## nc

### framework

#### concede util is good!

### 1

#### Private space exploration tech is key to monitoring the future of climate

**Thales 20** (Thales, global leader in building a trustable future, “Monitoring Earth and Climate Change Impact from Space”, 7/7/20, <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/group/magazine/monitoring-earth-and-climate-change-impact-space>) // el

The blue planet or the green one? As climate change is becoming one of the greatest long-term challenges that society is facing, its consequences on Earth are more and more visible, starting with its colour, when observed from space. To anticipate the consequences of global warming and protect our planet, we need precise information about how the natural environment is changing. Some Earth Observation satellites can provide reliable and highly accurate information on Earth over long periods of time and on a global scale. While meteorology was the first scientific discipline to use space capabilities in the 1960s, satellites are now able to help us monitor how healthy – or not – the planet we call home is, based on a broad range of data including weather analyses, the oceans’ colour and temperature, or measures of earth gravity. Three-quarters of the data used in numerical weather prediction models depend on satellite measurements, says OECD's quarterly magazine, OECD Observer. “It’s not something we can study from Earth. Of course we would get some data, but we wouldn’t be able to get a global view. It would be like watching television through a little hole,” says Sandrine Mathieu, Product Line Manager for Meteorology, Environment and Oceanography, at Thales Alenia Space. “Satellites give us a global view that progresses in time, showing how events are related and how fast they are evolving,” she adds. Some of the observation satellites orbiting around the Earth are purpose-designed for environmental monitoring. Satellites allow scientists and decision makers to better monitor the impact of climate change, and they can also be the only solution to monitor parts of the world where ground systems are not deployable. Every day, their eyes stay focused on our planet, capturing images that provide invaluable data to help us respond when nature goes wild, as well as to understand climate change, make better use of natural resources and protect populations at risk. Creating a ‘digital twin’ of Earth For example, satellites were able to detect the impact that the intense bushfires in Australia at the end of 2019 had on air quality in the United States, 15,000 kilometres away. Another key purpose of satellites is the monitoring of oceans. Around 70% of the planet’s surface is covered by oceans, which have a crucial impact on climate, regulating heat, absorbing CO2 and providing food as well as economic sustenance to coastal communities. Monitoring the oceans from space means we can have a comprehensive picture of their health by checking their depth with millimetre accuracy thanks to radar technology, their temperature with thermal infra-red sensors, and their salinity and – last but not least – their colour through the eyes of optical sensors. Oceans are not always blue. Their hue depends on the concentration of phytoplankton and other particle matters that could indicate discharges or the presence of pollution. By keeping an eye on oceans, we can detect algae bloom, which have a deadly effect on marine wildlife. The new-generation satellites will offer greater capabilities. The next step in the study of the Earth from space will be a hyperspectral 2D sounding meteorology mission that will provide a 3D vision of the atmosphere, compared with the surface data we can gather today. This will provide a gigantic leap in the knowledge we can apply to air transport, as well as the study of typhoons and air quality. “The logical continuation is the creation of a ‘digital twin’ for the Earth, which will allow us to gather all sorts of environment parameters (biodiversity, agricultural ressources, water quality, water height, …) on the global surface planet and monitor them in real time. By observing and understanding interactions we will eventually be able to anticipate pollution, extreme events, harvests, forest fires, climate change impacts, etc ,” says Sandrine Mathieu. Providing technology that benefits the daily lives of people At Thales, we’re fully aware of the impact of global warming. For more than 40 years now, Thales Alenia Space engineers have leveraged their expertise to give the world’s scientists and decision-makers the means they need to acquire vital data for environmental monitoring, oceanography and meteorology. Thales Alenia Space has been at the forefront of European geostationary meteorology, as prime contractor for three generations of Meteosat weather satellites on behalf of the European Space Agency (ESA) and EUMETSAT, the European operational satellite agency for monitoring weather, climate and the environment. The company is also involved in major Sentinel missions, a key to Europe’s environmental monitoring efforts. Sentinel satellites are being built on behalf of ESA as part of the European Union’s Copernicus programme. Thales Alenia Space is a major partneronboard this very ambitious programme, which is designed to monitor land and ocean, vegetation, soil and coastal areas, and study sea-surface as well as the temperature and colour of sea and land. As a world leader in altimetry and a major partner onboard the most iconic international missions dedicated to oceanography, Thales Alenia Space is also working on the French-American oceanography satellite SWOT (Surface Water Ocean Topography), which will revolutionise modern oceanography by detecting ocean features with 10 times better resolution than current technologies. Thales, which aims to provide technology that benefits the daily lives of people around the world, is committed to fighting climate disruption. Observation of the Earth from space is crucial to defining and implementing responsible environmental policies as satellite missions ensure that the environment we live in – the air we breathe, the water where we bathe and the forests we walk in -- remains as clean as possible.

#### Climate change triggers sweeping death and population loss (AGW = anthropogenic global warming)

**Parncutt, 19** - Professor of Systematic Musicology at the University of Graz. Honours (Master's) degree in Physics from University of New England (UNE), Australia. Interdisciplinary PhD in psychology, music and physics from UNE (Richard, Edited by: Eric Brymer, Australian College of Applied Psychology, Australia Reviewed by: José Gutiérrez-Pérez, University of Granada, Spain; Robert Martin Rees, Scotland’s Rural College, United Kingdom, 10-16-2019, accessed on 6-28-2021, Frontiers in Psychology, "The Human Cost of Anthropogenic Global Warming: Semi-Quantitative Prediction and the 1,000-Tonne Rule", doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02323)ao **AGW = Anthropogenic Global Warming**

Today, about 30% of global population experiences deadly heat for over 20 days per year. By 2100, this will rise to 48% if GHG emissions are drastically reduced and 74% if they continue to grow (Mora et al., 2017). The combination of AGW and high population growth in developing African countries such as Equatorial Guinea, Omar, Niger, Uganda, Angola, and Congo will lead to unprecedented death rates due to poverty (hunger, disease, and violence) and massive population displacement. Africa’s population (currently 1.3 × 109) will rise to roughly 2.5 × 109 by 2050 and 4 × 109 by 21002. Between 2017 and 2050, 26 African countries may double their populations (United Nations, 2017b). Even without AGW, it will not be possible to produce and deliver sufficient food and fresh water (Godfray et al., 2010). AGW will exacerbate the crisis—even without considering population growth (McMichael et al., 2006, 2008). By 2100, the total death toll due to 2°C AGW may approach 10^9 in Africa alone. There will be severe climate impacts in the Middle East and Northern Africa, with mean temperature increases well above GMST and displacement of large human populations (Economist, 2018). Thomas et al. (2004) estimated that 15% of all species will be extinct by 2050 if AGW is limited to 1.5°C; 37% if limited to 2°C. Ecological dependencies may multiply the direct effects of environmental change on the collapse of planetary diversity by 10 (Strona and Bradshaw, 2018). Loss of biodiversity will make it impossible to feed a larger African population (Frison et al., 2011). Insect populations will be affected by a combination of AGW and insecticides (Boggs, 2016). Forty percent of the world’s insect species may go extinct in coming decades (Resnick, 2019; Sánchez-Bayo and Wyckhuys, 2019). In the past 50 years, bee pollinations have declined as demand for agricultural pollination has approximately tripled, triggering a pollination crisis that affects crop yields (Goulson et al., 2015). Extinction of bee species could lead to the extinction of plant species that depend on bees for pollination, leading to other animal, plant, and insect extinctions, which in turn affects insect-eating bird populations (Goulson, 2014). Biodiverse coral reefs will be degraded due to pollution, overfishing, and rising temperature and acidity of ocean waters (Hughes et al., 2017). Oceanic oxygen concentration is also falling (Poppick, 2019). Most reefs will be seriously threatened or irreversibly damaged by 2050 (Burke et al., 2011) and the rest may die by 2100. Sekerci and Petrovskii (2015) showed that “the oxygen production by marine phytoplankton can stop suddenly if the water temperature exceeds a certain critical value. Since the ocean plankton produces altogether more than one half of the total atmospheric oxygen, it would mean oxygen depletion not only in the water but also in the air. Should it happen, it would obviously kill most of life on Earth” (p. 2349). Soil will be degraded by chemical-heavy farming techniques and deforestation-induced erosion, reducing crop yields (Arsenault, 2014). “There is rapidly escalating competition between the demand for land functions that provide food, water, and energy, and those services that support and regulate all life cycles on Earth” (United Nations, 2017c, p. 8). Groundwater (Dalin et al., 2017) is the largest available store of global freshwater and 2 × 10^9 people rely on it. About 6% of global groundwater is readily available and can be replenished with a human lifespan (Gleeson et al., 2016). Where groundwater is depleted, recovery may take centuries or millennia (Cuthbert et al., 2019, p. 140). About 10% of global land is covered by glaciers, and 10^9 people depend on their meltwater (Qui, 2019). AGW will cause non-polar glacier volume to fall by 29–41% in 2100; “glaciers in Central Europe, low-latitude South America, Caucasus, North Asia, Western Canada, and US are projected to lose more than 80% of their volume by 2100” with “major implications for regional hydrology and water availability in the near future” (Radić et al., 2014). Clarke et al. (2015) predicted that by 2100 Western Canadian glaciers will shrink by 70% relative to 2005, affecting aquatic ecosystems, agriculture, forestry, and water quality. Iceland’s glaciers will shrink by 40% in 2100 and 100% in 2200 (Poore et al., 2000). Accelerated deglaciation in Greenland from 2003 to 2013 suggests a tipping point driven by changes in air temperature and solar radiation (Bevis et al., 2019). Pathogens such as anthrax may emerge from melting permafrost (Revich and Podolnaya, 2011; Legendre et al., 2015) and cause regional or global pandemics (Wu et al., 2016). Humans have little immune resistant to zoonoses—diseases transmitted between human and non-human animals, such as ebola and salmonellosis. In the 14th century, bubonic plague (spread by fleas or body fluids from plague-infected animals) killed 25–40% of European children and adults (Galvani and Slatkin, 2003). 2°C AGW will trigger conflicts over natural resources (Barnett and Adger, 2007). Political destabilization could lead to use of nuclear weapons, causing radioactive fallout and ozone depletion (Mills et al., 2008). In a zeroth-order estimate, one or more of these points could alone cause 10^7 deaths per year for a century—a total of 10^9 deaths each. If that is true, a worst-case estimate of 3 × 10^9 for the worst-case AGW death toll may be realistic. That would correspond to roughly 30% of future world population, which will reach 9.8 × 10^9 in 2050 and 11.2 × 109 in 2100 (or between 8 × 109 and 15 × 109; United Nations (2017a). Given the high degree of uncertainty, a more precise estimate is hardly realistic.

