – have lives that are well worth living, and that things will continue to improve. Derek Parfit, whose work has emphasized future generations as well as agreement in ethics, described our situation clearly and accurately: “We live during the hinge of history. Given the scientific and technological discoveries of the last two centuries, the world has never changed as fast. We shall soon have even greater powers to transform, not only our surroundings, but ourselves and our successors. If we act wisely in the next few centuries, humanity will survive its most dangerous and decisive period. Our descendants could, if necessary, go elsewhere, spreading through this galaxy…. Our descendants might, I believe, make the further future very good. But that good future may also depend in part on us. If our selfish recklessness ends human history, we would be acting very wrongly.” (From chapter 36 of On What Matters)

### **Underview**

#### 1] Aff gets 1AR theory since the neg can be infinitely abusive and I can’t check back. Aff theory is drop the debater, competing interps, and the highest layer since the 1ar is too short to win both theory and substance and reasonability bites intervention since it’s up to the judge to determine. No 2NR RVI, new paradigm issues, new theory shells, or new responses to AC arguments since they’d dump on it for 6 minutes and my 3-minute 2AR is spread too thin.

#### **2] Fairness is a voter – A] Debate’s a competitive game and requires objective evaluation.** B] Fairness best coheres a winner since if one debater had ten minutes to speak and the other had three there would be incongruence that alters ability to judge the better debater C] Determines engagement in substance so it outweighs.

#### **3] Weigh the case a] Fairness – opposing frameworks moot the 1AC – there are infinite parts they could problematize which forces a 1ar restart. b] Clash – Our scholarship is tied to the consequences of the plan – their model lets them get through the 2NR without addressing the aff skewing our time.**

#### 4] The alt cedes the celestial commons to the hands of global imperialism. Only IR education can create momentum to demilitarize space.

Raymond Duvall 6 – Professor of Political Science @ Univ of Minnesota, Taking Sovereignty Out of This World: Space Weapons and Empire of the Future, October 2006, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/111193/Taking%20Sovereignty%20Out%20of%20This%20World.pdf>

III. Space Weapons, Sovereignty, and the Constitution of Empire Each of the three new forms of military use of space, if brought into effect, will dramatically affect political societies on Earth. Missile defense has as its aim the creation of a shield for the territory of the U.S. (and possibly some selected allies). To the extent that it is accomplished, this would partially re-inscribe, through a truly three-dimensional shield, the borders of the United States—in Herz’s terms, its “hard shell”—and accordingly its effective sovereignty as political subject. At the same time, it would reduce or even eliminate the capacity of other political subjects to exercise an effective deterrent defense against U.S. intervention in their affairs—that is to say, it would further erode their sovereignty. The second type of militarization—space control—is both a form of “privatizing” the commons of orbital space and a form of military exclusion, an extra-territorial complement to the effort to create an exclusive territorial “hard shell” for just one state (and perhaps its “friends”) through missile defense. In the first respect, it can be understood as a type of “primitive accumulation”,48 whereby the commons of orbital space is effectively colonized and “made safe” for the capitalist interests that flow through it—primarily information services at this point in time. Here, the project of space control is constitutive of the U.S. as expressly capitalist state—sovereign subject of a particular global socio-economic order. In the second respect, that moment of constitution is conjoined with the constitution of an exclusive—a singular—sovereignty in regard to the workings of that socio-economic order through the global commons of orbital space. Finally, the placing of weapons in space capable of targeting objects on or near the Earth’s surface creates a new form of territorial rule. Whereas modern military action has been concerned principally with occupying and controlling territory, and whereas modern sovereignty is accordingly territorially defined, this form of weaponization of space would dispense with the need for such cumbersome military practices, and the pretense of sovereign territorial authority. Instead, through increased precision in space-based weapons systems, combined with the ability to target and attack anywhere on the Earth on a very short notice—ranging from minutes to seconds depending upon the weapon system—it becomes possible to “surveil and punish” any potential enemy of such a system.49 This is constitutive of a globally singular sovereign, capable of deciding the exception for the entirety of humanity, with no terrestrial “outside” to the scope of its sovereignty.50 Our argument, in simple terms, is that the militarization of space reconstitutes and alters the social production of political society in three interlocked ways that are rooted respectively in three distinct forms of putting economies/cartographies of violence into practice in outer space. The conjoint effect of those three processes of reconstitution is to substitute the consolidation of an extra-territorial system of rule—which we refer to as empire of the future—for the competitive sovereignties of the modern states-system. Missile defense The first instance of weaponization of space will probably be the deployment of a spacebased missile defense system. Indeed, the