# King RR Semis---Blake OR vs Strake MS

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Settler Colonialism K

#### Settler colonialism is the permeating structure of the nation-state which requires the elimination of indigenous life and land via the occupation of settlers---it turns Natives into ghosts and chattel slaves into excess labor.

Tuck and Yang 12 (Eve Tuck, Unangax, State University of New York at New Paltz K. Wayne Yang University of California, San Diego, Decolonization is not a metaphor, Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40, https://clas.osu.edu/sites/clas.osu.edu/files/Tuck%20and%20Yang%202012%20Decolonization%20is%20not%20a%20metaphor.pdf JKS)

Our intention in this descriptive exercise is not be exhaustive, or even inarguable; instead, we wish to emphasize that (a) decolonization will take a different shape in each of these contexts - though they can overlap - and that (b) neither external nor internal colonialism adequately describe the form of colonialism which operates in the United States or other nation-states in which the colonizer comes to stay. Settler colonialism operates through internal/external colonial modes simultaneously because there is no spatial separation between metropole and colony. For example, in the United States, many Indigenous peoples have been forcibly removed from their homelands onto reservations, indentured, and abducted into state custody, signaling the form of colonization as simultaneously internal (via boarding schools and other biopolitical modes of control) and external (via uranium mining on Indigenous land in the US Southwest and oil extraction on Indigenous land in Alaska) with a frontier (the US military still nicknames all enemy territory “Indian Country”). The horizons of the settler colonial nation-state are total and require a mode of total appropriation of Indigenous life and land, rather than the selective expropriation of profit-producing fragments. Settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain. Thus, relying solely on postcolonial literatures or theories of coloniality that ignore settler colonialism will not help to envision the shape that decolonization must take in settler colonial contexts. Within settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth (land, for shorthand, in this article.) Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is **not temporally contained** in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation. This is why Patrick Wolfe (1999) emphasizes that settler colonialism is a structure and not an event. In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. Epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land are interred, indeed made pre-modern and backward. Made savage. In order for the settlers to make a place their home, they must destroy and disappear the Indigenous peoples that live there. Indigenous peoples are those who have creation stories, not colonization stories, about how we/they came to be in a particular place - indeed how we/they came to be a place. Our/their relationships to land comprise our/their epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies. For the settlers, Indigenous peoples are in the way and, in the destruction of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous communities, and over time and through law and policy, Indigenous peoples’ claims to land under settler regimes, land is recast as property and as a resource. Indigenous peoples must be erased, must be made into ghosts (Tuck and Ree, forthcoming). At the same time, settler colonialism involves the subjugation and forced labor of chattel slaves, whose bodies and lives become the property, and who are kept landless. Slavery in settler colonial contexts is distinct from other forms of indenture whereby excess labor is extracted from persons. First, chattels are commodities of labor and therefore it is the slave’s person that is the excess. Second, unlike workers who may aspire to own land, the slave’s very presence on the land is already an excess that must be dis-located. Thus, the slave is a desirable commodity but the person underneath is imprisonable, punishable, and murderable. The violence of keeping/killing the chattel slave makes them deathlike monsters in the settler imagination; they are reconfigured/disfigured as the threat, the razor’s edge of safety and terror. The settler, if known by his actions and how he justifies them, sees himself as holding dominion over the earth and its flora and fauna, as the anthropocentric normal, and as more developed, more human, more deserving than other groups or species. The settler is making a new "home" and that home is rooted in a homesteading worldview where the wild land and wild people were made for his benefit. He can only make his identity as a settler by making the land produce, and produce excessively, because "civilization" is defined as production in excess of the "natural" world (i.e. in excess of the sustainable production already present in the Indigenous world). In order for excess production, he needs excess labor, which he cannot provide himself. The chattel slave serves as that excess labor, labor that can never be paid because payment would have to be in the form of property (land). The settler's wealth is land, or a fungible version of it, and so payment for labor is impossible.6 The settler positions himself as both superior and normal; the settler is natural, whereas the Indigenous inhabitant and the chattel slave are unnatural, even supernatural. Settlers are not immigrants. Immigrants are beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous laws and epistemologies. Therefore, settler nations are not immigrant nations (See also A.J. Barker, 2009). Not unique, the United States, as a settler colonial nation-state, also operates as an empire - utilizing external forms and internal forms of colonization simultaneous to the settler colonial project. This means, and this is perplexing to some, that dispossessed people are brought onto seized Indigenous land through other colonial projects. Other colonial projects include enslavement, as discussed, but also military recruitment, low-wage and high-wage labor recruitment (such as agricultural workers and overseas-trained engineers), and displacement/migration (such as the coerced immigration from nations torn by U.S. wars or devastated by U.S. economic policy). In this set of settler colonial relations, colonial subjects who are displaced by external colonialism, as well as racialized and minoritized by internal colonialism, still occupy and settle stolen Indigenous land. Settlers are diverse, not just of white European descent, and include people of color, even from other colonial contexts. This tightly wound set of conditions and racialized, globalized relations exponentially complicates what is meant by decolonization, and by solidarity, against settler colonial forces. Decolonization in exploitative colonial situations could involve the seizing of imperial wealth by the postcolonial subject. In settler colonial situations, seizing imperial wealth is inextricably tied to settlement and re-invasion. Likewise, the promise of integration and civil rights is predicated on securing a share of a settler-appropriated wealth (as well as expropriated ‘third-world’ wealth). Decolonization in a settler context is fraught because empire, settlement, and internal colony have no spatial separation. Each of these features of settler colonialism in the US context - empire, settlement, and internal colony - make it a site of contradictory decolonial desires7. Decolonization as metaphor allows people to equivocate these contradictory decolonial desires because it turns decolonization into an empty signifier to be filled by any track towards liberation. In reality, the tracks walk all over land/people in settler contexts. Though the details are not fixed or agreed upon, in our view, decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically. This is precisely why decolonization is necessarily unsettling, especially across lines of solidarity. “Decolonization never takes place unnoticed” (Fanon, 1963, p. 36). Settler colonialism and its decolonization implicates and unsettles everyone.

#### Uranium mining is an extension of the global imperial project designed to genocide indigenous communities and expand US military dominance.

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In 2014, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Nuclear Energy Agency stated in a report titled ‘Managing Environmental and Health Impacts of Uranium Mining’: Uranium mining and milling has evolved significantly over the years. By comparing currently leading approaches with outdated practices, this report demonstrates how uranium mining can be conducted in a way that protects workers, the public and the environment. Innovative, modern mining practices combined with strictly-enforced regulatory standards are geared towards avoiding past mistakes committed primarily during the early history of the industry when maximising uranium production was the principal operating consideration. (n.p.)

Although I do believe in safer, more ecological safe methods and practices in min- ing, including that of uranium, I am highly sceptical of the ability of hierarchical, centralized models of organizations such as capitalism and the state to carry out such methods in a way that benefits humanity. Most people in positions of power are removed from the consequences of their actions, or at least the social and environ- mental consequences; in a centralized, bureaucratic and hierarchical organization, those with the power to make decisions are only able to see costs and benefits in terms of finance and statistics, never in terms of vital resources and human beings. Without decentralized, participatory planning and execution of plans, it is almost certain that somebody is going to get the short end of the stick, which is especially worrying in situations involving human lives and the health of the planet. For these reasons, the management of uranium would be best informed by an anarchist model, which would provide the best possible ethical and ecological outcomes.

From the 1930s to the 1970s, Navajo people, Hopi people and Mormon people were used by mining companies to mine for uranium in the four corners region of the United States (Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado). The miners, who were largely indigenous, were not informed of the dangers of working in such close proximity to uranium without proper protection by the mining companies nor by the US government. Uranium tailings were left uncovered and unmarked all over the region near the mines. The leftover ore was used to build houses for the miners and their families in the area. The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was aware of the dangers posed to uranium miners prior to uranium mining due to the studies of uranium miners in Europe that had previously taken place, and throughout the 1950s, the commission oversaw uranium mining in the region without informing miners of the dangers of uranium (McLeod 1983). During this period, the Navajo people mined about 4 million tonnes of uranium, largely used by the US govern- ment in the production of nuclear weapons during the Cold War, and there are now 259 abandoned uranium mines in the state of New Mexico alone (Frosch 2009).

Ever since the uranium mining in the four corners region and the Navajo nation, uranium has contaminated the water that the peoples of the region use for drink- ing, cleaning and cooking. The people that work and live near old uranium mines, tailings and downstream from them end up consuming high amounts of uranium throughout their life, which causes sickness and early death among them. It should be noted that the children of dead parents in these situations often are taken by the government and put in the foster care system, robbing the children of their families and cultural identities (Spitz 2009). In addition to contaminating the drinking water, the uranium contaminated the every brick that people’s homes were built out of, and living in one of the uranium houses could be up to the equivalent of receiving 553 chest X-rays per year (McLeod 1983). The radiation in the region dramatically increased the rates of birth defects among infants in the Navajo nation as well.

In 1997, the United States Environmental Protection Agency finally measured the levels of radiation in Monument valley and discovered that many water sources had been contaminated due to the waste being piled up along the Colorado River, just as the indigenous peoples had been saying for years, and that in some areas the radia- tion was around eighty times the federally designated dose limit for human beings (Spitz 2009). The 2000 documentary The Return of Navajo Boy was finally able to assist in triggering a federal investigation into uranium houses in the four corners region. The federal government has even promised reparations to all those affected by uranium mining, though they often will refuse to help lung cancer patients due to the use of traditional tobacco (ibid.). In the year 2008, the US EPA finally made a five-year plan to clean up all Cold War uranium contamination on Navajo land, though vast areas of land and many families have still been left out of this plan. Federal and tribal scientists tested radioactivity over the 27,000 square miles of the reservation, searching for the lung-cancer-causing mineral, radium (Frosch 2009).

In a personal account, Bertha Nez, a resident of the southeastern edge of the Navajo nation, said that ‘I’m sandwiched between these tailings piles. The kids have asthma, my sister had cancer – lymphoma – then my dad, and some people that worked in the uranium mine, they have respiratory problems and some have kidney problems’. ‘There were a lot of things people weren’t told about the plight of Navajos and uranium mining’ (Stephen B. Etsitty, executive director of the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency) said, ‘These legacy issues are impacting genera- tions. At some point people are saying, ‘It’s got to end’ (Jung 2013).

This internal colonialism by the United States was used during the Cold War for multiple purposes. The first and foremost was the development of a large and sophisticated nuclear arsenal for use in intimidating the rest of the world into sub- mission for (neo)colonialism and imperialism abroad. The second was the deliberate destruction of native homelands in an attempt to force the indigenous peoples of the region to either assimilate into the culture of the United States, or to leave and no longer be a bother to the white colonizers. The third was an attempt by the state and capitalism to further reduce the health and population of the indigenous peoples of North America by inflicting the horrible diseases and conditions that come along with living in uranium mining waste. And yet these practices are on the rise again in recent years, as several multinational corporations have begun to mine in Mount Taylor, a site considered sacred to the Navajo people and many other surrounding peoples, referred to as Tsoodził by the Navajo people. The project is called the Roca Honda Mine and it is the largest mine in the nation. It has the potential to pollute local groundwater sources and destroy culturally significant sites, but it is also esti- mated to create 2,400 jobs and over $1 billion in economic activity, an offer hard to refuse in a state that ranks third in poverty. However, the mine is predicted to affect up to 70 acres of land designated by the forest service to be a traditional cultural property (ibid.).

Investors are beginning to take notice of uranium mining lately, despite uranium mining was never really recovering from a crash in the early 1980s, likely due to the recent surge in desire for alternative energy sources. The project has been taken over by the Canadian-based company Energy Fuels, and, using the underground mining method, they hope to extract 1,000 tonnes of uranium every day for 9 years. Jackie Jefferson, a neighbour of Bertha Nez, has said about the mine, ‘We just don’t want no other uranium stuff coming to us. We don’t want to be a dumping ground’ (ibid.)

Despite the negative stigma around uranium, the world continues mining it to use for the production of energy and, in a more sinister vein, weapons. Over two- thirds of the world’s production of uranium comes from Kazakhstan, Canada and Australia, with a rapidly increasing amount extracted using ISL. Uranium produc- tion overall has also been increasing in recent years, rising from 41,282 tonnes in 2007 to 60,496 tonnes in 2015; Kazakhstan’s production has increased by approxi- mately 300 per cent since 2007; Canada’s has increased by about 50 per cent; and while Australia has actually decreased production by about a third. The United State’s uranium production has remained about the same over the past decade, but it would not be surprising if it were to begin rising again. Currently, over half of uranium mining is handled by state-owned mining companies, which generally prioritize secure supplies of uranium over actual market considerations. Uranium production from mines took a serious downturn in the late 1980s and early 1990s but has been steadily on the rise ever since. Recently, in 2012, uranium supply hit the highest it had been since 1988, and over the next few years could easily surpass its peak in 1980. The largest producing mine in 2015 was McArthur River mine in Canada (7,354 tonnes of uranium), followed by Cigar Lake, Canada (4,345 tonnes of uranium) and Tortkuduk & Myunkum, Kazakhstan (4,109 tonnes of uranium). The United States has approximately 207,400 tonnes of known recoverable uranium resources, 4 per cent of the world’s known uranium resources (World Nuclear Asso- ciation, n.d.).

The environmental aspects of uranium mining are largely the same as other metal-liferous mining, especially that of heavy metals which are generally highly toxic, but the radioactivity of uranium and other related ores is what makes uranium mining especially worrisome compared to other forms of mining. ISL runs the extra risk of polluting groundwater if done improperly. Mining equipment used for uranium mining generally cannot be sold once it is being used due to exposure to radiation, so it has to be buried along with the rest of the waste. Uranium mining sites must get prior approval from the governing bodies with jurisdiction over the land before being used, they must comply with all environmental standards of those governing bodies and they are subject to international standards and external audits. This is not to say that it is not possible to ignore regulations, or that the regulations are com- mensurate to the risk posed to workers, communities and the environment, but there are at least some general standards of safety that prevent disaster, and the regulations are almost always getting better (ibid.). One could hope that a solution would be to control over industry and energy production in a communal, democratic manner so that the people most affected by any mining or milling may make the decisions as to whether and how they want to operate these facilities, as people with decision- making power would be those affected, and could weigh the benefits and costs (which are social, personal and environmental, not simply monetary as viewed by central organizers such as businesses and governments).