### advantage 1

**No risk of accidents – not even megaconstellations– tech solves AND space isn’t crowded.**

**Fernholz ’19** [Tim, "SpaceX’s new satellites will dodge collisions autonomously (and they’d better)," May 24, https://qz.com/1627570/how-autonomous-are-spacexs-starlink-satellites]

“Within a year and a half, maybe two years, if things go well, SpaceX will probably have more satellites in orbit than all other satellites combined,” Elon Musk said last week. This is an exaggeration. There are almost 2,000 operational satellites in space right now. But Thursday night’s launch of 60 satellites for a new internet network called Starlink is the first step towards that goal. Today, Musk’s space company said it expects to launch six more times in 2019, with the goal of operating 720 satellites by the end of the 2020, and eventually more than 4,000. The Federal Communications Commission—the lead regulator for American satellites—approved these satellite, among 13,000 new satellites okayed in the last year. That huge number has many in the space community nervous about the potential for collisions with other satellites or with space debris. Neither the United States nor the world has a reliable system for managing traffic in space, and policymakers are struggling to keep up with the private sector’s growing ability to hurl computers into the cosmos at faster and faster rates. Musk said the satellites his company launches will avoid potential collisions on their own. And Mark Juncosa, the SpaceX executive in charge of developing the Starlink satellites, downplayed concerns when answering press inquiries on the matter last week. “It might be worth mentioning for people that are not in the space industry … space is really big,” he said. It was experts focused on pinning down what’s going on in orbit who questioned whether the autonomous systems would have sufficient data to safely maneuver. Musk’s electric cars at Tesla often face similar questions. However advanced their AI, what’s more important is how well the car can see. The ultimate source for space situational awareness is the US Air Force’s Combined Space Operations Center, or CSpOC, which tracks orbital objects 10 centimeters in diameter or larger with a worldwide radar network. Most satellite companies, especially those with large fleets, automate the communications and “station keeping” maneuvers. But when they receive a warning from CSpOC that there is a risk of collision with another spacecraft or with space debris, their team consults with the Air Force to make a decision about how to move. Planet, which operates more than 150 spacecraft, automates its communications with CSpOC and has software that calculates the probability of potential conjunctions when they receive a warning. But, when the probability of conjunction reaches about 1 in 10,000, their flight operations team steps in to plan a maneuver to keep their satellites out of trouble. SpaceX says there will be no human in the loop when it comes to its satellites. When notified of a potential conjunction with another object in space, their software will decide whether and how to maneuver, and communicate that information back to CSpOC. It’s not clear what their threshold will be for taking action, or how much warning they will give to the US Air Force. CSpOC did not respond to questions about this communications system. Satellite experts are happy to see efforts at automation, because conjunction reports are only going to increase as more satellites fly. But they worry about an automated system responding to imperfect data, and emphasize the need for the widest possible transparency. Though orbital mechanics are extremely predictable, space sensing is imperfect and the margin of error around where exactly a satellite can be is quite large. Many spacecraft operators join the Space Data Association, a trade association for exchanging space traffic data, and others partner with new space surveillance companies like LeoLabs to obtain more data about what’s happening in orbit. “Because we look at many hundreds of satellites every single day, we find that there are issues with the data,” Dr. T.S. Kelso, a former Air Force officer who works for the Space Data Association, told Quartz. His operation generates about 2,000 conjunction reports every four days. “We can go from something that looks very serious one day to all of the sudden there is nothing in the data. … if you are maneuvering because it is a 1 in 10,000 chance, if you had done nothing, you still had a pretty good chance nothing was going to happen.” SpaceX isn’t responsible for the lack of a real space traffic management system, but as a first mover among companies preparing ambitious satellite networks that far outstrip anything that came before, it is likely to set the tone for how operators and regulators interact. The company chose to fly the satellites at a low enough altitude that if they fail, they will safely burn up in the atmosphere within a year, rather than remaining space junk. “The space junk thing, we don’t want to trivialize it or not take it seriously,” Musk said. “[But] it’s not crowded up there. It’s extremely sparse. If your goal was to hit something, it wouldn’t be easy.”

#### No risk of war from satellite losses: Attribution. The U.S. knows the difference between intentional indirect attacks and accidental collisions---no nation would try.

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Kinetic Attacks. Essentially, an adversary can choose between two types of noncyber antisatellite attacks: direct kinetic and indirect kinetic. While a direct kinetic antisatellite missile attack on a US satellite is possible, it would provide direct attribution to the attacker, thus leading to repercussions. The thruster and the heat from the missile would be identified and attributed to the country or vessel that launched the attack. A direct kinetic attack might be inviting, but the political price is high. Even though it would be inviting to attack satellites, an adversary would not be able to attack without leaving a trace of tangible evidence. Using an ASAT missile is a grave act of war and can only reasonably be used if the perpetrator anticipates and accepts a wartime response.

For a potential adversary, it can be far more advantageous to increase the amount of debris that clutters specific orbits, thus epitomizing the indirect attack. Increasing debris can be accomplished through actively adding debris to specific well-targeted orbits, systematic designer accidents, or collisions in space.

During the eighteenth century and until the Second World War, artillery units had a special round to be used if enemy infantry came uncomfortably close to the battery position—the case shot. The battery aimed toward the closing infantry and fired the case shots, which dispersed thousands of steel balls that created massive losses in the infantry ranks. Whether those steel balls hit an arm, a leg, the torso, or a hand did not matter; the infantry assault against the battery position lost momentum and ended. By applying the case shot idea to space, we can see an unsophisticated way to radically increase debris by using space boosters to reach lower Earth orbit (LEO) and then using kinetic energy to disperse hundreds of thousands of steel balls into a segment of space. Any obsolete or crude missile—exemplified by the Iranian Shahab or the North Korean Taepodong—could act as a space booster to take the payload to space. A salvo of 20 such crude space boosters delivering a significant amount of prefragmented shrapnel or steel balls could radically increase the amount of hypervelocity debris.

The probability for collision in space between a functional satellite and debris is a numbers game. Reduced to a simplified example, if the presence of 5,000 debris pieces at a specific altitude generates a risk of one satellite hit every 10 years—not taking into account additional debris generated from the impact—an additional 100,000 debris pieces would increase that risk drastically. To illustrate the principle, 20 space boosters can lift 30 metric tons of payload to LEO—roughly 400,000 steel balls—that would be spread at hypervelocity into the satellite orbits. The attack is kinetic but indirect, as the target satellites are not individually targeted but are instead approached by a swarm of hypervelocity debris that impacts the target satellites either by penetration or by destroying antennas, solar panels, or other equipment. This impact would initially generate more debris, although orbital decay would counterbalance some of it by moving it to a lower altitude; eventually it would disappear from space.

Either a direct or indirect kinetic attack would be an act of war and provide the necessary attribution to give the United States casus belli approved by at least a part of the international community. First, both the direct and indirect kinetic attack would be attributable to the nation that launched the attack, and observations from space-borne monitoring satellites would be accurate enough to give the United States a solid case. Second, creating unprecedented amounts of space debris would not only be hazardous to US satellites but also to those of other major powers. If rogue nation X launches an indirect kinetic attack, it would affect Russia’s, Europe’s, China’s, India’s, Pakistan’s, and other nations’ satellites. Depending on the dispersement of these debris objects, damage could be limited to small areas of space, but it would still be a space territory not used solely by the United States. Rogue nation X traditionally has avoided United Nations–supported repercussions from the international community when US interests have been damaged. Russia and/or China, in particular, are likely to veto any punitive actions proposed by the United States in the UN Security Council.20 In this scenario, rogue nation X cannot afford to lose that support by damaging Russian or Chinese space assets as collateral damage from its attack on US satellites. Chinese space assets are quite limited compared to Russian or US inventories; therefore, an indirect kinetic attack against US assets could result in severe damage to Chinese interests, as the Chinese lack space resilience. Neither direct nor indirect kinetic attacks are suitable or viable options for a rogue nation that intends to harm US satellites.

#### Extinction is inevitable from future technology — nanotech, our simulation gets shut down, AI, biotech, particle accelerators, and black swans

Bruce **Sterling**, 6-1-20**18**, "When Nick Bostrom says “Bang”," WIRED, https://www.wired.com/beyond-the-beyond/2018/06/nick-bostrom-says-bang/

4.1 Deliberate misuse of nanotechnology

In a mature form, molecular nanotechnology will enable the construction of bacterium-scale self-replicating mechanical robots that can feed on dirt or other organic matter [22-25]. Such replicators could eat up the biosphere or destroy it by other means such as by poisoning it, burning it, or blocking out sunlight. A person of malicious intent in possession of this technology might cause the extinction of intelligent life on Earth by releasing such nanobots into the environment.[9]

The technology to produce a destructive nanobot seems considerably easier to develop than the technology to create an effective defense against such an attack (a global nanotech immune system, an “active shield” [23]). It is therefore likely that there will be a period of vulnerability during which this technology must be prevented from coming into the wrong hands. Yet the technology could prove hard to regulate, since it doesn’t require rare radioactive isotopes or large, easily identifiable manufacturing plants, as does production of nuclear weapons [23].

Even if effective defenses against a limited nanotech attack are developed before dangerous replicators are designed and acquired by suicidal regimes or terrorists, there will still be the danger of an arms race between states possessing nanotechnology. It has been argued [26] that molecular manufacturing would lead to both arms race instability and crisis instability, to a higher degree than was the case with nuclear weapons. Arms race instability means that there would be dominant incentives for each competitor to escalate its armaments, leading to a runaway arms race. Crisis instability means that there would be dominant incentives for striking first. Two roughly balanced rivals acquiring nanotechnology would, on this view, begin a massive buildup of armaments and weapons development programs that would continue until a crisis occurs and war breaks out, potentially causing global terminal destruction. That the arms race could have been predicted is no guarantee that an international security system will be created ahead of time to prevent this disaster from happening. The nuclear arms race between the US and the USSR was predicted but occurred nevertheless.

4.2 Nuclear holocaust[winter]

The US and Russia still have huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons. But would an all-out nuclear war really exterminate humankind? Note that: (i) For there to be an existential risk it suffices that we can’t be sure that it wouldn’t. (ii) The climatic effects of a large nuclear war are not well known (there is the possibility of a nuclear winter). (iii) Future arms races between other nations cannot be ruled out and these could lead to even greater arsenals than those present at the height of the Cold War. The world’s supply of plutonium has been increasing steadily to about two thousand tons, some ten times as much as remains tied up in warheads ([9], p. 26). (iv) Even if some humans survive the short-term effects of a nuclear war, it could lead to the collapse of civilization. A human race living under stone-age conditions may or may not be more resilient to extinction than other animal species.

4.3 We’re living in a simulation and it gets shut down

A case can be made that the hypothesis that we are living in a computer simulation should be given a significant probability [27]. The basic idea behind this so-called “Simulation argument” is that vast amounts of computing power may become available in the future (see e.g. [28,29]), and that it could be used, among other things, to run large numbers of fine-grained simulations of past human civilizations. Under some not-too-implausible assumptions, the result can be that almost all minds like ours are simulated minds, and that we should therefore assign a significant probability to being such computer-emulated minds rather than the (subjectively indistinguishable) minds of originally evolved creatures. And if we are, we suffer the risk that the simulation may be shut down at any time. A decision to terminate our simulation may be prompted by our actions or by exogenous factors.

While to some it may seem frivolous to list such a radical or “philosophical” hypothesis next the concrete threat of nuclear holocaust, we must seek to base these evaluations on reasons rather than untutored intuition. Until a refutation appears of the argument presented in [27], it would intellectually dishonest to neglect to mention simulation-shutdown as a potential extinction mode.

4.4 Badly programmed superintelligence

When we create the first superintelligent entity [28-34], we might make a mistake and give it goals that lead it to annihilate humankind, assuming its enormous intellectual advantage gives it the power to do so. For example, we could mistakenly elevate a subgoal to the status of a supergoal. We tell it to solve a mathematical problem, and it complies by turning all the matter in the solar system into a giant calculating device, in the process killing the person who asked the question. (For further analysis of this, see [35].)

4.5 Genetically engineered biological agent

With the fabulous advances in genetic technology currently taking place, it may become possible for a tyrant, terrorist, or ~~lunatic~~ to create a doomsday virus, an organism that combines long latency with high virulence and mortality [36].

Dangerous viruses can even be spawned unintentionally, as Australian researchers recently demonstrated when they created a modified mousepox virus with 100% mortality while trying to design a contraceptive virus for mice for use in pest control [37]. While this particular virus doesn’t affect humans, it is suspected that an analogous alteration would increase the mortality of the human smallpox virus. What underscores the future hazard here is that the research was quickly published in the open scientific literature [38]. It is hard to see how information generated in open biotech research programs could be contained no matter how grave the potential danger that it poses; and the same holds for research in nanotechnology.

Genetic medicine will also lead to better cures and vaccines, but there is no guarantee that defense will always keep pace with offense. (Even the accidentally created mousepox virus had a 50% mortality rate on vaccinated mice.) Eventually, worry about biological weapons may be put to rest through the development of nanomedicine, but while nanotechnology has enormous long-term potential for medicine [39] it carries its own hazards.

4.6 Accidental misuse of nanotechnology (“gray goo”)

The possibility of accidents can never be completely ruled out. However, there are many ways of making sure, through responsible engineering practices, that species-destroying accidents do not occur. One could avoid using self-replication; one could make nanobots dependent on some rare feedstock chemical that doesn’t exist in the wild; one could confine them to sealed environments; one could design them in such a way that any mutation was overwhelmingly likely to cause a nanobot to completely cease to function [40]. Accidental misuse is therefore a smaller concern than malicious misuse [23,25,41].

However, the distinction between the accidental and the deliberate can become blurred. While “in principle” it seems possible to make terminal nanotechnological accidents extremely improbable, the actual circumstances may not permit this ideal level of security to be realized. Compare nanotechnology with nuclear technology. From an engineering perspective, it is of course perfectly possible to use nuclear technology only for peaceful purposes such as nuclear reactors, which have a zero chance of destroying the whole planet. Yet in practice it may be very hard to avoid nuclear technology also being used to build nuclear weapons, leading to an arms race. With large nuclear arsenals on hair-trigger alert, there is inevitably a significant risk of accidental war. The same can happen with nanotechnology: it may be pressed into serving military objectives in a way that carries unavoidable risks of serious accidents.

