# 1NC – UT r2

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#### Capitalism is a system engendering massive violence and inevitable extinction – the foundational task is to find a way out – the Role of the Ballot is to endorse the best organizational tactics.

Badiou ‘18

[Alain, former chair of philosophy at the Ecole Normale Superiure, professor of philosophy at The European Graduate School. Translated by David Broder. 07/30/2018. “The Neolithic, Capitalism, and Communism,” <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3948-the-neolithic-capitalism-and-communism>] pat

Today, it has become commonplace to predict the end of the human race such as we know it. There are various reasons for such forecasts. According to a messianic kind of environmentalism, the excessive predations of a beastly humanity will soon bring about the end of life on Earth. Meanwhile, those who instead point to runaway technological advances prophesy, indiscriminately, the automation of all work by robots, grand developments in computing, automatically-generated art, plastic-coated killers, and the dangers of a super-human intelligence.

Suddenly, we see the emergence of threatening categories like transhumanism and the post-human — or, their mirror image, a return to our animal state — depending on whether one prophesies on the basis of technological innovation or laments all the attacks on Mother Nature.

For me, all such prophesies are just so much ideological noise, intended to obscure the real peril that humanity is today exposed to: that is to say, the impasse that globalised capitalism is leading us into. In fact, it is this form of society — and it alone — which permits the destructive exploitation of natural resources, precisely because it connects this exploitation to the boundless quest for private profit. The fact that so many species are endangered, that climate change cannot be controlled, that water is becoming like some rare treasure, is all a by-product of the merciless competition among billionaire predators. There is no other reason for the fact that scientific innovation is subject to the question of what technologies can sell, in an anarchic selection mechanism.

Environmentalist preaching does sometimes use persuasive descriptions of what is going on — despite the exaggerations typical of the prophet. But most of the time this becomes mere propaganda, useful for those states who want to show their friendly face. Just as it is for the multinationals who would have us believe — to the greater benefit of their balance sheets — in the noble, fraternal, natural purity of the commodities they are trafficking.

The fetishism of technology, and the unbroken series of "revolutions" in this domain — of which the "digital revolution" is the most in vogue — has constantly spread the beliefs both that this will take us to the paradise of a world without work — with robots to serve us, and us left to idle — and then, on the other hand, that digital "thought" will crush the human intellect. Today there is not one magazine that does not inform its astonished readers of the imminent "victory" of artificial over natural intelligence. But in most cases neither "nature" nor the "artificial" are properly or clearly defined.

Since the origins of philosophy, the question of the real scope of the word "nature" has been constantly posed. "Nature" could mean the romantic reverie of evening sunsets, the atomic materialism of Lucretius (De natura rerum), the inner being of things, Spinoza’s Totality (Deus sive Natura), the objective underside of all culture, rural and peasant surroundings as counterposed to the suspicious artificiality of the towns ("the earth does not lie," as Marshal Pétain put it), biology as distinct from physics, cosmology as compared to the tiny location that is our planet, the invariance of centuries as compared to the frenzy of innovation, natural sexuality as compared to perversion… I am afraid that today "nature" most of all refers to the calm of the villa and the garden, the charm wild animals have for tourists, and the beach or the mountains where we can spend a nice summer. Who, then, can imagine man responsible for nature, when thus far he has just been a thinking flea on a secondary planet in an average solar system at the edge of one banal galaxy?

Since its origins philosophy has also devoted a great deal of thought to Technology, or the Arts. The Greeks meditated on the dialectic of Techne and Physis — a dialectic within which they situated the human animal. They laid the ground for this animal to be seen as "a reed, the weakest of nature, but … a thinking reed." For Pascal, this meant that humanity was stronger than Nature and closer to God. A long time ago, they saw that the animal capable of mathematics would do great things to the order of materiality.

Are these "robots" which they keep banging on about anything more than calculation in the form of a machine? Digits in motion? We know that they can count quicker than us, but it was we who invented them, precisely in order to fulfil this task. It would be stupid to look at a crane raising a concrete pillar up to some great height, use this to argue that man is incapable of the same feat, and then conclude by saying that some muscular, superhuman giant has emerged… Lightning-quick counting is not the sign of an insuperable "intelligence" either. Technological transhumanism plays the same old tune — an inexhaustible theme of horror and sci-fi movies — of the creator overwhelmed by his own creation. It does so either thrilled about the advent of the superman — something we have been expecting ever since Nietzsche — or fearing him and taking refuge under the skirt of Gaia, Mother Nature.

Let’s put things in a bit more perspective.

For four or five millennia, humanity has been organised by the triad of private property — which concentrates enormous wealth in the hands of very narrow oligarchies; the family, in which fortunes are transmitted via inheritance; and the state, which protects both property and the family by armed force. This triad defined our species’ Neolithic age, and we are still at this point — we could even say, now more than ever. Capitalism is the contemporary form of the Neolithic. Its enslavement of technology in the interests of competition, profit and concentrating capital only raises to their fullest extension the monstrous inequalities, the social absurdities, the murderous wars, and the damaging ideologies that have always accompanied the deployment of new technology under the reign of class hierarchy throughout history.

We should be clear that technological inventions were the preliminary conditions of the arrival of the Neolithic age, and by no means its result. If we consider our species’ fate, we see that sedentary agriculture, the domestication of cattle and horses, pottery, bronze, metallic weapons, writing, nationalities, monumental architecture, and the monotheist religions are inventions at least as important as the airplane or the smartphone. Throughout history, whatever has been human has always, by definition, been artificial. If that had not existed, there would not have been Neolithic humanity — the humanity we know — but a permanent close proximity with animal life; something which did indeed exist, in the form of small nomadic groups, for around 200,000 years.

A fearful and obscurantist primitivism has its roots in the fallacious concept of "primitive communism." Today we can see this cult of the ancient societies in which babies, men, women and the elderly supposedly lived in fraternity, without anything artificial, and indeed lived in common with the mice, the frogs, and the bears. Ultimately, all this is nothing but ridiculous reactionary propaganda. For everything suggests that the societies in question were extremely violent. After all, even their most basic survival needs were constantly under threat.

To speak fearfully of the victory of the artificial over the nature, of robot over man, is today an untenable regression, something truly absurd. It is easy enough to answer such fears, such prophesies. For judged by this standard, even a simple axe, or a domesticated horse, not to mention a papyrus covered in symbols, is an exemplary case of the post- or trans-human. Even an abacus allows quicker calculation than the fingers of the human hand.

Today we need neither a return to primitivism, or fear of the "ravages" the advent of technology might bring. Nor is there any use in morbid fascination for the science-fiction of all-conquering robots. The urgent task we face is the methodical search for a way out of the Neolithic order. This latter has lasted for millennia, valuing only competition and hierarchy and tolerating the poverty of billions of human beings. It must be surpassed at all cost. Except, that is, the cost of the high-tech wars so well known to the Neolithic age, in the lineage of the wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, with their tens of millions of dead. And this time it could be a lot more.

The problem is not technology, or nature. The problem is how to organise societies at a global scale. We need to posit that a non-Neolithic way of organising society is possible. This means no private ownership of that which ought to be held in common, namely the production of all the necessities of human life. It means no inherited power or concentration of wealth. No separate state to protect oligarchies. No hierarchical division of labour. No nations, and no closed and hostile identities. A collective organisation of everything that is in the collective interest.

