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### Plan

#### The United States federal government should bar foreign military sales and suspend direct commercial sales licenses relating to air-to-ground strike capabilities for operations in Yemen.

## Yemen

#### 233,000 will die by the end of 2019

**Bazzi, 19 –** Mohamad Bazzi, a journalism professor at New York University, is a former Middle East bureau chief at Newsday (“Trump wants to sell more weapons to Saudi Arabia. Congress must stop him” The Guardian, 6/8, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/08/saudi-arabia-trump-weapon-arms-sales-must-be-stopped>

On the Friday before Memorial Day, when few Americans were paying attention, the Trump administration announced that it would circumvent Congress and sell $8bn in new weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It was Donald Trump’s latest attempt to give a blank check to two US allies leading a disastrous war in Yemen. If Trump succeeds in getting around Congress, these weapons sales will prolong suffering in Yemen and eliminate one of the last levers that allowed the US to exert influence over Saudi and Emirati actions: the threat of Congress blocking arms deals. On 5 June, a bipartisan group of senators said they would try to block the administration from going ahead with the sales by introducing 22 “resolutions of disapproval” – one for each of the deals cleared by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. The effort is led by two unlikely allies: Bob Menendez, a Democrat from New Jersey and frequent Trump critic, and Lindsey Graham, a Republican from South Carolina who is one of Trump’s biggest supporters. The two senators agree on one thing: that Saudi Arabia should face more scrutiny of its actions in Yemen after Saudi agents murdered the journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October. Since then, members of Congress have tried to force the Trump administration to reexamine its alliance with the kingdom – especially its relationship with Mohammed bin Salman, the brash and ruthless crown prince often considered an architect of the Yemen war. But Trump and his senior aides have made clear that they still support the prince and won’t try to isolate him, despite a CIA assessment that concluded, with “high confidence”, that Prince Mohammed ordered the killing of Khashoggi. The senators’ effort, which includes seven co-sponsors, is yet another example of Congress trying to claw back its constitutional responsibilities. On 24 May, when Pompeo notified Congress that the administration would move ahead with the $8bn deals without congressional approval, he cited a rarely used provision of the Arms Export Control Act which allows the president to bypass Congress if he determines there is an emergency that impacts national security. Pompeo invoked the Trump administration’s favored bogeyman: an increased threat of “Iranian aggression”. But over the past month the administration has inflated the threat posed by Iran to US troops and allies in the Middle East and several hawkish Trump aides, especially national security adviser John Bolton, have pushed for a new confrontation with Tehran. At Bolton’s request, the Pentagon updated plans to send as many as 120,000 troops to the Middle East. The administration is using similar scare tactics to justify its end-run around Congress to sell more weapons to Saudi Arabia and the UAE. As Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut and one of the earliest critics of US support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, wrote on Twitter: “To state the obvious, there is no new emergency reason to sell bombs to Saudi Arabia to drop in Yemen. The Saudis [have] been dropping the bombs on civilians, so if there is an emergency, it’s a humanitarian emergency caused by the bombs we sell the Saudis.” Trump’s supposed desire to end US involvement in foreign wars – in Syria and Afghanistan – clearly hasn’t superseded his wish to keep Saudi Arabia and the UAE happy and continuing to purchase American weapons. This willingness to prolong the suffering of millions of Yemenis also underlines the administration’s single-minded obsession with countering Iran. Trump and his advisers repeatedly try to justify a prolonged war in Yemen by blaming Iran and its support for the rebel Houthi militia. This narrative ignores the fact that the Houthis did not receive significant help from Iran before Saudi Arabia intervened in March 2015. With the administration firmly behind its Saudi and Emirati allies, Congress offers the best hope to end the American role in a war that has triggered one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises. In early April, the House voted to cease military support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, finally approving a bill to restrain presidential war powers that has taken years to pass both chambers of Congress. On 16 April, Trump vetoed the bill. Two weeks later, the bill’s supporters in the Senate tried to override the veto but fell short, 53-45. (It takes two-thirds of the Senate, or 67 votes, to override a presidential veto.) But the measure was still a turning point because it focused attention on the extent and unpopularity of military support for Saudi Arabia and its allies. As the political jockeying unfolded in Washington, the United Nations Development Programme issued a report underscoring the extent of the humanitarian disaster being fueled by US weapons and logistical support. The report warned that the death toll in Yemen could rise to 233,000 by the end of 2019 – far higher than previous estimates. (The projection includes an estimate of 102,000 deaths from combat and 131,000 indirect deaths due to the lack of food, health crises like a cholera epidemic and damage to Yemen’s infrastructure.) “The current conflict in Yemen is one of the greatest preventable disasters facing humanity,” the report said, adding that the conflict has turned into a “war on children”, with a Yemeni child dying every 12 minutes. The report estimated that 140,000 of those killed by the end of 2019 would be children under the age of five. Despite a majority of Congress voting to end support, American assistance to the Saudi-led war persists, thanks to Trump’s veto. In their latest effort to stop the weapons sales, congressional critics of the war will likely need to secure a veto-proof majority. It is a matter of moral and political urgency.

#### US arms to Saudi sustains the use of child soldiers in the Yemen conflict

Kiersz 18 (Andy, a senior reporter at Business Insider, "Saudi Arabia is reportedly paying up to $10,000 to Sudanese militiamen, including child soldiers, to fight in their brutal war in Yemen," Business Insider, 12/29/18 <https://www.businessinsider.com/saudi-arabia-reportedly-using-sudanese-child-soldiers-in-yemen-2018-12>) // TW @taylor.w0ng

Saudi Arabia and its allies are paying Sudanese soldiers, many of whom are between the ages of 14 and 17, as much as $10,000 to fight in their brutal war in Yemen. David D. Kirkpatrick of The New York Times reported on Friday that the Saudi-led coalition has recruited thousands of militiamen from Sudan to fight in the kingdom's war in Yemen, including child soldiers as young as 14 years old. Most of the soldiers are from the Darfur region in Sudan, according to the report. Darfur has been devastated by years of civil war and ethnic cleansing. According to the UN, there were still 19,000 child soldiers in South Sudan in October. The Times reported that money is the main motivation for the Sudanese soldiers. The Saudi-led coalition paid the equivalent of between $480 and $530 per month, along with additional pay in months where the soldiers faced combat and a one-time $10,000 payment at the end of a six-month tour. The Times noted for comparison that a Sudanese doctor would earn roughly the equivalent of $500 per month. Many of the soldiers saw the war and the money being paid by the coalition as a way to help their families escape economic despair. The report quoted Hager Shomo Ahmed, a 16-year-old Sudanese veteran of the war in Yemen who was recruited at the age of 14, as saying "families know that the only way their lives will change is if their sons join the war and bring them back money." According to the Times, Sudanese soldiers who fought in Yemen said that between 20% and 40% of their units were made up of children. The Saudi-led coalition denied that there were children among the Sudanese forces in a statement to the Times. The war in Yemen has been described as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Since 2015, Saudi Arabia and its allies have been fighting against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebel movement. Thousands of civilians have died in the fighting and millions more face disease and malnutrition as a result of the conflict. In December, the US Senate voted to remove American support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, but the measure has not been taken up in the House of Representatives. The Times reported that the Sudanese soldiers have bolstered the Saudi-led coalition's ability to continue the war and that they "have insulated the Saudis and Emiratis from the casualties that might test the patience of families at home."

#### These children suffer tremendous psychological trauma – violence, drugs, mutilation, and other methods of torture – that leave lasting impacts

**Tiefenbrun, 7** (Susan W. Tiefenbrun, Emeritus Faculty Director, Center for Global Legal Studies Off-site Director, Thomas Jefferson School of Law/Zhejiang University College of Law Summer Program in Hangzhou, China Director, Thomas Jefferson School of Law Summer Program in Nice, France J.D., New York University School of Law; Ph.D., Columbia University, magna cum laude; M.S., University of Wisconsin, magna cum laude; B.S., University of Wisconsin, magna cum laude, "Child Soldiers, Slavery, and the Trafficking of Children", Oct. 2007, accessed 5-26-2019, SSRN Electronic Journal, vol. 31: 415, pp. 423-426, DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.1020341, <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2091&context=ilj>, ~soham)

~Trigger warning: This article describes experiences suffered by child soldiers, such as torture~