In some situations it can even be strategically advantageous to deliberately make one’s technology or control systems risky, for example in order to make a “threat that leaves something to chance” [42].

4.7 Something unforeseen

We need a catch-all category. It would be foolish to be confident that we have already imagined and anticipated all significant risks. Future technological or scientific developments may very well reveal novel ways of destroying the world.

Some foreseen hazards (hence not members of the current category) which have been excluded from the list of bangs on grounds that they seem too unlikely to cause a global terminal disaster are: solar flares, supernovae, black hole explosions or mergers, gamma-ray bursts, galactic center outbursts, supervolcanos, loss of biodiversity, buildup of air pollution, gradual loss of human fertility, and various religious doomsday scenarios. The hypothesis that we will one day become “illuminated” and commit collective suicide or stop reproducing, as supporters of VHEMT (The Voluntary Human Extinction Movement) hope [43], appears unlikely. If it really were better not to exist (as Silenus told king Midas in the Greek myth, and as Arthur Schopenhauer argued [44] although for reasons specific to his philosophical system he didn’t advocate suicide), then we should not count this scenario as an existential disaster. The assumption that it is not worse to be alive should be regarded as an implicit assumption in the definition of Bangs. Erroneous collective suicide is an existential risk albeit one whose probability seems extremely slight. (For more on the ethics of human extinction, see chapter 4 of [9].)

4.8 Physics disasters

The Manhattan Project bomb-builders’ concern about an A-bomb-derived atmospheric conflagration has contemporary analogues.

There have been speculations that future high-energy particle accelerator experiments may cause a breakdown of a metastable vacuum state that our part of the cosmos might be in, converting it into a “true” vacuum of lower energy density [45]. This would result in an expanding bubble of total destruction that would sweep through the galaxy and beyond at the speed of light, tearing all matter apart as it proceeds.

Another conceivability is that accelerator experiments might produce negatively charged stable “strangelets” (a hypothetical form of nuclear matter) or create a mini black hole that would sink to the center of the Earth and start accreting the rest of the planet [46].

These outcomes seem to be impossible given our best current physical theories. But the reason we do the experiments is precisely that we don’t really know what will happen. A more reassuring argument is that the energy densities attained in present day accelerators are far lower than those that occur naturally in collisions between cosmic rays [46,47]. It’s possible, however, that factors other than energy density are relevant for these hypothetical processes, and that those factors will be brought together in novel ways in future experiments.

The main reason for concern in the “physics disasters” category is the meta-level observation that discoveries of all sorts of weird physical phenomena are made all the time, so even if right now all the particular physics disasters we have conceived of were absurdly improbable or impossible, there could be other more realistic failure-modes waiting to be uncovered. The ones listed here are merely illustrations of the general case.

#### Growth causes a global toxification crisis - risks extinction

Ehrlichand Ehrlich 13 [Paul R. Ehrlich, Professor of Biology and President of the Center for Conservation Biology at Stanford University, and Adjunct Professor at the University of Technology, Sydney, Anne H. Ehrlich, Senior Research Scientist in Biology at Stanford and focuses her research on policy issues related to the environment, “Can a collapse of global civilization be avoided?”, Proc Biol Sci. Mar 7, 2013; 280(1754), \\wyo-bb]

Another possible threat to the continuation of civilization is global toxification. Adverse symptoms of exposure to synthetic chemicals are making some scientists increasingly nervous about effects on the human population [77–79]. Should a global threat materialize, however, no planned mitigating responses (analogous to the ecologically and politically risky ‘geoengineering’ projects often proposed to ameliorate climate disruption [80]) are waiting in the wings ready for deployment. Much the same can be said about aspects of the epidemiological environment and the prospect of epidemics being enhanced by rapid population growth in immune-weakened societies, increased contact with animal reservoirs, high-speed transport and the misuse of antibiotics [81]. Nobel laureate Joshua Lederberg had great concern for the epidemic problem, famously stating, ‘The survival of the human species is not a preordained evolutionary program’ [82, p. 40]. Some precautionary steps that should be considered include forbidding the use of antibiotics as growth stimulators for livestock, building emergency stocks of key vaccines and drugs (such as Tamiflu), improving disease surveillance, expanding mothballed emergency medical facilities, preparing institutions for imposing quarantines and, of course, moving as rapidly as possible to humanely reduce the human population size. It has become increasingly clear that security has many dimensions beyond military security [83,84] and that breaches of environmental security could risk the end of global civilization.

#### War is inevitable---BUT, the longer we wait, the worse it gets.

Seth **Baum &** Anthony **Barrett 18**. Global Catastrophic Risk Institute. 2018. “A Model for the Impacts of Nuclear War.” SSRN Electronic Journal. Crossref, doi:10.2139/ssrn.3155983.

On the other end of the spectrum, the norm could be weaker. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings provided a vivid and enduring image of the horrors of nuclear war—hence the norm can reasonably be described as a legacy of the bombings. Without this image, there would be less to motivate the norm. A weaker norm could in turn have led to a nuclear war occurring later, especially during a near-miss event like the Cuban missile crisis. A later nuclear war would likely be much more severe, assuming some significant buildup of nuclear arsenals and especially if “overkill” targeting was used. A new nuclear war could bring a similarly wide range of shifts in nuclear weapons norms. It could strengthen the norm, hastening nuclear disarmament. Already, there is a political initiative drawing attention to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use in order to promote a new treaty to ban nuclear weapons as a step towards complete nuclear disarmament (Borrie 2014). It is easy to imagine this initiative using any new nuclear attacks to advance their goals. Alternatively, it could weaken the norm, potentially leading to more and/or larger nuclear wars. This is a common concern, as seen for example in debates over low-yield bunker buster nuclear weapons (Nelson 2003). Given that the impacts of a large nuclear war could be extremely severe, a shift in nuclear weapons norms could easily be the single most consequential effect of a smaller nuclear war.

#### Nuke war won’t cause extinction---BUT, it’ll spur political will for meaningful disarmament.

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Although nuclear war is the oldest of these technogenic threats to civilization and human survival, and although important steps to restraint, particularly at the end of the Cold War, have been achieved, the nuclear world is increasingly changing in major ways, and in almost entirely dangerous directions. The third “bombs away” phase of the great debate on the nuclear-political question is more consequentially divided than in the first two phases. Even more ominously, most of the momentum lies with the forces that are pulling states toward nuclear-use, and with the radical actors bent on inflicting catastrophic damage on the leading states in the international system, particularly the United States. In contrast, the arms control project, although intellectually vibrant, is largely in retreat on the world political stage. The arms control settlement of the Cold War is unraveling, and the world public is more divided and distracted than ever. With the recent election of President Donald Trump, the United States, which has played such a dominant role in nuclear politics since its scientists invented these fiendish engines, now has an impulsive and uninformed leader, boding ill for nuclear restraint and effective crisis management. Given current trends, it is prudent to assume that sooner or later, and probably sooner, nuclear weapons will again be the used in war. But this bad news may contain a “silver lining” of good news. Unlike a general nuclear war that might have occurred during the Cold War, such a nuclear event now would probably not mark the end of civilization (or of humanity), due to the great reductions in nuclear forces achieved at the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, politics on “the day after” could have immense potential for positive change. The survivors would not be likely to envy the dead, but would surely have a greatly renewed resolution for “never again.” Such an event, completely unpredictable in its particulars, would unambiguously put the nuclear-political question back at the top of the world political agenda. It would unmistakeably remind leading states of their vulnerability It might also trigger more robust efforts to achieve the global regulation of nuclear capability. Like the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that did so much to catalyze the elevated concern for nuclear security in the early Cold War, and like the experience “at the brink” in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the now bubbling nuclear caldron holds the possibility of inaugurating a major period of institutional innovation and adjustment toward a fully “bombs away” future.