An environmental engineer working for the New Mexico Mining & Minerals

Division (MMD), James Smith, said, ‘Total mines that have been really well cleaned up? Ummm. One. You can’t see uranium. You don’t know that it’s there. So, it’s really hard to be able to recognize what to do.’ Cleaning up uranium mining sites may sound easy in theory, but in practice it is very difficult to determine exactly what the impact of the mine has been, and to what extent it is necessary to cover it up.

Covering old uranium mines can range from piling rocks and topsoil over it to fill- ing an entire mine shaft with concrete, it really depends on the particular site. Juan Velasquez, senior vice president of environmental affairs at Strathmore Minerals, one of the companies involved with the Roca Honda Mine project, easily admits that industry has had bad practices in the past, but also insists that things have changed and that they know better now. The New Mexico Mining Act of 1993 introduces very strict regulations on mining in the state, and they have more regulations requir- ing companies to clean up any damage they do to the environment. Eric Jantz, a lawyer with the New Mexico Environmental Law Center, said that ‘the single big- gest problem environmentally is the water situation’, he continued, ‘In order to start mining, the company is going to have to de-water the mine, which means they’re going to have to pump out millions of gallons of groundwater from the mine area’ (Jung 2013). Especially with ISL, there is extra risk of releasing heavy metals into local water sources. ‘For the communities most immediately impacted, the benefits are negligible and the costs are huge’, Jantz said, and for the ones with the power to carry out the deeds, the costs are negligible and the benefits are huge (ibid.).

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The story of the capacity for uranium to produce high quantities of energy, which would be used both in nuclear weapons and in nuclear power, begins with the dis- covery of the neutron. In 1932, English physicist James Chadwick discovered the neutron, a particle theorized by Ernest Rutherford a decade earlier. Neutrons have no charge (as opposed to the +1 charge of the proton and −1 charge of the elec- tron), and can only be detected by the way they cause other particles around them to move. Rutherford would comment soon after the discovery that anyone who thought that neutron collisions could provide any sort of useful power was ‘talking moonshine’ (Zoellner 2009). But perhaps the story starts earlier with a book written in 1914 by socialist and science-fiction author H. G. Wells: The World Set Free. The book described a mineral that could use radioactivity to set off a chain reaction to liberate the binding energy of atoms and create an explosion; destruction on a global scale would then ensue. Leo Szilard, another physicist, was annoyed by Rutherford’s comments and, inspired by what he feared after having read Wells’ book, decided that he needed to make sure that this idea of such a weapon never became public. Szilard patented the idea in the name of the British Admiralty and it was promptly forgotten. Not long after this, a new form of uranium, U-235, would be discovered by physicists at the University of Chicago, a much rarer form that could be used for nuclear fission (ibid.).

In September of 1938, Adolf Hitler annexed the Sudetenland, a region of Czechoslovakia with an ethnic German majority, and consequently gained control of the mining town of St. Joachimsthal, one of the world’s only known sources of uranium at the time. Fears grew that if Germany were to gain control of Belgium, then they would have control over Shinkolobwe, and the United States and Britain would have little-to-no access to uranium supplies, while thousands of tonnes would be necessary to crush, separate and enrich to get enough U-235 to create a uranium bomb. Luckily (though unsure at the time), the likelihood of the Ger- mans developing a nuclear bomb was slim due to Hitler’s distrust of technology, and his dismissal of the uranium bomb as the ‘Spawn of Jewish pseudo-science’ (ibid.). The US government on the other hand decided to go ahead with the project and ordered the purchase of a depopulated piece of land in Washington state near the Columbia River. This became the Hanford Site, where the govern- ment would secretly manufacture plutonium, and it would turn into one of the most polluted sites on the Earth. George B. Kistiakowsky, present for the Trinity explosion, the first nuclear weapon ever detonated, described the explosion as ‘the nearest thing to Doomsday that one could possibly imagine. I am sure that at the end of the world – in the last millisecond – the last man will see what we have just seen’ (ibid.).

Nuclear weapons were developed during Second World War by the United States under the Manhattan Project and were designed to serve one purpose and one purpose only: to destroy cities and population centres. A common trend of US military tactics is the use of what was once referred to as ‘irregular warfare’, attack- ing cities, villages, food and water sources, and trade routes, as opposed to attacking the enemy’s soldiers (‘regular warfare’). This ‘irregular’ warfare became the regular form of warfare for the United States when colonizing the continent and wiping out indigenous populations. This style of warfare is designed not for the winning of battles and defeating armies, but for the total destruction of the enemy’s civilization. The goal of ‘irregular’ warfare is to win wars by any means necessary, through the elimination of other civilizations from the face of the planet if necessary, which is exactly what nuclear weapons do. Nuclear bombs would serve no better than regu- lar bombs in attacking soldiers or battleships or airplanes, they are only useful for destroying population centres and killing civilians. It is exactly this type of warfare that the United States perfected as means for committing genocide against indig- enous peoples, and it is exactly this type of warfare that the United States used to let loose the most dangerous weapon in the history of Japan in 1945.

Because nuclear weaponry is a tool for ‘irregular’ warfare, and the goal of ‘irregu-lar’ warfare is the absolute destruction of your enemy’s civilization, it should be the logical conclusion that a war between multiple nuclear powers where nuclear weapons were used would signal the end of civilization as a whole, and that was the fear from the end of Second World War until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The world was dominated by two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, with vast nuclear arsenals, and every time the two superpowers clashed there was a risk of nuclear war. This was prevented by the two superpowers exploiting the conflict in the global south to be used as proxy wars, such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War and countless others, in order to gain an advantage over the other in control of the world’s people and resources. It was the Cold War and imperialism that fuelled the drive for uranium mining in the four corners region. It was the conflict between capitalism and socialism that created the incentive for capitalists to mine uranium, and it was the very techniques of warfare used for the genocide of indigenous peoples that created the weapons that their mined uranium would build. Japan, as a country that has been a victim of nuclear weapons, and its three non- nuclear principles (non-production, non-possession and non-introduction of nuclear weapons) give it a unique role in the movement against nuclear weapons, yet it has consistently been pro-nuclear, both energy and weapons. Many of Japan’s post–Sec- ond World War prime ministers have been pro-nuclear or had pro-nuclear cabinet members. This has led to Japan’s inclusion in the United States ‘nuclear umbrella’. The core of Japan’s defence policy is nuclear weapons; the weapons themselves will be American, but their purpose is clear: the defence of Japan. Much like the United States, Japan’s non-proliferation policy turns a blind eye to US-favoured countries such as India and Israel, while denouncing unfavoured countries such as Iran and North Korea (Abramsky 2010).

The United Kingdom, France, China and Russia are all engaging in nuclear weap- ons modernization programmes, meanwhile Israel maintains a nuclear force, and Pakistan and India are building up nuclear forces. The United States claims to be ‘revising’ its nuclear arsenal to be more effective in a ‘Post-Cold War security envi- ronment’ (ibid.). The fact that countries such as the United States are modernizing their arsenals serves as encouragement to those states without nuclear programmes or with relatively weak ones to develop their arsenals, especially those of which the United States may be unfriendly towards, such as Iran. Peer de Rijk, director of the World Information Service on Energy, said that everything [Iran] has done in past years is legal under any international treaty. Yet, the simple fact that it is not considered an ally of the Western world and its interests mean that the US and others have been considering a war against Iran. (Ibid.)

Among uranium-exporting countries, two of the largest exporters, Australia and Canada, have strict guidelines to ensure that the exported uranium is used for peace- ful purposes only and not used for the development of weapons or in ways that could support the development of weapons. Over the past few decades, the concern has been that uranium intended for civilian fuel use will be used for the development of weapons; however, the opposite has come true: surplus weapons-grade uranium and plutonium have increasingly been used for fuel production rather than for weapons. Military uranium has become an increasingly large portion of the uranium used for commercial fuel productions, and will likely increase as the governments of the United States and former Soviet countries continue to follow through on disarmament trea- ties that have been being put in place since 1987 (World Nuclear Association n.d.).

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Nuclear energy is a type of energy that uses heat generated by splitting atom nuclei in order to generate steam to turn turbines, similar to fossil fuel energy. However, there are some key differences between fossil fuels and nuclear energy. The first is that fossil fuels generate greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide when they are burned, causing a multitude of environmental and health problems such as global warming, ocean acidification and increased respiratory diseases. Nuclear energy releases little greenhouse gas throughout the process, and absolutely none during the actual pro- duction of energy. Fossil fuels are far less efficient than nuclear energy (though the issue of nuclear waste is still important).

Uranium is generally found in two types, U-238 and U-235, the latter of which makes up approximately 0.7 per cent of natural uranium. U-235 is the main type of uranium that is ‘fissile’. The process of ‘enrichment’ separates the isotopes in order to concentrate certain isotopes. Most reactors require the amount of U-235 to increase from about 0.7 per cent to 3-5 per cent. By firing a neutron into the nucleus of a U-235 atom, it will split, producing more neutrons that hit the nuclei of surround- ing uranium atoms and the process is repeated, producing vast quantities of heat energy. The heat energy then is used to turn water into steam, which turns turbines and generates electrical energy. This process is far more efficient than fossil fuels, as it uses far less fuel to produce more energy and less waste, and more reliable and consistent than other forms of alternative energy such as solar and wind.

In 1954, the AEC announced that nuclear energy would soon be ‘too cheap to meter’, opening the possibility of a future in which energy could be free for all to use. Nuclear energy would soon become a standard method of energy production and penetrate every household and industry in the country. By the late-1960s, every European country had a nuclear power programme, but also by that time the voices in opposition to nuclear power were also making themselves heard. Opposition to the development of nuclear energy, due to the risks of meltdowns and troubles with nuclear waste, continued for the next decade until, in 1979, the worst nuclear disas- ter in the US history occurred at the Three Mile Island Generating Station, an acci- dent that would ultimately cost $1 billion in clean-up. The nuclear industry never recovered from the events of Three Mile Island, as 110 orders for nuclear power plants were cancelled after that, and the last order for a nuclear reactor actually built in the United States was placed in 1974.

At the present time, thirty-one countries have operating nuclear power stations; however only six of these are responsible for about 75 per cent of production: France, Germany, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States. A new reactor has been designed, called the ‘European Pressurised Reactor’ (EPR), to produce cost-effective nuclear energy at the two sites France and Finland, where they have been under construction, however they have proven to be incredibly costly and serious concerns over safety have been raised. Designers hope that the reactor will usher in a new ‘nuclear renaissance’ and make nuclear energy more competitive. It has been pro- posed by the United States that only a few selected countries be allowed to produce nuclear energy: China, France, Germany, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The list excludes all Islamic countries and most of the global south (and the only countries of the global south on the list are generally the US friendly). The countries excluded from the list would have to buy their nuclear energy from those who are privileged enough to produce it (Abramsky 2010). Bernard Weinstein, an energy economist at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, said about nuclear reactors that China is pushing ahead big time with nuclear. They’ve got 26 gigawatts of nuclear plants under construction (Jung 2013). On top of that, ten plants are being built in Russia and six are being built in India. This recent increase in nuclear reactor construction has slightly increased demand for uranium, ‘So if someone was looking to invest in mining uranium ore in the United States, it’s probably going to be for markets abroad’, said Weinstein (Jung 2013).

According to the OECD’s ‘World Energy Outlook’, a significant increase in nuclear energy to replace fossil fuels would be required to maintain greenhouse gases below 450 ppm. Many environmental groups view 450 ppm as too high and hope to keep them below 350 ppm, which has already been surpassed and will require the removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. One way to combat the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere is to replace fossil fuels with nuclear energy, because nuclear does not release any greenhouse gases during the energy production process (though mining and transportation and such do release gases). Throughout the whole process, including extraction, milling, enrichment, transportation and energy production, less greenhouse gases are released than in the life cycle of solar power production.

Despite its lack of greenhouse gas emissions, nuclear does present some very harmful and infamous problems to the environment. I’ve already talked about ura- nium mining and its effects on the environment and human health, but there are also problems with nuclear energy such as reactor meltdowns and leaks. Accidents such as the Three Mile Island disaster in 1979, the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 and the Fukushima disaster of 2011 are a few examples, and while nuclear disasters are not commonplace, the infrequency of their occurrence is perhaps outweighed by the severity of the disasters they cause. Nuclear meltdowns and reactor leaks cause serious environmental destruction and are harmful to human health in a capacity that is hardly seen anywhere else. In addition to this, nuclear waste has to be kept in isolation for anywhere from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of years. Ten thousand years ago we were just developing agriculture, can we imagine where we will be 10,000 years from now? The possibility of future societies not knowing the dangers of nuclear waste is why we have developed symbols for radioactivity and biohazards that we hope would be effective in warning future peoples of danger without having to use written language that they may not understand.

Currently, nuclear energy production, though rising, is not rising as fast as energy consumption, and as the climate worsens due to overuse of fossil fuels, the need for a form of energy that produces at the rate of fossil fuels is growing more and more. However, it is hardly possible to maintain the percentage of energy that nuclear energy makes up as energy demands increase, it is estimated that over the next ten years, eighty new reactors would have to be built simply to maintain its current share, let alone begin replacing fossil fuels. Further, as oil supplies decrease (though we are in no danger of running out before we experience ecological col- lapse), competition for such resources grows fiercer. And any model for increasing nuclear energy production has to take into account uranium supplies and current reactor capacity. It is estimated that sometime between now and 2030, uranium stockpiles will be depleted, and production cannot increase at a fast enough rate to make up for the increase in demand for energy. About 2.3 Mt of uranium have been produced and known remaining reserves are generally of lower quality and lower concentration so they may not be worth the energy it takes to extract them. If estimates of undiscovered uranium from the Nuclear Energy Agency are included, reserved double or quadruple, which gives some hope to the prospect of a uranium- fuelled future, but not much. The likelihood of these reserves being found is less than the likelihood of not being found, and they are far too speculative for any seri- ous planning of what the future of energy is going to look like (Abramsky 2010).

The life cycle of a nuclear power plant is a long one, including several years of planning and at least five years of construction. The plant may then operate for sev- eral decades, with estimates being around forty years. Some 45 per cent of reactors have been operating for over twenty-five years, and about 90 per cent have been operating for more than fifteen. Current nuclear reactors should begin reaching the end of their lifetime around 2030, at which time they will need be replaced in order to maintain productive capacity, but serious planning for this time has yet to have taken place (ibid.).