Child soldiers are subjected daily to **dehumanizing atrocities**. They are often **abducted** from their own home, **tortured**, **indoctrinated with brutality**, forced to become **intoxicated with mind-altering drugs**, **threatened with** death and/or **dismemberment** if they don't fight, forced to return to their own village to witness or participate in the death or **disfigurement of their own family members**, **required to kill friends** who don't obey the commanders, and made to **watch the punishment of other child soldiers** who attempt in vain to escape. Child soldiers are **brainwashed thoroughly and brutally** until their ethics and moral values become so **distorted** that they believe doing evil is good. One twelve-year-old child in Columbia described the leadership's obsession with the virtues of killing: If you join the paramilitaries [the AUC in Colombia,] your **first duty is to kill**. They tell you, 'Here you are going to kill.' From the very beginning, they teach you how to kill. I mean when you arrive at the camp, the first thing they do is kill a guy, and if you are a recruit they call you over to prick at him, **to chop off his hands and arms**. 3 7 Brainwashing is accomplished by **desensitizing children** to the sight and commission of atrocities. Some children who try to escape are reportedly boiled alive, and the other child soldiers are then forced to eat the human flesh as part of their training.38 Other child soldiers who manage to escape have reported that while they were at the training camp they were forced to beat the dead body of a captured escapee and "smear themselves with his blood."39 Rebels keep the children obedient through **frequent beatings**, **threats of death**, and **threats of retaliation** against the children's family members.40 Young girls are abducted as well and make up forty percent of the ranks of armed groups in some countries.41 In El Salvador, Ethiopia, and Uganda, almost a third of the child soldiers are young girls,4 2 who are raped, enslaved, given to military commanders as "wives," and victimized by sexual violence on a daily basis. Girl soldiers encounter serious abuse, including forced pregnancy. During the 1990s over eight hundred children were born to the Lords' Resistance Army ("LRA") "wives" who were concentrated at Jabelein camp in southern Sudan. 3 Girl soldiers are often used as domestic servants and sex slaves during conflict, and when they become infected with HIV, they are usually not treated. These victimized girl soldiers require rehabilitation and special attention after their demobilization.' These children who are trained to be fearless actually become dangerous, killing machines. Anyone seeing them in action is naturally stunned into disbelief and is likely to wonder why these children kill, maim, and dismember their own friends and relatives. The answer is quite simple. **Child soldiers are pumped up on drugs to make them fearless**.45 These drugs are no doubt trafficked into the country for a hefty sum. Powerless and abandoned children are empowered with small, light weapons and indoctrinated with brutality into the virtues of committing wartime atrocities. These small weapons are trafficked into the country at a substantial cost. Young girls are also trafficked to service the commanders and even the boy child soldiers. The money earned from one form of trafficking typically supplies the goods and services of the other form of trafficking in a complex network that constitutes a lucrative trafficking industry run by international organized crime groups. These children are victims of **inhumane brainwashing** and **merciless combat training** that makes them robotically obey orders to **kill innocent victims**, just to stay alive. These children undergo a terrifying initiation that consists of killing or raping a close relative. They are forced to participate in acts of extreme violence and barbarity including beheadings, amputations, rape, and the burning of people alive.46 The LRA in Uganda initiates children into its gang by forcing them "to club, stamp or bite to death their friends and relatives, and then to lick their brains, drink their blood and even eat their boiled flesh."47 The LRA slices off the lips and noses of children it suspects of disloyalty. 48 The children of Uganda are reportedly so frightened about being abducted and enslaved by the LRA that they do not sleep at home, preferring instead to become "night commuters"49 who travel alone or in groups every night to "protected villages" where "they sleep on verandas, in bus parks, on church grounds" for safety.50

#### The US turns a blind eye to Saudi use of soldiers now, the plan sends a clear and tangible signal of disapproval

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY UNITED STATES SENATE 07, 4-24-27, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LAW of the COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY UNITED STATES SENATE ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110shrg38737/html/CHRG-110shrg38737.htm>

In, addition it is important and life saving not only to have international legal standards that ban the use of children in war, but they must be strengthened and supported by nations affected and those not affected by these appalling tragedies. With the presence and enforcement of these legal standards, United Nations and NGO workers will have the courage and conviction to confront commanders who use children in war and ask them to release those young fighters. If such legal standards hadn't been in place, I wouldn't be here. I would be dead. But the problem continues, which is why I urge you to join in prevention efforts by supporting the prosecution of those who recruit children; strengthening international laws to ban the use and sale of small arms, a good number coming from the United States, that end up in the hands of children; and, finally, condemning and curtailing all support to nations that recruit children or allow such practices to occur on their territory. One thing that history has taught us is that when we ignore such problems as the use of children in war, they become bigger and more complex problems that later affect us and that we then might be unable to solve. If you do not help these children now, they will grow into adults who will become the leaders of their nations who will have no understanding of ethical and moral standards, and, ladies and gentlemen, whether you like it or not, your children, the future leaders of this country, will have to face them and deal with them.

#### Ending U.S. support for the Saudi regime is an ethical imperative---arms sales facilitate the biggest humanitarian crisis in history by enabling Saudi Arabia to lead indiscriminate bombing campaigns that slaughter innocent civilians; causes mass starvation, hundreds of thousands of deaths, refugee flows, and epidemics.

Sjursen, 3-20-2018 - Danny, U.S. Army strategist and former history instructor at West Point. He served tours with reconnaissance units in Iraq and Afghanistan; "Key US Allies in the Middle East Are the Real Tyrants," *Truthout*, https://truthout.org/articles/key-us-allies-in-the-middle-east-are-the-real-tyrants/