All this has a name, indeed a fine one: communism. Capitalism is but the final phase of the restrictions that the Neolithic form of society has imposed on human life. It is the final stage of the Neolithic. Humanity, that fine animal, must make one last push to break out of a condition in which 5,000 years of inventions served a handful of people. For almost two centuries — since Marx, anyway — we have known that we have to begin the new age. An age of technologies incredible for all of us, of tasks distributed equally among all of us, of the sharing of everything, and education that affirms the genius of all. May this new communism everywhere and on every question stand up against the morbid survival of capitalism. This capitalism, this seeming "modernity," represents a Neolithic world that has in fact been going on for five millennia. And that means that it is old — far too old.

#### History proves an effective right to strike is impossible in liberal capitalist society – courts will water it down and workers will be replaced – but its justification relies on the same tropes of property protection that will be used to delegitimize worker militancy.

White ‘18

[Ahmed, University of Colorado Law School. 2018. “Its Own Dubious Battle: The Impossible Defense of an Effective Right to Strike,” <https://scholar.law.colorado.edu/articles/1261/>] pat

Like every other aspect of Taft-Hartley, the 1947 amendments to the Wagner Act that directly touched on mass picketing and other forms of strike militancy were strongly supported by the business community, including prominent employers and business associations like the National Association of Manufactures, the American Iron and Steel Institute, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Promoted by these groups, witness after witness regaled the Congress with stories of how mass picketing, along with secondary boycotts and other militant tactics, gave unions too much power, eroded the power of owners and their supervisors, and threatened the American way. Time and again, senators and representatives expressed their support for new restrictions on the right to strike as mandates of a common faith, a commitment of the nation itself, to the principles of property and order. “They are a veritable pronouncement of contempt of law and order, private capitalism, and ownership of property, competition, and everything that even smacks of liberty,” said Ohio Representative Frederick Smith, speaking of NLRB positions that seemed to continence an expansive view of the right to strike. “He has been required to employ or reinstate individuals who have assaulted him and his employees and want only to destroy his property,” said New York Representative Ralph Gwinn, in defense of employers supposedly ravaged by such strikes. Under prevailing law, such employers endured “respectable robbery without liability,” Gwinn said.

We in America prize human individual liberty even above the state. We believe that property rights are natural to man. The best protection of those property rights and of that liberty is in the balancing of the rights of our workers and the rights of our businessmen so that the great majority of our citizens will enjoy that private property and that human liberty,

said Representative Charles Kersten of Wisconsin, condemning mass picketing of the sort that had recently featured at the Allis-Chalmers plants in his state. Consider, too, the remarks of Representative John Robsion of Kentucky:

There have been cases in this country where literally thousands of persons have picketed a plant and engaged in violence. In my honest opinion, labor nor management never did help its cause by engaging in lawlessness, violence, and the destruction of the property of others, and under this bill and the law the company cannot mistreat, browbeat and engage in violence and lawlessness against the workers.

Nor was it only conservatives who joined in this, as evidenced by remarks of Utah Senator Elbert Thomas, who had supported the New Deal and the work of the La Follette Committee, on which he had served, and who had joined with Robert La Follette Jr. in 1939 in sponsoring a pro-labor amendment to the Wagner Act. For a worker, he said,

to interpret his right to strike as being an absolute right, entitling him to quit work while the water is turned on in the plant, for leaving in a mine certain equipment in such a way as to result in costly destruction, would obviously be most improper. No person has a right to do such things. No one has a right to act against society. No one has a right to destroy it.

And so it went, the references to the inviolate values of property and order in defense of the legislation much too numerous to exhaustively cite. It is easy to dismiss these contentions, even from moderates like Thomas, as the contrived utterances of people who were singularly committed to advancing their narrow class and political interests. To some extent, they surely were that. But these views were hardly outside the mainstream of American politics, particularly among elites, broad swathes of the middle class, and important elements of the working class. Indeed, they comported very conveniently with commonplace views about the virtues of property and order and resonated with what much of the public believed at the time—this is what made them so resonant. And whether contrived or not, they performed an important function. By invoking the virtues of property and order in this way, these Congressmen and the witnesses before them who favored restricting mass picketing and other forms of coercive protest were conspicuously able to couch this position as something other than a malicious attack on the “legitimate” rights of labor. Instead, theirs was a mission to realign the labor law with fundamental American values, to save it from those who had allowed labor policies and the habits of union to stray beyond this field. In this way they were able to deflect, if not disprove, the all-too-apt contention by the legislation’s opponents, repeated many times in the process, that what Taft-Hartley was really about was elevating property rights over human rights.

Added proof that strike militancy was actually indefensible can be found in the fact that no scholars would justify it, not even mass picketing—at least not beyond the point at which it became coercive, which was of course the very point at which it was employed in an effective way. In the wake of the Memorial Day Massacre, most all the major papers sided with the police, declaring the strikers enemies of public order who brought the violence upon themselves. Initially, this stance was premised on distorted readings of the events of that day that charged the strikers with various acts of provocation. But even when the La Follette Committee publicized a Paramount Pictures newsreel (which the company had suppressed) and unearthed other evidence that proved that most all of the blame for what happened that day rested on the police, most of the papers still adhered to this reading of the events.

This attitude toward mass picketing was a centerpiece of revived interest in the right to strike in the major papers, one that extended from the mid 1930s into the 1940s and exceeded the surge in interest of the late 1910s and early 1920s. In 1941, for instance, the New York Herald Tribune described pending legislative attempts to limit mass picketing as “too thoroughly justified to require argument.” In 1946 the New York Times summoned up the rhetoric used to condemn the sitdown trikes and declared mass picketing a “seizure” that was “by its very nature illegal because it infringes both individual and property rights.” Conservative though he was, newspaperman David Lawrence, founder of U.S. News and World Report, spoke for many when he declared mass picketing an act of “violence” by which unionists were seeking to take the law into their own hands. In fact, Lawrence’s judgement that mass picketing was an affront to civil liberties aligned with that of the American Civil Liberties Union, long a champion of labor rights, which, as the New York Times was keen to note, also condemned the tactic in these terms.

Such views fit with a broader tendency to criticize the right to strike as being too aggressively employed by unionists and too generously construed by the courts and the NLRB. In the decade between the validation of the Wagner and the passage of Taft-Hartley, newspapers gave voice to a criticism of mass picketing and other erstwhile excessive forms of strike behavior, one that typically described the Wagner Act as having gone too far in protecting workers’ prerogatives to protest. A typical example of the content and tenor of these pieces is a 1941 editorial in the Chicago Daily Tribune:

“The right to strike” is now used frequently to mean the right of union leaders to force men who don’t want to strike to do so. It is used to justify the seizure of industries and the blockading of factories by mass picketing to prevent the entrance of workers who are satisfied with their working conditions and the movement of goods in and out of the plants. “The right to strike” in this sense means not only that every strike is right but that every measure which may be adopted to win a strike is right.

In fact, at this crucial moment it was common for elites of all stripes to claim that they supported the right to strike and yet to assert that it was being abused by unionists who insisted on winning every labor dispute and using coercive and disorderly methods to do so. In 1946, Hebert Hoover, who might well have denied just such a thing fifteen years earlier, inveighed that “Nobody denies that there is a ‘right’ to strike”; but that right, he said, had been abused to the detriment of the public interest. Although considerably more liberal than Hoover, Walter Lippmann, the extremely popular political commentator, offered a similar judgement about a railroad strike that same year, concluding “we must henceforth refuse to regard the right to strike as universal and absolute, and as one of the inalienable rights of man.” Also writing in 1946, Henry Ford II, whose father had used a small army of thugs and toughs to enforce the open shop at his plants and bitterly fought unionization until 1941, now purported at once to support the right to strike—and to believe that it should be limited. “There is no longer any question of the right of organized workers to strike, but that right,” he said, “is being misused.”