#### Industrial civilization wouldn’t recover.

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Imagine that the world as we know it ends tomorrow. There’s a global catastrophe: a pandemic virus, an asteroid strike, or perhaps a nuclear holocaust. The vast majority of the human race perishes. Our civilisation collapses. The post-apocalyptic survivors find themselves in a devastated world of decaying, deserted cities and roving gangs of bandits looting and taking by force. Bad as things sound, that’s not the end for humanity. We bounce back. Sooner or later, peace and order emerge again, just as they have time and again through history. Stable communities take shape. They begin the agonising process of rebuilding their technological base from scratch. But here’s the question: how far could such a society rebuild? Is there any chance, for instance, that a post-apocalyptic society could reboot a technological civilisation? Let’s make the basis of this thought experiment a little more specific. Today, we have already consumed the most easily drainable crude oil and, particularly in Britain, much of the shallowest, most readily mined deposits of coal. Fossil fuels are central to the organisation of modern industrial society, just as they were central to its development. Those, by the way, are distinct roles: even if we could somehow do without fossil fuels now (which we can’t, quite), it’s a different question whether we could have got to where we are without ever having had them. So, would a society starting over on a planet stripped of its fossil fuel deposits have the chance to progress through its own Industrial Revolution? Or to phrase it another way, what might have happened if, for whatever reason, the Earth had never acquired its extensive underground deposits of coal and oil in the first place? Would our progress necessarily have halted in the 18th century, in a pre-industrial state? It’s easy to underestimate our current dependence on fossil fuels. In everyday life, their most visible use is the petrol or diesel pumped into the vehicles that fill our roads, and the coal and natural gas which fire the power stations that electrify our modern lives. But we also rely on a range of different industrial materials, and in most cases, high temperatures are required to transform the stuff we dig out of the ground or harvest from the landscape into something useful. You can’t smelt metal, make glass, roast the ingredients of concrete, or synthesise artificial fertiliser without a lot of heat. It is fossil fuels – coal, gas and oil – that provide most of this thermal energy. In fact, the problem is even worse than that. Many of the chemicals required in bulk to run the modern world, from pesticides to plastics, derive from the diverse organic compounds in crude oil. Given the dwindling reserves of crude oil left in the world, it could be argued that the most wasteful use for this limited resource is to simply burn it. We should be carefully preserving what’s left for the vital repertoire of valuable organic compounds it offers. But my topic here is not what we should do now. Presumably everybody knows that we must transition to a low-carbon economy one way or another. No, I want to answer a question whose interest is (let’s hope) more theoretical. Is the emergence of a technologically advanced civilisation necessarily contingent on the easy availability of ancient energy? Is it possible to build an industrialised civilisation without fossil fuels? And the answer to that question is: maybe – but it would be extremely difficult. Let’s see how. We’ll start with a natural thought. Many of our alternative energy technologies are already highly developed. Solar panels, for example, represent a good option today, and are appearing more and more on the roofs of houses and businesses. It’s tempting to think that a rebooted society could simply pick up where we leave off. Why couldn’t our civilisation 2.0 just start with renewables? Well, it could, in a very limited way. If you find yourself among the survivors in a post-apocalyptic world, you could scavenge enough working solar panels to keep your lifestyle electrified for a good long while. Without moving parts, photovoltaic cells require little maintenance and are remarkably resilient. They do deteriorate over time, though, from moisture penetrating the casing and from sunlight itself degrading the high-purity silicon layers. The electricity generated by a solar panel declines by about 1 per cent every year so, after a few generations, all our hand-me-down solar panels will have degraded to the point of uselessness. Then what? New ones would be fiendishly difficult to create from scratch. Solar panels are made from thin slices of extremely pure silicon, and although the raw material is common sand, it must be processed and refined using complex and precise techniques – the same technological capabilities, more or less, that we need for modern semiconductor electronics components. These techniques took a long time to develop, and would presumably take a long time to recover. So photovoltaic solar power would not be within the capability of a society early in the industrialisation process. Perhaps, though, we were on the right track by starting with electrical power. Most of our renewable-energy technologies produce electricity. In our own historical development, it so happens that the core phenomena of electricity were discovered in the first half of the 1800s, well after the early development of steam engines. Heavy industry was already committed to combustion-based machinery, and electricity has largely assumed a subsidiary role in the organisation of our economies ever since. But could that sequence have run the other way? Is there some developmental requirement that thermal energy must come first? On the face of it, it’s not beyond the bounds of possibility that a progressing society could construct electrical generators and couple them to simple windmills and waterwheels, later progressing to wind turbines and hydroelectric dams. In a world without fossil fuels, one might envisage an electrified civilisation that largely bypasses combustion engines, building its transport infrastructure around electric trains and trams for long-distance and urban transport. I say ‘largely’. We couldn’t get round it all together. When it comes to generating the white heat demanded by modern industry, there are few good options but to burn stuff While the electric motor could perhaps replace the coal-burning steam engine for mechanical applications, society, as we’ve already seen, also relies upon thermal energy to drive the essential chemical and physical transformations it needs. How could an industrialising society produce crucial building materials such as iron and steel, brick, mortar, cement and glass without resorting to deposits of coal? You can of course create heat from electricity. We already use electric ovens and kilns. Modern arc furnaces are used for producing cast iron or recycling steel. The problem isn’t so much that electricity can’t be used to heat things, but that for meaningful industrial activity you’ve got to generate prodigious amounts of it, which is challenging using only renewable energy sources such as wind and water. An alternative is to generate high temperatures using solar power directly. Rather than relying on photovoltaic panels, concentrated solar thermal farms use giant mirrors to focus the sun’s rays onto a small spot. The heat concentrated in this way can be exploited to drive certain chemical or industrial processes, or else to raise steam and drive a generator. Even so, it is difficult (for example) to produce the very high temperatures inside an iron-smelting blast furnace using such a system. What’s more, it goes without saying that the effectiveness of concentrated solar power depends strongly on the local climate. No, when it comes to generating the white heat demanded by modern industry, there are few good options but to burn stuff. But that doesn’t mean the stuff we burn necessarily has to be fossil fuels. Let’s take a quick detour into the pre-history of modern industry. Long before the adoption of coal, charcoal was widely used for smelting metals. In many respects it is superior: charcoal burns hotter than coal and contains far fewer impurities. In fact, coal’s impurities were a major delaying factor on the Industrial Revolution. Released during combustion, they can taint the product being heated. During smelting, sulphur contaminants can soak into the molten iron, making the metal brittle and unsafe to use. It took a long time to work out how to treat coal to make it useful for many industrial applications. And, in the meantime, charcoal worked perfectly well. And then, well, we stopped using it. In retrospect, that’s a pity. When it comes from a sustainable source, charcoal burning is essentially carbon-neutral, because it doesn’t release any new carbon into the atmosphere – not that this would have been a consideration for the early industrialists. But charcoal-based industry didn’t die out altogether. In fact, it survived to flourish in Brazil. Because it has substantial iron deposits but few coalmines, Brazil is the largest charcoal producer in the world and the ninth biggest steel producer. We aren’t talking about a cottage industry here, and this makes Brazil a very encouraging example for our thought experiment. The trees used in Brazil’s charcoal industry are mainly fast-growing eucalyptus, cultivated specifically for the purpose. The traditional method for creating charcoal is to pile chopped staves of air-dried timber into a great dome-shaped mound and then cover it with turf or soil to restrict airflow as the wood smoulders. The Brazilian enterprise has scaled up this traditional craft to an industrial operation. Dried timber is stacked into squat, cylindrical kilns, built of brick or masonry and arranged in long lines so that they can be easily filled and unloaded in sequence. The largest sites can sport hundreds of such kilns. Once filled, their entrances are sealed and a fire is lit from the top. The skill in charcoal production is to allow just enough air into the interior of the kiln. There must be enough combustion heat to drive out moisture and volatiles and to pyrolyse the wood, but not so much that you are left with nothing but a pile of ashes. The kiln attendant monitors the state of the burn by carefully watching the smoke seeping out of the top, opening air holes or sealing with clay as necessary to regulate the process. Brazil shows how the raw materials of modern civilisation can be supplied without reliance on fossil fuels Good things come to those who wait, and this wood pyrolysis process can take up to a week of carefully controlled smouldering. The same basic method has been used for millennia. However, the ends to which the fuel is put are distinctly modern. Brazilian charcoal is trucked out of the forests to the country’s blast furnaces where it is used to transform ore into pig iron. This pig iron is the basic ingredient of modern mass-produced steel. The Brazilian product is exported to countries such as China and the US where it becomes cars and trucks, sinks, bathtubs, and kitchen appliances. Around two-thirds of Brazilian charcoal comes from sustainable plantations, and so this modern-day practice has been dubbed ‘green steel’. Sadly, the final third is supplied by the non-sustainable felling of primary forest. Even so, the Brazilian case does provide an example of how the raw materials of modern civilisation can be supplied without reliance on fossil fuels. Another, related option might be wood gasification. The use of wood to provide heat is as old as mankind, and yet simply burning timber only uses about a third of its energy. The rest is lost when gases and vapours released by the burning process blow away in the wind. Under the right conditions, even smoke is combustible. We don’t want to waste it. Better than simple burning, then, is to drive the thermal breakdown of the wood and collect the gases. You can see the basic principle at work for yourself just by lighting a match. The luminous flame isn’t actually touching the matchwood: it dances above, with a clear gap in between. The flame actually feeds on the hot gases given off as the wood breaks down in the heat, and the gases combust only once they mix with oxygen from the air. Matches are fascinating when you look at them closely. Wartime gasifier cars could achieve about 1.5 miles per kilogram. Today’s designs improve upon this To release these gases in a controlled way, bake some timber in a closed container. Oxygen is restricted so that the wood doesn’t simply catch fire. Its complex molecules decompose through a process known as pyrolysis, and then the hot carbonised lumps of charcoal at the bottom of the container react with the breakdown products to produce flammable gases such as hydrogen and carbon monoxide. The resultant ‘producer gas’ is a versatile fuel: it can be stored or piped for use in heating or street lights, and is also suitable for use in complex machinery such as the internal combustion engine. More than a million gasifier-powered cars across the world kept civilian transport running during the oil shortages of the Second World War. In occupied Denmark, 95 per cent of all tractors, trucks and fishing boats were powered by wood-gas generators. The energy content of about 3 kg of wood (depending on its dryness and density) is equivalent to a litre of petrol, and the fuel consumption of a gasifier-powered car is given in miles per kilogram of wood rather than miles per gallon. Wartime gasifier cars could achieve about 1.5 miles per kilogram. Today’s designs improve upon this. But you can do a lot more with wood gases than just keep your vehicle on the road. It turns out to be suitable for any of the manufacturing processes needing heat that we looked at before, such as kilns for lime, cement or bricks. Wood gas generator units could easily power agricultural or industrial equipment, or pumps. Sweden and Denmark are world leaders in their use of sustainable forests and agricultural waste for turning the steam turbines in power stations. And once the steam has been used in their ‘Combined Heat and Power’ (CHP) electricity plants, it is piped to the surrounding towns and industries to heat them, allowing such CHP stations to approach 90 per cent energy efficiency. Such plants suggest a marvellous vision of industry wholly weaned from its dependency on fossil fuel. Is that our solution, then? Could our rebooting society run on wood, supplemented with electricity from renewable sources? Maybe so, if the population was fairly small. But here’s the catch. These options all presuppose that our survivors are able to construct efficient steam turbines, CHP stations and internal combustion engines. We know how to do all that, of course – but in the event of a civilisational collapse, who is to say that the knowledge won’t be lost? And if it is, what are the chances that our descendants could reconstruct it? In our own history, the first successful application of steam engines was in pumping out coal mines. This was a setting in which fuel was already abundant, so it didn’t matter that the first, primitive designs were terribly inefficient. The increased output of coal from the mines was used to first smelt and then forge more iron. Iron components were used to construct further steam engines, which were in turn used to pump mines or drive the blast furnaces at iron foundries. And of course, steam engines were themselves employed at machine shops to construct yet more steam engines. It was only once steam engines were being built and operated that subsequent engineers were able to devise ways to increase their efficiency and shrink fuel demands. They found ways to reduce their size and weight, adapting them for applications in transport or factory machinery. In other words, there was a positive feedback loop at the very core of the industrial revolution: the production of coal, iron and steam engines were all mutually supportive. In a world without readily mined coal, would there ever be the opportunity to test profligate prototypes of steam engines, even if they could mature and become more efficient over time? How feasible is it that a society could attain a sufficient understanding of thermodynamics, metallurgy and mechanics to make the precisely interacting components of an internal combustion engine, without first cutting its teeth on much simpler external combustion engines – the separate boiler and cylinder-piston of steam engines? It took a lot of energy to develop our technologies to their present heights, and presumably it would take a lot of energy to do it again. Fossil fuels are out. That means our future society will need an awful lot of timber. An industrial revolution without coal would be, at a minimum, very difficult In a temperate climate such as the UK’s, an acre of broadleaf trees produces about four to five tonnes of biomass fuel every year. If you cultivated fast-growing kinds such as willow or miscanthus grass, you could quadruple that. The trick to maximising timber production is to employ coppicing – cultivating trees such as ash or willow that resprout from their own stump, becoming ready for harvest again in five to 15 years. This way you can ensure a sustained supply of timber and not face an energy crisis once you’ve deforested your surroundings. But here’s the thing: coppicing was already a well-developed technique in pre-industrial Britain. It couldn’t meet all of the energy requirements of the burgeoning society. The central problem is that woodland, even when it is well-managed, competes with other land uses, principally agriculture. The double-whammy of development is that, as a society’s population grows, it requires more farmland to provide enough food and also greater timber production for energy. The two needs compete for largely the same land areas. We know how this played out in our own past. From the mid-16th century, Britain responded to these factors by increasing the exploitation of its coal fields – essentially harvesting the energy of ancient forests beneath the ground without compromising its agricultural output. The same energy provided by one hectare of coppice for a year is provided by about five to 10 tonnes of coal, and it can be dug out of the ground an awful lot quicker than waiting for the woodland to regrow. It is this limitation in the supply of thermal energy that would pose the biggest problem to a society trying to industrialise without easy access to fossil fuels. This is true in our post-apocalyptic scenario, and it would be equally true in any counterfactual world that never developed fossil fuels for whatever reason. For a society to stand any chance of industrialising under such conditions, it would have to focus its efforts in certain, very favourable natural environments: not the coal-island of 18th-century Britain, but perhaps areas of Scandinavia or Canada that combine fast-flowing streams for hydroelectric power and large areas of forest that can be harvested sustainably for thermal energy. Even so, an industrial revolution without coal would be, at a minimum, very difficult. Today, use of fossil fuels is actually growing, which is worrying for a number of reasons too familiar to rehearse here. Steps towards a low-carbon economy are vital. But we should also recognise how pivotal those accumulated reservoirs of thermal energy were in getting us to where we are. Maybe we could have made it the hard way. A slow-burn progression through the stages of mechanisation, supported by a combination of renewable electricity and sustainably grown biomass, might be possible after all. Then again, it might not. We’d better hope we can secure the future of our own civilisation, because we might have scuppered the chances of any society to follow in our wake.