In other words, Washington stands shoulder to shoulder with a truly abhorrent regime, while simultaneously complaining bitterly about the despotism and tyranny of nations of which it’s less fond. The hypocrisy should be (but generally isn’t) considered staggering here. We’re talking about a Saudi government that only recently allowed women to drive automobiles and still beheads them for “witchcraft and sorcery.” Indeed, mass execution is a staple of the regime. Recently, the kingdom executed 37 men in a single day. (One of them was even reportedly crucified.) Most were not the “terrorists” they were made out to be, but dissidents from Saudi Arabia’s Shia minority convicted, as Amnesty International put it, “after sham trials that… relied on confessions extracted through torture.” During the Arab Spring of 2011, the Saudi royals certainly proved anything but friends to the budding democratic movements brewing across the region. Indeed, its military even invaded a tiny neighbor to the east, Bahrain, to suppress civil-rights protests by that country’s embattled Shia majority. (A Sunni royal family runs the show there.) In Yemen, the Saudis continue to terror bomb civilians in its war against Houthi militias. Tens of thousands have died — the exact number isn’t known — under a brutal bombing campaign and at least 85,000 Yemeni children have already starved to death thanks to the war and a Saudi blockade of what was already the Arab world’s poorest country. The hell unleashed on Yemen has been dubbed the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. It has already produced millions of refugees and, at present, the world’s worst cholera epidemic. Through it all, Washington stood by its royals time and again, with The Donald far more gleefully pro-Saudi than his predecessors. His first foreign excursion, after all, was to that kingdom’s capital, Riyadh, where the president seemed to relish joining the martial pageantry of a Saudi “sword dance.” He also let it be known that the cash would keep flowing from the kingdom into military-industrial coffers in this country, announcing a supposedly record $110 billion set of arms deals (including a number closed by the Obama administration and ones that may never come to fruition). Son-in-law Jared Kushner even continues to maintain a bromance with the ambitious and brutal ruling Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman. In other words, with fulsome support from Washington, sophisticated American weapons, and a boatload of American cash, Saudi Arabia continues to unleash terror at home and abroad. This much is certain: if you’re looking for a troika of tyrants, that country should top your list. Conditions are deteriorating by the minute---every delay exponentially worsens structural conditions that are entirely preventable. Varfolomeeva, 2-11-2019 – “Why is Yemen the world's worst humanitarian crisis?,” Rescue.Org, <https://www.rescue.org/article/why-yemen-worlds-worst-humanitarian-crisis> Yemen is facing the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. Over 22 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, the country is on the brink of famine, and a million people have suffered from the worst cholera outbreak in modern history. Since 2015, Yemen has been in the grip of a brutal civil war. After rebel groups overtook the government, the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition has been attempting to regain control by launching thousands of airstrikes, many of which have hit homes and public areas such as schools, health facilities and markets. Thousands of civilians have been killed and tens of thousands injured as a result. In fact, August 2018 was the deadliest month so far, with nearly 500 civilians killed in the first nine days. But these deaths represent only a fraction of the impact of the airstrikes. Many more people suffer when the damage and destruction left by the attacks cut off their access to health care and clean water. The attacks not only violate international humanitarian law, but they also make it dangerous and difficult for humanitarian organizations like the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to deliver aid. Even worse, the governments of the United States and United Kingdom thus far have failed to use their leverage as diplomatic allies and military supporters of the Saudi and Emirati-led coalition to end the violence This crisis only continues to grow as conflict rages on and those in need are prevented from receiving lifesaving assistance. Here’s what you need to know about why Yemen is home to the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. What is the impact of the conflict on access to food, health services and education? Conditions in Yemen are deteriorating across every measure. Over 8 million people are at risk of starvation and 16 million lack access to basic health care. As the airstrikes continue — one every 99 minutes for the past three years — Yemenis are unable to access the food and health services they need to survive. More than half of Yemen’s health care facilities have already been destroyed. On top of that, the coalition is restricting access to ports. And all sides to the conflict have [restricted humanitarian organizations from providing lifesaving medicine and clean water](https://www.rescue.org/report/they-die-bombs-we-die-need-impact-collapsing-public-health-systems-yemen). This only exacerbates the growing cholera epidemic, which has taken over 2,300 lives in the past year. Thousands of schools have also been closed due to the conflict, keeping 2 million children out of the classroom. Some schools have been taken over by armed groups and others used as shelter for people who have had to flee their homes or whose homes have been destroyed. As the violence escalates, Yemen remains on the brink of catastrophe. Who is hit hardest by this crisis? Children, the chronically ill, the elderly and disabled, and pregnant women and nursing mothers are at particularly high risk of starvation and sickness.  There are over 11 million Yemeni children in need of aid – that’s almost every child in the country. According to UNICEF, a Yemeni child dies every ten minutes from entirely preventable war-related causes, and thousands have already been killed or injured as a result of conflict. Left in vulnerable positions from violence and displacement, boys are being recruited by armed forces and young girls are being forced into early marriages. What is the most critical flashpoint right now? The port city of Hodeidah, where 70% of imports enter the country, is under relentless attack from airstrikes and naval ships. Houses, farms, livestock, businesses, roads, medical facilities and water facilities have all been hit in recent months. The coalition is encircling and likely attempting to besiege Hodeidah. This would have a dire impact on the roughly 300,000 remaining civilians, who are among the most vulnerable in all of Yemen. The United Nations warned that in the worst case 250,000 civilians could be killed in an attack on Hodeidah, with aid cut off to 22 million civilians in need of support. Blocking this port could also trigger famine as millions are already on the brink of starvation. IRC staff members have been advised to evacuate their homes in Hodeidah City and are now working from a small town located 31 miles from the frontlines of the war, where they continue their lifesaving work. What are the most concerning threats on the horizon? The U.N. has warned that 10 million more Yemenis will be at risk of famine by the end of 2018 if conditions do not improve. The number of suspected cholera cases also has increased, suggesting that the country might face a new wave of the epidemic. Civilians continue to be killed, injured and forced from their homes as a result of conflict and destruction. As [Kamel Jendoubi](https://www.irinnews.org/news/2018/08/28/un-experts-signal-possible-war-crimes-yemen" \t "_blank), Chair of the The Group of Eminent Experts, said, “There is little evidence of any attempt by parties to the conflict to minimize civilian casualties.” What needs to be done to stop the suffering? There is no military solution to the end of the war in Yemen. The IRC calls on all parties to immediately stop the fighting and allow room for a U.N.-led peace process to take place in order to avoid further humanitarian catastrophe. “The protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure is not a luxury,” said Frank Mc Manus, Yemen country director at the IRC. “It is an essential provision of international law. When these laws fail civilians suffer.” What is the IRC doing to help? The IRC has been delivering lifesaving services in Yemen since 2012. While the ongoing conflict and closures of airports and sea ports create challenges to our response, the IRC has maintained access to affected populations in our areas of operation.The IRC runs medical treatment centers, made household visits to promote cholera prevention awareness, [screened and treated children for malnutrition](https://www.rescue.org/article/follow-mobile-health-team-treating-children-yemens-remotest-villages), counseled mothers and caregivers on safe feeding and breastfeeding, and trained and paid health volunteers to work in local communities. This year the IRC expects to help over 50,000 people access clean water and sanitation, and over 800,000 people access primary and reproductive health care through a network of 135 IRC-supported health facilities .Empowering those affected by the crisis to rebuild their lives, the IRC distributes cash vouchers to hundreds of households so they can purchase the food and basic resources they need to survive.

#### The plan immediately grounds offensive operations in Yemen and creates leverage for a political settlement

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**Menu of options** I focused my conversations with former U.S. officials and other experts on the following set of options: 1. Bar future foreign military sales**(FMS)** relating to air-to-ground strike capabilities for operations in Yemen (e.g., precision-guided munitions) 2. Suspend existing Direct Commercial Sales **(DCS)** licenses relating to air-to-ground strike capabilities for operations in Yemen (e.g., for maintenance and sustainment of fighter aircraft) 3. Bar appropriations for **in-flight refueling** of Saudi aircraft conducting missions in Yemen 4. Adopt targeted and mandatory **financial sanctions** of the senior-most Saudi officials. 5. Push for **Global Magnitsky Act** sanctions 6. Other options This list does not include suspending U.S. support for defensive weapons systems, and none of the experts suggested placing such support on the list. One former official who supported measures to suspend arms sales specially highlighted the importance of maintaining U.S. support for defensive systems to protect Saudi Arabia from threats coming over its border from Houthi militants. “We should not suspend THAAD or sale of other weapons necessary to defend the KSA from missile/rocket attacks. And we should send a strong signal to Iran that any effort to exploit this moment will be met with a harsh response,” the former official said. One recurring theme involved concerns about predicating any approach on executive branch certification, such as the State Department’s determination that Saudi Arabia met specified conditions. A former senior official told me, “I don’t like any approach that involves certification requirements, because this administration has shown it’s prepared to certify just about anything (other than the manifest Iranian compliance with the JCPOA).” [Editor’s note: on the Secretary of Defense’s recent certification of Saudi Arabia and the UAE actions in the Yemen war, see Larry Lewis, “Grading the Pompeo Certification on Yemen War and Civilian Protection: Time for Serious Reconsideration,” and Ryan Goodman, “Annotation of Sec. Pompeo’s Certification of Yemen War: Civilian Casualties and the Saudi-Led Coalition.”] **Options 1-3** It is important to separate option 1 (includes blocking future arm sales) and option 2 (includes suspending maintenance and logistics for existing weapons systems), because the latter may have more immediate effects on Saudi offensive military operations in Yemen. In short, Riyadh would have no readily available substitute for maintaining and servicing existing American weapons systems. On Fox News Sunday, Senator Rand Paul said, “We have incredible leverage. … They can’t last a couple of months without parts and mechanics to help them run their air force.” National Review’s David French wrote: “American F-15s comprise close to half the Saudi fighter force, and the Saudi variant of the F-15E Strike Eagle represents a substantial portion of the air force’s striking power….They can’t just waltz over to a different country and transform their armed forces — not without suffering enormous setbacks in readiness and effectiveness during a years-long transition. A fundamental reality of arms deals is that a major arms purchase essentially locks the purchasing nation in a dependent posture for training, spare parts, and technical upgrades.” Threatening support for Saudi Arabia’s war machine can serve a variety of purposes. First, such levers present a potentially significant stick and carrot for achieving policy goals that are broader than the Yemen war. As Senator Macro Rubio stated earlier this month on CNN’s State of the Union, “Arm sales are important, not because of the money, but because it also provides leverage over their future behavior….They will need our spare parts. They will need our training. And those are things we can use to influence their behavior.” Options 1-3 can also help curtail Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s misadventures, if not his leadership of the Saudi government itself. Bruce Riedel, who served as senior adviser on South Asia and the Middle East to the last four presidents, explained in a recent essay, “Responsibility for the war is on Mohammed bin Salman, who as defense minister has driven Riyadh into this quagmire. Shaking the arms relationship is by far the most important way to clip his wings.” A former Obama official said as well, “The message needs to be that the relationship is being frozen unless MBS moves aside. What Yemen and the Gulf crisis and Khashoggi affair have clarified is that MBS has allows personal pique and vendettas to override any impulse to reform. He has made the region an even more dangerous place, and, left to his own devices, is very likely to drag us into regional conflict. So I would pursue 4 and 2, with the former underscoring our message that MBS needs to step aside, and the latter grounding their Air Force, to both add internal pressure on MBS and to pressure the Saudis to negotiate a resolution to Yemen.” Options 1-3 can, indeed, serve purposes specific to the Yemen War, including distancing the United States from support for Saudi crimes and encouraging the Saudis and United Arab Emirates to finally bring the war to a close through political negotiations. In a New Yorker Radio Hour interview with David Remnick back in March, Riedel explained, “The United States is not a direct party to the war, but we are an enabler of the war. If the United States decided today that it was going to cut off supplies, spare parts, munitions, intelligence, and everything else to the Royal Saudi Airforce, it would be grounded tomorrow.” One former senior official suggested tying arm sales to different sets of purposes, “I think Congress should pause all FMS and end other support to the Saudi campaign in Yemen. Resumption of arms sales should be conditioned on Riyadh agreeing to a fully transparent international investigation into the Khashoggi incident, regular intelligence community assessments of Saudi efforts to reduce civilian casualties in Yemen, and a report from the administration outlining their strategy for addressing the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and producing a peaceful settlement.” Another former senior official supported a clean break from U.S. support for the Yemen war rather than a piecemeal approach. “On Yemen, the best move would be to support the Khanna-Murphy War Powers resolution. A clean end to US military support for the Saudi-UAE war in Yemen is better than more targeted efforts to police that support (like the bar on in-flight refueling). Suspending existing DCS licenses and placing limits on future foreign military sales for things like air-to-ground strike capabilities would be a natural supplement to this approach,” the former official said. Jeffrey Prescott, who served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Iran, Iraq, Syria, and the Gulf States on the National Security Council and now a strategic consultant to the Penn Biden Center expressed a similar perspective, “My view is that the callous murder of Mr. Khashoggi — and the Trump administration’s clear impulse to sweep it under the rug — demonstrates how far the relationship with Saudi Arabia has gotten off track, and the need for serious consequences. As a start, we could use this moment to extricate ourselves from military involvement in the disastrous war in Yemen, a step that is long overdue. Ideally we would simultaneously help push for a diplomatic resolution of the conflict – necessary, not easy, and very unlikely given how little effort the Trump administration has put into serious diplomacy. But washing our hands of involvement in the war, even in the absence of a US diplomatic push, will still put pressure on UAE and Saudi to end the conflict.” Professor Mohamad Bazzi, who is writing a book on proxy wars between Saudi Arabia and Iran, had a similar assessment of the effectiveness of suspending US military support as a means to effectuate a resolution to the conflict. Bazzi told me, “Together, actions 1, 2, and 3 (likely in that order of effectiveness) would go significantly beyond the Obama administration’s freeze on the sale of precision-guided munitions to Riyadh in late 2016. They would signal to the Saudis and Emiratis that US military assistance will now truly become contingent on progress in political negotiations. I suspect that’s the only way Saudi and UAE leaders can be convinced to pursue a political settlement, which the Trump administration agrees (at least rhetorically) is the path to ending this war.” Notably, in my interviews with former U.S. officials, suspension of in-flight refueling (option 3) was generally considered a weak measure on its own, treated as a supplement or afterthought to other measures. That may be due to the percentage of Saudi aircraft that actually depend on such refueling and the Saudis’ ability to replace U.S. in-air refueling with other substitutes. Concerns about the utility of option 3 as a pressure point is especially important because it is the only measure that’s triggered by section 1290 of the McCain National Defense Authorization Act if the Secretary of State fails to certify that the Saudis are taking appropriate steps to reduce civilian casualties in Yemen.