Like Taft-Hartley’s supporters in Congress, figures like Hoover, Lippmann, and Ford did not trouble themselves to confess that such tactics as they so blithely condemned might actually be necessary to counterbalance the power of employers and give life and meaning to a statute that did not take adequate account of this basic reality, let alone that they were essential in establishing the idea that workers enjoyed any enforceable right to strike. But they did not have to, either; for they honestly did not believe that labor should generally prevail. Liberal or conservative, it did not matter; these were capitalists in a capitalist society, contented, consistent with their values, with a right to strike that went little further than a right to withhold one’s labor. To be sure, these were not the views of ordinary people. But the public’s perspective did not seem to vary all that much from those of elites. Although overall approval of union membership as measured in Gallup surveys slipped noticeably after 1937, it remained quite high—well above fifty percent right through the 1940s. Nevertheless, Gallup surveys taken in June 1937, after the big wave of sit-strikes had waned noticeably, but while mass picketing and overall levels of labor militancy remained high, revealed that fifty-seven percent supported the proposition that the militia should “be called out whenever strike trouble threatens.”

As with the sit-down strikes, too, the status of mass picketing and other forms of strike militancy can also be gauged by the way these tactics were defended. During the hearings on Taft-Hartley, only a few labor leaders stood against the torrent of criticism of these practices by businessmen, conservative unionists, and congressmen and senators, and tried to parry the move to prohibit the strikes. With only a couple of exceptions, most of them consistently qualified their defense of these tactics by downplaying their coercive qualities—again the very thing that made them so effective in the first place—while also describing them as expedients, presumably temporary, that were justified by the unreasonable stances of some employers.

While the political motivations and implications of this campaign against these forms of strike militancy might be as dubious as the attacks on the sit-down strikes, their value in expressing dominant political judgments concerning these tactics is not. Repeatedly, it was taken for granted that workers could not be allowed to excessively coerce their fellow workers, that they should be obliged to adhere to their contractual obligations, that they did not own the streets or the workplace, and that whatever the right to strike was, it was surely, as Brandeis had insisted, not an absolute right. Of course, all of this was controversial for many unionists. But unionists were almost the only ones to really push back against these measures. Even President Harry Truman’s dramatic veto of Taft-Hartley is widely regarded as a political move taken with the expectation that Congress would override the veto anyway. It is also notable that despite dedicating itself to this aim, the labor movement has never come close to repealing the Taft-Hartley Act, or even securing the enactment of favorable amendments to any of its provisions.

And then there is the replacement worker doctrine where, if anything, the change in the law even more clearly reflected the depth and power of liberal norms. For the rule established in Mackay Radio came out of the blue. It was set forth in a case which required no such question to be resolved, in a manner that drew no support from the text of the Wagner Act, and on the basis of legislative history that was ambiguous at best. Worse, as Getman points out, the rule is in direct conflict with the very statutory principle of barring discrimination on the basis of a worker’s assertion of the basic labor rights laid out in § 7 that it was, itself, supposedly derived from.

As an exercise in statutory construction and administration, Mackay Radio makes no sense; but as a defense of property rights it makes all the sense in the world. One way to see this is to consider what would have happened had the Court decided the matter in a fundamentally different way. If employers were barred from replacing economic strikers, it seems likely that strikes would have proliferated to an extraordinary extent, as workers could at least plausibly have expected to be able to strike under a broad array of circumstances and yet be restored to their jobs no matter the outcome. But precisely because such a doctrine would have given workers so much power, Congress would almost certainly have stepped in with its own rule, codifying employers’ right to permanently replace striking workers and bringing this to an end. Ultimately, it is difficult to imagine a much more liberal alternative to the Mackay Radio rule surviving for very long—a point that also draws support from labor’s failure to repeal the rule in Congress in the early 1990s.

A simple exercise in counterfactual speculation bears similar fruit in regard to other, more basic, limitations on the right to strike, including those imposed relative to sit-down strikes, mass picketing, and secondary boycotts. Shrill and self-interested though it was, all the testimony from employers and their allies during the hearings on Taft-Hartley or Landrum-Griffin about the perils posed by these tactics, was fundamentally correct. For were workers able to make unfettered use of sit-down strikes, mass picketing, and general strikes and sympathy walkouts, they could have very much challenged the sovereignty of capitalists in and about the workplace, and with this the bedrock institutions and norms of liberal society. As Jim Pope puts it, Charles Evans Hughes’ opinion in Fansteel established the maxim that “the employer could violate the workers’ statutory rights without sacrificing its property rights, while the workers could not violate the employer’s property rights without sacrificing their statutory rights.” This is unquestionably true. But equally unquestionable is that neither this court nor any other important arbiter of legal rights in this country was ever prepared to endorse the contrary view that property rights might be sufficiently subordinate to labor rights as to justify the kinds of tactics by which workers could routinely defeat powerful employers on the fields of industrial conflict.

Significantly, there is no reason to believe that any of this has changed or is poised to change today. Quite the contrary: In a culture and political system more immersed than ever in the veneration of order and control, mediated by criminal law and police work, by the celebration of property rights, and by a readiness to punish violence, it is all but unthinkable that the courts or the NLRB would deign to give legal sanction to workers to engage in any sustained way in the kinds of tactics that might make going on strike a worthwhile thing to do.

#### Vote neg to join the party – dual power organizing is the only path to revolutionary change.

Escalante ‘18

[Alyson, philosophy at U of Oregon. 08/24/2018. “Against Electoralism, For Dual Power!” <https://theforgenews.org/2018/08/24/against-electoralism-for-dual-power/>] pat

I am sure that at this point, the opportunists reading this have already begun to type out their typical objection: the world is different than it was in 1917, and the conditions of the United States in no way echo the conditions which enabled the Bolsheviks to achieve revolutionary success.

To this tried and true objection, there is one simple answer: you are entirely correct, and that is why we need to abandon electoralism and working within the bourgeois state.

What were the conditions which allowed the Bolsheviks to successfully revolt? The conditions were that of Dual Power. Alongside the capitalist state, there existed a whole set of institutions and councils which met the needs of the workers. The soviets, a parallel socialist government made up of individual councils, successfully took over many governmental responsibilities in some parts of Petrograd. In the radical Viborg district, the Bolshevik controlled soviets provided government services like mail, alongside programs that could meet the needs of workers. When a far right coup was attempted against the provisional government, it was troops loyal to the Bolshevik factions within the soviet who repelled the coup plotters, proving concretely to the workers of Petrograd that the socialists could not only provide for their needs, but also for their defense.

In short: the Bolsheviks recognized that instead of integrating into the bourgeois state, they could operate outside of it to build dual power. They could establish programs of elected representatives who would serve the workers. They would not bolster the capitalist state in the name of socialism, they would offer an alternative to it.

And so, when the time came for revolt, the masses were already to loyal to the Bolsheviks. The only party who had never compromised, who had denounced the unpopular imperialist wars, who had rejected the provisional government entirely, was the party who successfully gained the support of the workers.

And so, many of us on the more radical fringes of the socialist movement wonder why it is the the DSA and other socialist opportunists seem to think that we can win by bolstering the capitalist state? We wonder, given this powerful historical precedent, why they devote their energy to getting more Ocasios elected; what good does one more left democrat who will abandon the workers do for us?

The answer we receive in return is always the same: we want to win small changes that will make life for the workers easier; we want to protect food stamps and healthcare.