Twelve countries – Argentina, Bulgaria, Congo, Czech Republic, France, Gabon, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Tajikistan – have all depleted their uranium supplies, and the bulk of known uranium supplies remain in Kazakh- stan, Canada and Australia. Only if we can construct adequate nuclear breeding reactors (which generate more fissile material than they consume) can we ensure that uranium supplies do not run out over the next twenty years. However, neither nuclear breeding reactors nor thorium reactors, which will be discussed further in this chapter, can be built in time to be cost-efficient and competitive in the market. Other forms of alternative energy exist beyond nuclear that many readers will be aware of, and certainly they will play an increasing role in the future of our energy system, but as of now they all have problems that need to be solved before they can be put into use on the scale that we currently require. Solar power as a technology is consistently getting better but it has some serious drawbacks that get forgotten by people when imagining a green energy future. First, the mining of rare earth miner- als for solar panels is especially harmful to the environment, as any mining is, and some minerals are scarce. The second reason is solar panels last only for a few years before they need to be replaced and are difficult to recycle. Finally, solar panels get incredibly hot, which can be seriously harmful to animals and plants near the solar farms. Another possible alternative is geothermal energy, which harnesses the earth’s internal heat to use underground steam to turn turbines to generate electricity. Pockets of underground steam are rare though and can be created by injecting water into the ground, but this also has the possibility of creating many of the problems associated with hydraulic fracturing.

Even with these critiques, renewable energy future is not impossible; however, two things must be done in order to ensure that these forms of energy don’t end up causing more damage. The first is that we must invest more time and energy into the research and development of renewable energy technology in order to produce it in ways that will be sustainable and environmentally friendly. The second is that we must make sure that while we are implementing these technologies, we must do it in ways that are safe for the communities they are providing for and extracting from, the people working to produce the energy and the planet as a whole. The capitalist drive to cut costs causes us to overlook safety and environmental impact in exchange for saving money, costs that can be externalized are thrust upon the most vulnerable communities. Centralized control over resources, present in hierarchical institutions, especially in capitalism, allows those with power to affect change to ignore the con- sequences of their actions while many suffer.

Since the birth of nuclear energy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, it has been proposed by scientists that we could produce nuclear energy with materials other than uranium, notably thorium. The idea to use thorium instead of uranium to produce energy was originally proposed in the late-1940s, but the government refused to fund research into it because the process burned excess plutonium, while the government needed the plutonium to build nuclear weapons during the Cold War. However, as the climate crisis grows more direr and alternative energy sources are not progressing fast enough to replace fossil fuels soon, we need to find a way to power our civilization that is both ecologically friendly and can meet our energy demands. Thorium-based nuclear energy solves these problems and more.

The first advantage of thorium is that it is abundant in nature. It is estimated that three times as much thorium on earth than uranium is available, and currently we have few uses for it, and it mostly ends up as a waste product, contaminating rivers after mining rare earth metals. The second advantage to thorium, especially considering how abundant it is, is that it produces far more energy than any other current energy source. One tonne of thorium can produce as much energy as 200 tonnes of uranium, or 3.5 million tonnes of coal. Also, all thorium is usable for energy, as opposed to the small percentage of uranium that is usable, and therefore does not require enrichment, which also saves time and energy in producing the fuel. Additionally, the waste produced by thorium-based nuclear power needs to be kept isolated only for a few hundred years, unlike waste products from uranium reactors which have to be kept isolated for up to hundreds of thousands of years. Thorium’s melting point is also approximately 500°C higher than that of uranium, which provides an extra margin of safety against meltdowns in reactors. There are still the issues of the immense initial investment in the construction of power plants, and the issues of the impact of mining (though mining is likely to continue, so we might as well use the upturned thorium rather than let it contaminate rivers), but a dialogue around thorium and nuclear energy should be happening.

CONCLUSION

Capitalism has turned uranium from a nuisance into a valuable commodity. The capitalist drive for cheap sources of energy turned uranium into nuclear energy, but the need for profit kept capitalism from turning nuclear energy into a practically free, practically limitless resource for the people to use. Capitalist cost-cutting and externalizing damages have turned nuclear energy into one of the most taboo forms of energy in the world. The need to exploit impoverished peoples for cheap labour fuelled colonialism in the four corners region of the United States. Capitalism and production for profit have turned uranium, and all sources of energy, into questions of cost-efficiency and marketability rather than a question of resource-efficiency, safety and human need.

The ‘irregular warfare’ of American colonialism led to the creation of nuclear weapons out of uranium. The possibility of nuclear immolation is all-too-real of a fear, and it is one that is the culmination of over 500 years of colonialism. And not only did colonialism fuel the conception of the weaponry, but it is through colonial- ism that people were able to obtain the uranium to build the weaponry. Exploiting the labour of Navajo people in the four corners and of African people in Shinkol- obwe would fuel the uranium bombs that would be dropped on Japan in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers that played a danger- ous game of chess with ‘third world’ countries during the Cold War.

Uranium has the potential for so much good and so much harm to the biosphere. The radioactivity and chemical toxicity of uranium requires that it be carefully handled and used so that it does not cause damage to ecological and human health. But currently the prospects of replacing fossil fuels otherwise are looking slim. Insti- tutions such as capitalism and the state have made nuclear power dangerous and destructive, by producing power for profit rather than for safety, to meet human needs and to liberate us from the chains of fossil fuels. If we wish to develop other forms of alternative energy to their fullest capacity, and if we wish to use nuclear energy to safely power our civilization, we must abandon centralization and the profit motive, and we must produce communally, through participatory planning, and for human need.

Uranium has a long, complex and dark past: a past of colonialism, imperialism and environmental destruction. But uranium is not inherently evil, it is merely a radioactive element with ninety-two protons and isotopes ranging from U-233 to U-238. It is through the process of commodification and exploitation for the ben- efit of the few at the expense of the many that uranium, like many other things, becomes a tool for evil. Uranium may have a dark past, but if we can move past capitalism and promote ideas of non-hierarchical social organization and ecologi- cal principles, perhaps it can have a better future (or perhaps it will be abandoned altogether, but a dialogue must happen, and we must think outside of capitalism while it happens).

#### Viewing nuclear energy as a common good defines what is “common” and what is “good” in a way that erases subaltern indigenous epistemes deemed uncredible by nuclear environmentalists.

Romy Opperman 23 11/1/23 (Romy Opperman is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research, NYC. Romy’s research centers on feminist Africana, Indigenous, and decolonial thinkers to foreground issues of racism and colonialism for environmental and climate ethics and justice and to highlight the importance of marginalized perspectives for liberated climate futures. Specifically, her work is oriented by philosophies that trouble theories of justice inherited from liberal political philosophy, and by practices of freedom operative in Black ecologies, place-based movements, and struggles overland and ecological issues. “Anti-Nuclear Anti-Colonial Feminism” Women in Philosophy https://blog.apaonline.org/2023/11/01/anti-nuclear-anti-colonial-feminism/)//evw

My use of the term anti-colonial is informed by Max Liboiron (Red River Métis/Michif and settler) in Pollution is Colonialism, as well as my long-standing engagement with anti-colonial thinkers and militants such as Frantz Fanon. Despite the differences between them, both approaches start with accounts of colonial land relations, as opposed to intentions. On Liboiron’s view, the features of colonial land relations always have pollution as the outcome, are marked by fantasies of disposability and containment, and are therefore predicated on access to Indigenous lands and bodies. Starting with colonial land relations allows us to see how colonialism reproduces itself (and our role in it) despite well-intentioned efforts (such as environmentalism) that seek to treat its worst effects. On my view, nuclear environmentalism is a great example of this phenomenon, and thus the need for ecological approaches that start with an understanding of colonial land relations. Starting with colonial land relations entails carefully moving between different scales, to trace the afterlives and radioactive nodes of nuclear—(whether weapons or energy)—that link those living with nuclear in a virtual web of what Lou Cornam calls “the irradiated international.” The term anti-colonial stresses a political commitment and shared project, one that is profoundly informed by the insights, demands, and struggles of Indigenous and other people subject to colonialism, imperialism, and racism, but is not confined to members of such groups. An anticolonial approach also does not claim to be doing “Indigenous” philosophy—a claim that often effectively amounts to erasure and appropriation (or unintentional reproduction of colonialism).

Why anti-colonial feminist? Understanding of colonialism as land relations cannot be disentangled from the imposition of a system of gender-sexuality as a crucial tactic in land expropriation, dispossession, and genocide. Default (white) ecofeminist approaches to nuclear have focused on the intergenerational and reproductive ethics of nuclear weapons. Anti-colonial feminist perspectives, however, are longer and wider. Longer, since unlike approaches that consider nuclear “risks” as a theoretical future or one-off event, anti-colonial feminists work with the fact of continual and widespread nuclear use and often live with its past, present, and perilous future. They are wider since they include the whole nuclear fuel chain, as well as analyses of heteropatriarchal power that begin with racial capitalism, (settler) colonialism, and imperialism, and because they reflect on a different set of issues and values (such as land-based relations and spiritual obligations) targeted by nuclear. These wider and longer perspectives offer important lessons for all of us and our shared nuclear climate future.

As Winona LaDuke and Ward Churchill warned in 1985:

The new colonialism knows no limits. Expendable populations will be expended. National sacrifice areas will be sacrificed. New populations and new areas will be targeted, expended and sacrificed. There is no sanctuary. The colonialism is radioactive; what it does can never be undone. Left to its own dynamics to run its course, it will spread across the planet like the cancer it is. It can never be someone else’s problem; regardless of its immediate location at the moment, it has become the problem and the peril of everyone alive, and who will be alive. The place to end it is where it has taken root, where it disclosed its inner nature. The time to end it is now.

We would do well to listen now. Let’s be clear. Nuclear energy = extractivism or colonial land relations + imperialism. We cannot divorce nuclear weapons from nuclear power. As Anne Sisson Runyan notes: “the same nuclear fuel chain upon which weapons rely would remain intact and balloon as more and more non-nuclear weapon states adopted nuclear power. That nuclear fuel chain runs from uranium mining to nuclear power and weapons production and testing as well as the resulting nuclear waste. While apocalyptic visions of nuclear war suggest indiscriminate destruction, the relatively non-spectacular field chain is highly discriminatory.” Starting with the mines, with the denuded, disemboweled, irradiated land and the near decimation of all it sustains, we cannot forget that nuclear entails the extraction of a finite resource that remains radioactive for at least 100,000 years. Reckoning with the abandoned mines and the uncountable open piles and streams of radioactive tailings, reckoning with the man camps, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and other related forms of gender-based and sexual violence, reckoning with the global trails of inter-species/generational illness, the premature and often horrific death, it’s hard to know whether to laugh or cry in the face of claims that nuclear is a “green” “sustainable” net zero energy source that some philosophers have concluded we are “ethically mandated” to endorse. How is this possible? How did they reach this conclusion? And how is nuclear environmentalism becoming a commonsense solution for climate futures?

One explanation is that from Niger to India to Canada, uranium is on Indigenous land. In addition to mines, facilities at various stages of the nuclear cycle are overwhelmingly sited within or near BIPOC communities. Discounting those worst affected by the nuclear fuel chain is a prerequisite for greenwashing nuclear. The agency, resistance, and knowledge of the BIPOC womxn who have resisted and chronicled its effects are erased and forgotten. Luckily for the industry, this erasure is relatively easy in a world that disqualifies such womxn from epistemic credibility.

The view that nuclear is best for the common good presupposes constricted notions of the common and the good. Indeed, the fallout of nuclear on BIPOC womxn and children is not coincidental. Nuclearism is inextricable from the reproductive futurity of colonialism and imperialism. Nuclear has been tied to the imposition of dimorphic gender, a narrow model of (nuclear) family life, and associated patterns of proper conduct and consumption (patterns that require abundant energy—energy that is supposedly supplied by nuclear power). As the reproduction of a colonial regime of gender-sexuality, nuclear kills two birds with one stone: (1) dispossession: gaining land for use as “sinks,” buffer, or sacrifice zones that (radioactive) colonialism is predicated on. This serves the end of (2) genocide: by attacking and undermining Indigenous and non-normative forms of kinship, gender-sexuality, community power, and organization, as well as associated forms of land tenure and relative autonomy, and through wildly harmful and intergenerational and reproductive health effects, nuclear is effectively a eugenic measure that supplements others strategies such as forced sterilization and family separation.

#### Thus, the only alternative is decolonization.

Tuck and Yang 12 (Eve Tuck, Unangax, State University of New York at New Paltz K. Wayne Yang University of California, San Diego, Decolonization is not a metaphor, Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40, JKS)

An ethic of incommensurability, which guides moves that unsettle innocence, stands in contrast to aims of reconciliation, which motivate settler moves to innocence. Reconciliation is about rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future. Reconciliation is concerned with questions of what will decolonization look like? What will happen after abolition? What will be the consequences of decolonization for the settler? Incommensurability acknowledges that these questions need not, and perhaps cannot, be answered in order for decolonization to exist as a framework. We want to say, first, that decolonization is not obliged to answer those questions - decolonization is not accountable to settlers, or settler futurity. Decolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity. Still, we acknowledge the questions of those wary participants in Occupy Oakland and other settlers who want to know what decolonization will require of them. The answers are not fully in view and can’t be as long as decolonization remains punctuated by metaphor. The answers will not emerge from friendly understanding, and indeed require a dangerous understanding of uncommonality that un-coalesces coalition politics - moves that may feel very unfriendly. But we will find out the answers as we get there, “in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give [decolonization] historical form and content” (Fanon, 1963, p. 36). To fully enact an ethic of incommensurability means relinquishing settler futurity, abandoning the hope that settlers may one day be commensurable to Native peoples. It means removing the asterisks, periods, commas, apostrophes, the whereas’s, buts, and conditional clauses that punctuate decolonization and underwrite settler innocence. The Native futures, the lives to be lived once the settler nation is gone - these are the unwritten possibilities made possible by an ethic of incommensurability.

*when you take away the punctuation*

*he says of*

*lines lifted from the documents about*

*military-occupied land*

*its acreage and location*

*you take away its finality*

*opening the possibility of other futures*

-Craig Santos Perez, Chamoru scholar and poet (as quoted by Voeltz, 2012)

Decolonization offers a different perspective to human and civil rights based approaches to justice, an unsettling one, rather than a complementary one. Decolonization is not an “and”. It is an elsewhere.

#### The role of the ballot is to embody refusal of settler logics that get normalized within the settler psyche and naturalize dispossessive violence. Settler colonialism is reliant on the everyday reiteration of ‘settler common sense.’