#### Existential threats outweigh

GPP 17 (Global Priorities Project, Future of Humanity Institute at the University of Oxford, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, “Existential Risk: Diplomacy and Governance,” Global Priorities Project, 2017, <https://www.fhi.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Existential-Risks-2017-01-23.pdf>

1.2. THE ETHICS OF EXISTENTIAL RISK In his book Reasons and Persons, Oxford philosopher Derek Parfit advanced an influential argument about the importance of avoiding extinction: I believe that if we destroy mankind, as we now can, this outcome will be much worse than most people think. Compare three outcomes: (1) Peace. (2) A nuclear war that kills 99% of the world’s existing population. (3) A nuclear war that kills 100%. (2) would be worse than (1), and (3) would be worse than (2). Which is the greater of these two differences? Most people believe that the greater difference is between (1) and (2). I believe that the difference between (2) and (3) is very much greater. ... The Earth will remain habitable for at least another billion years. Civilization began only a few thousand years ago. If we do not destroy mankind, these few thousand years may be only a tiny fraction of the whole of civilized human history. The difference between (2) and (3) may thus be the difference between this tiny fraction and all of the rest of this history. If we compare this possible history to a day, what has occurred so far is only a fraction of a second.65 In this argument, it seems that Parfit is assuming that the survivors of a nuclear war that kills 99% of the population would eventually be able to recover civilisation without long-term effect. As we have seen, this may not be a safe assumption – but for the purposes of this thought experiment, the point stands. What makes existential catastrophes especially bad is that they would “destroy the future,” as another Oxford philosopher, Nick Bostrom, puts it.66 This future could potentially be extremely long and full of flourishing, and would therefore have extremely large value. In standard risk analysis, when working out how to respond to risk, we work out the expected value of risk reduction, by weighing the probability that an action will prevent an adverse event against the severity of the event. Because the value of preventing existential catastrophe is so vast, even a tiny probability of prevention has huge expected value.67 Of course, there is persisting reasonable disagreement about ethics and there are a number of ways one might resist this conclusion.68 Therefore, it would be unjustified to be overconfident in Parfit and Bostrom’s argument. In some areas, government policy does give significant weight to future generations. For example, in assessing the risks of nuclear waste storage, governments have considered timeframes of thousands, hundreds of thousands, and even a million years.69 Justifications for this policy usually appeal to principles of intergenerational equity according to which future generations ought to get as much protection as current generations.70 Similarly, widely accepted norms of sustainable development require development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.71 However, when it comes to existential risk, it would seem that we fail to live up to principles of intergenerational equity. Existential catastrophe would not only give future generations less than the current generations; it would give them nothing. Indeed, reducing existential risk plausibly has a quite low cost for us in comparison with the huge expected value it has for future generations. In spite of this, relatively little is done to reduce existential risk. Unless we give up on norms of intergenerational equity, they give us a strong case for significantly increasing our efforts to reduce existential risks. 1.3. WHY EXISTENTIAL RISKS MAY BE SYSTEMATICALLY UNDERINVESTED IN, AND THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY In spite of the importance of existential risk reduction, it probably receives less attention than is warranted. As a result, concerted international cooperation is required if we are to receive adequate protection from existential risks. 1.3.1. Why existential risks are likely to be underinvested in There are several reasons why existential risk reduction is likely to be underinvested in. Firstly, it is a global public good. Economic theory predicts that such goods tend to be underprovided. The benefits of existential risk reduction are widely and indivisibly dispersed around the globe from the countries responsible for taking action. Consequently, a country which reduces existential risk gains only a small portion of the benefits but bears the full brunt of the costs. Countries thus have strong incentives to free ride, receiving the benefits of risk reduction without contributing. As a result, too few do what is in the common interest. Secondly, as already suggested above, existential risk reduction is an intergenerational public good: most of the benefits are enjoyed by future generations who have no say in the political process. For these goods, the problem is temporal free riding: the current generation enjoys the benefits of inaction while future generations bear the costs. Thirdly, many existential risks, such as machine superintelligence, engineered pandemics, and solar geoengineering, pose an unprecedented and uncertain future threat. Consequently, it is hard to develop a satisfactory governance regime for them: there are few existing governance instruments which can be applied to these risks, and it is unclear what shape new instruments should take. In this way, our position with regard to these emerging risks is comparable to the one we faced when nuclear weapons first became available. Cognitive biases also lead people to underestimate existential risks. Since there have not been any catastrophes of this magnitude, these risks are not salient to politicians and the public.72 This is an example of the misapplication of the availability heuristic, a mental shortcut which assumes that something is important only if it can be readily recalled. Another cognitive bias affecting perceptions of existential risk is scope neglect. In a seminal 1992 study, three groups were asked how much they would be willing to pay to save 2,000, 20,000 or 200,000 birds from drowning in uncovered oil ponds. The groups answered $80, $78, and $88, respectively.73 In this case, the size of the benefits had little effect on the scale of the preferred response. People become numbed to the effect of saving lives when the numbers get too large. 74 Scope neglect is a particularly acute problem for existential risk because the numbers at stake are so large. Due to scope neglect, decision-makers are prone to treat existential risks in a similar way to problems which are less severe by many orders of magnitude. A wide range of other cognitive biases are likely to affect the evaluation of existential risks.75

#### Rigorous climate simulations prove that hydrophilic black carbon would cause to atmospheric precipitation – results in a rainout effect that quickly reverses nuclear cooling

Reisner et al. 18 (Jon Reisner – Climate and atmospheric scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Gennaro D’Angelo – Climate scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Research scientist at the SETI institute, Associate specialist at the University of California, Santa Cruz, NASA Postdoctoral Fellow at the NASA Ames Research Center, UKAFF Fellow at the University of Exeter. Eunmo Koo - Scientist at Applied Terrestrial, Energy, and Atmospheric Modeling (ATEAM) Team, in Computational Earth Science Group (EES-16) in Earth and Environmental Sciences Division and Co-Lead of Parallel Computing Summer Research Internship (PCSRI) program at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, former Staff research associate at UC Berkeley. Wesley Even - Computational scientist in the Computational Physics and Methods Group at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Matthew Hecht – Atmospheric scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Elizabeth Hunke - Lead developer for the Los Alamos Sea Ice Model (CICE) at the Los Alamos National Laboratory responsible for development and incorporation of new parameterizations, model testing and validation, computational performance, documentation, and consultation with external model users on all aspects of sea ice modeling, including interfacing with global climate and earth system models. Darin Comeau – Climate scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Randy Bos - Project leader at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, former Weapons Effects program manager at Tech-Source. James Cooley – Computational scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory specializing in weapons physics, emergency response, and computational physics. <MKIM> “Climate impact of a regional nuclear weapons exchange:An improved assessment based on detailed source calculations”. 3/16/18. DOA: 7/13/19. <https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/2017JD027331>)

\*BC = Black Carbon

The no-rubble simulation produces a significantly more intense fire, with more fire spread, and consequently a significantly stronger plume with larger amounts of BC reaching into the upper atmosphere than the simulation with rubble, illustrated in Figure 5. While the no-rubble simulation **represents the worst-case scenario** involving vigorous fire activity, **only a relatively small amount of carbon makes its way into the stratosphere** during the course of the simulation. But while small compared to the surface BC mass, stratospheric BC amounts from the current simulations are significantly higher than what would be expected from burning vegetation such as trees (Heilman et al., 2014), e.g., the higher energy density of the building fuels and the initial fluence from the weapon produce an intense response within HIGRAD with initial updrafts of order 100 m/s in the lower troposphere. Or, in comparison to a mass fire, wildfires will burn only a small amount of fuel in the corresponding time period (roughly 10 minutes) that a nuclear weapon fluence can effectively ignite a large area of fuel producing an impressive atmospheric response. Figure 6 shows vertical profiles of BC multiplied by 100 (number of cities involved in the exchange) from the two simulations. The total amount of BC produced is in line with previous estimates (about 3.69 Tg from no-rubble simulation); however, the majority of BC resides **below the stratosphere** (3.46 Tg below 12 km) and can be **readily impacted by scavenging from precipitation** either via pyro-cumulonimbus produced by the fire itself (not modeled) or other synoptic weather systems. While the impact on climate of these more realistic profiles will be explored in the next section, it should be mentioned that **these estimates are** still **at the high end**, considering the inherent simplifications in the combustion model that lead to **overestimating BC production**. 3.3 Climate Results Long-term climatic effects critically depend on the initial injection height of the soot, with larger quantities reaching the upper troposphere/lower stratosphere inducing a greater cooling impact because of longer residence times (Robock et al., 2007a). Absorption of solar radiation by the BC aerosol and its subsequent radiative cooling tends to heat the surrounding air, driving an initial upward diffusion of the soot plumes, an effect that depends on the initial aerosol concentrations. **Mixing and sedimentation** tend to **reduce this process**, and low altitude emissions are also significantly impacted by precipitation if aging of the BC aerosol occurs on sufficiently rapid timescales. But once at stratospheric altitudes, aerosol dilution via coagulation is hindered by low particulate concentrations (e.g., Robock et al., 2007a) and lofting to much higher altitudes is inhibited by gravitational settling in the low-density air (Stenke et al., 2013), resulting in more stable BC concentrations over long times. Of the initial BC mass released in the atmosphere, most of which is emitted below 9 km, **70% rains out within the first month** and 78%, or about 2.9 Tg, is removed within the first two months (Figure 7, solid line), with the remainder (about 0.8 Tg, dashed line) being transported above about 12 km (200 hPa) within the first week. This outcome differs from the findings of, e.g., Stenke et al. (2013, their high BC-load cases) and Mills et al. (2014), who found that most of the BC mass (between 60 and 70%) is lifted in the stratosphere within the first couple of weeks. This can also be seen in Figure 8 (red lines) and in Figure 9, which include results from our calculation with the initial BC distribution from Mills et al. (2014). In that case, only 30% of the initial BC mass rains out in the troposphere during the first two weeks after the exchange, with the remainder rising to the stratosphere. In the study of Mills et al. (2008) this percentage is somewhat smaller, about 20%, and smaller still in the experiments of Robock et al. (2007a) in which the soot is initially emitted in the upper troposphere or higher. In Figure 7, the e-folding timescale for the removal of tropospheric soot, here interpreted as the time required for an initial drop of a factor e, is about one week. This result compares favorably with the “LT” experiment of Robock et al. (2007a), considering 5 Tg of BC released in the lower troposphere, in which 50% of the aerosols are removed within two weeks. By contrast, the initial e-folding timescale for the removal of stratospheric soot in Figure 8 is about 4.2 years (blue solid line), compared to about 8.4 years for the calculation using Mills et al. (2014) initial BC emission (red solid line). The removal timescale from our forced ensemble simulations is close to those obtained by Mills et al. (2008) in their 1 Tg experiment, by Robock et al. (2007a) in their experiment “UT 1 Tg”, and © 2018 American Geophysical Union. All rights reserved. by Stenke et al. (2013) in their experiment “Exp1”, in all of which 1 Tg of soot was emitted in the atmosphere in the aftermath of the exchange. Notably, the e-folding timescale for the decline of the BC mass in Figure 8 (blue solid line) is also close to the value of about 4 years quoted by Pausata et al. (2016) for their long-term “intermediate” scenario. In that scenario, which is also based on 5 Tg of soot initially distributed as in Mills et al. (2014), the factor-of2 shorter residence time of the aerosols is caused by particle growth via coagulation of BC with organic carbon. Figure 9 shows the BC mass-mixing ratio, horizontally averaged over the globe, as a function of atmospheric pressure (height) and time. The BC distributions used in our simulations imply that the upward transport of particles is substantially less efficient compared to the case in which 5 Tg of BC is directly injected into the upper troposphere. The semiannual cycle of lofting and sinking of the aerosols is associated with atmospheric heating and cooling during the solstice in each hemisphere (Robock et al., 2007a). During the first year, the oscillation amplitude in our forced ensemble simulations is particularly large during the summer solstice, compared to that during the winter solstice (see bottom panel of Figure 9), because of the higher soot concentrations in the Northern Hemisphere, as can be seen in Figure 11 (see also left panel of Figure 12). Comparing the top and bottom panels of Figure 9, the BC reaches the highest altitudes during the first year in both cases, but the concentrations at 0.1 hPa in the top panel can be 200 times as large. Qualitatively, the difference can be understood in terms of the air temperature increase caused by BC radiation emission, which is several tens of kelvin degrees in the simulations of Robock et al. (2007a, see their Figure 4), Mills et al. (2008, see their Figure 5), Stenke et al. (2013, see high-load cases in their Figure 4), Mills et al. (2014, see their Figure 7), and Pausata et al. (2016, see one-day emission cases in their Figure 1), due to high BC concentrations, but it amounts to only about 10 K in our forced ensemble simulations, as illustrated in Figure 10. Results similar to those presented in Figure 10 were obtained from the experiment “Exp1” performed by Stenke et al. (2013, see their Figure 4). **In that scenario as well, somewhat less that 1 Tg of BC remained in the atmosphere after the initial rainout**. As mentioned before, the BC aerosol that remains in the atmosphere, lifted to stratospheric heights by the rising soot plumes, undergoes sedimentation over a timescale of several years (Figures 8 and 9). This mass represents the effective amount of BC that can force climatic changes over multi-year timescales. In the forced ensemble simulations, it is about 0.8 Tg after the initial rainout, whereas it is about 3.4 Tg in the simulation with an initial soot distribution as in Mills et al. (2014). Our more realistic source simulation involves the worstcase assumption of no-rubble (along with other assumptions) and hence serves as an upper bound for the impact on climate. As mentioned above and further discussed below, our scenario induces perturbations on the climate system similar to those found in previous studies in which the climatic response was driven by roughly 1 Tg of soot rising to stratospheric heights following the exchange. Figure 11 illustrates the vertically integrated mass-mixing ratio of BC over the globe, at various times after the exchange for the simulation using the initial BC distribution of Mills et al. (2014, upper panels) and as an average from the forced ensemble members (lower panels). All simulations predict enhanced concentrations at high latitudes during the first year after the exchange. In the cases shown in the top panels, however, these high concentrations persist for several years (see also Figure 1 of Mills et al., 2014), whereas the forced ensemble simulations indicate that the BC concentration starts to decline after the first year. In fact, in the simulation represented in the top panels, mass-mixing ratios larger than about 1 kg of BC © 2018 American Geophysical Union. All rights reserved. per Tg of air persist for well over 10 years after the exchange, whereas they only last for 3 years in our forced simulations (compare top and middle panels of Figure 9). After the first year, values drop below 3 kg BC/Tg air, whereas it takes about 8 years to reach these values in the simulation in the top panels (see also Robock et al., 2007a). Over crop-producing, midlatitude regions in the Northern Hemisphere, the BC loading is reduced from more than 0.8 kg BC/Tg air in the simulation in the top panels to 0.2-0.4 kg BC/Tg air in our forced simulations (see middle and right panels). The more rapid clearing of the atmosphere in the forced ensemble is also signaled by the soot optical depth in the visible radiation spectrum, which drops below values of 0.03 toward the second half of the first year at mid latitudes in the Northern Hemisphere, and everywhere on the globe after about 2.5 years (without never attaining this value in the Southern Hemisphere). In contrast, the soot optical depth in the calculation shown in the top panels of Figure 11 becomes smaller than 0.03 everywhere only after about 10 years. The two cases show a similar tendency, in that the BC optical depth is typically lower between latitudes 30º S-30º N than it is at other latitudes. This behavior is associated to the persistence of stratospheric soot toward high-latitudes and the Arctic/Antarctic regions, as illustrated by the zonally-averaged, column-integrated mass-mixing ratio of the BC in Figure 12 for both the forced ensemble simulations (left panel) and the simulation with an initial 5 Tg BC emission in the upper troposphere (right panel). The spread in the globally averaged (near) surface temperature of the atmosphere, from the control (left panel) and forced (right panel) ensembles, is displayed in Figure 13. For each month, the plots show the largest variations (i.e., maximum and minimum values), within each ensemble of values obtained for that month, relative to the mean value of that month. The plot also shows yearly-averaged data (thinner lines). The spread is comparable in the control and forced ensembles, with average values calculated over the 33-years run length of 0.4-0.5 K. This spread is also similar to the internal variability of the globally averaged surface temperature quoted for the NCAR Large Ensemble Community Project (Kay et al., 2015). These results imply that surface air temperature differences, between forced and control simulations, which lie within the spread may not be distinguished from effects due to internal variability of the two simulation ensembles. Figure 14 shows the difference in the globally averaged surface temperature of the atmosphere (top panel), net solar radiation flux at surface (middle panel), and precipitation rate (bottom panel), computed as the (forced minus control) difference in ensemble mean values. The sum of standard deviations from each ensemble is shaded. Differences are qualitatively significant over the first few years, when the anomalies lie near or outside the total standard deviation. Inside the shaded region, differences may not be distinguished from those arising from the internal variability of one or both ensembles. The surface solar flux (middle panel) is the quantity that appears most affected by the BC emission, with qualitatively significant differences persisting for about 5 years. The precipitation rate (bottom panel) is instead affected only at the very beginning of the simulations. The red lines in all panels show the results from the simulation applying the initial BC distribution of Mills et al. (2014), where the period of significant impact is much longer owing to the higher altitude of the initial soot distribution that results in longer residence times of the BC aerosol in the atmosphere. When yearly averages of the same quantities are performed over the IndiaPakistan region, the differences in ensemble mean values lie within the total standard deviations of the two ensembles. The results in Figure 14 can also be compared to the outcomes of other previous studies. In their experiment “UT 1 Tg”, Robock et al. (2007a) found that, when only 1 Tg of soot © 2018 American Geophysical Union. All rights reserved. remains in the atmosphere after the initial rainout, temperature and precipitation anomalies are about 20% of those obtained from their standard 5 Tg BC emission case. Therefore, the largest differences they observed, during the first few years after the exchange, were about - 0.3 K and -0.06 mm/day, respectively, comparable to the anomalies in the top and bottom panels of Figure 14. Their standard 5 Tg emission case resulted in a solar radiation flux anomaly at surface of -12 W/m2 after the second year (see their Figure 3), between 5 and 6 time as large as the corresponding anomalies from our ensembles shown in the middle panel. In their experiment “Exp1”, Stenke et al. (2013) reported global mean surface temperature anomalies not exceeding about 0.3 K in magnitude and precipitation anomalies hovering around -0.07 mm/day during the first few years, again consistent with the results of Figure 14. In a recent study, Pausata et al. (2016) considered the effects of an admixture of BC and organic carbon aerosols, both of which would be emitted in the atmosphere in the aftermath of a nuclear exchange. In particular, they concentrated on the effects of coagulation of these aerosol species and examined their climatic impacts. The initial BC distribution was as in Mills et al. (2014), although the soot burden was released in the atmosphere over time periods of various lengths. Most relevant to our and other previous work are their one-day emission scenarios. They found that, during the first year, the largest values of the atmospheric surface temperature anomalies ranged between about -0.5 and -1.3 K, those of the sea surface temperature anomalies ranged between -0.2 and -0.55 K, and those of the precipitation anomalies varied between -0.15 and -0.2 mm/day. All these ranges are compatible with our results shown in Figure 14 as red lines and with those of Mills et al. (2014, see their Figures 3 and 6). As already mentioned in Section 2.3, the net solar flux anomalies at surface are also consistent. This overall agreement suggests that the **inclusion of organic carbon aerosols, and** ensuing **coagulation** with BC, **should not dramatically alter the climatic effects** resulting from our forced ensemble simulations. Moreover, aerosol growth would likely **shorten the residence time of the BC particulate in the atmosphere** (Pausata et al., 2016), possibly **reducing the duration of these effects.**