And do this, we reply: what makes you think reformism is the only way to do this. When the bourgeois state in California was happy to let black children go to school unfed, the Black Panthers didn’t rally around democratic candidates, they became militant and fed the children themselves. In the 40s and 50s, socialists in New York saw people going without healthcare and instead of rallying behind democratic candidates, they built the IWO to provide healthcare directly. Both these groups took up our pressing revolutionary task: building dual power.

Imagine if all those hours the DSA poured into electing Ocasio were instead used to feed the people of New York, to provide them with medical care, to ensure their needs were met. Imagine the masses seeing socialism not as a pipe dream we might achieve through electing more imperialists, but as a concrete movement which is currently meeting their needs?

The fact is, we are not nearly ready for revolution. Socialists in the United States have failed to meet the needs of the people, and as long as their only concrete interaction with the masses is handing them a voter registration form, they will continue to fail the people. Our task now is not to elect representatives to advocate for the people; it is much more gruelingly laborious than that. Our task is to serve the people. Our task is to build dual power.

The movement to do this is underway. Members of the DSA refoundation caucus have begun to move the left of the DSA in this direct, socialist groups like Philly Socialists have begun to build dual power through GED programs and tenants unions, many branches of the Party For Socialism and Liberation have begun to feed the people and provide for their concrete needs, and Red Guard collectives in Los Angeles have built serve the people programs and taken on a stance of militant resistance to gentrification. The movement is growing, its time is coming, and dual power is achievable within our life time.

The opportunists are, in a sense, correct. We are not where we were in 1917, but we can begin to move in that direction and dual power can take us there. In order to achieve dual power we have to recognize that Lenin was right: there will be no socialist gains by working within state institutions designed to crush socialism. Furthermore, we must recognize that the strategies of the electoral opportunists trade off with dual power. Electing candidates drains resources, time, and energy away from actually serving the people.

And so, we should commit to undertake the difficult and dangerous task of building dual power. We must reject opportunism, we must name the democratic party as our enemy, we must rally around power directly in the hands of the socialist movement. We do not have a parallel system of soviets in the United States. We can change that. Someday the cry “all power to the soviets” will be heard again. Lets make it happen.

## 1NC -- Inequality

#### Growth causes extinction and tech can’t solve – the laws of thermodynamics prove

\*1st law of thermodynamics = limited energy, 2nd law of thermodynamics = energy becomes high entropy + low quality *irrevocably*. Growth requires continual energy, so we’ll run out.

\*example: when we burn coal, 35% becomes useful energy and the rest is released as heat we can’t bet back. Plus, we turn the useful 35% into useless energy after we use it.

\*impacts: climate change, biod, nitrogen, phosphorus, ozone, ocean acidification, global freshwater chemical pollution

**Ghebremichael 16**. (Asghedom Ghebremichael – Research Economist, The Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Natural Resources, Government of Canada. “Frontiers of the Biosphere Inhibit Perpetual Economic Growth: Exploring Pathways to Genuine Sustainable Development,” Journal of Environmental and Social Sciences. Volume 3, Issue 2. DOA: 1/22/19. <http://www.opensciencepublications.com/wp-content/uploads/ESS-2454-5953-3-125.pdf>) Thanks Trinity!