Rifkin 13 – [Mark, Associate Professor of English & WGS @ UNC-Greensboro. "Settler common sense." Settler Colonial Studies 3.3-4 (2013): 322-340 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2013.810702] ansh

* Spec – rob > theory, offense is a rejection of set col ideologies, operates prefiat. We’ll defend reasonable preferences on specificity in CX.

This affective experience productively can be characterized as an instantiation of what more broadly may be characterized as settler common sense. The phrase suggests the ways the legal and political structures that enable non-Native access to Indigenous territories come to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy, association, history, and personhood. Addressing whiteness in Australia, Fiona Nicoll argues that “rather than analysing and evaluating Indigenous sovereignty claims…, we have a political and intellectual responsibility to analyse and evaluate the innumerable ways in which White sovereignty circumscribes and mitigates the exercise of Indigenous sovereignty”, and she suggests that “we move towards a less coercive stance of reconciliation with when we fall from perspective into an embodied recognition that we already exist within Indigenous sovereignty”. 2 Addressing the question of how settlement as a system of coercive incorporation and expropriation comes to be lived as **quotidian** forms of non-Native being and potential, though, may require tactically shifting the analytical focus such that Indigenous sovereignties are **not at the center** of critical attention, even as they remain crucial in animating the study of settler colonialism and form its ethical horizon. “An embodied recognition” of the enduring presence of settler sovereignty, as well as of quotidian non-Native implication in the dispossession, effacement, and management of indigeneity, needs to attend to everyday experiences of non-relation, of a perceptual engagement with place, various institutions, and other people that takes shape around the policies and legalities of settlement but that do not specifically refer to them as such or their effects on Indigenous peoples. In order to conceptualize the mundane dynamics of settler colonialism, the quotidian feelings and tendencies through which it is continually reconstituted and experienced as the horizon of everyday potentiality, we may need to shift from an explicit attention to articulations of Native sovereignty and toward an exploration of the processes through which settler geographies are lived as **ordinary**, non-reflexive conditions of possibility. In Marxism and Literature, Raymond Williams argues for the necessity of approaching “relations of domination and subordination” as “practical consciousness” that saturat[es] … the whole substance of **lived identities and relationships**, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and **common sense**.3 Understanding settlement as, in Williams’s terms, such a “structure of feeling” entails asking how emotions, sensations, psychic life take part in the (ongoing) process of realizing the exertion of non-Native authority over Indigenous peoples, governance, and territoriality in ways that saturate quotidian life but are not necessarily present to settlers as a set of political propositions or as a specifically imperial project of dispossession. In the current scholarly efforts to characterize settler colonialism, the contours of settlement often appear analytically as clear and coherent from the start, as a virtual totality, and in this way, the ongoing processes by which settler dominance actively is **reconstituted** as a set of actions, occupations, deferrals, and potentials **slide from view**. We need to ask how the regularities of settler colonialism are materialized in and through quotidian non-Native sensations, inclinations, and trajectories. Moreover, administrative initiatives and legalities become part of everyday normalizations **of state aims and mappings** but in ways that also allow for an exceeding of state interests that potentially can be turned back against the state, giving rise to oppositional projects still given shape and momentum by the framings that emerge out of the ongoing work of settler occupation – such as in Walden. The essay will close with a brief reading of Thoreau’s text that illustrates how its ethical framing emerges out of, and indexes, everyday forms of settler feeling shaped by state policy but not directly continuous with it. 1. **The figure of the** vanishing Indian still remains prominent within US popular and scholarly discourses, both explicitly and implicitly. Within this narrative, Native peoples may have had prior claims to the land, but they, perhaps tragically, were removed from the area, or died out, or ceased to be “really” Indian, or simply disappeared at some point between the appearance of the “last” one and the current moment, whenever that may be.4 As against this tendency, scholars who seek to track the workings of settler colonialism face an entrenched inattention to the ways non-Native conceptions and articulations of personhood, place, property, and political belonging coalesce around and through the dispossession of Native peoples and normalization of (the) settler (-state’s) presence on Native lands. Insistence on the systemic quality of such settler seizures, displacements, identifications responds to this relative absence of acknowledgment by emphasizing its centrality and regularity, arguing that the claiming of a naturalized right to Indigenous place lies at the heart of non-Native modes of governance, association, and identity. However, such figurations of the **pervasive** and enduring quality of settler colonialism may shorthand its workings, producing accounts in which it appears as a fully integrated whole operating in smooth, consistent, and intentional ways across the socio-spatial terrain it encompasses. Doing so, particularly in considering the exchange between the domains of formal policy and of everyday life, may displace how settlement’s histories, brutalities, effacements, and interests become quotidian and common-sensical. Looking at three different models, I want to sketch varied efforts to systemize settler colonialism, highlighting some questions that emerge when they are read in light of issues of process and affect.

### 1NC

Russia DA

#### Russia’s economy is at the brink---oil is Putin’s lifeline.

**Matthews 25** [Owen Matthews, Degree in Modern History at Oxford University, 3-13-2025, The Russian economy is on the **brink of collapse** and Putin knows it, The Independent, https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/europe/russia-economy-putin-ukraine-war-deal-talks-trump-b2714371.html, Willie T.] \*\*edited for objectionable language\*\*

How close is Russia’s economy to collapse? As Donald Trump’s negotiators open direct talks with the Kremlin, Kyiv’s European allies hope that a final push on sanctions against Russia could be Ukraine’s last – and best – hope of victory. Mr Trump has warned that the US could impose a “devastating” financial blow on Russia if Putin refuses to accept the ceasefire agreement. “There are things you can do that wouldn’t be pleasant in a financial sense. I can do things financially,” he said in the Oval Office.

Putin intended his full-scale invasion of Ukraine to be a three-day operation that would force regime change in Kyiv. Neither Putin nor his military or economic planners anticipated a grinding war that now soaks up over **40 per cent of Kremlin spending**.

Nor did they expect Europe to impose serious sanctions, and even less did they anticipate the destruction of three of the four Gazprom gas pipelines under the Baltic Sea that before the war supplied over 30 per cent of Europe’s gas.

The result in Russia has been **rampant inflation**, currently running at over 9 per cent, crippling **[staggering] interest rates** of 21 per cent and runaway price hikes on staple goods that far **outpace the headline inflation rate** and have hit ordinary Russians hard.

Last summer the price of **eggs jumped by 42 per cent**, **bananas by 48 per cent, tomatoes by 39.5 per cent and potatoes by 25 per cent**. The Russian ruble has lost over **half of its value** since Putin first invaded Crimea in 2014, and over $600bn of the Kremlin’s foreign currency reserves have been frozen in Western banks.

More than **1,000 Western businesses** – including Ikea and McDonald’s – pulled out, as did Western car manufacturers. Imports of Western goods – especially technology – are now **expensively routed through sanctions-busting neighbours** like Kazakhstan and Georgia. And last month Russian utility companies hiked prices for electricity by up to **250 per cent.**

“Everyone drives Chinese cars these days, but there are no spare parts,” says Alexandra, 39, a former journalist who lives in Moscow and whose ex-husband is fighting in Ukraine. “The only foreign cars you buy are right-hand-drive [from Japan]. Anyone with a mortgage is paying crazy interest. People complain how expensive everything has become.”

Russia spent more on its military in 2024 than the rest of Europe combined, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies’ latest Military Balance report – a staggering $462bn, if adjusted for purchasing power. The Kremlin’s spending splurge on its war effort has produced some winners, notably the 1.5 million troops currently serving in Putin’s army who are paid up to $2,500 a month to fight – four times the average salary in Russia’s most impoverished provinces.

Massive losses on the battlefield have **worsened labour shortages**, with a record-low unemployment rate of 2.4 per cent. Factories are **running at capacity and beyond**. Russia’s economy has “reached the **limits of its productive capacity** while demand continues to be stimulated,” Central Bank chief Elvira Nabiullina warned the Russian parliament in November, predicting a fatal combination of economic stagnation and inflation known as “stagflation”.

For the first three years of the war, the Kremlin’s war spending fuelled GDP growth which peaked at a staggering 5.4 per cent in early 2024. But 2025 will be the year that growth flatlines, experts predict.

The Kremlin has been able to afford its spending spree thanks, mostly, to India and China, which have continued to import Russian oil in record quantities. The EU has in theory capped the price that customers can pay for Russian Urals crude at $60 a barrel – somewhat below the current market price of $67. But so-called “attestation fraud” – such as making up the difference in fake transportation and other costs – makes the rules easy to bend.

Natural gas has **never been sanctioned** by the EU at all – and until 1 January of this year, 13 per cent of Europe’s piped gas was still being shipped from Russia through Ukrainian pipelines to Slovakia and Hungary.

Ukrainian fire and fury are currently doing damage to Russia’s war economy that near-**nonexistent European sanctions have failed to achieve**

Southern Europe **continues to import** millions of cubic meters of Russian gas via Turkey. And despite its posturing, Europe still sources more than 15 per cent of its liquefied natural gas or LNG from Russia – with some 17.8m tonnes of LNG docking in European ports in 2024, **up by more than 2 million tonnes from the year before**, according to analysts Rystad Energy.

In fact the only really effective “sanctions” on the Russian energy sector – which accounts for over **two-thirds of government revenues** – have been in the form of Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian oil refineries, pumping stations and storage facilities. Ukrainian fire and fury are currently doing damage to Russia’s war economy that European “sanctions” have failed to achieve.

International pressure has made it harder, but not impossible, for the Russian war machine to obtain important components such as semiconductors. And sanctions have certainly “achieved the crucial goal of leaving Russia’s economy highly unstable in the medium to long term”, according to Oliver Ruth of London’s Royal United Services Institute.

The current crazy levels of expenditure are unsustainable, so Putin has a strong economic incentive to bring his war to an end. Ukraine’s economy is also under attack.

But on the flip side, even as Russia’s economy slips into stagflation Ukraine’s economy is doing far worse. Concerted Russian assaults, damage to vital energy infrastructure and mass emigration have inflicted catastrophic damage of up to 40 per cent of the country’s pre-war GDP. Kyiv’s budget payments to millions of soldiers and state employees are currently being paid by the EU. Without those subsidies – the lion’s share of the €60bn in direct financial support so far sent by Brussels – Ukraine’s government finances would instantly collapse.

Ukraine’s European allies hoped that sanctions would force Putin into taking an early off ramp and bring his **economy crashing down**. That hasn’t yet happened yet – largely because Europe has been unable to kick its addiction to Russian gas, and the US did not want to risk a global **oil price spike by cutting off Russian exports.**

But while they have **not brought Putin to his knees**, they have made the war disastrous for Russia. As Moscow and Washington begin talks in Riyadh, and European leaders hold their own emergency meeting, keeping up economic pressure on Putin is the real weapon that they still have left in their arsenal.

#### Affirming collapses state stability.

**Proedrou 23** [Filippos; Senior Lecturer in Global Political Economy @ the University of South Wales, PhD in IR from the University of Thrace; November 10; Elgar; “Chapter 27: The global energy transition and Russian structural power: scenarios and strategic options,” https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/book/9781800370432/book-part-9781800370432-35.xml; DOA: 3-21-2025] tristan

Lower fossil-induced profits will test the current rent-based social contract (Scholten et al., 2019, p. 190). **Shrinking** budget **revenues** will **decelerate** the country’s **fiscal** **capacity** to **maintain** the **wealth** and the **welfare** level of the Russian population (Henderson & Mitrova, 2020, p. 110). The ensuing likely **removal** of gas **subsidies** and **cuts** to **healthcare**, **education** and **social** **services** have the potential to **destabilize** the **regime**. This will be so especially in the resource-producing regions, which are going to be hit the hardest by the progressive divestment from the fossil industry. One could counterargue that Russia retains strong fiscal capacity and has managed to successfully support its budget in cases of low oil prices. Hence, one should not anticipate such drastic deterioration of the social contract in Russia. Nevertheless, and while Russia will manage to offset some of these repercussions at least for some time, the pace and **scale** of the **revenue** **decrease** caused by the global energy transition is **expected** to be very **severe**. More importantly, **unlike** the **case** of **low** oil **prices** that at some point **rebound** in **normal** boom-and-bust **cycles**, the trend of the **global** **energy** **transition** will be exactly towards **lower** oil and gas quantities exported and lower prices (Coffin et al., 2021), thus bringing the **Russian** **economy** to its **knees**. Such **developments** are likely to **increase** the **infighting** between the **Russian** **elites** as the **consolidated** **power** of incumbents **weakens**, thus opening up a **window** of **opportunity** for **contenders** (Øverland, 2021). This, at the same time, can **intensify** (a sense of) non-governability and **instability**, and precipitate/invite **insurrections** and **separatist** **movements**, as separatist factions may **perceive** **Russian** **impoverishment** and **economic** **hardship** as the **opening** of a **grand** **opportunity** for achieving longstanding **political** **goals**. The precedent of Chechnya in an impoverished and largely unproductive Russia in the 1990s (Aliyev, 2013) may offer insight into the likely internal political problems Russia may face once the global energy transition dilutes a substantial chunk of Russia’s budget and spending capacity. **Regional** **nationalism** in, among others, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, the Urals and the Far East (exposing the populations to Chinese influence and encroachment) renders **secessionist** **tendencies** a **real** **danger** to Russian integrity. The shifting of budgetary priorities to meet the war economy goals, in conjunction with anticipated progressively **lower** energy-borne **revenues**, resistance to mobilization of the part of the population for war needs and frustration with the war constitute a context more conducive to **political** **turmoil**, resistance and **pressures** to the **regime** (Lieven, 2022).

#### Perception triggers financial shocks.

**Baltvilks 22** [Witajewski; Expert @ the Centre for Climate and Energy Analyses @ the Polish National Centre for Emission Management; April 26; euractiv; “How the green paradox and climatepolicy can become Putin’s nightmare,” https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/opinion/how-the-green-paradox-and-climate-policy-can-become-putins-nightmare/; DOA: 3-21-2025] tristan

**Russia’s** **invasion** of Ukraine **pushed** global **oil** and **gas** **prices** even **higher** than they stood in 2021 because of the Russian **export** **restriction**. Many experts believe that further sanctions on Russia, including the gradual isolation of Russia in the sphere of global trade, would **keep** oil and gas **prices** **high** in the medium term.

Ironically, **high** global **prices** **imply** that many Asian **countries** are more likely to **purchase** Putin’s **oil**, especially if it is **offered** at a **lower** **price**. Should this happen, Putin’s oil revenues will remain high, and sanctions by G7 countries will not achieve their primary goal.