#### Isolated island populations repopulate Earth after radiation and nuclear winter – bunkers and submarines expand the likelihood of survival

Turchin and Green 18 (Alexey Turchin – Scientist for the Foundation Science for Life Extension in Moscow, Russia, Founder of Digital Immortality Now, author of several books and articles on the topics of existential risks and life extension. Brian Patrick Green – Director of technology ethics at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, teaches AI ethics in the Graduate School of Engineering at Santa Clara University. <MKIM> “Islands as refuges for surviving global catastrophes”. September 2018. DOA: 7/20/19. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/FS-04-2018-0031/full/html?fullSc=1&mbSc=1&fullSc=1)

Different types of possible catastrophes suggest different scenarios for how survival could happen on an island. What is important is that the island should have properties which protect against the specific dangers of particular global catastrophic risks. Specifically, different islands will provide protection against different risks, and their natural diversity will contribute to a higher total level of protection: **Quarantined island survives pandemic** . An island could impose effective quarantine if it is sufficiently remote and simultaneously able to protect itself, possibly using military ships and air defense. **Far northern aboriginal people survive an ice age**. Many far northern people have adapted to survive in extremely cold and dangerous environments, and under the right circumstances could potentially survive the return of an ice age. However, their cultures are endangered by globalization. If these people become dependent on the products of modern civilization, such as rifles and motor boats, and lose their native survival skills, then their likelihood of surviving the collapse of the outside world would decrease. Therefore, preservation of their survival skills may be important as a defense against the risks connected with **extreme cooling**. Remote polar island with high mountains survives brief global warming of median surface temperatures, up to 50˚C. There is a theory that the climates of planets similar to the Earth could have several semi-stable temperature levels (Popp et al., 2016). If so, because of climate change, the Earth could transition to a second semi-stable state with a median global temperature of around 330 K, about 60˚C, or about 45˚C above current global mean temperatures. But even in this climate, **some regions of Earth could still be survivable for humans**, such as the Himalayan plateau at elevations above 4,000 m, but below 6,000 (where oxygen deficiency becomes a problem), or on polar islands with mountains (however, global warming affects polar regions more than equatorial regions, and northern island will experience more effects of climate change, including thawing permafrost and possible landslides because of wetter weather). In the tropics, the combination of increased humidity and temperature may increase the wet bulb temperature above 36˚C, especially on islands, where sea moisture is readily available. In such conditions, proper human perspiration becomes impossible (Sherwood and Huber, 2010), and there will likely be increased mortality and morbidity because of tropical diseases. If temperatures later returned to normal – either naturally or through climate engineering – **the rest of the Earth could be repopulated**. ‘‘Swiss Family Robinsons’’ survive on a tropical island, unnoticed by a military robot ‘‘mutiny’’. Most AI researchers ignore medium-term AI risks, which are neither near-term risks, like unemployment, nor remote risks, like AI superintelligence. But a large drone army – if one were produced – could receive a wrong command or be infected by a computer virus, leading it to attack people indiscriminately. Remote islands without robots could provide protection in this case, allowing survival until such a drone army ran out of batteries, fuel, ammunition or other supplies: Primitive tribe survives civilizational collapse. The inhabitants of **North Sentinel Island**, near the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean, are hostile and uncontacted. **The Sentinelese survived the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami apparently unaffected** (Voanews, 2009), and if the rest of humanity disappear, **they might well continue their existence without change.** Tropical Island survives extreme global nuclear winter and glaciation event. Were a **nuclear**, bolide impactor or volcanic “**winter**” scenario to unfold, these islands would remain surrounded by Warm Ocean, and local volcanism or other energy sources might provide heat, energy and food. Such island refuges may have helped life on Earth survive during the **“Snowball Earth”** event in Earth’s distant past (Hoffman et al., 1998). Remote island base for project “Yellow submarine”. Some catastrophic risks such as a gamma ray burst, a global nuclear war with high radiological contamination or multiple pandemics might be best survived **underwater in nuclear submarines** (Turchin and Green, 2017). However, after a catastrophe, the submarine with survivors would eventually need a place to dock, and an island with some prepared amenities would be a reasonable starting point for rebuilding civilization. Bunker on remote island. For risks which include multiple or complex catastrophes, such as a bolide impact, extreme volcanism, tsunamis, multiple pandemics and nuclear war with radiological contamination, **island refuges could be strengthened with bunkers**. Richard Branson survived hurricane Irma on his own island in 2017 by seeking refuge in his concrete wine cellar (Clifford, 2017). Bunkers on islands would have higher survivability compared to those close to population centers, as they will be neither a military target nor as accessible to looters or unintentionally dangerous (e.g. infected) refugees. These bunkers could potentially be connected to water sources by underwater pipes, and passages could provide cooling, access and even oxygen and food sources.

## nr

### 2nc top-level

#### Probabilistically outweigh- 10% each century

Phil **Torres**, 8-17-20**16**, "The Looming Extinction of Humankind, Explained," Vice, https://www.vice.com/en\_us/article/vv7pzb/armageddon-comma-explained