U.S. military is already testing several prototypes of components of such a system. Two of the most notable examples of this are NFIRE (Near Field Infrared Experiment) and the MDA (Missile Defense Agency) Space Test Bed. “NFIRE … is an experimental satellite to be launched in on (sic) a rocket in 2006 that is designed to distinguish between a ballistic missile’s fiery plume and the rocket itself, according to an official at the Missile Defense Agency (MDA)”.51 The MDA Space Test Bed is slated to receive funding in 2008, with the aim of integrating already existing space technologies into a system that can intercept ballistic missiles in their boost phase from orbital space.52 Such a system replaces deterrence with defense. In realist literature, the sovereignty of states is often closely linked to their ability to deter enemies from attacking. During the Cold War, nuclear weapons, through their capacity to deter attack, were cited as one of the potential means by which states could protect their territorial integrity, and, in turn, their sovereignty.53 Kenneth Waltz has argued that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their deterrent effects actually stabilizes international relations, making the world safer and, implicitly, strengthening the security of sovereign states.54 A missile defense system, developed by and operative for only one state (or that state and its allies), undermines the logic of deterrence. States lacking the missile defense system become increasingly vulnerable to (even nuclear) attack by the state that has such a system.55 In a fashion entirely consistent with the logic of John Herz’s predictions made in the 1950s, the “hard shell” of defensible territory is thereby lost for those states. The realist argument that has largely carried the day for the past half century in critical response to Herz—that the deterrent effect of mutual assured destruction of two states possessing nuclear weapons re-inscribes the logic of territorial state sovereignty—accordingly is brought into doubt. With the advent of exclusive missile defense, it is worth re-examining—indeed reinvigorating—Herz’s original argument, because if the U.S. were to develop a sufficiently sophisticated missile defense shield the deterritorializing effect on the sovereignty of other states would be precisely those that he forecasted. There would be a significant twist, however, because, for the U.S., control of an effective missile defense system would markedly re-inscribe its territorial “hard shell” and its sovereignty in exclusively shielding it from the threat of (missile-based) nuclear attack by others. The sovereignty of one state is reproduced, while that of other states is eroded. Space control The doctrine of space control has emerged in the U.S. military out of the belief that assets in space represent a potential target for enemies of the U.S.56 There are two kinds of vulnerable U.S. assets: private-commercial; and military. One concern is that rivals may attack commercial satellites, thereby disrupting the flow of information and potentially inflicting significant harm on global markets. Militarily, a second concern is that, through its increasing reliance on satellites for its Earth-based military operations, the U.S. has created an “asymmetrical vulnerability”. An adversary (including a non-state, “terrorist” organization) could effectively immobilize U.S. forces by disabling the military satellites that provide communication, command, and control capabilities. As noted above, U.S. military planners are already warning about a possible “Space Pearl Harbor”. Consequently, the doctrine of space control is designed to protect commercial and military satellites from potential attacks, and ultimately to prevent rivals from having access to space.57 As of the year 2000 there were over 500 satellites in orbit owned by 46 countries, worth in excess of $250 billion. With the rise of the information economy, satellites are playing an increasing role in international trade and finance. As such, U.S. military planners are concerned about commercial satellites. One rationalization for the weaponization of space is that these commercial assets represent a vulnerability to economic sabotage and terrorism. As Lambeth has argued, The most compelling reason for moving forward for dispatch toward acquiring at least the serious elements of space control capability is that the United States is now unprecedentedly invested and dependent upon on-orbit capabilities, both military and commercial. Since these equities can only be expected to grow in sunk cost, it is fair to presume that they will eventually be challenged by potential opponents.58 Notice how this description of space control discusses space in terms of a set of capital assets that should be protected from external threats. While scholars have for a long time debated whether one, if not the, primary objective of U.S. military endeavors is to protect the interests of business, when it comes to questions of space control it is one of only two things in space to protect. There are no human populations in space—with the exception of the two or three occupants on the International Space Station—that could be killed by conflict in space, so the thing that is being secured through the project of space control is technology—either commercial satellites or military assets. In Volume One of Capital, Marx chided classical political economists for their inability to explain how workers became separated from the means of production. Whereas political economists such as Adam Smith argued that a previous accumulation of capital was necessary for a division of labor, Marx argued that this doctrine was an absurd doctrine. Division of labor existed in pre-capitalist societies where workers were not alienated from