#### The plan moderates Saudi aggression in Yemen---the U.S. is key AND other countries model. That enables delivery of aid to avoid further humanitarian disasters.

Spindel, 5-14-2019 - Jennifer, assistant professor of international security at the University of Oklahoma, and the Associate Director of the Cyber Governance and Policy Center; "The Case for Suspending American Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia," War on the Rocks, https://warontherocks.com/2019/05/the-case-for-suspending-american-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia/

Arms embargos are often dismissed as symbolic, and therefore ineffective. But just because something is symbolic, doesn’t mean that it won’t have an effect. A U.S. arms embargo against Saudi Arabia would be a clear signal of American disproval of Saudi actions in Yemen, and would be an equally important signal to Washington’s allies, who are left wondering if the United States is ambivalent or uninterested in the growing Yemeni humanitarian catastrophe.

By continuing to provide weapons, President Donald Trump tacitly endorses Saudi policies. This signal is strengthened by Trump’s recent veto of the resolution that called for an end to U.S. support for the war in Yemen. While Trump justified the veto by saying that the resolution was a “dangerous attempt to weaken my constitutional authorities,” statements from Congressional representatives show they are aware of the powerful signals sent by arms sales. Sen. Tim Kaine said that the veto “shows the world [Trump] is determined to keep aiding a Saudi-backed war that has killed thousands of civilians and pushed millions more to the brink of starvation.” An arms embargo against Saudi Arabia would be a signal both to leaders of that country, and other states, that the United States does not endorse Saudi actions. Those arguing against a ban are correct on one point: Embargos as blunt force instruments of coercion are rarely effective. But arms embargos are effective as signals of political dissatisfaction, and serve an important communication role in international politics.

Arms Embargos Are Signals and Can Build Coalitions

Policymakers and scholars agree that arms embargoes are not effective “sticks” in international politics. Rarely do states cave when faced with punishment in the form of an embargo. But even if an arms embargo isn’t a direct tool of coercion, an embargo would be an important political signal. There are at least two reasons for the United States to seriously consider an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia.

First, arms sales are signals that cut through the noise of the international system. Cutting off arms transfers is a common way that states express their dissatisfaction with others and try to influence behavior. As Lawrence Freedman observed in 1978, “refusing to sell arms is a major political act. It appears as a calculated insult, reflecting on the stability, trust, and credit-worthiness, or technical competence of the would-be recipient.” Yet this crucial point seems to have been lost in the current policy debate about whether or not the United States should continue selling arms to Saudi Arabia. My research shows that stopping arms transfers or denying requests is an effective way to signal dissatisfaction and causes the would-be recipient to re-think their behavior.

Take, for example, the U.S. relationship with Israel in the 1960s. The United States sold Israel Hawk surface-to-surface missiles in 1962, M-48 Patton tanks in 1964 and 1965, and A-4E Skyhawk bombers in 1966. Israeli leaders understood that these transfers signaled a close U.S.-Israeli relationship. As diplomat Abba Eban wrote, the arms transfers were “a development of tremendous political value.” Even against this backdrop of close ties and significant arms sales, Israeli leaders were extremely sensitive to arms transfer denials. In April and May 1967, the United States denied Israeli requests for armored personnel carriers and fighter jets. Approving the transfers would have signaled support, and likely emboldened Israel, as tensions were growing in the region. Israeli leaders believed these transfer denials overruled prior signals and demonstrated that the United States was not willing to be a close political ally for Israel. Eban described Israel as “isolated,” and the head of Israel’s intelligence service said that the arms transfer denials made it clear that “in Israel, there existed certain misperceptions [about the United States].” If arms transfer denials could have such a significant effect on Israeli thinking — keeping in mind that there was a close and significant political relationship between the US and Israel — imagine what a transfer denial would mean for U.S.-Saudi relations. Like Israel, Saudi Arabia would have to re-think its impression that it has political support and approval from the United States. We can, and should, ask whether or not withdrawal of U.S. support would affect Saudi behavior, but it’s important that this question not get overlooked in the current debate.

Because arms transfers (and denials) are powerful signals, they can have an effect even before a transfer is actually completed. This suggests that even the announcement of an embargo against Saudi Arabia could have an effect. Take, for example, Taiwan’s recent request for a fleet of new fighter jets. As reports mounted that Trump had given “tacit approval” to a deal for F-16 jets, China’s protests increased. The United States has not sold advanced fighter jets to Taiwan since 1992, partially out of fear of angering China, which views Taiwan as a renegade province. Even if the deal for F-16s is formally approved, Taiwan is unlikely to see the jets until at least 2021, and the balance of power between China and Taiwan would not change. As one researcher observed, the sale would be a “huge shock” for Beijing, “But it would be more of a political shock than a military shock. It would be, ‘Oh, the U.S. doesn’t care how we feel.’ It would be more of a symbolic or emotional issue.” Yet China’s immediate, negative reaction to even the announcement of a potential deal shows how powerful arms transfer signals can be.

If this same logic is applied to an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia, an arms embargo would signal that Saudi Arabia does not have the support of the United States. This signal would be an important first step in changing Saudi behavior because it would override other statements and actions the United States has sent that indicate support. And Trump has given Saudi Arabia a number of positive signals: He called Saudi Arabia a “great ally” and dismissed reports that that the Saudi government was involved in the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. He has expressed interested in selling nuclear power plants and technology to Saudi Arabia. And he has repeatedly claimed that he has made a $110 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia (he hasn’t). With these clear signals of support, why should Saudi Arabia alter its behavior based on resolutions that come out of the House or Senate, which are likely to be vetoed by Trump, anyway? An arms embargo would be a clear and unambiguous signal that the United States disproves of Saudi actions in Yemen.

The second reason for supporting an embargo concerns U.S. allies and the logistical difficulties of making an embargo have an effect. One of the reasons embargoes have little material impact is because they require cooperation among weapons exporting states. A ban on sales from one country will have little effect if the target of the embargo can seek arms elsewhere. Germany, instituted an arms ban against Riyadh in November 2018, and German leaders have pressured other European states to stop selling arms to the Saudis. Germany understands the importance of the embargo as a political signal: as a representative of the German Green Party explained, “The re-start of arms exports to Saudi Arabia would be a fatal foreign policy signal and would contribute to the continued destabilization of the Middle East.” But the German embargo has had minimal effect because Saudi Arabia can get arms elsewhere.