For most people, driving with a seat belt tightly strapped around their bodies is a smart habit. Not only is racing down the highway without it illegal—"click it or ticket," as the slogan goes—but seat belts also "reduce serious crash-related injuries and deaths by about half." Yet as we've previously estimated, your chances of dying in a car crash are at least 9.5 times lower than dying in a human extinction event. If this sounds incredible—and admittedly, it does—it's because the human mind is susceptible to cognitive biases that distort our understanding of reality. Consider the fact that you're more likely to be killed by a meteorite than a lightning bolt, and your chances of being struck by lightning are about four times greater than dying in a terrorist attack. In other words, you should be more worried about meteorites than the Islamic State or al-Qaeda (at least for now). The calculation above is based on an assumption made by the influential "Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change," a report prepared for the UK government that describes climate change as "the greatest and widest-ranging market failure ever seen." In making its case that climate change should be a top priority, the Stern Review stipulates a 0.1 percent annual probability of human extinction. This number might appear minuscule at first glance, but over the course of a century it yields a whopping 9.5 percent probability of our species going extinct. Even more, compared to estimates offered by others, it's actually quite low. For example, a 2008 survey of experts put the probability of human extinction this century at 19 percent. And the co-founder of the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, Sir Martin Rees, argues that civilization has a 50:50 chance of making it through the current century—a mere coin toss How could the probability of a global disaster be so much greater than that of dying in a car accident? How is this possible? How could the probability of a global disaster be so much greater than that of dying in a car accident? To be sure, these estimates could be wrong. While some existential risks, such as asteroid impacts and super-volcanic eruptions, can be estimated using objective historical data, risks associated with future technologies require a good dose of speculation. Nonetheless, we know enough about certain technological trends and natural phenomena to make at least some reasonable claims about what our existential situation will look like in the future. There are three broad categories of "existential risks," or scenarios that would either cause our extinction or permanently catapult us back into the Stone Age. The first includes natural risks like asteroid and comet impacts, super-volcanic eruptions, global pandemics, and even supernovae. These form our cosmic risk background and, as just suggested, some of these risks are relatively easy to estimate. As you may recall from middle school, an assassin from the heavens, possibly a comet, smashed into the Yucatan Peninsula 66 million years ago and killed almost all of the dinosaurs. And about 75,000 years ago, a super-volcano in Indonesia caused the Toba catastrophe, which some scientists believe dramatically reduced the human population, though this claim is controversial. Few people today realize just how close humanity may have come to extinction in the Paleolithic. Although the "dread factor" of pandemics tends to be lower than wars and terrorist attacks, they have resulted in some of the most significant episodes of mass death in human history. For example, the 1918 Spanish flu killed about 3 percent (though some estimates are double that) of the human population and infected roughly a third of all humans between 1918 and 1920. In absolute numbers, it threw roughly 33 million more people into the grave than all the bayonets, bullets, and bombs of World War I, which lasted from 1914 to 1918. And based on CDC estimates, the fourteenth-century Black Death, caused by the bubonic plague, could have taken approximately the same number of lives as World War II, World War I, the Crusades, the Mongol conquests, the Russian Civil War, and the Thirty Years' War combined. (Take note, anti-vaxxers!) INFLUENZA PATIENTS DURING THE 1918 FLU PANDEMIC IN IOWA. IMAGE: OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HISTORIAN The second category of existential risks concerns advanced technologies, which could cause unprecedented harm through "error or terror." Historically speaking, humanity created the first anthropogenic risk in 1945 when we detonated an atomic bomb in the New Mexico desert. Since this watershed event, humanity has lived in the flickering shadows of a nuclear holocaust, a fact that led a group of physicists to create the Doomsday Clock, which metaphorically represents our collective nearness to disaster. While nuclear tensions peaked during the Cold War—President Kennedy even estimated that the likelihood of nuclear war at one point was "between 1 in 3 and even"—the situation improved significantly after the Iron Curtain fell. Unfortunately, US-Russian relations have recently deteriorated, leading Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to suggest that, "we have slid back to a new Cold War." As we write this, the Doomsday Clock is set to a mere three minutes before midnight—or doom—which is the second closest it's been to midnight since its creation in 1947. While nuclear weapons constitute the greatest current risk to human survival, they may be among the least of our concerns by the end of this century. Why? Because of the risks associated with emerging fields like biotechnology, synthetic biology, and nanotechnology. The key point to understand here is that these fields are not only becoming exponentially more powerful, but their products are becoming increasingly accessible to groups and individuals as well. For example, it's increasingly possible for nonexperts to cobble together a makeshift gene-editing laboratory. The affordability of home-built labs is being driven in part by the biohacking movement, which aims to empower interested hobbyists by making inexpensive, automated equipment readily available. DNA material can also be ordered from commercial providers, as journalists for the Guardiandiscovered in 2006 when they managed to acquire "part of [the] smallpox genome through mail order." Even more, anyone with an internet connection can access databases that contain the genetic sequences of pathogens like Ebola. We're a long way from programming organisms' DNA the way we program software. But if these trends continue (as they likely will), terrorists and lone wolves of the future will almost certainly have the ability to engineer pandemics of global proportions, and perhaps even more devastating than anything our species has previously encountered. As for nanotechnology, the most well-known risk stems from what's called the grey goo scenario. This involves tiny self-replicating machines, or nanobots, programmed to disassemble whatever matter they come into contact with and reorganize those atoms into exact replicas of themselves. The resulting nanorobotic clones would then convert all the matter around them into even more copies. Because of the exponential rate of replication, the entire biosphere could be transformed into a wriggling swarm of mindlessly reproducing nanobots in a relatively short period of time. Alternatively, a terrorist could design such nanobots to selectively destroy organisms with a specific genetic signature. An ecoterrorist who wants to remove humanity from the planet without damaging the global ecosystem could potentially create self-replicating nanobots that specifically target Homo sapiens, thereby resulting in our extinction.

#### That outweighs

Milan M. **Ćirković 19**. Future of Humanity Institute, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford. 01/01/2019. “Space Colonization Remains the Only Long-Term Option for Humanity: A Reply to Torres.” Futures, vol. 105, pp. 166–173.

Perhaps a skeptic wants to believe (as a kind of anti-agent Moulder, of the X-Files’ fame) that extraterrestrial intelligence is nonexistent or vanishingly rare? To begin with, it would be strange to bet the long-term future of humanity on such a technical astrobiological issue, on which we can exert no influence whatsoever. Extraterrestrial life either exists or it does not, irrespectively of any amount of our ethical or political hand-wringing. So, lacking specific information for one or the other, we should certainly make strategies for both options. Further, the advances of astrobiology over the last quarter century offer many reasons for cautious belief in the conclusion that life and intelligence are reasonably abundant in astrophysically and astrochemically permissible ecosystems. Some of the arguments to that effect are summarized in Ćirković (2012).11 Even if, by some quirk of astrobiological evolution, humanity is the first intelligent species to arise in the Milky Way (as, for instance, per the well-known argument of Carter, 1983, 2008), following Torres’s advice and relinquishing space colonization will simply ensure that the second, third, or 275th intelligent species to evolve will indeed colonize the Galaxy instead of humans. If, on the other hand, Torres is wrong and it is possible to colonize the Galaxy in a peaceful and prosperous manner, humanity might survive on Earth in a kind of zoo or preserve, surrounded by friendly and considerate interstellar aliens – but obviously failing to realize its creative potential (which would also count as an existential catastrophe in Bostrom’s taxonomy).12 There is simply no way out of that quandary, unless one is a creationist who believes that humanity originated by Divine supernatural act and there is exactly zero probability of abiogenesis/noogenesis occurring elsewhere. In general, no naturalistic utilitarian calculus of various scenarios for the future of humanity could be complete if it does not take extraterrestrial intelligence into account.

### --2nc at far off

#### It'll be quick

Tim Urban 15 {Creator of Wait But Why, with a degree from Harvard and a close friend of Elon Musk. 1-22-2015. “ The AI Revolution: The Road to Superintelligence.” https://waitbutwhy.com/2015/01/artificial-intelligence-revolution-1.html}//JM

I hope you enjoyed normal time, because this is when this topic gets unnormal and scary, and it’s gonna stay that way from here forward. I want to pause here to remind you that every single thing I’m going to say is real—real science and real forecasts of the future from a large array of the most respected thinkers and scientists. Just keep remembering that. Anyway, as I said above, most of our current models for getting to AGI involve the AI getting there by self-improvement. And once it gets to AGI, even systems that formed and grew through methods that didn’t involve self-improvement would now be smart enough to begin self-improving if they wanted to.3 And here’s where we get to an intense concept: recursive self-improvement. It works like this— An AI system at a certain level—let’s say human village idiot—is programmed with the goal of improving its own intelligence. Once it does, it’s smarter—maybe at this point it’s at Einstein’s level—so now when it works to improve its intelligence, with an Einstein-level intellect, it has an easier time and it can make bigger leaps. These leaps make it much smarter than any human, allowing it to make even bigger leaps. As the leaps grow larger and happen more rapidly, the AGI soars upwards in intelligence and soon reaches the superintelligent level of an ASI system. This is called an Intelligence Explosion,11 and it’s the ultimate example of The Law of Accelerating Returns. There is some debate about how soon AI will reach human-level general intelligence. The median year on a survey of hundreds of scientists about when they believed we’d be more likely than not to have reached AGI was 2040 12—that’s only 25 years from now, which doesn’t sound that huge until you consider that many of the thinkers in this field think it’s likely that the progression from AGI to ASI happens very quickly. Like—this could happen: It takes decades for the first AI system to reach low-level general intelligence, but it finally happens. A computer is able to understand the world around it as well as a human four-year-old. Suddenly, within an hour of hitting that milestone, the system pumps out the grand theory of physics that unifies general relativity and quantum mechanics, something no human has been able to definitively do. 90 minutes after that, the AI has become an ASI, 170,000 times more intelligent than a human. Superintelligence of that magnitude is not something we can remotely grasp, any more than a bumblebee can wrap its head around Keynesian Economics. In our world, smart means a 130 IQ and stupid means an 85 IQ—we don’t have a word for an IQ of 12,952. What we do know is that humans’ utter dominance on this Earth suggests a clear rule: with intelligence comes power. Which means an ASI, when we create it, will be the most powerful being in the history of life on Earth, and all living things, including humans, will be entirely at its whim—and this might happen in the next few decades.

### 2nc particle accelerator

#### Particle acceleration disasters cause galactic extinction- that outweighs

Milan M. **Cirkovic**, Anders **Sandberg, and** Nick **Bostrom**, **’10**, “Anthropic Shadow: Observation Selection Effects and Human Extinction Risks,” Risk Analysis, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1539-6924.2010.01460.x>

An example par excellence of a Q = 0 event is a vacuum phase transition or a comparable quantum field collapse. Such an event would not only extinguish humanity but also completely and permanently destroy the terrestrial biosphere. Coleman and De Luccia first mentioned the possibility that such a disaster might be caused by the operation of high-energy particle colliders used in physics research.(40) This possibility has since been widely discussed,(10,41−46) and has motivated objections to the operation of high-energy particle colliders, including most recently the Large Hadron Collider.(46,47) Three specific threats are relevant: (1) triggering vacuum phase transition through creation of an expanding bubble of “new” vacuum state, (2) accidental production of charged strangelets, which could transform all Earth’s mass into strange matter, and (3) accidental production of a mini black hole falling into Earth’s center and subsequently destroying our planet. Although smacking of science fiction, this idea has been seriously considered even by high-level 1504 Cirkovi ´ c, Sandberg, and Bostrom ´ administrators of modern particle-accelerator laboratories.(48) This is not only an eschatological issue for humanity: a vacuum phase transition would also destroy the habitability of the universe for any other observers in our future light cone. Even if the chance of such a disaster is remote, its catastrophic impact would be so enormous that it deserves close scrutiny. Hut and Rees, in an important pioneering study of the problem of high-energy physics risks, suggested that concerns about particle colliders can be reasonably dismissed because high-energy particle collisions occurring in nature, such as those between cosmic-rays and the Earth’s atmosphere or the solid mass of the Moon, are still orders of magnitude higher than those achievable in human laboratories in the near future.(10) With plausible general assumptions on the scaling of the relevant reaction crosssections with energy, Hut and Rees concluded that the fact that the Earth (and the Moon) have survived cosmic-ray bombardment for about 4.5 Gyr implies that we are safe for the foreseeable future. For example, if the probability of a high-energy physics disaster in nature is 10−50 per year, then a doubling or even 10-fold increase of the risk through deliberate human activities is arguably trivial. The Hut-Rees argument should provide us no comfort, however, as it fails to correct for anthropic bias. A vacuum phase transition is an event for which Q = 0. Probability estimates based on observations of the Earth’s and Moon’s existence are thus completely unreliable. Moreover, the unreliability of these estimates applies to both naturally occurring and humaninduced vacuum phase transitions. (Hut and Rees also conclude, completely justifiably, that the number of potentially risky events in any conceivable human accelerator is much smaller than in the cosmicray interactions in nature.) Unfortunately, the same error is repeated in the recent Large Hadron Collider (LHC) safety study, where the duration of the solar system thus far is invoked as part of the arguments for accelerator safety.(46)

#### Particle accelerator accidents cause extinction—black holes won’t evaporate, high energy densities create vacuums, and strange matter is more stable than regular matter

Toby **Ord**, 10-30-200**8**, Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford. "Probing the Improbable: Methodological Challenges for Risks with Low Probabilities and High Stakes," arXiv.org, https://arxiv.org/abs/0810.5515