The biosphere is a self-regulating natural system of the global ecosystems. It embodies all living beings and their relationships among themselves and with the elements of the other three major spheres: lithosphere (rocky), geosphere (geologic), hydrosphere (water), and atmosphere (a layer of gases of nitrogen 78.09%, oxygen 20.95%, argon 0.93%, and 0.039% CO2) [1]. Dynamically created and sustained through exchanges, transfers, and connections of energy, materials, and information, the biosphere is a life-sustaining system of the Earth. Through the collective metabolic activities of its innumerable plants, animals, and microbes physically and chemically, the biosphere unites the atmosphere, geosphere, and hydrosphere into one environmental system within which millions of species, including humans, have thrived. Breathable air, potable water, fertile soils, productive lands, bountiful seas, the healthful climate of Earth’s recent history, and other ecosystem services are manifestations of the workings of a healthy biosphere. The biosphere embodies natural technology for which there is no substitute and on which human survival depends. Health, integrity,and sustainability of the biosphere and its ecosystems cannot be takenfor granted. “The awe and wonder it generates continues to inspireevery human being that takes the time to behold and ponder it; it is agreat gift-a gift given and yet not owned by all who receive it. This gift is also a giver of gifts; it gives life through a myriad of provisions” [2]. Nature has its own set of rules, solidly grounded in laws of physics and chemistry, and emergent principles of geology and biology, which are not artificial constructs. The natural rules are real, and they govern human well-being. Earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, famines, civil conflicts, wildfires, poverty, and disease epidemics demonstrate dramatically that our planet Earth is at risk. Moreover, the outbreak of novel diseases, such as Ebola and AIDS, in socially, economically, and ecologically impoverished regions is a clear signal of the global predicaments of inequality and poverty. These natural and anthropogenic disasters are clear indicators of ecological overshoot, meaning anthropogenic disturbances beyond the carrying capacity of ecosystems that lead to ecological crash, causing an eventual die-off, hence environmental disasters [3]. The frequency, scale, and adverse effects of these challenges must be of great concern to humanity. “Human alteration of the Earth was substantial and growing, transforming between one-third and one-half of the global land surface; CO2 concentration in the atmosphere increased by nearly 30% since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution; more atmospheric nitrogen was fixed by humanity than by all natural terrestrial sources combined; humanity consumed more than half of all accessible surface-freshwater; and about one-quarter of the birdspecies on Earth were driven to extinction” [4]. The UN’s Millennium Ecosystem Assessment [5], a global landmark study, which involved more than 1,360 scientists, technical experts, and policy makers from around the globe, summarized its findings as follows (paraphrased): (i) although living standards of “the few” have improved over the past two centuries, human activity is putting such strain on nature, undermining the Earth’s capacity to support current and future generations; (ii) we are living beyond our means: the current gains in enhanced quality of life have come at a considerable cost to health and integrity of ecosystems on which human well-being depends; (iii) if we act now, we can avoid irreversible damage to ecosystems and to our well-being; and (iv) we can no longer treat Nature’s bounty as free and limitless. The information summarized in table i (Ecological Foundations section below) makes it all clear that human well-being depends on the life sustaining multiple services of ecosystems. Furthermore, a team of renowned scientists from N. America, Europe, Australia and the Scandinavian countries identified the following nine ecological thresholds, which define “the safe operating space for humanity”: (i) climate change, (ii) rate of terrestrial and marine biodiversity loss, (iii) human interference with the natural cycles of nitrogen and phosphorus, (iv) stratospheric ozone depletion, (v) ocean acidification, (vi) global freshwater consumption rate, (vii) land-use-change, (viii) chemical pollution, and (ix) atmospheric aerosol loading. The team concluded that humanity was approaching to the boundaries for freshwater consumption, land-use-change, ocean acidification, and interference with the global phosphorus cycle, while the boundaries for climate change, biodiversity loss, and interference with the nitrogen cycle have already been transgressed [6]. An urgent call for an anthropogenic balancing act not to transgress ecological thresholds is in order. Halting short-sighted excessive anthropocentric activities that lead to overexploitation of natural resources is imperative. The naturally imposed limiting frontiers, the ecological thresholds, must be respected and protected. Rooted in the doctrine of laissez-faire, neoliberalism promotes Perpetual Economic Growth (PEG), which means unfettered expansion of an economy’s productive capacity realized through enabling institutional arrangements. But, PEG is inherently not compatible with ecological integrity, environmental quality, andGenuine Sustainable Development (GSD). Drawing on the findings , conclusions, and recommendations of Rockström’s team [6], I define GSD as a dynamic process by which human well-being is improved in an inclusive, a just, and an environmentally safe operating space, achieved through inventions, innovations, diffusion, and adoption of appropriate technologies as well as learning-by-doing. GSD is in a stark contrast with the highly publicized andpoliticized concept of sustainable development (SD) of the UN’sBrundtland Commission, which is also known as World Commissionon Environment and Development (WCED) (1987) [7]. The highly generalized and vague definition of SD is: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present withoutcompromising the ability of future generations to meet their ownneeds. It contains within it two key concepts: (1) the concept of“needs”, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overwhelming priority should be given; and (2) the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs”. Our Common Future, p.143. Given all its good intentions, the WECD failed to explain theconsequences of PEG strongly. Unfortunately, SD’s exact definitioncontinues to be globally politicized and linked always to strategicpolicy goals and objectives one would like to talk about. SD doesnot give any specific guidelines pertinent to alleviation of thehuman predicaments associated with inequality, poverty, perverselyglobalized markets, destruction of the health and integrity ofecosystems, and climate change. Research questions, goal, and organization of the paper What are the theoretical and practical foundations of the PEGdoctrine? Are PEG and GSD compatible? Addressing these questionshas become a persistent challenge to both social and naturalscientists. The overarching goal of this article is to demonstrate theincompatibility of PEG with GSD. Rooted in neoclassical microeconomic theory, neoliberalismadvocates for PEG, which is unfettered expansion of an economy’s productive capacity in the finite, materially closed (except theconstant inflow of solar energy), and non-growing biosphere [8]. For this doctrine to be realized, neoliberal economists prescribe globalized perfectly competitive markets, where multinational corporations play the dominant economic games against all policies and strategic practices of GSD. Let me be clear at the outset. As a trained economist, who wentthrough the grueling processes of acquiring a PhD, I understand the importance of all the fundamentals of microeconomic and macroeconomic theories. My argument is against the misuse and, in some case, abuse of these scientific theories to promote personal ideological perceptions. I am motivated to add my “voice” to those voices of many preeminent scholars, whose extensively published works inspired me to learn more on the adverse effects of neoliberalism on ecological integrity and human well-being [6,8-12]. The paper is organized into six sections: this introduction,ecological foundations for GSD, the fallacies of the PEG doctrine, anthropogenic effects on ecological integrity, selected pathways to GSD, and concluding remarks and policy recommendations, in that order. Ecological Foundations of Genuine Sustainable Development In this section, I summarize the ecological foundations of GSD,using taxonomy of the following key scientific terms: ecologicalprinciples of holism, biodiversity loss, sustainability, resilience,ecological integrity, biogeochemical processes, carrying capacity, andovershoot. Principles of holism Ecological principles of holism mean that everything is interconnected with everything. This can be summarized by the dictum: “A whole is more than the sum of its parts or members”.The totality of the whole of any living system-biological, social, oreconomic-is not fully embodied in its individual parts or members.Wholes have properties that are not present in any of their separateparts; they emerge only when the parts are combined together, forming mutually reinforcing synergistic nexus, in a coherent whole; and the specific properties of individual parts disappear when they are part of the whole. Thus, relationships among the parts of wholes matter; whenrelationships change, the whole is changed. For example, water, air,and soil are polluted with chemical and biological waste, because wehumans fail to appreciate the importance of their holistic relationshipwith Nature and thereby with our well-being. Respiratory problems,cancer, food poisoning, and general poor health as well as the cost ofhealthcare are some of the consequences of ignoring the imperativesof holism. Government policies that influence agriculture, forestry, mining,manufacturing, labor relations, capital investments, employment,economic growth, all have direct and indirect impacts on the naturalenvironment-locally, nationally, and globally. We have no way ofknowing how large or small our individual or collective adverseeffects may be, but understanding the ecological principles of holismis necessary condition to preserve ecological integrity and fosterhuman well-being. Consequences of biodiversity loss Biodiversity (i.e., biological diversity) is the number, variety andvariability of genes, populations, species, communities, ecosystems,and ecological processes. Biodiversity underpins the multiple services of ecosystems that sustain human well-being; is the foundation of resilience of life on Earth; and an integral part of the fabric of all the worlds cultures. It is a common knowledge of the science of ecology that no feature of Earth is more complex, dynamic, and varied than the layer of organisms that occupy its surfaces and its seas; and no feature is experiencing more dramatic changes at the hands ofhumans than this extraordinary, singularly unique and beautifulfeature of the Earth, biodiversity. Critical ecological processes (i.e.,ecosystem functions) that depend on prevailing scale of biodiversity at the ecosystem level influence plant productivity, soil fertility, water quality, atmospheric chemistry, and many other local and global environmental conditions that ultimately affect human welfare. Substantial changes have already occurred, especially local andglobal losses of biodiversity. The primary cause has been widespreadhuman transformation of once highly diverse natural ecosystems intorelatively species-poor managed ecosystems. Recent studies suggest that such reductions in biodiversity can alter both the magnitude and the stability of ecosystem processes, especially when biodiversity is reduced to the low levels typical of many managed natural systems. We humans ought to remind ourselves that barren deserts are capable of supporting very little life (if any), because they lack biological diversity. Ecosystems that completely lack diversity have no high quality, low entropy, energy left to support life. Diversity enables living systems to adapt and evolve to accommodate their ever-changing natural environment. Even if wedo not understand fully the specific nature of a threat, it should beclear that loss of biodiversity represents a growing threat to the future of human life on Earth. There is no way of knowing how many more species can be lost before the ecological balance is tipped toward extinction of all species. Sustainability What does this revered-modern term, sustainability, mean?It means the capacity to endure natural and/or human-inducedadversities and remain in existence. Ecologically, it is how biologicalsystems remain diverse and productive in perpetuity. Long-lived andhealthy wetlands and forest ecosystems are examples of sustainablebiological systems. In more general terms, sustainability is theendurance of systems and processes. For the purpose of this paper, the unifying concept I have chosenfor the science of sustainability is GSD. It is a process by which humanwell-being is improved in an inclusive, a just, and an