This risk can be avoided if sanctions are complemented by a firm climate policy.

The ability of climate policy to influence the oil market and oil prices is illustrated in the so-called green paradox. The green paradox is a hypothetical scenario in which the **announcement** of a rigid **climate** **policy** becomes a **signal** for **oil** **producers** that the **demand** for oil will **end** **soon**, motivating them to **sell** as **much** as they **can** as soon as they can.

**Flooding** the **market** with oil **depresses** its **price** and **incentivises** **consumers** to **use** **more**. If this were to happen, emissions would increase, **rendering** the climate **policy** **ineffective**. The green paradox is particularly relevant in the context of oil markets, but the mechanisms of the paradox can also apply to natural gas and coal.

Until recently, the green paradox was a problem for climate change economists, but the one who should be most concerned is, in fact, Vladimir Putin. The green paradox has the potential to turn radical climate policy into a weapon against Putin’s regime. It is especially important because Russia, the second-largest worldwide gas producer and the third-largest oil producer, currently uses fossil fuels as a weapon against the West for the purpose of pacification.

A **clear** and credible **commitment** by the largest economies in the world to halve the consumption of oil over the next two decades would be a **clear** **signal** to all oil producers that their **resources** will soon **lose** **value**. **No** **producer** with low extraction costs will **keep** its **reserves** for the **future** — they will **attempt** to **pump** their **oil** into the market as long as it **exists**.

**Low**-**cost** oil from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will, at least partly, **crowd** **out** the more **expensive** **product** from **Russia**, Venezuela and Iran. Even if that crowding out is not complete, the low oil price will **render** these countries’ **oil** **revenues** **negligible**. In Russia, where **oil** **rents** constitute more than **9% of** the nation’s **GDP** (**36%** of public-sector **revenue**), this will unavoidably **complicate** the **financial** **landscape** of the regime.

#### Nuclear is unique.

**Adams 13** [Rod Adams; Reporter for the American Nuclear Society; 12-10-2013; "Do oil and gas suppliers worry about nuclear energy development?"; Nuclear Newswire; https://www.ans.org/news/article-1481/do-oil-and-gas-suppliers-worry-about-nuclear/; accessed 03-04-2025] leon

That is the most important take away for attendees at the OPEC Embargo +40 summit held in Washington DC on October 16. Unfortunately, the meeting sponsors avoided acknowledging that nuclear energy is the **alternative** energy source that **most worries** established **hydrocarbon suppliers**. Nuclear has held that position since the early 1960s, when General Electric first won a head-to-head competition against coal to sell the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant.

Nuclear energy is **reliable**, virtually **emission-free**, and uses a **widely distributed**, **abundant** fuel source that is **no longer subject to influence** by the same producers that manipulate other fuel prices. Its cheap, clean heat can help turn coal, natural gas, and plants (vegetation) into liquid fuels that can be drop-in replacements for petroleum-based fuels.

#### Decline causes great power war.

**Kaplan 16** [Robert D. Kaplan; American author, Senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security; March/April 2016; "Eurasia’s Coming Anarchy"; Foreign Affairs; https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2016-02-15/eurasias-coming-anarchy; access at https://archive.ph/YfaTO; accessed 03-29-2025] doobz

Not coincidentally, these military **adventures have accompanied** the sharp reversal of Russian economic power. In 2014, the price of oil collapsed, the countries of central and eastern Europe continued to wean themselves off Russian gas, slow global growth further reduced the appetite for Russian hydrocarbons and other natural resources, and the West levied damaging sanctions on Moscow. The result has been a full-blown economic crisis, with the ruble losing roughly half of its value against the U.S. dollar since 2014. That year, Russian GDP growth fell to nearly zero, and by the third quarter of 2015, the economy was shrinking by more than four percent. In the first eight months of 2015, capital investment declined by six percent and the volume of construction fell by eight percent.

Russia’s economic problems run deep, leaving its leaders with few easy options for fixing them. For decades, Russia has **relied on natural resource production** and a manufacturing sector that makes **consumer goods** for the domestic market (since few foreigners want to buy Russia’s nonmilitary products). Despite some pockets of ostentatious wealth, the service sector has remained **underdeveloped**. Because Putin and his camarilla never built civil institutions or a truly free market, the corrupt, gangster-led economy of Russia today exhibits eerie similarities to the old Soviet one.

Back in the 1980s, when that economy was hit by a crisis, Mikhail Gorbachev responded by opening up the political system—only to be rewarded with anarchy and the collapse of Russia’s empire. Putin learned this lesson well and is determined to do the opposite: keep the political system closed while distracting the masses with displays of Russian power in the near abroad. Putin is a former intelligence agent, not a former apparatchik. Thus, although he nurses historical grudges concerning Russia’s place in the world, he is not deceiving himself about Russia’s internal problems. As the Russian economy decays further, Putin **surely knows** that for the sake of **domestic approval**, his foreign policy must become more creative and calculating, even deceptively conciliatory at moments. Over time, expect him to find new ways to undermine NATO and the EU, even as he claims to be helping the West fight the Islamic State, or ISIS. For the **more chaos** he can generate **abroad**, the **more valuable** the autocratic **stability** he provides at home will **appear**. Russians may know in the abstract that a freer society is preferable, but they fear the risks of such a transition.

Try as he might, however, Putin will not be able to shelter his regime from the fallout of economic collapse. Desperation will spawn infighting among a ruling elite that has grown used to sharing generous spoils. Given the absence of strong institutions, as well as the brittle and highly centralized nature of the regime, a **coup** like the one that toppled Nikita Khrushchev in 1964 cannot be **ruled out**; Russia remains Soviet in its style of governance. The country has experienced the crumbling of autocracy followed by chaos before (as during and after the 1917 revolutions), and it’s possible that enough turmoil could cause Russia to fragment yet again. The heavily Muslim North Caucasus, along with areas of Russia’s Siberian and Far Eastern districts, distant from the center and burdened by bloody politics, may begin loosening their ties to Moscow in the event of instability inside the Kremlin itself. The result could be Yugoslavia lite: **violence and separatism** that begin in one place and spread **elsewhere**. As Moscow loses control, the **global jihadist movement could take advantage** of the vacuum and come to Russia’s outlying regions and to Central Asia.

Bad as this sounds, things could still get worse. Back in 1991, the Polish intellectual Adam Michnik predicted that future leaders in Russia and eastern Europe would fill the gap left by the collapse of communism with “a coarse and primitive nationalism.” Putin has adopted just such a **nationalism** in recent years. He has slyly backed separatist movements in Abkhazia, the Donbas, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, creating deniable conflicts that result in warlord-run statelets. In the years ahead, he may well choose to provoke more of these so-called frozen conflicts, but this time in **NATO Baltic member states** (which have sizable Russian populations and which Moscow still considers lost provinces). Meanwhile, Putin will try to play on Europe’s need for Russian support in Syria to force Europe to acknowledge his annexation of Crimea and his de facto rule over eastern Ukraine.

#### Extinction!

**Clare 23** [Stephen Clare; Effective Altruism writer and existential risks researcher; June 2023; "Great power war"; 80000 Hours; https://80000hours.org/problem-profiles/great-power-conflict/; accessed 12-05-2024, BZ + Willie T. + sumzom]

A modern great power war could see **nuclear weapons**, **bioweapons**, **autonomous weapons**, and other destructive **new** technologies deployed on an unprecedented scale.

It would probably be the most destructive event in history, shattering our world. It could even threaten us with **extinction**.

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We’ve come perilously close to just this kind of catastrophe before.¶ On October 27, 1962 — near the peak of the Cuban Missile Crisis — an American U-2 reconnaissance plane set out on a routine mission to the Arctic to collect data on Soviet nuclear tests. But, while flying near the North Pole, with the stars obscured by the northern lights, the pilot made a navigation error and strayed into Soviet airspace.1¶ Soviet commanders sent fighter jets to intercept the American plane. The jets were picked up by American radar operators and nuclear-armed F-102 fighters took off to protect the U-2.¶ Fortunately, the reconnaissance pilot realised his error with enough time to correct course before the Soviet and American fighters met. But the intrusion enraged Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, who was already on high alert amidst the crisis in Cuba.¶ “What is this, a provocation?” Khrushchev wrote to US President John F. Kennedy. “One of your planes violates our frontier during this anxious time when everything has been put into combat readiness.”¶ If the U-2’s path had strayed further west, or the Soviet fighters had been fast enough to intercept it, this incident could have played out quite differently. Both the United States and the USSR had thousands of nuclear missiles ready to fire. Instead of a nearly-forgotten anecdote, the U-2 incident could have been a trigger for war, like the assassination of Franz Ferdinand.

<<LINE BREAKS CONTINUE>>

**Competition** among the world’s most powerful countries shapes our world today. And whether it’s through future incidents like the lost U-2, or something else entirely, it’s plausible that it could **escalate** and lead to a major, devastating war.

Is there anything you can do to help avoid such a terrible outcome? It is, of course, difficult to imagine how any one individual can hope to influence such world-historical events. Even the **most powerful** world leaders often **fail to predict** the global consequences of their decisions.

But I think the **likelihood** and **severity** of great power war makes this among the **most pressing problems** of our time — and that some solutions could be impactful enough that working on them may be one of the highest-impact things to do with your career.

By taking action, I think we can create a future where the threat of great power war is a distant memory rather than an ever-present danger.

Summary

Economic **growth** and **technological progress** have **bolstered** the arsenals of the world’s most powerful countries. That means the next war between them could be far worse than World War II, the deadliest conflict humanity has yet experienced.

Could such a war actually occur? We can’t rule out the possibility. Technical **accidents** or diplomatic **misunderstandings** could spark a conflict that **quickly escalates**. Or international **tension** could cause leaders to decide they’re **better off fighting than negotiating**.