According to the 2019 Military Balance, most of Saudi Arabia’s equipment is American or French in origin, such as the M1A2 Abrams and AMX-30 tanks, Apache and Dauphin helicopters, and F-15C/D fighter jets. Saudi Arabia has some equipment manufactured wholly or in part in Germany, such as the Eurofighter Typhoon and the Tornado ground attack craft, but these weapons are a small portion of its complete arsenal. A U.S. embargo would send an important signal to the allies who also supply Saudi Arabia, allowing them to explain participation in the embargo to their own domestic constituencies. This is especially important for countries like France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, that need to export arms to keep their own production lines running. While the research shows that sustaining an arms embargo is often the most difficult step, embargoes can restrain sending states’ arms exports. Even if a U.S. embargo won’t have a direct effect on Saudi Arabia on its own, an embargo is important for building coalitions for a more expansive embargo that could affect Saudi behavior.

The Difficulty of Stopping Atrocities

Beyond signaling, we know U.S. arms sales often end up in the wrong hands, and have been used in Yemen. The Saudi-led war in Yemen has led to starvation conditions, caused thousands of civilian casualties, and has led to the displacement of millions of people. The United Nations estimates that 80 percent of Yemen’s population – 24 million people – require some form of humanitarian or protection assistance, and that the severity of the situation is increasing. Would an arms embargo create meaningful change in Yemen?

An initial effect of an embargo is that Saudi Arabia would have to work harder to access war materiel. As Jonathan Caverley noted, more than 60 percent of Saudi Arabia’s arms delivered in the past five years came from the United States. Even if this percentage decreases over time, it will be costly for Saudi Arabia to transition to a primarily Russian- or Chinese-supplied military. Though Saudi Arabia might be willing to pay this cost, it would still have to pay, and take the time to transition to its new weapons systems. This would represent a brief break in hostilities that could facilitate the delivery of aid and assistance in Yemen.

#### The plan shifts jurisdiction over sales to Saudi and the UAE away from the executive---it’s binding AND no DA’s because congress will approve defensive weapons sales.

Cambanis and Hanna, 10-24-2018 – \*Thanassis, senior fellow, journalist specializing in the Middle East and American foreign policy \*\*Michael Wahid, senior fellow at The Century Foundation. He is also a non-resident senior fellow at the Reiss Center on Law and Security at New York University School of Law; "The War in Yemen Is a Tragedy—and America Can End Its Complicity," Century Foundation, https://tcf.org/content/commentary/war-yemen-tragedy-america-can-end-complicity/?agreed=1

Congress can and should pass resolutions against the existing arms contracts connected to the war, and it can demand that the administration provide compelling national security arguments to continue any sales. For instance, the administration could easily convince Congress to approve sales of defensive weaponry, like anti-missile batteries that could protect Saudi Arabia from Houthi Scud missiles. Furthermore, Congress can and should demand that the administration fulfil its existing reporting requirements. Members of Congress have asked tough direct questions that Pentagon can answer about the impact of American refueling, and the nature and impact of targeting intelligence.

Those measures alone, however, will not be enough. Congress ought to write new legislation that imposes far more substantive reporting and certification obligations on the administration. Legislation with more teeth would make it much harder for the administration to treat certification as a hollow pro forma exercise. Such legislation should not allow for national security waivers, which in the past have been used by administrations to sidestep Congressional oversight. Tougher legislation would also suspend ongoing sales if the administration does not actively fulfil its reporting requirements. The Pentagon has an affirmative obligation to prove that its actions are fulfilling the United States’ stated aims—in the case of the Yemen War, that U.S. actions are advancing strategic aims and reducing civilian casualties.

The problem of weapons sales transcends the Yemen War and has contaminated a growing swathe of U.S. policy. Weapons sales have acquired a pernicious logic of their own, as if funding the U.S. weapons industry were a jobs creation program and national security policy simply a means to promote domestic economic growth. U.S. weapons sales can be a major driver of conflict and have routinely complicated foreign policy in regions where the imperative to maintain market shares conflicts with core U.S. interests. In specific cases like the Yemen War, where weapons sales run so thoroughly against U.S. policy goals, they should end conclusively.

To date, the United States has been almost entirely unwilling to give up any weapons contract, no matter how noxious, because of the adverse impact to the U.S. economy. This type of path dependency is counterproductive. The United States must be willing to forego profitable contracts that harm our interests or bind us to ineffective allies or specific misguided policies.

Winding Back the Forever War

The line between the Yemen War and America’s global war on terror is not a long one. Congress authorized the president to use military force against the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks. Since then, military action has become a reflex rather than a rarity. U.S. foreign policy since 2001 has been dominated by direct and indirect intervention, ranging from outright invasion and occupation, as in Iraq in 2003, to dozens of undeclared and unmonitored actions that might not meet the legal definition of direct military action. Trump’s excesses are an expansion of, rather than a departure from, the practices of his predecessors. Congress and public opinion have tended to applaud military adventurism when they like its results and have avoided confrontation with the executive branch even in cases where they disapprove. Endless war has successfully been sold as a public necessity in a campaign against terrorism, even when U.S. military action makes the world, and Americans, less safe.

There are, of course, real security threats, and counter-terrorism deservedly is a high priority for American officials—including in Yemen. An effective counter-terrorism policy would move away from a military paradigm toward a policing framework, in which the military supports a policy that pursues terrorist networks much the same way that it pursues organized crime syndicates. As the practice stands, the forever war it has produced and perpetuates has corroded American values and behavior. Malpractice abroad has bred contempt for our democratic values and a hopelessness about the rule of law at home. Ideological frameworks used to justify foreign intervention and mistreatment of civilians in conflict zones have also been invoked at home. Threat inflation and demagoguery have helped fuel bigotry and xenophobia at home. Elected officials now risk their careers if they try to openly address the tradeoff between security and rights.

Ending the United States’ part in the Yemen campaign won’t suddenly bring an end to the American forever war. But it would mark a turning point—a decisive rejection of the reflex to sign onto any military conflict with even the slightest connection to terrorism. The United States has a great many tools at its disposal beyond weapons sales and direct engagement in hostilities. We can pursue our interests in Yemen while avoiding extremes; and American self-interest does not require it to fully reject its traditional allies in the Gulf nor to actively join them in their worst excesses. A rational assessment of that self-interest might now be possible.

#### Only U.S. arms prolong Saudi’s involvement in Yemen---other actors can’t fill the void.

\*HR leadership internal

Guay, 10-19-2018 - Terrence, Clinical Professor of International Business, Pennsylvania State University; "Arms sales to Saudi Arabia give Trump all the leverage he needs in Khashoggi affair," Conversation, https://theconversation.com/arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia-give-trump-all-the-leverage-he-needs-in-khashoggi-affair-104998

US leverage

While it’s true that Russia and China are indeed major exporters of armaments, the claim that U.S. weapons can easily be replaced by other suppliers is not – at least not in the short term.

First, once a country is “locked in” to a specific kind of weapons system, such as planes, tanks or naval vessels, the cost to switch to a different supplier can be huge. Military personnel must be retrained on new equipment, spare parts need to be replaced, and operational changes may be necessary.

After being so reliant on U.S. weapons systems for decades, the transition costs to buy from another country could be prohibitive even for oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

The second problem with Trump’s argument is that armaments from Russia, China or elsewhere are simply not as sophisticated as U.S. weapons, which is why they are usually cheaper – though the quality gap is quickly decreasing. To maintain its military superiority in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia has opted to purchase virtually all of its weapons from American and European companies.

That is why the U.S. has significant leverage in this aspect of the relationship. Any Saudi threat to retaliate against a ban on U.S. arms sales by buying weapons from countries that have not raised concerns about the Khashoggi disappearance would not be credible. And is probably why, despite worries in the White House, such a threat has not yet been made.

#### Zero strategic benefit to U.S. involvement in the war---DA’s are non-unique because the Yemen crisis erodes U.S. crediblity.

Larison, 5-2-2019 - Daniel, PhD in history from the University of Chicago; "The Disgraceful Case for Increasing U.S. Support for the War on Yemen," American Conservative, https://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/the-disgraceful-case-for-increasing-u-s-support-for-the-war-on-yemen/

Ending U.S. support for the war is what’s best for Yemen, but it is also clearly in the American interest as well. U.S. involvement in the war is a stain on our foreign policy record. Aiding and abetting the coalition in their many crimes makes our government complicit in horrific attacks that have claimed thousands of lives and contributed to the impoverishment and starvation of millions. The U.S. has not advanced any of its security interests through its involvement in this war, and in fact the coalition’s war effort has undermined the effort to combat Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). On top of all that, U.S. involvement in the war is unauthorized and illegal, as Congress has made clear, and increasing U.S. involvement in defiance of majorities in the House and the Senate would show even more contempt for the Constitution than Trump has already shown.