their labor. Instead, Marx argued that the actual historical process of primitive accumulation of capital was carried out through brute force. The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation.59 While not a perfect analogy, because of the lack of labour occurring in orbital space, the doctrine of space control is part and parcel of an ongoing process of such primitive accumulation. One of the purposes of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty was to keep outer space a commons where all states, regardless of technical ability or economic or military power, could participate in the potential benefits space has to offer. In the years since this treaty was signed, the primary economic use of space has been for commercial communications satellites. This industry has expanded dramatically in the last two decades. Total revenues for commercial space-related industries in 1980 were 2.1 billion dollars; by 2003 this figure had expanded to $91 billion and it was expected to increase at least as rapidly into the foreseeable future.60 On the economic front, space control is about determining who has access to this new economy. Positions in orbit for satellites are a new form of “real estate,” and by controlling access to outer space the U.S. would be forcibly appropriating the orbits around Earth, thereby placing the U.S. in a position to determine which governments and corporations could use space. In effect, orbital slots around earth would be turned into private property. This process of primitive accumulation is of importance to our concerns in two ways. First, the doctrine of space control represents the extension of U.S. sovereignty into outer space. In addition to being a clear violation of international law, it reinforces the constitutive effect identified in the previous section on missile defense, namely to re-inscribe the “hard shell” borders of the U.S., which are now extended to include the “territory” of outer space. This simultaneously constitutes the exclusive sovereignty of the U.S., while displacing the sovereignty of other states Second, space control bears significantly on the production of political subjectivities. The original Star Trek series would begin with the voice of Captain Kirk describing space as the “final frontier”. While presenting the exploration of space as a largely peaceful enterprise, the TV show was also drawing upon its viewers’ “memories” of the “western frontier” of 19th century U.S. expansion. At least since the writings of Frederick Turner, there has been the notion that the frontier represents the well-spring of U.S. ingenuity, freedom, and creativity. According to Turner, because as they expanded westward settlers in the U.S. had to continually adapt to a new environment, they became increasingly “American”. The theme of the frontier as essential for American identity has had a significant discursive role in U.S. imperialist expansion.61 Although Turner concluded that the American frontier had closed by the late 1890s, he argued that the U.S. could extend it frontier into new countries, such as Latin America. Theodore Roosevelt, influenced by the Turner thesis, concluded that in order to maintain the exceptional American identity new frontiers had to be opened overseas. The notion of frontiers, then, has been integral to the U.S. imperialist project since its outset. The doctrine of space control, seen in this light, is simply an extension of the imperial logic. By expanding into and taking control of the “final frontier” the U.S. is continuing to renew an exceptional—an exclusive—identity by adapting itself to the harsh realities of a new environment. So, the doctrine of space control can be read as extending U.S. sovereignty into orbit. While a clear violation of international law, this de facto expansion of U.S. sovereignty will have two effects. First, it enables a process of primitive accumulation, whereby orbital spaces around earth are removed from the commons initially established by the Outer Space Treaty, and places them under the control of the U.S. for use and perhaps even ownership by businesses sympathetic to U.S. interests. The U.S. becomes even more than it is now the state for global capitalism, the global capitalist state. Second, this doctrine of space control is part of the ongoing re-production of American subjects as “Americans”. Embedded within space control is the notion that space is a new frontier. Following the Turner thesis and Roosevelt’s doctrine of imperialist expansion, there has long been a drive for Americans to seek out new frontiers as a way of renewing the American identity and promoting American values of individuality, innovation, and exceptionalism. Force application from orbital space Force application entails using weapons either based in space or passing through space to attack targets within Earth’s atmosphere. For technical reasons, such weapons systems are still many years off, but substantial research is being conducted, and military strategists and policy analysts are already discussing how these weapons might be used.62 The major advantage of space-based weapons aimed at Earth-based targets is that they can deliver an attack to any point on the Earth in an extremely short period of time, and it is virtually impossible to defend against them. They become the violent parallel to the surveillance panopticon. In order to investigate what the constitutive effects on sovereignty and political subjectivities would be of force application from outer space, we need to look at two aspects of these weapons: what they can do—their technical aspects—and how they would be useful—their tactical aspects.63 Technically, the two types of weapons systems discussed in the previous section—laserenergy and kinetic-energy—would have different uses. Laser weapons are