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It seems hard to make progress on this problem. It’s also less neglected than some of the problems that we think are most pressing. There are certain issues, like making nuclear weapons or military artificial intelligence systems safer, which seem promising — although it may be more impactful to work on reducing risks from AI, bioweapons or nuclear weapons directly. You might also be able to reduce the chances of misunderstandings and miscalculations by developing expertise in one of the most important bilateral relationships (such as that between the United States and China).¶ Finally, by making conflict less likely, reducing competitive pressures on the development of dangerous technology, and improving international cooperation, you might be helping to reduce other risks, like the chance of future pandemics.¶ Our overall view¶ Recommended¶ Working on this issue seems to be among the best ways of improving the long-term future we know of, but all else equal, we think it’s less pressing than our highest priority areas (primarily because it seems less neglected and harder to solve).¶ Scale ¶ There’s a significant chance that a new great power war occurs this century.¶ Although the world’s most powerful countries haven’t fought directly since World War II, war has been a constant throughout human history. There have been numerous close calls, and several issues could cause diplomatic disputes in the years to come.¶ These considerations, along with forecasts and statistical models, lead me to think there’s about a one-in-three chance that a new great power war breaks out in roughly the next 30 years.¶ Few wars cause more than a million casualties and the next great power war would probably be smaller than that. However, there’s some chance it could escalate massively. Today the great powers have much larger economies, more powerful weapons, and bigger military budgets than they did in the past. An all-out war could kill far more people than even World War II, the worst war we’ve yet experienced.¶ Could it become an existentially threatening war — one that could cause human extinction or significantly damage the prospects of the long-term future? It’s very difficult to say. But my best current guess is that the chance of an existential catastrophe due to war in the next century is somewhere between 0.05% and 2%.¶ Neglectedness ¶ War is a lot less neglected than some of our other top problems. There are thousands of people in governments, think tanks, and universities already working on this problem. But some solutions or approaches remain neglected. One particularly promising approach is to develop expertise at the intersection of international conflict and another of our top problems. Experts who understand both geopolitical dynamics and risks from advanced artificial intelligence, for example, are sorely needed.¶ Solvability ¶ Reducing the risk of great power war seems very difficult. But there are specific technical problems that can be solved to make weapons systems safer or less likely to trigger catastrophic outcomes. And in the best case, working on this problem can have a leverage effect, making the development of several dangerous technologies safer by improving international cooperation and making them less likely to be deployed in war.¶ At the end of this profile, I suggest five issues which I’d be particularly excited to see people work on. These are:¶ Developing expertise in the riskiest bilateral relationships¶ Learning how to manage international crises quickly and effectively and ensuring the systems to do so are properly maintained¶ Doing research to improve particularly important foreign policies, like strategies for sanctions and deterrence¶ Improving how nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are governed at the international level¶ Improving how such weapons are controlled at the national level¶ Profile depth¶ In-depth ¶ This is one of many profiles we've written to help people find the most pressing problems they can solve with their careers. Learn more about how we compare different problems, see how we try to score them numerically, and see how this problem compares to the others we've considered so far.¶ Why might preventing great power war be an especially pressing problem?¶ A modern great power war — an all-out conflict between the world’s most powerful countries — could be the worst thing to ever happen to humanity.¶ Historically, such wars have been exceptionally destructive. Sixty-six million people died in World War II, likely the deadliest catastrophe humanity has experienced so far.¶ Since World War II, the global population and world economy have continued to grow, nuclear weapons have proliferated, and military technology has continued to advance. This means the next world war could be even worse, just as World War II was much deadlier than World War I.¶ It’s not guaranteed that such a war will break out. And if it does, it may not escalate to such a terrible extent. But the chance can’t be ignored. In fact, there are reasons to think that the odds of World War III breaking out this century are worryingly high.¶ A modern great power war would be devastating for people alive today. But its effects could also persist long into the future. That’s because there is a substantial chance that this century proves to be particularly important. Technologies with the potential to cause a global catastrophe or radically reshape society are likely to be invented. How we choose to develop and deploy them could impact huge numbers of our descendants. And these choices would be affected by the outcomes of a major war.¶ To be more specific, there are three main ways great power conflict could affect the long-term future:¶ High international tension could increase other risks. Great power tensions could make the world more dangerous even if they don’t lead to war. During the Cold War, for example, the United States and the USSR never came into direct conflict but invested in bioweapons research and built up nuclear arsenals. This dynamic could return, with tension between great powers fueling races to develop and build new weapons, raising the risk of a disaster even before shots are fired.¶ War could cause an existential catastrophe. If war does break out, it could escalate dramatically, with modern weapons (nuclear weapons, bioweapons, autonomous weapons, or other future technologies) deployed at unprecedented scale. The resulting destruction could irreparably damage humanity’s prospects.¶ War could reshape international institutions and power balances. While such a catastrophic war is possible, it seems extremely unlikely. But even a less deadly war, such as another conflict on the scale of World War II, could have very long-lasting effects. For example, it could reshape international institutions and the global balance of power. In a pivotal century, different institutional arrangements and geopolitical balances could cause humanity to follow different long-term trajectories.¶ The rest of this profile explores exactly how pressing a problem great power conflict is. In summary:¶ Great power relations have become more tense. (More.)¶ Partly as a result, a war is more likely than you might think. It’s reasonable to put the probability of such a conflict in the coming decades somewhere between 10% and 50%. (More.)¶ If war breaks out, it would probably be hard to control escalation. The chance that it would become large enough to be an existential risk cannot be dismissed. (More.)¶ This makes great power war one of the biggest threats our species currently faces. (More.)¶ It seems hard to make progress on solving such a difficult problem (more) — but there are many things you can try if you want to help (more).¶ International tension has risen and makes other problems worse¶ Imagine we had a thermometer-like device which, instead of measuring temperature, measured the level of international tension.2 This ‘tension metre’ would max out during periods of all-out global war, like World War II. And it would be relatively low when the great powers3 were peaceful and cooperative. For much of the post-Napoleonic 1800s, for example, the powerful European nations instituted the Concert of Europe and mostly upheld a continental peace. The years following the fall of the USSR also seem like a time of relative calm, when the tension metre would have been quite low.4¶ How much more worried would you be about the coming decades if you knew the tension metre would be very high than if you knew it would be low? Probably quite a lot. In the worst case, of course, the great powers could come into direct conflict. But even if it doesn’t lead to war, a high level of tension between great powers could accelerate the development of new strategic technologies, make it harder to solve global problems like climate change, and undermine international institutions.¶ During the Cold War, for instance, the United States and USSR avoided coming into direct conflict. But the tension metre would still have been pretty high. This led to some dangerous events:¶ A nuclear arms race. The number of nuclear warheads in the world grew from just 300 in 1950 to over 64,000 in 1986.¶ The development of new bioweapons. Despite signing the Biological Weapons Convention in 1972, the search for military advantages motivated Soviet decision makers to continue investing in bioweapon development for decades. Although never used in combat, biological agents were accidentally released from research facilities, resulting in dozens of deaths and threatening to cause a pandemic.5¶ Nuclear close calls. Military accidents and false alarms happened regularly, and top decision makers were more likely to interpret these events hostilely when tensions were high. On several occasions it seems the decision about whether or not to start a nuclear war came down to individuals acting under stress and with limited time.¶ This makes international tension an existential risk factor. It’s connected to a number of other problems, which means reducing the level of international tension would lower the total amount of existential risk we face.¶ The level of tension today¶ Recently, international tension seems to have once again been rising. To highlight some of the most salient examples:¶ China-United States relations have deteriorated, leading to harsh diplomatic rhetoric and protectionist trade policies that aim to reduce the countries’ economic interdependence.¶ Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has killed about a hundred thousand people so far, raised the risk of nuclear war, and sent United States-Russia relations to their lowest point since the Cold War.¶ Chinese and Indian soldiers fought deadly skirmishes along their countries’ disputed border in 2020–21.¶ These dynamics raise an important question: how much more dangerous is the world given this higher tension than it would be in a world of low tension?¶ I think the answer is quite a bit more dangerous — for several reasons. First, international tension seems likely to make technological progress more dangerous. There’s a good chance that, in the coming decades, humanity will make some major technological breakthroughs. We’ve discussed, for example, why one might worry about the effects of advanced artificial intelligence systems or biotechnology. The level of tension could strongly affect how these technologies are developed and governed. Tense relations could, for example, cause countries to neglect safety concerns in order to develop technology faster.6¶ Second, great power relations will strongly influence how nations do, or do not, cooperate to solve other global collective action problems. For example, in 2022, China withdrew from bilateral negotiations with the United States over climate action in protest of what it perceived as American diplomatic aggression in Taiwan. That same year, efforts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention were reportedly hampered by the Russian delegation after their country’s invasion of Ukraine raised tensions with the United States and other western countries.¶ And third, if relations deteriorate severely, the great powers could fight a war.¶ How likely is a war?¶ Wars are destructive and risky for all countries involved. Modern weapons, especially nuclear warheads, make starting a great power war today seem like a suicidal undertaking.¶ But factors like the prevalence of war throughout history, the chance that leaders make mistakes, conflicting ideologies, and commitment problems, make me think that conflict could break out anyway.¶ On balance, I think such an event is somewhat unlikely but hardly unthinkable. To quantify this: I put the chance we experience some kind of war between great powers before 2050 at about one-in-three.7¶ War has occurred regularly in the past¶ One reason to think a war is quite likely is that such conflicts have been so common in the past. Over the past 500 years, about two great power wars have occurred per century.8¶ Naively, this would mean that every year there’s a 2% chance such a war occurs, implying the chance of experiencing at least one great power war over the next 80 years — roughly until the end of the century — is about 80%.9¶ This is a very simple model. In reality, the risk is not constant over time and independent across years. But it shows that if past trends simply continue, the outcome is likely to be very bad.¶ Has great power war become less likely?¶ One of the most important criticisms of this model is that it assumes the risk is constant over time. Some researchers have argued instead that, especially since the end of World War II, major conflicts have become much less likely due to:¶ Nuclear deterrence: Nuclear weapons are so powerful and destructive that it’s just too costly for nuclear-armed countries to start wars against each other.10¶ Democratisation: Democracies have almost never gone to war against each other, perhaps because democracies are more interconnected and their leaders are under more public pressure to peacefully resolve disputes with each other.11 The proportion of countries that are democratic has increased from under 10% in 1945 to about 50% today.¶ Strong economic growth and global trade: Global economic growth accelerated following World War II and the value of global exports grew by a factor of almost 30 between 1950 and 2014. Since war disrupts economies and international trade, strong growth raises the costs of fighting.12¶ The spread of international institutions: Multilateral bodies like the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council promote diplomatic dialogue and facilitate coordination to punish transgressors.13¶ It is true that we are living through an unusually long period of great power peace. It’s been about 80 years since World War II. We just saw that a simple model using the historical frequency of great power wars suggests there was only a 20% chance of going that long without at least one more war breaking out. This is some evidence in favour of the idea that wars have become significantly less common.¶ At the same time, we shouldn’t feel too optimistic.¶ The numerous close calls during the Cold War suggest we were somewhat lucky to avoid a major war in that time. And a 20% chance of observing 80 years of peace is not that low.14 Structural changes might have dramatically reduced the likelihood of war. Or perhaps we’ve just been lucky. It could even be that technological advances have made war less likely to break out, but more deadly when it occurs, leaving the overall effect on the level of risk ambiguous. It just hasn’t been long enough to support a decisive view.15¶ So while the recent historical trend is somewhat encouraging, we don’t have nearly enough data to be confident that great power war is a thing of the past. To better predict the likelihood of future conflict, we should also consider distinctive features of our modern world.16¶ One might think that a modern great power war would simply be so destructive that no state leader would ever choose to start one. And some researchers do think that the destruction such a war would wreak globally makes it less likely to occur. But it would be hard to find anyone who claims this dynamic has driven the risk to zero.¶ First, a war could be started by accident.¶ Second, sometimes even prudent leaders may struggle to avoid a slide towards war.¶ We could blunder into war¶ An accidental war can occur if one side mistakes some event as an aggressive action by an adversary.¶ This happened several times during the Cold War. The earlier example of the wayward American reconnaissance plane shows how routine military exercises carry some escalation risk. Similarly, throughout history, nervous pilots and captains have caused serious incidents by attacking civilian planes and ships.17 Nuclear weapons allow for massive retaliatory strikes to be launched quickly — potentially too quickly to allow for such situations to be explained and de-escalated.¶ It is perhaps more likely, though, that an accidental war could be triggered by a technological malfunction. Faulty computers and satellites have previously triggered nuclear close calls. As monitoring systems have become more reliable, the rate at which such accidents have occurred has been going down. But it would be overconfident to think that technological malfunctions have become impossible.¶ Future technological changes will likely raise new challenges for nuclear weapon control. There may be pressure to integrate artificial intelligence systems into nuclear command and control to allow for faster data processing and decision making. And AI systems are known to behave unexpectedly when deployed in new environments.18¶ New technologies will also create new accident risks of their own, even if they’re not connected to nuclear weapon systems. Although these risks are hard to predict, they seem significant. I’ll say more about how such technologies — including AI, nuclear, biological, and autonomous weapons — are likely to increase war risks later.¶ Leaders could choose war¶ All that said, most wars have not started by accident. If another great power war does break out in the coming decades, it is more likely to be an intentional decision made by a national leader.¶ Explaining why someone might make such a costly, destructive, unpredictable, and risky decision has been called “the central puzzle about war.” It has motivated researchers to search for “rationalist” explanations for war. In his 2022 book Why We Fight, for example, economist Chris Blattman proposes five basic explanations: unchecked interests, intangible incentives, uncertainty, commitment problems, and misperceptions.19¶ Blattman's Five (Rationalist) Explanations for War¶ This section discusses how great power tensions may escalate to war in the next few decades. It focuses on three potential conflicts in particular: war between the US and China, between the US and Russia, and between China and India. These are discussed because each of these countries are among the world’s largest economies and military spenders, and seem particularly likely to fight. At the end, I briefly touch on other potential large conflicts.¶ Projected real GDP of the US, China, India and Russia according to a 2022 Goldman Sachs analysis Source: Author’s figure using data from: Kevin Daly and Tadas Gedminas, “Global Economics Paper The Path to 2075 — Slower Global Growth, But Convergence Remains Intact,” Global Economics Paper (Goldman Sachs, December 6, 2022), https://www.goldmansachs.com/intelligence/pages/gs-research/the-path-to-2075-slower-global-growth-but-convergence-remains-intact/report.pdf.¶ United States-China¶ The most worrying possibility is war between the United States and China. They are easily the world’s largest economies. They spend by far the most on their militaries. Their diplomatic relations are tense and have recently worsened. And their relationship has several of the characteristics that Blattman identifies as causes of war.¶ At the core of the United States-China relationship is a commitment problem.¶ China’s economy is growing faster than the United States’. By some metrics, it is already larger.20 If its differential growth continues, the gap will continue to widen between it and the United States. While economic power is not the sole determinant of military power, it is a key factor.21¶ The United States and China may be able to strike a fair deal today. But as China continues to grow faster, that deal may come to seem unbalanced. Historically, such commitment problems seem to have made these kinds of transition periods particularly dangerous.22¶ In practice, the United States and China may find it hard to agree on rules to guide their interactions, such as how to run international institutions or govern areas of the world where their interests overlap.¶ The most obvious issue which could tip the United States-China relationship from tension into war is a conflict over Taiwan. Taiwan’s location and technology industries are valuable for both great powers.¶ This issue is further complicated by intangible incentives.¶ For the United States, it is also a conflict over democratic ideals and the United States’ reputation for defending its allies.¶ For China, it is also a conflict about territorial integrity and addressing what are seen as past injustices.¶ Still, forecasts suggest that while a conflict is certainly possible, it is far from inevitable. As of 8 June 2023, one aggregated forecast23 gives a 17% chance of a United States-China war breaking out before 2035.24¶ A related aggregated forecast of the chance that at least 100 deaths occur in conflict between China and Taiwan by 2050 gives it, as of 8 June 2023, a much higher 68% chance of occurring.25¶ United States-Russia¶ Russia is the United States’ other major geopolitical rival.¶ Unlike China, Russia is not a rival in economic terms: even after adjusting for purchasing power, its economy is only about one-fifth the size of the United States’.¶ However, Russia devotes a substantial fraction of its economy to its military. Crucially, it has the world’s largest nuclear arsenal. And Russian leadership has shown a willingness to project power beyond their country’s borders.¶ Country Military spending in 2021 (2020 USD, PPP adjusted)¶ United States 801 billion¶ China 293 billion¶ India 76.6 billion¶ United Kingdom 68.4 billion¶ Russia 65.9 billion¶ Top five countries by estimated military spending, 2021. Source: SIPRI¶ Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine demonstrated the dangers of renewed rivalry between Russia and the United States-led West. The war has already been hugely destructive: the largest war in Europe since World War II, with hundreds of thousands of casualties already and no end to the conflict in sight. And it could get much worse. Most notably, Russian officials have repeatedly refused to rule out the use of nuclear weapons.¶ Unchecked interests and intangible incentives are again at play here. Vladimir Putin leads a highly-centralised government. He has spoken about how his desire to rebuild Russia’s reputation played in his decision to invade Ukraine.¶ Given their ideological differences and history of rivalry, it is reasonable to expect that the United States and Russia will continue to experience dangerous disagreements in the future. As of 8 June 2023, an aggregated forecast gives a 20% chance that the United States and Russia will fight a war involving at least 1,000 battle deaths before 2050.¶ China-India¶ India is already the world’s third-largest economy. If national growth rates remain roughly constant, the size of the Indian economy will surpass that of the United States’ sometime this century. India also has nuclear weapons and is already the world’s third-largest military spender (albeit at a much lower level than China or the United States).¶ One reason to worry that China and India could fight a war is that they already dispute territory along their border. Countries that share a border, especially when it is disputed, are more likely to go to war than countries that do not. By one count, 88% of the wars that occurred between 1816 and 1980 began as wars between neighbours.26¶ In fact, China and India already fought a brief but violent border war in 1962. Deadly skirmishes have continued since, resulting in deaths as recently as 2020.¶ Forecasters agree that a China-India conflict seems relatively (though not absolutely) likely. An aggregated forecast gives a 19% chance of war before 2035.¶ Other dangerous conflicts¶ These three conflicts — United States-China, United States-Russia, and China-India — are not the only possible great power wars that could occur. Other potential conflicts could also pose existential risk, either because they drive dangerous arms races or see widespread deployment of dangerous weapons.¶ We should keep in mind India-Pakistan as a particularly likely conflict between nuclear-armed states and China-Russia as a potential, though unlikely, conflict between great powers with a disputed border and history of war. Plus, new great powers may emerge or current great powers may fade in the years to come.¶ While I think we should prioritise the three potential conflicts I’ve highlighted above, the future is highly uncertain. We should monitor geopolitical changes and be open to changing our priorities in the future.¶ Overall predictions¶ Below is a table listing relevant predictions from the forecasting platform Metaculus, including the number of predictions made, as of 10 March 2023. Note the different timescales and resolution criteria for each question; they may not be intuitively comparable.¶ Prediction Resolution criteria Number of predictions Metaculus prediction¶ World war by 2151 Either:¶ A war killing >0.5% of global population, involving >50% of countries totalling >50% of global population from at least 4 continents.¶ Or:¶ A war killing at least >1% of global population, involving >10% of countries totalling >25% of global population¶ 561 52%¶ World War III before 2050 Involving countries >30% of world GDP OR >50% of world population¶ AND¶ >10M deaths¶ 1640 20%¶ Global thermonuclear war by 2070 EITHER:¶ 3 countries each detonate at least 10 nuclear warheads of at least 10 kt yield outside of their territory¶ OR¶ 2 countries each detonate at least 50 nuclear warheads of at least 10 kt outside of their territory¶ 337 11%¶ When will be the next great power war? Any two of the top 10 nations by military spending are at war¶ “At war” definition:¶ EITHER¶ Formal declaration¶ OR¶ Territory occupied AND at least 250 casualties¶ OR¶ Media sources describe them as “at war”¶ 25th percentile: 2031¶ Median: 2048¶ 75th percentile: 2088¶ Never (not before 2200): 8%¶ No non-test nuclear detonations before 2035 No nuclear detonation other than controlled test¶ [Note the negation in the question. It resolves negatively if a warhead is detonated]¶ 321 69%¶ At least 1 nuclear detonation in war by 2050 Resolves according to credible media reports 476 31%¶ I have previously independently estimated the likelihood of seeing a World War III-like conflict this century. My calculation first adjusts historical base rates to allow for the possibility that major wars have become somewhat less likely, and uses the adjusted base rate to calculate the probability of seeing a war between now and 2100.¶ This method gives a 45% chance of seeing a major great power war in the next 77 years. If the probability is constant over time then the cumulative probability between now and 2050 would be 22%. This is aligned with the Metaculus predictions above.¶ We can also ask experts what they think. Unfortunately, there are surprisingly few expert predictions about the likelihood of major conflict. One survey was conducted by the Project for the Study of the 21st Century. The numbers were relatively aligned with the Metaculus forecasts, though slightly more pessimistic. However, it seems a mistake to put too much stock in this survey (see footnote).27¶ We now have at least a rough sense of a great power war’s probability. But how bad could it get if it occurred?¶ A new great power war could be devastating¶ At the time, the mechanised slaughter of World War I was a shocking step-change in the potential severity of warfare. But its severity was surpassed just 20 years later by the outbreak of World War II, which killed more than twice as many people.¶ A modern great power war could be even worse.¶ How bad have wars been in the past?¶ The graph below shows how common wars of various sizes are, according to the Correlates of War’s Interstate War dataset.28¶ The x-axis here represents war size in terms of the logarithm of the number of battle deaths. The y-axis represents the logarithm of the proportion of wars in the dataset that are at least that large.¶ Using logarithms means that each step to the right in the graph represents a war not one unit larger, but 10 times larger. And each step up represents a war that is not one unit more likely, but 10 times more likely.¶ Cumulative frequency distribution of severity of interstate wars, 1816-2007 Source: Author’s figure. See the data here. Data source: Correlates of War Interwar dataset, v4.029¶ What the graph shows is that wars have a heavy tail. Most wars remain relatively small. But a few escalate greatly and become much worse than average.¶ Of the 95 wars in the latest version of the database, the median battle death count is 8,000. But the heavy tail means the average is 334,000 battle deaths. And the worst war, World War II, had almost 17 million battle deaths.30¶ The number of battle deaths is only one way to measure the badness of wars. We could also consider the proportion of the population of the countries involved who were killed in battle. By this measure, the worst war since 1816 was not World War II. Instead, it’s the Paraguayan War of 1864–70. In that war, 30 soldiers died for every 1,000 citizens of the countries involved. It’s even worse if we also consider civilian deaths; while estimates are very uncertain, it’s plausible that about half of the men in Paraguay, or around a quarter of the entire population, was killed.31¶ What if instead we compared wars by the proportion of the global population killed? World War II is again the worst conflict since 1816 on this measure, having killed about 3% of the global population. Going further back in time, though, we can find worse wars. Ghengis Khan’s conquests likely killed about 9.5% of people in the world at the time.¶ The heavy tail means that some wars will be shockingly large.32 The scale of World War I and World War II took people by surprise, including the leaders who initiated it.¶ It’s also hard to know exactly how big wars could get. We haven’t seen many really large wars. So while we know there’s a heavy tail of potential outcomes, we don’t know what that tail looks like.¶ That said, there are a few reasons to think that wars much worse than World War II are possible:¶ We’re statistically unlikely to have brushed up against the end of the tail, even if the tail has an upper bound.¶ Other wars have been deadlier on a per-capita basis. So unless wars involving countries with larger populations are systematically less intense, we should expect to see more intense wars involving as many people as World War II.¶ Economic growth and technological progress are continually increasing humanity’s war-making capacity. This means that, once a war has started, we’re at greater risk of extremely bad outcomes than we were in the past.¶ So how bad could it get?¶ How bad could a modern great power war be?¶ Over time, two related factors have greatly increased humanity’s capacity to make war. 33¶ First, scientific progress has led to the invention of more powerful weapons and improved military efficiency.¶ Second, economic growth has allowed states to build larger armies and arsenals.¶ Since World War II, the world economy has grown by a factor of more than 10 in real terms; the number of nuclear weapons in the world has grown from basically none to more than 9,000, and we’ve invented drones, missiles, satellites, and advanced planes, ships, and submarines.