## Framing

#### Probability first – existential impacts are predicated on speculative internal link chains---solutions to high-probability impacts creates a positive feedback loop of improvements, which should come first.

Karnofsky 2014; July 03, 2014 Holden Karnofsky Executive Director of the Open Philanthropy Project degree in Social Studies from Harvard University “The Moral Value of the Far Future” <https://www.openphilanthropy.org/blog/moral-value-far-future>

The importance of the far future As discussed previously, I believe that the general state of the world has improved dramatically over the past several hundred years. It seems reasonable to state that the people who made contributions (large or small) to this improvement have made a major difference to the lives of people living today, and that when all future generations are taken into account, their impact on generations following them could easily dwarf their impact in their own time. I believe it is reasonable to expect this basic dynamic to continue, and I believe that there remains huge room for further improvement (possibly dwarfing the improvements we’ve seen to date). I place some probability on global upside possibilities including breakthrough technology, space colonization, and widespread improvements in interconnectedness, empathy and altruism. Even if these don’t pan out, there remains a great deal of room for further reduction in poverty and in other causes of suffering. In Astronomical Waste, Nick Bostrom makes a more extreme and more specific claim: that the number of human lives possible under space colonization is so great that the mere possibility of a hugely populated future, when considered in an “expected value” framework, dwarfs all other moral considerations. I see no obvious analytical flaw in this claim, and give it some weight. However, because the argument relies heavily on specific predictions about a distant future, seemingly (as far as I can tell) backed by little other than speculation, I do not consider it “robust,” and so I do not consider it rational to let it play an overwhelming role in my belief system and actions. (More on my epistemology and method for handling non-robust arguments containing massive quantities here.) In addition, if I did fully accept the reasoning of “Astronomical Waste” and evaluate all actions by their far future consequences, it isn’t clear what implications this would have. As discussed below, given our uncertainty about the specifics of the far future and our reasons to believe that doing good in the present day can have substantial impacts on the future as well, it seems possible that “seeing a large amount of value in future generations” and “seeing an overwhelming amount of value in future generations” lead to similar consequences for our actions. Catastrophic risk reduction vs. doing tangible good Many people have cited “Astronomical Waste” to me as evidence that the greatest opportunities for doing good are in the form of reducing the risks of catastrophes such as extreme climate change, pandemics, problematic developments related to artificial intelligence, etc. Indeed, “Astronomical Waste” seems to argue something like this: For standard utilitarians, priority number one, two, three and four should consequently be to reduce existential risk. The utilitarian imperative “Maximize expected aggregate utility!” can be simplified to the maxim “Minimize existential risk!”. I have always found this inference flawed, and in my recent discussion with Eliezer Yudkowsky and Luke Muehlhauser, it was argued to me that the “Astronomical Waste” essay never meant to make this inference in the first place. The author’s definition of existential risk includes anything that stops humanity far short of realizing its full potential - including, presumably, stagnation in economic and technological progress leading to a long-lived but limited civilization. Under that definition, “Minimize existential risk!” would seem to potentially include any contribution to general human empowerment. I have often been challenged to explain how one could possibly reconcile (a) caring a great deal about the far future with (b) donating to one of GiveWell’s top charities. My general response is that in the face of sufficient uncertainty about one’s options, and lack of conviction that there are good (in the sense of high expected value) opportunities to make an enormous difference, it is rational to try to make a smaller but robustly positive difference, whether or not one can trace a specific causal pathway from doing this small amount of good to making a large impact on the far future. A few brief arguments in support of this position: I believe that the track record of “taking robustly strong opportunities to do ‘something good’ ” is far better than the track record of “taking actions whose value is contingent on high-uncertainty arguments about where the highest utility lies, and/or arguments about what is likely to happen in the far future.” This is true even when one evaluates track record only in terms of seeming impact on the far future. The developments that seem most positive in retrospect - from large ones like the development of the steam engine to small ones like the many economic contributions that facilitated strong overall growth - seem to have been driven by the former approach, and I’m not aware of many examples in which the latter approach has yielded great benefits. I see some sense in which the world’s overall civilizational ecosystem seems to have done a better job optimizing for the far future than any of the world’s individual minds. It’s often the case that people acting on relatively short-term, tangible considerations (especially when they did so with creativity, integrity, transparency, consensuality, and pursuit of gain via value creation rather than value transfer) have done good in ways they themselves wouldn’t have been able to foresee. If this is correct, it seems to imply that one should be focused on “playing one’s role as well as possible” - on finding opportunities to “beat the broad market” (to do more good than people with similar goals would be able to) rather than pouring one’s resources into the areas that non-robust estimates have indicated as most important to the far future. The process of trying to accomplish tangible good can lead to a great deal of learning and unexpected positive developments, more so (in my view) than the process of putting resources into a low-feedback endeavor based on one’s current best-guess theory. In my conversation with Luke and Eliezer, the two of them hypothesized that the greatest positive benefit of supporting GiveWell’s top charities may have been to raise the profile, influence, and learning abilities of GiveWell. If this were true, I don’t believe it would be an inexplicable stroke of luck for donors to top charities; rather, it would be the sort of development (facilitating feedback loops that lead to learning, organizational development, growing influence, etc.) that is often associated with “doing something well” as opposed to “doing the most worthwhile thing poorly.” I see multiple reasons to believe that contributing to general human empowerment mitigates global catastrophic risks. I laid some of these out in a blog post and discussed them further in my conversation with Luke and Eliezer. For one who accepts these considerations, it seems to me that: It is not clear whether placing enormous value on the far future ought to change one’s actions from what they would be if one simply placed large value on the far future. In both cases, attempts to reduce global catastrophic risks and otherwise plan for far-off events must be weighed against attempts to do tangible good, and the question of which has more potential to shape the far future will often be a difficult one to answer. If one sees few robustly good opportunities to “make a huge difference to the far future,” the best approach to making a positive far-future difference may be “make a small but robustly positive difference to the present.” One ought to be interested in “unusual, outstanding opportunities to do good” even if they don’t have a clear connection to improving the far future.

#### Extinction first logic is infinitely regressive; gets weaponized against solutions to probabilistic harms.

Kessler, 8—Oliver; April 2008; PhD in IR, professor of sociology at the University of Bielefeld, and professor of history and theory of IR at the Faculty of Arts; (Alternatives, Vol. 33, “From Insecurity to Uncertainty: Risk and the Paradox of Security Politics” p. 211-232, //GrRv)