environmentallysafe operating space, achieved through inventions, innovations,diffusion, and adoption of appropriate technologies as well as learningby-doing. In other words, GSD integrates five domains: social,ecological, economic, environmental, and institutional. However,despite its importance, the possibilities that human societies willachieve GSD is getting harder and harder with time, because ofenvironmental degradation, climate change, overproduction,overconsumption, rapid growth of the human population, and thepursuit multinational corporations for PEG at any cost, through full support of neoliberalism’s institutions that create a globalized-freemarket economy. Thus, it is imperative to direct orientation of human behaviortoward planetary endurance and sustainability over time. Thisbehavioral orientation provokes reflection on the manner andpurposes of global human society. Problems like biodiversity loss andclimate change point to the global reach of humanity’s powers and thescale of its risk. Mitigating their impact and risk require reform acrossmany human systems-financial, political, production, consumption,energy, transportation, and even communication and education.Yet those reforms could complicate other goals of the internationalcommunity, such as overcoming extreme poverty and protectinghuman rights. How can these overlapping interests be prioritized?At local and global levels, sustainability directs practical attention tothe complex mutuality of human and ecological systems. Economichealth, ecological integrity, social justice, and responsibility to thefuture must be integrated to address multiple global problems withina coherent, durable, and moral social vision. That inclusive scope andprospective vision makes sustainability ideologically absorptive andsocially and politically viable. Resilience and resistance An ecosystem’s resilience refers to its ability to recover fromdisturbances (e.g., wildfires, diseases, insect infestations, climaticextremes, overgrazing, and overexploitation of natural resources)that exceed its resistance capacity. Resistance is the capacity ofan ecosystem to tolerate and mitigate disturbances. Linked tosustainability, resilience in ecology is the capacity of an ecosystem toabsorb disturbance and still retain its basic structure, functions, andviability. Resilience-thinking evolved from the need to manage interactionsbetween human-constructed systems and natural ecosystems in asustainable way, despite the fact that the definition remains elusiveto policymakers. Resilience-thinking addresses how much planetaryecological systems can withstand assault from human disturbancesand still deliver the services current and future generations needfrom them. It is also concerned with commitment from geopoliticalpolicymakers to promote and manage essential planetary ecologicalresources in order to promote resilience and achieve sustainabilityof these essential resources. Resiliency of an ecosystem, and thereby,its sustainability, can be reasonably measured at junctures or eventswhere the combination of naturally occurring regenerative forces(solar energy, water, soil, atmosphere, vegetation, and biomass)interact with the energy released into the ecosystem from disturbances. Integrity An ecosystem is an assemblage of organisms (biotic) interactingamong themselves and the physical environment (abiotic), includingair, light, soils, heat, and water, at a specific location. Ecologicalintegrity encompasses attributes of a healthy ecosystem, which include:abundance of biodiversity, resistance and resilience, sustainability,naturalness, wilderness, beauty, wholeness, and natural-maximumcarrying capacity. Integrity of an ecosystem is manifested throughits self-sustaining intact natural processes; it evolves naturally; itscapacity for self-renewal is maintained; the biodiversity is ensured;and is free of human and natural disturbances. Using these and other attributes, ecologists develop indexes that capture current conditionof a given ecosystem. Biogeochemical processes in ecosystems Biogeochemical processes in ecosystems are referred to ecosystemfunctions. These are ecological processes that control the fluxesof solar energy, nutrients, water, and organic matter throughoutof a given natural environment. Examples include: (a) primaryproduction, the process by which plants use solar energy to convertmatter into new biological tissues through photosynthetic chemicalreactions; (b) nutrient cycling, the process by which biologicallyessential nutrients are captured, used, released, and then recaptured;and (c) decomposition, the process by which organic waste, such asdead plants and animals, is broken-down, assimilated, and recycled. These functions are controlled by both the diversity and identity of the plant, animal, and microbial species living within a given community of living things. Human modifications to the living community in an ecosystem as well as to the collective biodiversity of the Earth can, therefore, alter ecological functions and sustainable supply of the life sustaining multiple services of ecosystems [table i]. Life sustaining multiple services of ecosystems What are ecosystem services? They are fluxes of services and thestocks that they (the fluxes) produce for all living things to enjoy andsurvive [table i]. Sustainable supply of these life sustaining services is a function of ecological integrity. The lack of a universally accepted single definition implies diversity of the services, ecological complexity, and degree of their importance for humanity. Development of human societies has been a story of changing the natural systems of planet Earth to sustain ever more sophisticated and excessively comfortable ways of living. “Human activities have taken the planet to the edge of a massive wave of species extinction, further threatening our own well-being” [5]. Carrying capacity and overshoot Ecologists define ecological carrying capacity as the maximumpopulation of a given species that a particular ecosystem can supportin perpetuity [13]. For the purposes of this article, the concept of carrying capacity is defined as the maximum level of human population size and its anthropogenic activities that a particular ecosystem can sustain under existing technologies, institutional configurations, demographic structure, and governance system. Overshoot, in contrast, is a condition where human population size and its anthropogenic activities have exceeded the carrying capacityof a given ecosystem [3]. In this situation, the ecosystem does not have the capacity to regenerate life-sustaining services or to absorb, detoxify, or neutralize wastes of economic growth. The theoretical and practical perspectives of ecological carrying capacity are elaborated in the fourth section, diagrammatically and mathematically, after the next section on the fallacies of the PEG doctrine. Fallacies of the Neoliberal Doctrine of Perpetual EconomicGrowth The previous sections have established the ecological foundationsfor GSD on which more elaborations will follow this section. Incompatibilities of the Perpetual Economic Growth (PEG) doctrinewith health and integrity of the biosphere and with the conditionsnecessary for GSD are explored here. The following features ofneoclassical microeconomic theory, the mother of neoliberalism, areelaborated: (a) the economy as an open subsystem of the biosphere,(b) the limitations of the competitive general equilibrium modelof microeconomic theory, (c) the causes and consequences of thefunctional failures of the competitive market structure, (d) theunrealistic nature of the assumed conditions where the neoclassicaleconomic model of laissez-faire market economy is expected to work,and (e) the wrong metrics of human well-being. The economy as an open subsystem of the biosphere To argue for PEG, neoliberal economists invoke the theoreticalfundamentals of neoclassical macroeconomic models. That is, PEG promotes growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through an unfettered expansion of an economy’s productive capacity within the biosphere, which is finite, non-growing, materially closed (except for the constant input of solar energy), and constrained by the laws of thermodynamics [Figure 1]. Note that a closed system is one in which matter neither enters nor exits, but energy enters as low entropy (high quality) and exits as high entropy (low quality). It is this throughput of energy that powers the material biogeochemical cycles on which life depends [8,9]. Figure 1: An open economic subsystem in the biosphere. An economy is a socially constructed and legally and politicallymediated an open subsystem within the biosphere [Figure i]. To be sustainable, it must be designed, organized, and function as a societal living system in accordance with the ecological and social paradigm of interconnectedness of living organisms. Sustainability of life on Earth depends on the inflow of solar energy; and only living organisms are capable of capturing, organizing, concentrating, and storing solar energy in diverse forms necessary to support life on Earth. Low entropy (high quality) solar energy and materials, along with generated energy and human capitaland information embedded in machinery, equipment, and information and communication technologies, flow from the biosphere through the open economic subsystem [Figure 1]. Subsequent to all socioeconomic activities, high entropy, i.e., degraded and dissipating energy and waste material that pollute the natural environment flow back to the biosphere. It might be possible to minimize the magnitude of pollution, if effective policy for recovering, reusing, and recycling (3Rs) is implemented. But, as the Second Law of Thermodynamics (aka Entropy Law) teaches us, most of the degraded material and energy dissipates as waste during the economic processes irrevocably [8]. Observe Figure 1 The sustainable level of energy throughput is a function of the biosphere to sequester low entropy (useful) solar energy and the capacity of the natural environment to absorb, detoxify, or neutralize wastes. Unsustainable economic growth, the PEG, can be compared to growth of a malignant cancer, becauseit devours its own support system, the Earth’s ecosystem services[Table 1]. Like an animal does, the economy lives on devouring all low entropy (useful energy contents) natural capital assets, such as fish, timber, arable land, water, metals and minerals, and fossil fuels, given back waste materials. This outcome, of course, diminishes the productive, regenerative, absorptive, decompositive, and assimilative capacities of the biosphere. Many fear that unless overexploitation of natural resources is checked, modern civilization will follow the path of ancient civilizations that collapsed because they overexploited their natural resources [3,9]. A bit more elaboration on the physics of the First and the Secondlaws of thermodynamics is warranted. According to the First Lawof Thermodynamics, also referred to as the Law of Energy/MaterialConservation, material inputs to economic processes are not“consumed”, because they return as wastes to the natural environmentfrom where they were extracted. This means that, during a physical orchemical change, energy is neither created nor destroyed, althoughit may change from one form to another; and it may move from oneplace to another. When one form of energy is converted to anotherform in any physical or chemical change process, energy input equalsenergy output- we cannot get something for nothing is the dictum. By contrast, the Second Law of Thermodynamics states that with each change in a form of energy some energy is degraded to a less useful form and given off to the surroundings, usually as low quality heat. That is, in the process of performing work, low entropy energy is converted into high entropy, which is waste energy characterized by dispersed, dissipated, and molecularly chaotic state. This is an index of irrevocably dissipated energy [9]. Economic implications of the Second Law, however, are far subtleand are very important. Economic processes utilize low entropy energy and raw materials (e.g., fossil fuels and high grade metal ores)and discard high entropy wastes. This process imposes constraints on economic growth. That is, anthropocentric economic processes transform valuable (low entropy) matter and energy into irrevocable waste. For example, when coal is burned to generate electricity, only about 35% of the total energy embedded in the coal is converted into electrical energy, the rest becoming waste heat, various gases (e.g.,CO2), various chemicals, such as sulfuric acid, particulates, and ash;and even the electricity dissipates into the natural environment aswaste heat once it has done its job [14]. The physicist may argue that the “books are balanced” - there is just as much matter and energy in the overall system as before in accordance with the First Law of Thermodynamics. But, the Second Law refutes The First: whatever remains is very significantly lower in quality. The upshot is that for every unit of good product that a human being creates, using agiven technology, ~~he~~ [they] manufactures two units of bad product – and even usefulness of the good product is ephemeral [14]. In short, the idea that technology will allow us to do ever more with ever less in perpetuity is a delusion.