Ghengis Khan’s conquests killed about 10% of the world, but this took place over the course of two decades. Today that proportion may be killed in a matter of hours.

First, nuclear weapons could be used.

Today there are around 10,000 nuclear warheads globally.34 At the peak of nuclear competition between the United States and the USSR, though, there were 64,000. If arms control agreements break down and competition resurges among two or even three great powers, nuclear arsenals could expand. In fact, China’s arsenal is very likely to grow — though by how much remains uncertain.

Many of the nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the great powers today are at least 10 times more powerful than the atomic bombs used in World War II.35 Should these weapons be used, the consequences would be catastrophic.

By any measure, such a war would be by far the **most destructive**, dangerous event in human history, with the potential to cause billions of deaths.

The probability that it would, on its own, lead to humanity’s **extinction** or unrecoverable collapse, is contested. But there seems to be some possibility — whether through a **famine** caused by **nuclear winter**, or by **reducing** humanity’s resilience enough that something else, like a **catastrophic pandemic**, would be far more likely to reach **extinction**-levels (read more in our problem profile on nuclear war).

**Nuclear weapons** are **complemented** and **amplified** by a **variety** of other **modern military** technologies, including **improved missiles**, **planes**, **submarines**, and **satellites**. They are **also not** the only **military technology** with the **potential** to cause a **global catastrophe** — **bioweapons**, too, have the potential to cause massive harm through accidents or unexpected effects.

## 2NC

### Framework---2NC

#### 1. DEBATE SHAPES SUBJECTIVITY---violent rhetoric unconsciously molds our mental habitus which the ballot’s symbolic value disrupts.

**Ingram 13,** [Dr. Brett Ingram (PhD in communication from UMass Amherst, Professor of Communication at UMass Amherst), “Critical Rhetoric in the Age of Neuroscience,” https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1696&context=open\_access\_dissertations, accessed 3-3-2023, 2013] suits

While we may be intellectually cognizant of the possibility of multiple perspectives on reality, we do not consciously weigh each perspective’s viability every time we encounter a new event or object, and then choose which one we wish to hold up to the influx of experience. Instead, our brain chooses **for us** according to **internalized** somatic markers, and delimits the parameters of the field of cognitive thought on which we will subsequently play. When **confronted** with **words** or **symbols** that have become deeply **entrenched** through **repetition** or emotion, reflexive memory takes over, draws on intuitions, and **bypasses** brain regions responsible for **reason** and critical thought. Science writer Chris Mooney explains how this influences political thought:

Memory, as embodied in the brain, is conceived of as a network, made up of nodes and linkages between them, and what occurs after an emotional reaction is called spreading activation. As you begin to **call** a subject to **mind** (like Sarah Palin) from your long-term memory, **nodes** associated with that subject (“woman,” “Republican,” “Bristol,” “death panels,” “Paul Revere”) are **activated** in a fanlike pattern—like a fire that races across a landscape but only burns a small fraction of the trees. And **subconscious** and automatic **emotion** starts the burn. It therefore determines what the **conscious mind** has available to work with—to **argue** with.

The (**brain** makes this determination based on which conclusion will deliver a jolt of **neurochemical stimulation**, or, in other words, which will **immediately** produce a satisfying **affective outcome**. Bruce Wexler writes, “**Consonance** between **internal** and **external** structure is experienced as **pleasurable**, while **dissonance** is an **unpleasant** source of psychophysiological tension” 144). The brain will often construct perceptions and interpretations of events that reinforce its preconceived notions, because doing triggers the release of neurochemicals it craves. This is often at odds with intellectual concerns, such as ethics, reason, or logic. We must here recall that what is “**satisfying**” to the brain is not synonymous with what makes us “happy” or “joyous,” nor is it necessarily connected to securing a happy future. Rather, it is the pure physiological arousal that comes from a flood of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, an arousal manifested in a mental state of reduced cognition—**mindlessness**.

With **repeated exposure** to a politics of mindlessness, the **brain** is **reconstituted**, via somatic markers, in such as a way as to automatically “**screen out**” alternative models of political **discourse**. This may explain why the emotional political rhetoric emanating from media outposts such as The O’Reilly Factor, Hannity, The Rush Limbaugh Show, Countdown with Keith Olbermann, and The Ed Show garner higher ratings and exert greater influence on the culture than more deliberative, thoughtful programs like The Jim Lehrer NewsHour and Charlie Rose.

One of the more “striking and unsettling conclusions derived from research into physiological and affective functioning in relation to politics” is that “automatic or even ‘**machinic’ processes**” in the brain and body “drive the **majority** of **political behavior**” (Pruchnic 2008: 171). For example, neurological studies of political partisanship indicate that the greater immersion one has in the political media, the less critical one becomes. Furthermore, after **repeated exposure** to affectively charged **political rhetoric**, the brain becomes **addicted** to the state of simplistic thinking, or **mindlessness**, that it achieves via the neurochemical flows this rhetoric **induces**. In order to feed its addiction, the brain actively rejects information that might prompt it to change its ways.

In a series of brain scans of political partisans who were asked to consider “obviously” contradictory statements by the politicians they supported, Dr. Drew Westen found that partisans’ brains reverted to the comfort zone of long-held biases—they could **easily identify** the contradictions in the statements made by the **opposition’s** candidate, or by neutral figures such as actors, but when it came to politicians they **supported**, they **failed** to perceive the contradiction. This result held true with both Republicans and Democrats. What was most surprising, though, was that these acts of willful ignorance gave people a neurochemical buzz. Westen writes

Once partisans had found a way to reason to false conclusions, not only did neural circuits involved in negative emotions turn off, but circuits involved in positive emotions turned on. The partisan brain didn’t seem satisfied in just feeling better. It worked overtime to feel good, activating reward circuits that give partisans a jolt of positive reinforcement for their biased “reasoning.” These reward circuits overlap substantially with those activated when drug addicts get their “fix,” giving new meaning to the term political junkie. (xiv, emphasis in original)

The “political junkie” is colloquial designation that, if taken literally instead of figuratively, offers insight into the ways in which ideological beliefs become embodied and intransigent.21 For the addict, the appeal of the substance to which he is **addicted** comes from the substance’s capacity to **reduce cognition** and critical thinking—this appears to be true whether the substance in question is **speed** or **speech**. As **addiction deepens**, the addict’s ability and **willingness** to be “**talked out of**” his compulsive behavior declines. An outside observer of the addict’s situation may inform him that certain drugs or ideas are bad for him, and present him with facts, figures, and case studies that testify to the veracity of this argument, but such efforts are likely to be in vain, because the addict does not suffer from confusion, he is in the thrall of certainty, and his certainty is reinforced each time he is exposed to the substance.

**Habituated engagement** with any substance, be it material or **symbolic**, can produce a state of **addiction** in which the user loses the **critical capacity** to make reasoned judgments concerning all matters related to the substance. The addict eventually develops a **tolerance** to the high it produces, and consequently he requires **increasingly elevated levels** of stimulation in order to maintain equilibrium, and experiences disorientation and agitation if the substance is withdrawn. Doidge explains that tolerance “can develop in happy lovers as they get used to each other” just as it develops in a drug user. This is because all addictions, be they to symbolic substances or material substances, are established by the brain’s **ever-increasing hunger** for the neurotransmitter **dopamine**, and “[D]opamine likes novelty” (Doidge 116). This means that the stakes must be constantly raised in order to stave off withdrawal—the addict needs more intense quantities or qualities of the substance. If the substance in question is emotional **political rhetoric**, the craving may be satisfied by **increasingly** hyperbolic and **incendiary** expressions of terror and rage. Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, both recovering drug addicts, refashion themselves as drug dealers, ingeniously adept at feeding the cravings of conservative political junkies.

#### 2. CONSTITUTIVISM. Judges are ‘educators’ and their paradigms are ‘geared to an educational audience’, which is us.

**Tabroom ’24** [Tabroom.com; debate hub site; “Your Paradigm,” https://www.tabroom.com/user/judge/paradigm.mhtml] etkin

This paradigm will be displayed publicly on the main Tabroom site, and will also be linked off pref/strike sheets for tournaments.

Please bear in mind that **paradigms** are public, geared to an **educational audience**, and have your **name attached**. For more on how to write a helpful paradigm, consult the NSDA judge paradigm guide.

Discriminatory, **hateful**, harmful and/or **profane language** is **forbidden**, and its use will result in your paradigm **being removed**. We might also lock or delete your Tabroom account. In other words, be **mature educators**, and **good people**.