the quickest and most precise, but they also apply the least amount of force. In theory, such weapons would take only seconds to use and could reach any target on earth instantaneously. They are not very destructive, however, and as such would not be very useful against large-scale and/or heavily shielded targets. Conversely, kinetic-energy weapons have the potential to deliver very destructive amounts of force. They would take a few hours to deploy, however. While they could also be designed to attack any point on earth, they are only useful against fixed targets, because of the time they take to deploy. In addition to laser and kinetic-energy systems, conventional weapons, such as bombs and missiles, might also be placed in space. They would occupy a middle ground. It would take approximately ten minutes to launch these weapons from space, and they could attack any targets that earth-based conventional weapons do.64 The tactical advantages of these types of weapons are obvious. Their tremendous range enables space-based weapons to reach targets that other weapons cannot, and because they are based in outer space there are no concerns about violating the airspace of other states in transit. They can also be used on very short notice, in contrast to the days to weeks typically required to deploy earth-based weapons, such as airplanes, ships, or troops. The major drawback of these weapons is their cost. In addition to the very high cost of developing state-of-the-art weaponry, there is also the high cost associated with placing these weapons into orbit.65 As such, they would likely have relatively limited use,66 particularly if other types of military forces can accomplish the same mission for a lower cost. Why, for instance, would the military use a kinetic-energy weapon orbiting in space against a terrestrial target when a similar result could be produced by an Earth-based system, such as a cruise missile or a bomb? The prime advantage of these weapons is their ability to be used on short notice at targets that are out of the reach of conventional weapons. In what kind of military operations, then, would space-based weapons be primarily useful? Military policy analysts have speculated on just such questions of the political utility of these weapons. Alternatively, a space weapon might be the weapon of choice for an otherwise lower-value target if the space weapon were the only choice available in time, particularly for a time critical political effect. For example, a locomotive might not be worth a space-delivered smart munition. However, it might be well worth the use of a space-delivered smart munition to target a locomotive pulling a train full of people forced from their homes for transport to the border or to a concentration camp at the beginning of an ethnic cleansing campaign – particularly if aircraft and helicopters cannot reach the train because air defenses have not been suppressed, basing and overflight rights have not been granted, or coalition consensus on the action has not been reached.67 This scenario is fascinating for the political logic at work within it—space weapons are required to launch an attack at an otherwise inaccessible target. The three reasons that the target might be inaccessible all have to do with potential gaps in imperial power. Either the defenses of the target country have not been suppressed, or other states have not consented to let the forces fly through their airspace, or other coalition members—presumably in NATO or the UN—have not consented to the action. The first “justification” for the use of the weapon involves clear erasure of the sovereignty of the targeted state, as it eliminates any pretense of that country’s defensibility. The second and third “justifications” diminish, by circumvention, the sovereignty of other states. All three buttress the exclusive capacity of the U.S. to act unilaterally in deciding the exception globally. In all three cases, the only practical use for this weapon is in an imperial project! The chief advantage of space weapons is their ability on very short notice to attack a target that is out of reach of conventional forces. What places these targets “out of reach” is the sovereignty of other states as exercised through those states’ abilities to defend their territory, control their airspace, and/or participate (jointly) in authorized decision of the (global) exception. The constitutive effect of these weapons, then, is to strip states of their sovereignty—they are constituted as subjects lacking authorization of decision, and lacking boundary effectively demarcating inside from outside. What modern sovereignty does (as identified in section I. above) is taken from them. Furthermore, given the potential targets that these weapons could destroy, and how they are used, space-based systems are most useful against small groups and individuals. While the purpose of the use of space-based weapons in the above example was to prevent genocide, the means by which this attack was carried out was essentially assassination—the assassination of those driving the vehicle to carry out the ethnic cleansing. Space-based weapons, then, are most useful at targeting individuals and groups on short notice in order to achieve a political objective. We have already seen potential glimpses of this type of warfare in recent years. Consider, for example, that the Iraq War began with a so called “decapitation strike” aimed at assassinating Saddam Hussein in the hope of ending the war before it began. Similar tactics have been used by the Israeli Defense Forces to kill specific leaders of the Palestinians. Also, the U.S. has used Unmanned Aerial Vehicles equipped with missiles to target specific members of Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Placing weapons in space aimed at terrestrial targets would only accelerate the ability to carry out these types of “targeted killings” (a.k.a. assassinations). Space weapons would enable those who control them to kill any person at any point on Earth on extremely short notice. Thus, application of force from outer space would have at least three crucially important constitutive effects. First, it would constitute the possessor of these weapons—presumably the U.S.