Particle physics is the study of the elementary constituents of matter and radiation, and the interactions between them. A major experimental method in particle physics involves the use of particle accelerators such as the RHIC and LHC to bring beams of particles to near the speed of light and then collide them together. This focuses a large amount of energy in a very small region and breaks the particles down into their components, which are then detected. As particle accelerators have become larger, the energy densities achieved have become more extreme, prompting some concern about their safety. These safety concerns have focused on three possibilities: the formation of ‘true vacuum’, the transformation of the earth into ‘strange matter’, and the destruction of the earth through the creation of a black hole. 4.1 True vacuum and strange matter formation The type of vacuum that exists in our universe might not be the lowest possible vacuum energy state. In this case, the vacuum could decay to the lowest energy state, either spontaneously, or if triggered by a sufficient disturbance. This would produce a bubble of ‘true vacuum’ expanding outwards at the speed of light, converting the universe into different state apparently inhospitable for any kind of life (Turner and Wilczek 1982). Our ordinary matter is composed of electrons and two types of quarks: up quarks and down quarks. Strange matter also contains a third type of quark: the ‘strange’ quark. It has been hypothesized that strange matter might be more stable than 11 normal matter, and able to convert atomic nuclei into more strange matter (Witten 1984). It has also been hypothesized that particle accelerators could produce small negatively charged clumps of strange matter, known as strangelets. If both these hypotheses were correct and the strangelet also had a high enough chance of interacting with normal matter, it would grow inside the Earth, attracting nuclei at an ever higher rate until the entire planet was converted to strange matter — destroying all life in the process. Unfortunately strange matter is complex and little understood, giving models with widely divergent predictions about its stability, charge and other properties (Jaffe, Busza et al. 2000). One way of bounding the risk from these sources is the cosmic ray argument: the same kind of high-energy particle collisions occur all the time in Earth’s atmosphere, on the surface on the Moon and elsewhere in the universe. The fact that the Moon or observable stars have not been destroyed despite a vast number of past collisions (many at much higher energies than can be achieved in human experiments) suggest that the threat is negligible. This argument was first used against the possibility of vacuum decay (Hut and Rees 1983) but is quite general. An influential analysis of the risk from strange matter was carried out in (Dar, De Rujula et al. 1999) and formed a key part of the safety report for the RHIC. This analysis took into account the issue that any dangerous remnants from cosmic rays striking matter at rest would be moving at high relative velocity (and hence much less likely to interact) while head-on collisions in accelerators could produce remnants moving much at much slower speeds. They used the rate of collisions of cosmic rays in free space to estimate strangelet production. These strangelets would then be slowed by galactic magnetic fields and eventually be absorbed during star formation. When combined with estimates of the supernova rate, this can be used to bound the probability of producing a dangerous strangelet in a particle accelerator. The resulting probability estimate was < 2 ! 10-9 per year of RHIC operation.8 While using empirical bounds and experimentally tested physics reduces the probability of a theory error, the paper needs around 30 steps to reach its conclusion. For example, even if there was just a 10-4 chance of a calculation or modelling error per step this would give a total P(¬A)!"!0.3%. This would easily overshadow the risk estimate. Indeed, even if just one step had a 10-4 chance of error, this would overshadow the estimate. A subtle complication in the cosmic ray argument was noted in (Tegmark and Bostrom 2005). The Earth’s survival so far is not sufficient as evidence for safety, since we do not know if we live in a universe with ‘safe’ natural laws or a universe where planetary implosions or vacuum decay do occur but we have just been exceedingly lucky so far. While this latter possibility might sound very unlikely, all observers in such a universe would find themselves to be in the rare cases where 8 (Kent 2004) points out some mistakes in stating the risk probabilities in different versions of the paper, as well as for the Brookhaven report. Even if these are purely typesetting mistakes, it shows that the probability of erroneous risk estimates is nonzero. 12 their planets and stars had survived, and would thus have much the same evidence as we do. Tegmark and Bostrom had thus found that in ignoring these anthropic effects, the previous model had been overly narrow. They corrected for this anthropic bias and, using analysis from (Jaffe, Busza et al. 2000), concluded that the risk from accelerators was less than 10-12 per year. This is an example of a demonstrated flaw in an important physics risk argument (one that was pivotal in the safety assessment of the RHIC). Moreover, it is significant that the RHIC had been running for five years on the strength of a flawed safety report, before Tegmark and Bostrom noticed and fixed this gap in the argument. Although this flaw was corrected immediately after being found, we should also note that the correction is dependent on both anthropic reasoning and on a complex model of the planetary formation rate (Lineweaver, Fenner et al. 2004). If either of these, or the basic Brookhaven analysis is flawed, the risk estimate is flawed. 4.2 Black hole formation The Large Hadron Collider experiment at CERN was designed to explore the validity and limitations of the Standard Model of particle physics by colliding beams of high energy protons. This will be the most energetic particle collision experiment ever done, which has made it the focus of a recent flurry of concerns. Due to the perceived strength of the previous arguments on vacuum decay and strangelet production, most of the concern about the LHC has focused on black hole production. None of the theory papers we have found appears to have considered the black holes to be a safety hazard, mainly because they all presuppose that any black holes would immediately evaporate due to Hawking radiation. However, it was suggested by (Dimopoulos and Landsberg 2001) that if black holes form, particle accelerators could be used to test the theory of Hawking radiation. Thus critics also began questioning whether we could simply assume that black holes would evaporate harmlessly. A new risk analysis of LHC black-hole production (Giddings and Mangano 2008) provides a good example of how risks can be more effectively bounded through multiple sub-arguments. While never attempting to give a probability of disaster (rather concluding "there is no risk of any significance whatsoever from such black holes") it uses a multiple bounds argument. It first shows that rapid black hole decay is a robust consequence of several different physical theories (A1). Second it discusses the likely incompatibility between non-evaporating black holes and mechanisms for neutralising black holes: in order for cosmic ray–produced stable black holes to be innocuous but accelerator-produced black holes to be dangerous, they have to be able to shed excess charge rapidly (A2). Our current understanding of physics suggests both that black holes decay and that even if they didn’t, they would be unable to discharge themselves. Only if this understanding is flawed will the next section come into play. 13 The third part, which is the bulk of the paper, models how multidimensional and ordinary black holes would interact with matter. This leads to the conclusion that if the size scale of multidimensional gravity is smaller than about 20 nm, then the time required for the black hole to consume the Earth would be larger than the natural lifetime of the planet. For scenarios where rapid Earth accretion is possible, the accretion time inside white dwarves and neutron stars would also be very short, yet production and capture of black holes from impinging cosmic rays would be so high that the lifespan of the stars would be far shorter than the observed lifespan (and would contradict white dwarf cooling rates) (A3). While each of these arguments have weaknesses the force of the total argument (A1,A2,A3) is significantly stronger by the combination of them. Essentially the paper acts as three sequential arguments, each partly filling in the grey area (see figure 1) left by the previous. If the theories surrounding black hole decay fail, the argument about discharge comes into play, and if against all expectation black holes are stable and neutral the third argument shows that astrophysics constrains them to a low accretion rate.

### 2nc mindset shift

#### Major events catalyze political and social solutions that counteract any biological nature – their ev uses data that is cherry-picked and maneuvered to match the political biases of their authors

**Busser 6** [“The Evolution of Security: Revisiting the Human Nature Debate in International Relations”, Mark Busser, Master’s Candidate, Department of Political Science, York University, YCISS Working Paper Number 40, August 2006]

Responding directly to Thayer, Duncan Bell and Paul MacDonald have expressed concern at the intellectual functionalism inherent in sociobiological explanations, suggesting that too often analysts choose a specific behaviour and read backwards into evolutionary epochs in an attempt to rationalize explanations for that behaviour. These arguments, Bell and MacDonald write, often fall into what Richard Lewontin and Stephen Jay Gould have called ‘adaptionism,’ or “the attempt to understand all physiological and behavioural traits of an organism as evolutionary adaptations.”42 Arguments such as these are hand-crafted by their makers, and tend to carry forward their assumptions and biases. In an insightful article, Jason Edwards suggests that sociobiology and its successor, evolutionary psychology, are fundamentally political because they frame their major questions in terms of an assumed individualism. Edwards suggests that the main question in both sub-fields is: “given human nature, how is politics possible?”43 The problem is that the ‘givens’ of human nature are drawn backward from common knowledges and truths about humans in society, and the game-theory experiments which seek to prove them are often created with such assumptions in mind. These arguments are seen by their critics as politicized from the very start. Sociobiology in particular has been widely interpreted as a conservative politico-scientific tool because of these basic assumptions, and because of the political writings of many sociobiologists.44 Because sociobiology naturalizes certain behaviours like conflict, inequality and prejudice, Lewontin et al. suggest that it “sets the stage for legitimation of things as they are.”45 The danger inherent in arguments that incorporate sociobiological arguments into examinations of modern political life, the authors say, is that such arguments naturalize variable behaviours and support discriminatory political structures. Even if certain behaviours are found to have a biological drives behind them, dismissing those behaviours as ‘natural’ precludes the possibility that human actors can make choices and can avoid anti-social, violent, or undesirable action.46 While the attempt to discover a geneticallydetermined human nature has usually been justified under the argument that knowing humankind’s basic genetic programming will help to solve the resulting social problems, discourse about human nature seems to generate self-fulfilling prophesies by putting limits on what is considered politically possible. While sociobiologists tend to distance themselves from the naturalistic fallacy that ‘what is’ is ‘what should be,’ there is still a problem with employing adaptionism to ‘explain’ how existing political structures because conclusions tend to be drawn in terms of conclusions that assert what ‘must be’ because of biologicallyingrained constraints.47 Too firm a focus on sociobiological arguments about ‘natural laws’ draws attention away from humanity’s potential for social and political solutions that can counteract and mediate any inherent biological impulses, whatever they may be. A revived classical realism based on biological arguments casts biology as destiny in a manner that parallels the neo-realist sentiment that the international sphere is doomed to everlasting anarchy. Jim George quotes the English School scholar Martin Wight as writing that “hope is not a political virtue: it is a theological virtue.”48 George questions the practical result of traditional realsist claims, arguing that the suggestion that fallen man’s sinful state can only be redeemed by a higher power puts limitations on what is considered politically possible. Thayer’s argument rejects the religious version of the fallen man for a scientific version, but similar problems remain with his ‘scientific’ conclusions.

### 2nc no nuke winter

#### ---b- They’re isolated and have non-traditional food sources

Turchin and Green 18 (Alexey Turchin – Scientist for the Foundation Science for Life Extension in Moscow, Russia, Founder of Digital Immortality Now, author of several books and articles on the topics of existential risks and life extension. Brian Patrick Green – Director of technology ethics at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, teaches AI ethics in the Graduate School of Engineering at Santa Clara University. <MKIM> “Islands as refuges for surviving global catastrophes”. September 2018. DOA: 7/20/19. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/FS-04-2018-0031/full/html?fullSc=1&mbSc=1&fullSc=1)

Islands offer excellent protection against natural and/or **low-tech catastrophes** which are neither too large nor too small. Remoteness, isolation and the diverse conditions found on different islands could be helpful features to aid survival in the face of different types of catastrophes. Islands could provide protection against a human-to-human transmitted biological pandemic; as mentioned in the Introduction, some islands were able to escape the 1918 flu pandemic by implementing effective quarantine measures. Islands may help to survive a **long-term collapse in food production caused by nuclear winter**, agricultural pests and other catastrophes. Islands often have **non-traditional food sources**, such as birds and sea flora and fauna, which may provide independent subsistence for an indefinitely long period. On remote islands, **the extent of radioactive and chemical contamination from catastrophes would likely be smaller**. This is especially true of islands located in the Southern hemisphere close to the Antarctic, as **winds around the pole maintain some isolation from the rest of the atmosphere**. **Constant rains and winds may accelerate the decontamination of some islands** (like Kerguelen). In addition, **sea animals may be relatively less contaminated food sources**. Islands away from the equator could provide protection against some of the direct effects of a gamma ray burst (muons) (Cirkovi c and Vukoti c, 2016 ) if they were in the constant shadow of the Earth, below the horizon of the gamma ray source. In the case of global war or technological collapse, **many islands could become unreachable**. This would protect them against human-borne diseases, pirates, looters and certain autonomous weapon systems such as land-based or short-range drones. Additionally, remote and sparsely populated islands may not be interesting military targets. In case of war, it may be more expensive to reach them than to ignore them, though this depends on the nature of the war. For example, the Germans used remote unpopulated islands in the Arctic (Grossman, 2016) and in the Southern Ocean (Rogge and Frank, 1956) as secret bases during Second World War, and the allies later sent cruisers to Kerguelen to check if Germans were hiding there. It might be too expensive for a hostile AI to seek out and kill small groups of people in remote places, if they do not pose an immediate risk to the AI’s interests. However, over time, the AI’s risk calculation might change.

#### ---c- 15 islands are capable of facilitating post-apocalyptic human repopulation – We’ll insert this chart

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