### AT: Fairness---2NC

#### 1 – Procedural fairness should be rejected when it is used to sustain indigenous genocide.

**Stanley 21** – (Michelle A. Stanley (Coharie) is a graduate student in the Public Administration Master’s program at UNC Charlotte, where she also works as a University Program Associate in the Office of Institutional Research. She received a post-baccalaureate graduate certificate in gender, sexuality, and women’s studies and a BA in Sociology and Psychology, with a Minor in HGHR Studies, from UNC Charlotte. "Beyond erasure: Indigenous genocide denial and settler colonialism." Denial: The Final Stage of Genocide. Routledge, 2021. 131-147, HKR-AS)  
Despite the importance of acknowledging Indigenous genocide within the U.S., acknowledgment is insufficient to challenge settler colonialism. Settler colonial ideology is internalized and naturalized among non-Native and Indigenous communities through internal modes of colonialism. **Settler colonialism moves beyond a re-telling of history to establish policies and procedures that uphold the settler state and ensure settler futurity**. Due to the pervasiveness of settler colonialism, settlers do not have a framework for “another” way within the U.S. Settler colonial ideals and values including, private property, individualism, Christianity, patriarchal systems, lineage, and governance, medicalized healing, and capitalism **are embedded within U.S. policies**, structures, families, schools, churches, **and every space within the settler state.**

Further, the pervasiveness of settler colonial ideology is most clearly demonstrated by the presence of these ideals within Indigenous communities. Within Indigenous tribal nations, settler colonial ideals have infiltrated traditions and have become naturalized as the “way it’s always been.” For instance, heteropatriarchal ideals have supplanted Indigenous traditions of gender and sexuality diversity within many Indigenous communities. The same-sex marriage bans within the Cherokee and Navajo Nations demonstrates the pervasiveness of heteropatriarchal settler colonial ideals (Nenetdale, 2017, Justice, 2010). Additionally, the discrimination against Indigenous Two-Spirits within their own communities/nations demonstrates the infiltration of heteropatriarchal settler colonial ideals (Gilley, 2006). These examples of heteropatriarchal ideals within Indigenous tribal nations represents the internalization of settler colonial ideals. **However, Indigenous Peoples have and continue to be pressured to conform to settler colonial culture in order to gain legitimacy and to be perceived as “civilized.”**

The internalization and naturalization of settler colonial ideals is not the only issue associated with simply acknowledging Indigenous genocide. Many Indigenous scholars argue that “genocide” is inadequate to acknowledge the continuation of colonial processes within the U.S. and Canada. Essentially, Indigenous scholars argue that genocide framework often positions harm in the past, ignoring the ongoing settler colonial structures and processes (Simpson, 2014). The U.S. and Canada already position harms to Indigenous Peoples as situated in the past as evidenced by Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper’s apology in 2008 and the U.S. apology written in 2009. Both apologies refer only to past events, ignoring the ongoing settler colonial processes and structures. While neither Canada nor the U.S. formally acknowledge Indigenous genocide, the naming of Indigenous genocide would not change the ways these settler states navigate their relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Specifically, the designation of genocide would likely prompt more apologies for past actions, after all, the Canadian apology only referred to the harms associated with the residential school system and not any other settler colonial actions. These apologies fail to address the ongoing settler colonial policies and structures that continue to harm Indigenous Peoples. Further, they continue to position Indigenous Peoples in the past when referring to their relationships with land, traditions, and sovereignty. **Any acknowledgment of Indigenous genocide must address settler colonialism, or it will further perpetuate settler colonialism**. Simply, settler colonialism will not disappear just from the inclusion of Indigenous genocide in the U.S. and Canadian narratives.

### AT: Clash---2NC

### Link---Heg---2NC

#### The 1AC’s defense of an American-led order as an extension of freedom and democratic justice is a smokescreen for American imperialism that can only cohere itself through the coercive expansionism of settler colonialism. You should not fall for their settler propaganda.

**Singh 19** — (Nikhil Pal Singh is Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis and History at New York University and Faculty Director of the NYU Prison Education Program. His most recent book is Race and America’s Long War., “The Pervasive Power of the Settler Mindset,” Boston Review, 9/26/19, Available Online at http://bostonreview.net/war-security-race/nikhil-pal-singh-pervasive-power-settler-mindset, accessed 9-22-2020, HKR-AS)

Settler colonial narratives thus needed to be rewritten to suit extra-territorial and global purposes. To be clear, rising U.S. globalism and imperialism were not simply an extension of settler freedom, but nor should we lose sight of how they were intertwined with it. As Fortune’s writers insisted: “The U.S. economy has never proved that it can operate without the periodic injection of new and real wealth. The whole frontier saga, indeed, centered around this economic imperative.” As such, “The analogy between the domestic frontier in 1787 when the Constitution was formed and the present international frontier is perhaps not an idle one.” Franklin Delano Roosevelt himself viewed the 1940 “destroyers for bases” agreement with Great Britain—which saw the exchange of U.S. naval ships for land rights on British possessions—as the most important action in “the reinforcement of our national defense . . . since the Louisiana Purchase.” A decade later, as historian Megan Black has recently shown, engineers from the U.S. Department of the Interior—with longstanding expertise charting Indian reservation lands for hidden energy and mineral resources—were dispatched the world over to survey sources of strategic minerals required to defend “the free world.” In short order, U.S. military forces were calling Vietnam “Indian Country,” forcibly sequestering its peasants on reservations, while fighting to ensure its reserves of tungsten and tin didn’t fall to the red tide of international communism. U.S. imperialism abroad, however, did not erase the influence of settler ethics and practices closer to home. As Time Magazine magnate Henry Luce suggested, even as non-interventionist sentiment ran high in the run up to World War II, “Americans had to learn how to hate Germans, but hating Japs comes natural—as natural as fighting Indians once was.” In turn, few events evoked the Indian removal of the 1830s more than the 1940s herding of 100,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans into camps in the Western interior while many of their white neighbors avidly claimed their farmlands and possessions. An expansive and celebratory vision of white settlement also retained its purchase: by the 1950s, Andrew Jackson’s studded republic was remade through the promise of homeownership on “the crabgrass frontier.” Working in conjunction with real estate and banking industries, federal housing authorities drew up “residential security maps” that identified with stark red-lines where the valued property, credit, and people needed go—and where untrustworthy denizens should remain fixed. By the late 1960s, as sharply racialized contests over public space and civic belonging gave way to the “wars” on crime and drugs, sociologist Sidney Willhelm foresaw that urban blacks in particular, who were no longer required for industrial labor, were “going the way of the American Indian” into carceral warehouses. It is hardly incidental that Michigan’s Oakland County Executive Brooks Patterson thought it apt, quite recently, to characterize inner city Detroit as a “reservation, where we herd all the Indians into the city, build a fence around it, and then throw in the blankets and the corn.” This push and pull of U.S. settler ethics, narratives, and corollary institutions of violence in the name of freedom has yielded a distinctive and multi-layered carceral history and geography, at once domestic and transnational: a global archipelago of prisons, internment camps, and detention centers. In the past years, at Standing Rock, its raw circuitry of indigenous sequester and citizen protection was once again laid bare as state police and U.S. military forces had tense stand-offs with thousands of Sioux and supporters who were blocking construction of the Dakota Access oil pipeline through Indian reservation lands. Here, we might observe how settler ethics and practices continue to create liberated citizens and subordinated subjects together; the former are defined by democratic, formally egalitarian claims to nationhood, legal status, consumer choice and protection, and the latter defined as atavistic, backward, passively disappearing, slated for elimination, subject to sequestration, or bound by what is thought to be permanent inferior status. “**Savagery,” in short, has been a fungible and centrifugal construct, with fears of the native fueling racism as well as nativism, while a recursive, blank-slate conception of settler primacy and preeminence animates movements, programs, and policies for eliminating or warding off alien or foreign presence**. **The inceptive structuring of indigenous elimination as a condition of the settlers’ freedom has yielded an enduring tendency among American officials, and among the publics they conscript, to think of democratic self-rule as interdependent with expansive and coercive rule over alien subjects**. After 9/11, this historical subtext returned to the foreground as Americans were told not only that fighting terrorists overseas meant not having to fight them at home, but also that continuing to shop and spend at home was no less the duty of a civilized and prosperous people. The term “enemy combatant” itself was a neologism invented for “unlawful” fighters, those deserving no legal standing or status—those who could be detained (and tortured) with impunity—those subject to an unlimited deprivation of freedom, one whose avowed legal precedent, once again referred back to the Indian wars. As inhabitants of a finite and ecologically stressed planet, the challenges of undoing settler ethics—its ways of war, its presumptions about a need for limitless growth, its hostile vision of blank slate autonomy without dependency, and its delimitations of social and political membership—have never been higher. For more than simple racism or discrimination, the destructive premise at the core of the settler narrative is that freedom itself must be built upon eliminationism, and that growth therefore requires expiry. And it this temptation—to remain on the right side of might that makes right—that stalks the future of a planet in the grips of climate destruction, secular stagnation, and unevenly distributed misery. Earthly co-existence, material subsistence, and ecological sustainability demand nothing less than a new dispensation of human freedom. Otherwise, there truly will be none left to mourn.

### AT: Link turn---2NC

## 1NR

### AT: You Link---1NR

#### Imperialism isn’t colonialism—we don’t link and China being “worse” is wrong.

Tuck & Yang 12 (Eve Tuck, Wayne Yang, 2012, [Tuck is Professor of Indigenous Studies @ NYU, PhD Urban Education @ CUNY, Founding Director @ Tkaronto CIRCLE Lab, Fmr. William T. Grant Scohlar; Yang is Professor @ UCSD, Ph.D in Social Studies @ UC Berkeley],  “Decolonization is not a metaphor, Decolonization: Indigeneity”, Education & Society Vol. 1 (1). \*\*brackets are original \*\* https://clas.osu.edu/sites/clas.osu.edu/files/Tuck%20and%20Yang%202012%20Decolonization%20is%20not%20a%20metaphor.pdf)

A **more** **nuanced** **move** to **innocence** is the **homogenizing** of **various** **experiences** of **oppression** as **colonization**. **Calling different groups ‘colonized’ without describing their relationship to settler colonialism is an equivocation,** **“the fallacy of using a word in different senses at different stages of the reasoning**" (Etymonline, 2001). In particular, **describing all struggles against imperialism as ‘decolonizing’ creates a convenient ambiguity between decolonization and social justice work**, especially among **people** **of** **color**, queer people, and **other** **groups** **minoritized** by the **settler nation-state**. ‘**We are all colonized**,’ **may** **be** a **true** **statement** **but** is **deceptively** **embracive** and **vague**, its **inference**: ‘**None of us are settlers**.**’ Equivocation, or calling everything by the same name, is a move towards innocence that is especially vogue in coalition politics** among people of color. People of color who enter/are brought into the settler colonial nation-state also enter the triad ofrelations between settler-native-slave. We are referring here to the colonial pathways that are usually described as ‘immigration’ and how therefugee/immigrant/migrant is invited to be a settler in some scenarios, given the appropriate investments in whiteness, or is made an illegal, criminal presence in other scenarios. Ghetto colonialism, prisons, and under resourced compulsory schooling are specializations of settler colonialism in North America; they are produced by the collapsing of internal, external, and settler colonialisms, into new blended categories15. This triad of settler-native-slave and its selective collapsibility seems to be unique to settler colonial nations. For example, all Aleut people on the Aleutian Islands were collected and placed in internment camps for four years after the bombing of Dutch Harbor; the stated rationale was the protection of the people but another likely reason was that the U.S. Government feared the Aleuts would become allies with the Japanese and/or be difficult to differentiate from potential Japanese spies. White people who lived on the Aleutian Islands at that same time were not interned. Internment in abandoned warehouses and canneries in Southeast Alaska was the cause of significant numbers of death of children and elders, physical injury, and illness among Aleut people. Aleut internment during WWII is largely ignored as part of U.S. history. The shuffling of Indigenous people between Native, enslavable Other, and Orientalized Other16 shows how settler colonialism constructs and collapses its triad of categories. This colonizing trick explains why certain minoritiescan at times become model and quasi-assimilable (as exemplified by Asian settler colonialism, civil rights, model minority discourse, and the use of ‘hispanic’ as an ethnic category to mean both white and non-white) yet, in times of crisis, revert to the status of foreign contagions (as exemplified by Japanese Internment, Islamophobia, Chinese Exclusion, Red Scare, anti-Irish nativism, WWII antisemitism, and anti-Mexican-immigration). This is why ‘labor’ or ‘workers’ as an agential political class fails to activate the decolonizing project. “[S]hifting lines of the international division of labor” (Spivak, 1985, p. 84) bisect the very category of labor into caste-like bodies built for work on one hand and rewardable citizen-workers on theother. Some labor becomes settler, while excess labor becomes enslavable, criminal, murderable. The impossibility of fully becoming a white settler - in this case, white referring to an exceptionalized position with assumed rights to invulnerability and legal supremacy - as articulated by minority literature preoccupied with “glass ceilings” and “forever foreign” status and “myth of the model minority”, offers a strong critique of the myth of the democratic nationstate. However, **its logical endpoint, the attainment of equal legal and cultural entitlements, is actually an investment in settler colonialism**. Indeed, **even** the **ability** to be a **minority citizen** in the **settler nation means** an **option** to **become** a **brown** **settler**. For many people of color, becoming a subordinate settler is an option even when becoming white is not. “Following stolen resources” is a phrase that Wayne has encountered, used to describe Filipino overseas labor (over 10% of the population of the Philippines is working abroad) and other migrations from colony to metropole. This phrase is an important anti-colonial framing of a colonial situation. However an anti-colonial critique is not the same as a decolonizing framework; anti-colonial critique often celebrates empowered postcolonial subjects who seize denied privileges from the metropole. This **anti**-to-**post**-**colonial** **project** **doesn’t strive** to **undo** **colonialism** but **rather to remake it** and **subvert it**. **Seeking** **stolen** **resources** is **entangled** with **settler** **colonialism** **because** those **resources** **were** **nature**/**Native** **first**, then **enlisted into** the **service** of **settlement** and **thus** almost **impossible** to **reclaim without re-occupying Native land**. Furthermore, the postcolonial pursuit of resources is fundamentally an anthropocentric model, as land, water, air, animals, and plants are never able to become postcolonial; they remain objects to be exploited by the empowered postcolonial subject. **Equivocation** is the **vague equating** of **colonialisms that erases** the **sweeping scope** of **land** as the **basis of wealth, power, law** in **settler nation-states**. Vocalizing a ‘muliticultural’ approach to oppressions, or remaining silent on settler colonialism while talking about colonialisms, or **tacking** **on** a **gesture** **towards** **Indigenous** **people** **without** **addressing** **Indigenous sovereignty** or **rights**, or forwarding a thesis on decolonization **without** **regard** to **unsettling/deoccupying land**, are **equivocations**. That is, they **ambiguously avoid engaging** with **settler** **colonialism**; they are **ambivalent** about **minority** / **people** of **color** / **colonized Others** as **settlers**; they are **cryptic about Indigenous land rights** in **spaces** **inhabited** by **people of color**.