—as the center of a globally extensive, late-modern empire,68 a sovereign of the globe. But this global sovereign would exercise its power in a new way. Rather than needing to control the land, sea, and airspace of all of the Earth, it could rely on space weapons— because they enable the precise application of force at any point on earth, on short notice— to control the globe. While these weapons are not particularly useful in fighting large-scale wars, or in the conquest of territory, they make such conventional uses of military power moot, in large part. There is no longer a need to exercise sovereign power through the control of territory, all one has to do is kill—or perhaps even threaten to kill—potential adversaries around the world in order to gain one’s wishes. In short, the type of power potentially wielded by such a sovereign would be far more absolute than any encountered throughout history.69 Second, these weapons, just as space-based missile defense was seen above to do, would effectively strip states of their ability to exercise sovereignty over their territories. While de jure sovereignty may remain intact, their de facto sovereignty would be effectively erased. For decades, realist international relations scholars have promoted the idea that states secure their sovereignty through self-help.70 If states lack the capacity to defend themselves from adversaries they are particularly vulnerable to attack and conquest. While other scholars from liberal and constructivist schools of thought have questioned how closely sovereignty is linked to military capability, throughout history states with disproportionate military power have repeatedly violated the sovereignty of weaker states.71 While space-based weapons in and of themselves would not enable conquest of another state, they could be used very effectively to achieve precise political objectives without a credible possibility of retaliation. Imagine what impact these weapons would have on U.S. foreign policy with respect to two of its most pressing objectives at this point in time. Consider, for one, how useful such weapons might be with respect to preventing a rival state such as Iran or North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons. While there has been speculation that the U.S. or Israel may launch air strikes against potential nuclear weapons manufacturing facilities in these countries, the logistics—getting access to airspace from neighboring countries, and the possibility of retaliation against military forces in the area—make such operations difficult to carry out. Using weapons in space to conduct such missions would avoid these logistical difficulties, thereby making them easier (and presumably more likely). The threat of using space weapons on either the manufacturing sites of weapons of mass destruction or on the political leadership of an adversary in most cases probably would be sufficient to alter the behaviour of governments. In short, if the U.S. were to deploy such weapons in space, they would likely be used to much the same effect as the gunboat diplomacy of the 19th century. A second contemporary policy objective is to fight specific non-state actors. The 9/11 Commission Report discussed in great detail the logistical obstacles that prevented the Clinton administration from capturing or killing Osama Bin Laden.72 The primary obstacle was the difficulty in either launching cruise missiles into Afghanistan through another state’s airspace or deploying U.S. Special Forces in an area so remote from U.S. military bases. Again, had the U.S. had space-based weapons at the time, they probably would have been the weapons of choice. When combined with intelligence about the location of a potential target, they could be used to kill that target on very short notice without violating the air space of other states, or needing to have a military base nearby to offer a support role. In effect, any person or group of people anywhere on Earth could be targeted on very short notice, thereby constituting everyone everywhere as objects of the global sovereign. All would be subject to the rule of the U.S. state. The sovereignty of states would no longer be an obstacle to killing enemies, and these assassinations could be carried out rather easily without the threat of retaliation by the state whose sovereignty has been violated. The example of using space weapons to target non-state actors such as Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda points to a third constitutive effect of space weapons. Because these weapons could target anyone, anywhere, at anytime, everyone on the Earth is effectively reduced to “bare life.”73 As Agamben demonstrates in Homo Sacer (1998), one of the constitutive powers of the sovereign is to determine who is outside the laws and protections of the state. While human rights regimes and the rule of law may exist under a late-modern global empire policed by space weapons,74 the global sovereign will have the ability to decide the exception to this rule of law, and this state of exception in many cases may be exercised by the use of space weapons that constituted this sovereign in the first place. Constituting empire of the future Each of the three forms of space weaponization has important constitutive effects on modern sovereignty, and, in turn, productive effects on political subjectivities. Exclusive missile defense constitutes