#### The transition solves – it makes it impossible to restart the growth economy

**Holmgren 13**. (David Holmgren – ecological educator and writer, studied ecology and agriculture @ Tasmanian College of Advanced Education's Department of Environmental Design, awarded an Honorary Doctorate from CQUniversity, inventor of the Permaculture system for regenerative agriculture, inducted into the Green Lifestyle Awards Hall of Fame for his pioneering and ongoing work with permaculture. <KEN> “Crash on Demand: Welcome to the Brown Tech Future,” Simplicity Institute Report 13c, 2013. DOA: 4/3/19. <http://simplicityinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/CrashOnDemandSimplicityInstitute13c.pdf>)

The evidence that the global financial system is a not-so-slow moving train crash is getting stronger. That investors and the billion or so middle class people who have any savings and discretionary expenditure are losing faith, might be an understatement. It may be that paralysis and inertia is all that is holding the system together. A collapse in credit could make it very difficult to raise the finance necessary for the ongoing extraction of tar sands, shale gas and other mad resource extraction projects that are accelerating the production of GGE[Greenhouse Gas Emissions]. A deflationary spiral that follows from a credit crisis and collapsing asset (housing, etc.) values could change behaviour to the extent that people stop spending on anything but essentials because of job insecurity and the fact that everything will be cheaper next month. I believe the chances of global economic collapse (in the next five years) being severe enough to achieve this have to be rated at least 50%. Further I believe many climate activists and policy professionals are shifting to at least privately hoping this might be the case because the chances of a planned powerdown seems to be fading. If we accept a global financial crash could make it very difficult, if not impossible, to restart the global economy with anything other than drastically reduced emissions, then an argument can be mounted for putting effort into precipitating that crash, the crash of the financial system. Any such plan would of course invite being blamed for causing it when it happens. No one wants to be strung up along with the bankers for causing a global version of Greece, Egypt or many other countries, let alone the horrors of Syria. On the other hand, we have no precedent to indicate how bad conditions might be in currently affluent countries.

## 1NC -- Democracy

#### The plan arrests global democratic backsliding – the symbol of the plan is used to revitalize efforts at democracy promotion

Haass 20

Richard, president of the Council on Foreign Relations since July 2003, prior to which he was Director of Policy Planning for the United States Department of State and a close advisor to Secretary of State Colin Powell, Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Policy By Example: Crisis at Home Makes the United States Vulnerable Abroad” June 5, 2020 https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-05/protests-pandemic-world-watching

Analysts of international affairs rarely focus on how the domestic condition of the United States shapes the country’s influence and role in the world, but today the connection could hardly be more relevant. The United States is currently experiencing three upheavals simultaneously: the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic aftershocks of that emergency, and the political protests and in some cases violence sparked by the videotape of the killing of George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American man, by police officers in Minneapolis.

The three crises of this moment will undoubtedly affect the foreign policy of the United States, which for three-quarters of a century has been the preeminent power in the world. Indeed, recent developments could have a profound and enduring impact on American influence. Unless the United States is able to come together to address its persistent societal and political divides, global prospects for democracy may weaken, friends and allies of the United States may rethink their decision to place their security in American hands, and competitors may dispense with some or all of their traditional caution.

THE WORLD IS WATCHING

The example the United States sets at home and the image it projects abroad can either magnify American power or detract from it. For all that foreign policy is commonly understood to be the province of officials and diplomats—consultations, negotiations, communiques, démarches, summits, and more—foreign policy by example is no less real. Through example, a country communicates its values and furnishes a context for all that its representatives say and do. At times, the United States has stood as a paradigm to countries that demanded accountability from their leaders; at other times, the United States has failed to live up to its highest ideals and thereby undermined its calls for other countries to treat their people better.

Today’s American travails have been widely seen and heard outside the United States. Globalization is a conveyor belt—one that in this instance carried stark images of police brutality across the globe. If one lesson of COVID-19 is that what starts in Wuhan does not stay in Wuhan, one lesson of the killing of George Floyd is that what happens in Minneapolis does not stay there. Comparisons between the current situation and the United States of 1968 are overdrawn, in no small part because what is going on now is arguably more serious, but one mantra from that time remains apt: “The Whole World is Watching.”

As if to prove that point, spontaneous demonstrations against racism and police brutality have sprung up around American embassies in Europe and elsewhere. But the context in which they did so is worth elucidating. Confidence in the American example has been waning for years, the result of prolonged political division and dysfunction within the United States—the pervasive gun-related violence that no other society allows or can identify with, the prevalence of opioid addiction and related deaths, the financial mismanagement that led to enormous global hardship in the crisis of 2008, the rise of inequality, the poor infrastructure that greets most visitors to the country, and much else. U.S. President Donald Trump, moreover, has proven to be as controversial, and in many cases as unpopular, abroad as he is at home.

The American response to the COVID-19 pandemic reinforced doubts about American competence. That the novel coronavirus would reach American shores was inevitable, given the nature of the pathogen and the initial failure of both China and the World Health Organization (WHO) to contain it and warn the world of it. What was not inevitable was that the disease would take the toll it did. The lack of protective equipment for first responders and hospital staff; the inability to produce at scale accurate, quick tests for either the virus or the antibodies; the delayed and then inconsistent messaging about wearing masks and social distancing—these failures are the country’s own. The result is more than 100,000 fatalities, millions of infections, and a deadly American course no one wishes to follow.

The United States has long retained many positive features when seen from abroad: excellent universities, innovative companies, and a tradition (currently compromised) of openness to immigration. The election of Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 seemed to show that racism had abated to a significant degree; the gains of the civil, women’s, and gay rights movements were a source of inspiration elsewhere; and even the country’s multiple experiences with impeachment seemed to showcase a system in which no person was above the law. Now, however, the image of a United States consistent with former President Ronald Reagan’s “shining city on a hill” grows ever more distant in the eyes of the world.

As that image recedes, the capacity diminishes for the United States to present itself as a model for others to emulate. So, too, does the ability of the United States to criticize or pressure other countries for their failings. A good deal of evidence suggests that Chinese leader Xi Jinping was on the defensive at home for China’s initial inadequate response to the COVID-19 outbreak. But the United States’ poor showing essentially took Xi off the hook, as invidious comparisons could not be drawn. For all of Washington’s talk, it squandered the opportunity to take a tough stance vis-à-vis China on the pandemic.