The problem of the second method is that it is very difficult to "calculate" politically unacceptable losses. If the risk of terrorism is defined in traditional terms by probability and potential loss, then the focus on dramatic terror attacks leads to the marginalization of probabilities. The reason is that even the highest degree of improbability becomes irrelevant as the measure of loss goes to infinity.^o The mathematical calculation of the risk of terrorism thus tends to overestimate and to dramatize the danger. This has consequences beyond the actual risk assessment for the formulation and execution of "risk policies": If one factor of the risk calculation approaches infinity (e.g., if a case of nuclear terrorism is envisaged), then there is no balanced measure for antiterrorist efforts, and risk management as a rational endeavor breaks down. Under the historical condition of bipolarity, the "ultimate" threat with nuclear weapons could be balanced by a similar counterthreat, and new equilibria could be achieved, albeit on higher levels of nuclear overkill. Under the new condition of uncertainty, no such rational balancing is possible since knowledge about actors, their motives and capabilities, is largely absent. The second form of security policy that emerges when the deterrence model collapses mirrors the "social probability" approach. It represents a logic of catastrophe. In contrast to risk management framed in line with logical probability theory, the logic of catastrophe does not attempt to provide means of absorbing uncertainty. Rather, it takes uncertainty as constitutive for the logic itself; uncertainty is a crucial precondition for catastrophes. In particular, catastrophes happen at once, without a warning, but with major implications for the world polity. In this category, we find the impact of meteorites. Mars attacks, the tsunami in South East Asia, and 9/11. To conceive of terrorism as catastrophe has consequences for the formulation of an adequate security policy. Since catastrophes hap-pen irrespectively of human activity or inactivity, no political action could possibly prevent them. Of course, there are precautions that can be taken, but the framing of terrorist attack as a catastrophe points to spatial and temporal characteristics that are beyond "rationality." Thus, political decision makers are exempted from the responsibility to provide security—as long as they at least try to preempt an attack. Interestingly enough, 9/11 was framed as catastrophe in various commissions dealing with the question of who was responsible and whether it could have been prevented. This makes clear that under the condition of uncertainty, there are no objective criteria that could serve as an anchor for measuring dangers and assessing the quality of political responses. For ex- ample, as much as one might object to certain measures by the US administration, it is almost impossible to "measure" the success of countermeasures. Of course, there might be a subjective assessment of specific shortcomings or failures, but there is no "common" currency to evaluate them. As a consequence, the framework of the security dilemma fails to capture the basic uncertainties. Pushing the door open for the security paradox, the main problem of security analysis then becomes the question how to integrate dangers in risk assessments and security policies about which simply nothing is known. In the mid 1990s, a Rand study entitled "New Challenges for Defense Planning" addressed this issue arguing that "most striking is the fact that we do not even know who or what will constitute the most serious future threat, "^i In order to cope with this challenge it would be essential, another Rand researcher wrote, to break free from the "tyranny" of plausible scenario planning. The decisive step would be to create "discontinuous scenarios ... in which there is no plausible audit trail or storyline from current events"52 These nonstandard scenarios were later called "wild cards" and became important in the current US strategic discourse. They justified the transformation from a threat-based toward a capability- based defense planning strategy.53 The problem with this kind of risk assessment is, however, that even the most absurd scenarios can gain plausibility. By constructing a chain of potentialities, improbable events are linked and brought into the realm of the possible, if not even the probable. "Although the likelihood of the scenario dwindles with each step, the residual impression is one of plausibility. "54 This so-called Othello effect has been effective in the dawn of the recent war in Iraq. The connection between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda that the US government tried to prove was disputed from the very beginning. False evidence was again and again presented and refuted, but this did not prevent the administration from presenting as the main rationale for war the improbable yet possible connection between Iraq and the terrorist network and the improbable yet possible proliferation of an improbable yet possible nuclear weapon into the hands of Bin Laden. As Donald Rumsfeld famously said: "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." This sentence indicates that under the condition of genuine uncertainty, different evidence criteria prevail than in situations where security problems can be assessed with relative certainty.

#### Each internal-link exponentially reduces the probability of the next---the conjunctive fallacy means you should have a low threshold for zero risk.

Piattelli, 96—Dr. Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, Professor of Cognitive Science, Linguistics, Psychology at Arizona State University, Doctorate in Physics at the University of Rome, Founder and Director of the Department of Cognitive Science at the Scientific Institute San Raffaele, Former Principal Research Scientist at the Center for Cognitive Science of MIT, Inevitable Illusions: How Mistakes of Reason Rule our Minds, p. 134-137

Here is deadly sin number 7 in its most blatant form, in that our judgment of probability allows itself to be influenced by fictions, including scenarios that we know to be the fruit of pure invention. I call this the Othello effect. You may remember that the lustful and thwarted Iago sets out to make Othello believe his beloved wife, Desdemona, is unfaithful to him. Iago makes up a scenario involving Desdemona’s handkerchief. This plausible but fallacious scenario convinces Othello of Desdemona’s betrayal, and in a fury of passion, Othello kills her. Such fictitious scenarios can be taken advantage of by any shrewd and unscrupulous Iago. But before we seek to save Desdemona, let us go back a few years to when Tversky and Kahneman ran their experiment on the Polish situation. Let’s imagine a much stranger possibility than the withdrawal of the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union. How likely do you think it is that the United States might invade Poland? Here the chances are in the order of one in a million or less. But supposing we ask our respondents to consider the following sequence of events (you have to think yourself back into those times): Strikes in Poland intensify; crowds are fired on; Lech Walensa is imprisoned; the pope goes to Warsaw on a peace mission and is arrested; world public opinion is inflamed; the United States sends a specialist force to free the Pope… As the narrative unfolds one event is linked with another, making for a script that seems plausible—always admitting, of course, that each stage has really been preceded by another. In the end, don’t we think that the probability of a U.S. invasion is somewhat higher than one in a million? Here we leave statistics behind and enter the domain of pure fiction. Look a bit closer, and one can see that we are not yet out of the realm of cognitive science, for these questionaire-experiments, just like real life, have countless times shown us that a plausible and well-told story can lead us to hold as “objectively” probable events that, just minutes before, we would have considered totally improbable. The notorious “Protocols of Zion,” a pure fabrication of the czar’s anti-Semitic propaganda taken up by the Nazi regime raised an Anti-Semitic storm. It did little good to show that it was a pure invention. What the propagandists sought to do, in order to seize power, was to make imaginatively presentable the probability of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, and in doing so they succeeded admirably, at least in the minds of those uncritically committed to hatred. I will not waste space on other instances, but limit myself to the purely cognitive aspects of the phenomenon. Offering a “plausible” sequence of events that are causally linked one to another has the effect of immediately raising our estimate of probability. It suffices that the links between these “events” should hold from one to the next for our minds to approach the final link in the chain. For, as we have seen, that which we can readily imagine is ipso facto more probable. Even if the probability of the very first link in this chain is very low, the fact is soon forgotten. Say “Let’s suppose that…” and we’re off, putting together a series of consequences, all of them “plausible” enough. I put “plausible” in quotation marks because true plausibility, in effect, depends wholly on that initial “Let’s suppose…” Once the first link in the chain of our script is “supposed,” then all the rest of the links “hold” one to another. Rationally speaking, however, and having regard to the calculation of probabilities, we are in the domain of what is known as “compound probabilities,”, or, more restrictively, “conditional probabilities.” (What is the likelihood that B will be true, supposing that A has to be true?) The probability of the last link in the chain being true is calculated on the basis of a series of conditional probabilities being true, and that in turn is obtained by combining the probabilities of each link in the chain, from the first to the last. Probabilities being, by their nature, less than one, the probability of the entire chain (or the last link) being true is always and without exception less probable than the probability of the least probable link in the chain. We fail to notice this progressive attenuation of probability. The story takes over from reality. The last link seems ever truer to our mind, and our increased facility in representing or imaging makes that last link seem ever more probable. The trick—which is one of the oldest in the book—is to find the narrative path by which the last, and most implausible, link can be made imaginatively compelling. My Othello effect depends on this perverse use of the imagination. If by chance one or two of the intervening links in this chain should come true, then poor Desdemona will indeed die. A narrative chain put together with art by some cunning Iago, and “resting” on a pair of intermediate links that come true (though only true for quite different reasons, and for reasons that no one may know), becomes irresistible. Poor us! The narrative then becomes an impregnable “logical” demonstration. Iago can transform doubt into certainty. Iago is not acting in good faith, and Othello, truth to tell, is no Sherlock Holmes. A rational, rigorously deductive man, knows perfectly well that the deductive inferences Iago makes about Desdemona’s fidelity don’t amount to much. His “indications,” hints, and “proofs”could all be explained without the infidelity hypothesis. Bayes’ law, or for that matter any sensible use of compound probability calculations, can save Desdemona from a horrible and unjust fate. Instead, reinforced by our cognitive illusions and dark passions, by a single imaginary chain of “plausibilities,” and by a pair of intermediate links that for totally unrelated reasons are true, Desdemona’s tragic death is set into motion. The implausible becomes plausible, indeed certain. Give us a little story, a script, something born of our own imagination, and our own natural tendencies, cognitive or emotional, do the rest. Isn’t this really the deadliest of our deadly sins?

**No great power wars – economic incentives, deterrence, and democratic norms**

**Aziz, 14** (John Aziz, former economics and business editor at TheWeek.com, 3/6/2014, accessed 5/30/2019, The Week, "Don't worry: World War III will almost certainly never happen", https://theweek.com/articles/449783/dont-worry-world-war-iii-almost-certainly-never-happen, ~soham)