a “hard shell” of sovereignty for one state, while erasing the sovereign political subject status of other states. Space control reinforces that exclusive constitution of sovereignty and its potentiality for fostering unilateral decision. It also constitutes the ‘space-controlling’ state, the U.S., as sovereign for a particular global social order, a global capitalism, and as a state populated by an exceptional people, “Americans.” Space weaponization in the form of capacities for direct force application obliterate the meaning of territorial boundaries for defense and for distinguishing an inside from an outside with respect to the scope of policing and law enforcement—that is authorized locus for deciding the exception. States, other than the exceptional “American” state, are reduced to empty shells of sovereignty, sustained, if at all, by convenient fiction—for example, as useful administrative apparatuses for the governing of locals. And their “citizens” are produced as “bare life” subject to the willingness of the global sovereign to let them live. Together, these three sets of effects constitute what we believe can appropriately be identified as late-modern empire, the political subjects of which are a global sovereign, an exceptional “nation” linked to that sovereign, a global social order normalized in terms of capitalist social relations, and “bare life” for individuals and groups globally to participate in that social order. If our argument is even half correct, the claim with which this paper began—that modes of political killing have important effects—would be an understatement! IV. Coping with Empire of the Future If the logic of space weaponization is to constitute a new, historically unprecedented form of empire, there are significant theoretical and practical implications. By way of conclusion, we take up some of the most important of those implications briefly in this section. Re-theorizing empire Broadly speaking, recent theorizing on imperialism has posited two competing pictures of empire. On the one hand, scholars have put forward a global hegemonic view of empire in which a great power – presumably the United States – through a combination of hard and soft power dominates the international system to such an extant that it becomes the de facto sovereign of a global order.75 On the other hand, theorists such as Hardt and Negri have posited a de-centered version of Empire in which a network of loosely integrated institutions govern the various facets of the lives of subjects to such an extent that all political subjects on the planet are governed under a single, dispersed regime that they have labeled Empire. Our paper rejects both these images of Empire, and uses the site of space weaponization to posit a third version of Empire that is neither the de-centered late modern vision of Hardt and Negri, nor the centralized hegemonic vision of both advocates and opponents of American Imperialism. Imagining resistance Given these grim prospects for a de-territorialized global rule of late-modern empire, are there any possibilities for resistance? Historically, every advance in the weaponry of imperial powers has always been met with an advance in counter hegemonic weaponry. Most recently, insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq have been able to counter the technological superiority of the U.S. forces with very simple yet effective Improvised Explosive Devices. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that space weaponry could be countered through a variety of asymmetrical tactics such as disabling space weapons while in orbit through energy, kinetic or even nuclear anti-satellite attacks, attacking the locations where space weapons are produced or launched, attack the research and development centers (such as universities) that are integral to the production of these systems, organizing strikes for the workers involved in harvesting the raw materials for these systems, and refusing to pay taxes to the political apparatuses that control these systems. While it is difficult to imagine what precise form resistance to these systems might take, it is not unreasonable to conclude that even in a context of space-based empire, some for of political and military resistance will be possible. That being said, just because resistance to space-based empire is a possibility, it by no means follows that such space-based empires are either inevitable or desirable. That is why we believe that resistance to placing weapons in space must begin now. Such resistance could take several forms. In the last 15 years social constructivists have made a convincing case that taboos against the use of chemical weapons, nuclear weapons and land mines have shamed states into abstaining from using these weapons.76 IR scholars should build on this research to focus on creating a taboo against the use and hopefully even the development of space weapons. Second, there is a need to educate the public about the dangerous consequences of placing weapons in space. As of this moment, most information about weapons in space is produced by defense agencies and related think tanks with a vested interest in them. As such, most research largely ignores the dangers of these weapons. An increased awareness of those dangers, not only to those potentially targeted by such weapons but also citizens of countries such as the U.S. that may deploy them, may create public pressure to cut funding to the development programs. If action is not taken now, we believe that the possibilities for resistance to these weapons will decrease dramatically once they are placed in orbit. The state of global domination constituted by such a weapons regime would mean that those who dared to speak out against such a regime might themselves become potential targets of such weapons.