The current political crisis, moreover, has likewise hindered U.S. prospects for promoting and protecting democracies abroad. Human rights and democracy promotion have long been a staple of American foreign policy—partly for normative reasons, because Americans believe that such principles enhance the meaning and value of life, and partly for practical reasons, because many U.S. policymakers believe that democracies act with restraint not just toward their own citizens but toward others and in so doing, make the world less violent. Now, democracy is in recession around the world, and the ability of the United States to arrest that retreat is likewise in decline. A case in point is China, which has countered Washington’s criticism of its actions in Hong Kong by pointing to U.S. behavior at home.

What happened in Washington, D.C. on Monday night, June 1, was particularly consequential in this regard. A peaceful protest in the public space across from the White House was broken up, not because it was a threat to order but to serve a political purpose. The White House made a bad situation worse by deploying military units to Washington. But the rights of free speech and assembly, including public protest, are constitutionally guaranteed and stand at the core of American democracy. Public trust requires that federal law enforcement agencies and the military not be politicized. Terrible images from that night traveled across the world. Not lost on either international viewers or American citizens was the dangerous precedent the incident set in a country just five months away from what is sure to be a hard-fought election.

POWER IN RETREAT

The turmoil in the United States, set before the eyes of the world, raises questions about American power. To distinguish between absolute power and available power is useful here. The country’s absolute power, above all military and economic power, is still considerable. The bigger question concerns its available power. Is a country with 42 million people unemployed, a declining GDP, shuttered factories, widespread protest that at times turns violent, and deep internal divisions in a position to act internationally?

#### Democracy causes diversionary war --- outweighs electoral accountability

**Rosato 11**. (Sebastian Rosato – Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. <KEN> “On the Democratic Peace,” Edward Elgar. DOA: 3/14/19. https://ideas.repec.org/h/elg/eechap/13385\_15.html)

Second, cost aversion is often trumped by nationalism. The growth of nationalism is one of the most striking features of the modern period. Its effect is so powerful, in fact, that ordinary citizens have repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to fight and die in order to defend their state and co-n ationals. This being the case, it is likely that if they believe the national interest is at stake, as it is in most interstate conflicts, the citizens of democracies will ignore the costs associated with a decision for war. Third, democratic leaders can often lead the public rather than follow it. Their reputation as foreign policy experts and their privileged access to relevant information give them ample opportunity to stoke nationalistic fervor, shape public opinion and suppress dissent despite the obligation to allow free and open discussion.22 There is good evidence that cost considerations are often trumped by nationalism or elite entrepreneurship. Between 1815 and 1991, the world’s five most militarily active democracies – the United States, Britain, France, India and Israel – went to war 30 times. In half of those cases, they were the victims of aggression and therefore we should not be surprised that their publics reacted in a nationalistic fashion or were persuaded to support decisions for war. In the other fifteen cases, however, there was no obvious threat to the homeland or vital national interests. Nevertheless, on 12 of these occasions (80 percent) the outbreak of war was greeted by a spontaneous and powerful nationalistic response, or in the absence of such a response, leaders persuaded the public to support the use of force. This kind of reaction has been common even in clashes between democracies. The available evidence reveals that public opinion was highly bellicose and nationalistic on at least a dozen occasions where democracies came to the brink of war with one another.

#### Democracies independent media spurs conflict

\*the media will focus on nationalist statements, not conciliatory ones. This forces leaders to escalate conflicts – media support signals public support, and leaders want to stay in office. Tubes negotiations and encourages escalation

**Doorenspleet 19**. (Renske Doorenspleet – Assistant Professor of Politics and International Studies @ The University of Warwick. Ph.D. in political science from Leiden University. <KEN> “Rethinking the Value of Democracy A Comparative Perspective,” Palgrave Macmillan. DOA: 3/7/19. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-91656-9)

In addition, there is no clear statistical evidence for the idea of electoral punishment: leaders who lose crises do not have shorter post-crisis tenure, and the costs of failure are not higher for democratic leaders compared to their authoritarian colleagues (Gelpi and Grieco 2000; see also Smith 1996; Chiozza and Goemans 2004; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999; Mansfeld et al. 2002; Arena and Nicoletti 2014; Zeigler et al. 2014; Conconi et al. 2014). There is also no clear evidence to support the ‘transparency costs argument’. Based on case studies, it can be concluded that ‘transparency often exacerbates crises’, so it certainly does not always prevent confict (see, e.g., Finel and Lord 2000). While the media is the key actor to spread the news in order to ensure transparency, the media ‘may have an incentive to pay more attention to belligerent statements than more subtle, conciliatory signals’. In this way, transparency may actually ‘undermine behind-the-scenes efforts at negotiated settlements’ and ‘transparent states engaged in belligerent rhetoric are more likely to have their crises spiral out of control’. Finally, transparency may make it more diffcult for observers ‘to determine which groups will control a given policy decision’ (Finel and Lord 2000: 166–167), which is not a positive situation when trying to prevent a confict.

#### autocracy solves war

**Rosato 11**. (Sebastian Rosato – Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. <KEN> “On the Democratic Peace,” Edward Elgar. DOA: 3/14/19. https://ideas.repec.org/h/elg/eechap/13385\_15.html)

There is also little evidence for the other implication of the group constraint claim, namely that group constraints must be weaker in autocracies than in democracies. If the mechanism is to explain why democracies remain at peace but autocracies do not, then there must be good evidence that democratic leaders face greater group constraints. The evidence suggests, however, that autocratic leaders often respond to groups – themselves or their supporters – that have powerful incentives to avoid war. One reason for autocrats to shy away from conflict is that wars are expensive and the best way to pay for them is to move to a system of consensual taxation, which in turn requires the expansion of the franchise. In other words, autocratic leaders have a powerful incentive to avoid wars lest they trigger political changes that may destroy their hold on power. Another reason to avoid war is that it allows civilian autocrats to maintain weak military establishments, thereby reducing the chances that they will be overthrown. Different considerations inhibit the war proneness of military dictators. First, because they must often devote considerable effort to domestic repression, they have fewer resources available for prosecuting foreign wars. Second, because they are used for repression their militaries often have little societal support, which makes them ill equipped to fight external wars. Third, military dictators are closely identified with the military and will therefore be cautious about waging war for fear that they will be blamed for any subsequent defeat. Finally, time spent fighting abroad is time away from other tasks on which a dictator’s domestic tenure also depends. Thus there may be fewer groups with access to the foreign policy process in autocracies – in extreme cases only the autocrat himself has a say – but these often have a vested interest in avoiding war. This being the case, it is not clear that group constraints are weaker in autocracies than they are in democracies.

#### Democratic wars are worse than autocratic wars – pluralism destabilizes deterrence

\*the media, interest groups, public opinion, opposing political parties all provide opposing narratives for how they’ll respond to conflict. Consequently, democracies cannot signal resolve. Opposing states will miscalculate via confusion about US military response, destabilizing deterrence.

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Democracies do not appear to be especially good at revealing their level of resolve in a crisis. The fi rst reason is that although their open political systems can provide a great deal of information, this is not the same as providing good information. In a standoff against a democracy, the other state will receive signals from numerous sources, including the government, the opposition, interest groups, public opinion and the media. Discerning which signal is representative of the democracy’s true position is likely to be a difficult task. There is good evidence for this claim. In their analysis of seven interstate crises between 1812 and 1969, for example, Bernard Finel and Kristin Lord (1999) find that democracies do indeed provide a great deal of information, but also that its sheer volume has either confused observers or served to reinforce prior misconceptions.