Next year will be the seventieth anniversary of the end of the last global conflict. There have been points on that timeline — such as the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, and a Soviet computer malfunction in 1983 that erroneously suggested that the U.S. had attacked, and perhaps even the Kosovo War in 1999 — when a global conflict was a real possibility. Yet today — in the shadow of a flare up which some are calling a new Cold War between Russia and the U.S. — I believe the threat of World War III has almost faded into nothingness. That is, the probability of a world war is the lowest it has been in decades, and perhaps the lowest it has ever been since the dawn of modernity. This is certainly a view that current data supports. Steven Pinker's studies into the decline of violence reveal that deaths from war have fallen and fallen since World War II . But we should not just assume that the past is an accurate guide to the future. Instead, we must look at the factors which have led to the reduction in war and try to conclude whether the decrease in war is sustainable. So what's changed? Well, the first big change after the last world war was the arrival of mutually assured destruction. It's no coincidence that the end of the last global war coincided with the invention of atomic weapons. The possibility of complete annihilation provided a huge disincentive to launching and expanding total wars. Instead, the great powers now fight proxy wars like Vietnam and Afghanistan (the 1980 version, that is), rather than letting their rivalries expand into full-on, globe-spanning struggles against each other. Sure, accidents could happen, but the possibility is incredibly remote. More importantly, nobody in power wants to be the cause of Armageddon. But what about a non-nuclear global war? Other changes — economic and social in nature — have made that highly unlikely too. The world has become much more economically interconnected since the last global war. Economic cooperation treaties and free trade agreements have intertwined the economies of countries around the world. This has meant there has been a huge rise in the volume of global trade since World War II, and especially since the 1980s. Today consumer goods like smartphones, laptops, cars, jewelery, food, cosmetics, and medicine are produced on a global level, with supply-chains criss-crossing the planet. An example: The laptop I am typing this on is the cumulative culmination of thousands of hours of work, as well as resources and manufacturing processes across the globe. It incorporates metals like tellurium, indium, cobalt, gallium, and manganese mined in Africa. Neodymium mined in China. Plastics forged out of oil, perhaps from Saudi Arabia, or Russia, or Venezuela. Aluminum from bauxite, perhaps mined in Brazil. Iron, perhaps mined in Australia. These raw materials are turned into components — memory manufactured in Korea, semiconductors forged in Germany, glass made in the United States. And it takes gallons and gallons of oil to ship all the resources and components back and forth around the world, until they are finally assembled in China, and shipped once again around the world to the consumer. In a global war, global trade becomes a nightmare. Shipping becomes more expensive due to higher insurance costs, and riskier because it's subject to seizures, blockades, ship sinkings. Many goods, intermediate components or resources — including energy supplies like coal and oil, components for military hardware, etc, may become temporarily unavailable in certain areas. Sometimes — such as occurred in the Siege of Leningrad during World War II — the supply of food can be cut off. This is why countries hold strategic reserves of things like helium, pork, rare earth metals and oil, coal, and gas. These kinds of breakdowns were troublesome enough in the economic landscape of the early and mid-20th century, when the last global wars occurred. But in today's ultra-globalized and ultra-specialized economy? The level of economic adaptation — even for large countries like Russia and the United States with lots of land and natural resources — required to adapt to a world war would be crushing, and huge numbers of business and livelihoods would be wiped out. (Andrew Burton/Getty Images) In other words, global trade interdependency has become, to borrow a phrase from finance, too big to fail. It is easy to complain about the reality of big business influencing or controlling politicians. But big business has just about the most to lose from breakdowns in global trade. A practical example: If Russian oligarchs make their money from selling gas and natural resources to Western Europe, and send their children to schools in Britain and Germany, and lend and borrow money from the West's financial centers, are they going to be willing to tolerate Vladimir Putin starting a regional war in Eastern Europe (let alone a world war)? Would the Chinese financial industry be happy to see their multi-trillion dollar investments in dollars and U.S. treasury debt go up in smoke? Of course, world wars have been waged despite international business interests, but the world today is far more globalized than ever before and well-connected domestic interests are more dependent on access to global markets, components and resources, or the repayment of foreign debts. These are huge disincentives to global war. But what of the military-industrial complex ? While other businesses might be hurt due to a breakdown in trade, surely military contractors and weapons manufacturers are happy with war? Not necessarily. As the last seventy years illustrates, it is perfectly possible for weapons contractors to enjoy the profits from huge military spending without a global war. And the uncertainty of a breakdown in global trade could hurt weapons contractors just as much as other industries in terms of losing access to global markets. That means weapons manufacturers may be just as uneasy about the prospects for large-scale war as other businesses. Other changes have been social in nature. Obviously, democratic countries do not tend to go to war with each other , and the spread of liberal democracy is correlated against the decrease in war around the world. But the spread of internet technology and social media has brought the world much closer together, too. As late as the last world war, populations were separated from each other by physical distance, by language barriers, and by lack of mass communication tools. This means that it was easy for war-mongering politicians to sell a population on the idea that the enemy is evil. It's hard to empathize with people who you only see in slanted government propaganda reels. Today, people from enemy countries can come together in cyberspace and find out that the "enemy" is not so different, as occurred in the Iran-Israel solidarity movement of 2012 . More importantly, violent incidents and deaths can be broadcast to the world much more easily. Public shock and disgust at the brutal reality of war broadcast over YouTube and Facebook makes it much more difficult for governments to carry out large scale military aggressions. For example, the Kremlin's own pollster today released a survey showing that 73 percent of Russians disapprove of Putin's handling of the Ukraine crisis, with only 15 percent of the nation supporting a response to the overthrow of the government in Kiev. There are, of course, a few countries like North Korea that deny their citizens access to information that might contradict the government's propaganda line. And sometimes countries ignore mass anti-war protests — as occurred prior to the Iraq invasion of 2003 — but generally a more connected, open, empathetic and democratic world has made it much harder for war-mongers to go to war. (Kena Betancur/Getty Images) The greatest trend, though, may be that the world as a whole is getting richer. Fundamentally, wars arise out of one group of people deciding that they want whatever another group has — land, tools, resources, money, friends, sexual partners, empire, prestige — and deciding to take it by force. Or they arise as a result of grudges or hatreds from previous wars of the first kind. We don't quite live in a superabundant world yet, but the long march of human ingenuity is making basic human wants like clothing, water, food, shelter, warmth, entertainment, recreation, and medicine more ubiquitous throughout the world. This means that countries are less desperate to go to war to seize other people's stuff.

#### Checks prevent miscalculation.

Feaver 17—Peter Feaver, Ph.D., Harvard, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University. (“President Trump and the Risks of Nuclear War,” 11-17-17, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/11/17/president-trump-and-the-risks-of-nuclear-war/>, //GrRv)

When the president wakes up the military It is a different matter in the other context: when it is the president who wakes up the military and tries to get them to go from peacetime to war, i.e. to launch a preventive nuclear attack. In the preventive case, it is not reasonable to believe that the streamlined procedures of an emergency response would operate without anyone raising objections. The steps the president would have to take in order to pass a nuclear order to someone who could physically launch the missiles would simultaneously alert the rest of his national security team. Efforts to bypass the senior leadership would themselves further alarm subordinates, increasing the likelihood that they would draw in the rest of the national security team, even if ordered not to. The military is trained to reject illegal orders and the president trying to order the military to go from peacetime to nuclear war without consulting with his national security advisors would set off alarms up and down the system about whether the orders were legal. The president does not need anyone else to help him fire off a tweet, but he does need many others to help him fire off a nuclear intercontinental ballistic missile. If he were trying to do so it would take an enormous effort of persuasion that would involve many more people than are involved in the streamlined, launch-under-attack scenario. What would happen in this second scenario? That question led to the second major topic of concern in the Q&A period: how robust is the military training to resist illegal orders and how confident could we be that the Pentagon would view an order to “launch a preventive nuclear war without notifying my national security team” to be illegal? In testimony, General Kehler repeatedly emphasized that the military does not follow orders [ignorantly] ~~blindly~~ and the ubiquity of lawyers at multiple layers of command gives us high confidence the legal questions would be asked (and need to be answered) before a nuclear strike actually happened. This is true, though it is also true that the military are trained that authenticated orders from the national command authority have a presumption of legality. (Note: the presumption is even stronger in launch-under-attack scenarios, because the United States has long embraced the legal concept of anticipatory self-defense, which could result in a decision to strike under circumstances where the United States has not yet suffered an attack, but one is deemed to be imminent or even underway.) Nevertheless, I am inclined to share General Kehler’s confidence that a rogue president would find it exceedingly hard to persuade the military to act in preventive war scenarios as rapidly as they are trained to act in launch-under-attack scenarios. Part of this comes from my understanding of the civil-military context of national security. Presidents already find it challenging to persuade the military to embrace policies that the military object to — and which are far less consequential than preventive nuclear war. Another of my books, Armed Servants, explores in some detail the push and shove of civil-military relations. And still a third (co-authored with Chris Gelpi), Choosing Your Battles, shows that the military are hardly chomping at the bit to initiate the use of force. To be sure, I also found, in Guarding the Guardians, that the military did favor a system inclined to the always rather than the never side of the always/never dilemma. This is in part why U.S. political leaders insisted that there be civilian control of the arsenal. Yet all of these policies were the result of a lengthy bureaucratic struggle that involved many more people than just the president and the few nuclear operators required to launch a missile. The longer timeline of a preventive war scenario gives the opportunity for all these actors to weigh in on the president’s decision. Yes, the president could still carry the day, as President George W. Bush did in 2003 when he ordered the invasion of Iraq in a similar preventive scenario. But Bush’s team spent over a year debating the decision. The military weighed in repeatedly. And, crucially, Congress voted to give the president the authority to do what he did.