#### There is a growing chorus of voices bringing attention to the deaths of civilians by drone strikes- from the reports by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to the UN special reports. But still, not enough Americans are listening. The Rehman family flew 7,000 miles to tell their story at a Congressional hearing and only 5 members of Congress showed up. We need a mobilized community to restrain future use of drones.

Madea Benjamin, founder of CODEPINK in 2013 Medea Benjamin is cofounder of CODEPINK and the human rights organization Global Exchange. She is the author of Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control. “Drone Victims Come Out of the Shadows” Nov 5 http://fpif.org/drone-victims-come-shadows/?utm\_source=feedburner&utm\_medium=feed&utm\_campaign=Feed%3A+FPIF+%28Foreign+Policy+In+Focus+%28All+News%29%29

At each of the over 200 cities I’ve traveled to this past year with my book Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control, I ask the audience an easy question: Have they ever seen or heard from drone strike victims in the mainstream U.S. press? Not one hand has ever gone up. This is an obvious indication that the media has failed to do its job of humanizing the civilian casualties that accompany President Obama’s deadly drone program. This has started to change, with new films, reports, and media coverage finally giving the American public a taste of the personal tragedies involved. On October 29, the Rehman family—a father with his two children—came all the way from the Pakistani tribal territory of North Waziristan to the U.S. Capitol to tell the heart-wrenching story of the death of the children’s beloved 67-year-old grandmother. And while the briefing, organized by Congressman Alan Grayson, was only attended by four other congresspeople, it was packed with media. Watching the beautiful 9-year-old Nabila relate how her grandmother was blown to bits while outside picking okra softened the hearts of even the most hardened DC politicos. From the congressmen to the translator to the media, tears flowed. Even the satirical journalist Dana Milbank, who normally pokes fun at everything and everyone in his Washington Post column, covered the family’s tragedy with genuine sympathy. The visit by the Rehman family was timed for the release of the groundbreaking new documentary Unmanned: America’s Drone Wars by Robert Greenwald of Brave New Foundation. The emotion-packed film is filled with victims’ stories, including that of 16-year-old Tariq Aziz, a peace-loving, soccer-playing teenager obliterated three days after attending an anti-drone conference in Islamabad. Lawyers in the film pose the critical question: If Tariq was a threat, why didn’t they capture him at the meeting and give him the right to a fair trial? Another just released documentary is Wounds of Waziristan, a well-crafted, 20-minute piece by Pakistani filmmaker Madiha Tahir that explains how drone attacks rip apart communities and terrorize entire populations. Just as the visit and the films have put real faces on drone victims, a plethora of new reports by prestigious institutions—five in total—have exposed new dimensions of the drone wars. On October 22, Human Rights Watch issued a report on drone strikes in Yemen and Amnesty International issued another on drone strikes in Pakistan. While not calling for an end to all drone strikes, the reports detail cases of civilian casualties and criticize the U.S. government for considering itself above the rule of law and accountability. A third report, License to Kill, released by the Geneva-based group Al Karama, is much more damning of U.S. policy. While Amnesty and Human Rights Watch say drones are lawful under certain circumstances and mainly push for transparency, Al Karama asserts that the U.S. drone war is a clear violation of international law. It calls for an end to extrajudicial executions and targeted killings; complete reparations to victims; and a resolution by the UN Human Rights Council opposing the U.S. practice of extrajudicial executions. Adding to these well-researched reports by non-governmental organizations are two documents commissioned by the United Nations. One is by Christof Heyns, the UN’s special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions. The other is by Ben Emmerson, the special rapporteur on human rights and counter-terrorism. Heyns warns that while drones may be more targeted than other weapons, they are easier to use and may “lower social barriers against the use of lethal force.” He said that a “drones only” approach risks ignoring peaceful approaches such as individual arrests and trial, negotiations and building alliances. Emmerson said states have the obligation to capture terrorist suspects, when feasible, and should only use force as a last resort. He blasted the U.S. lack of transparency, calling it the single greatest obstacle to an evaluation of the civilian impact of drone strikes. He said states must be transparent about the acquisition and use of drones, the legal basis and criteria for targeting, and their impact. “National security does not justify keeping secret the statistical and methodological data about the use of drones,” he claimed. But perhaps more impactful than the UN reports themselves was the debate they engendered on the floor of the UN General Assembly. On October 26, for the first time ever, representatives from a broad swath of nations waited their turn to denounce the U.S. drone policy. Venezuela called drones “flagrantly illegal” and said they were a form of “collective punishment.” Brazil pushed the UN rapporteurs to take an even stronger stand. China called drones a “blank space in international law” and insisted that nations “respect the principles of UN charters, the sovereignty of states, and the legitimate rights of the citizens of all countries.” The representative of Pakistan tried to put to rest press reports that the Pakistani government secretly approved of the strikes. He stated that drones put all Pakistanis at risk and radicalize more people, and called for “an immediate cessation of drone strikes within the territorial boundaries of Pakistan.” This was the same sentiment expressed by Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his October 23 meeting with President Obama. The U.S. government is feeling the pressure. It has taken steps to reduce civilian casualties and has reduced the actual number of strikes, but certainly not eliminated them. In fact, there was a drone strike in Somalia on October 28 and another one in Pakistan on October 31 that killed Taliban leader Hakimullah Mahsoud, who was about to engage in peace talks with the Pakistan government. While the reduction in the number of strikes is a partial victory, it cannot erase the hundreds of innocent lives lost over the years. Also, with the global proliferation of drones (thanks to the easing of restrictions on overseas sales and the introduction of domestic drones into U.S. skies by September 2015), their usage will inevitably increase. A mobilized global community is the only force that can serve as a restraining factor. It is also [the] best way to honor the Rehman family and other victims. As 13-year-old Zubair Rehman testified, “I hope that by telling you about my village and death of my grandmother, I can convince you that drones are not the answer. I hope I can return home to tell my community that Americans listened and are trying to help us solve the many problems we face. And maybe, just maybe, America may soon stop the drones.” Responding to this call is the Global Drone Summit November 16-17 in Washington DC, where hundreds of people from around the world will gather to strategize and to organize a global network. They will also announce campaigns to pressure the U.S. government to release the legal memos justifying drone strikes, and create a compensation fund for civilian victims. Check here to register for the summit or watch the livestream.

#### Obama never follows through with statements about drones, and there’s still a lot we don’t know.

Byrd 1/15 Lauren, Salon, “Obama’s staggering drone hypocrisy” http://www.salon.com/2014/01/15/the\_hypocrisy\_of\_drones\_what\_the\_obama\_administration\_says\_vs\_what\_happens\_partner/

In 2013, the discussion about the Obama administration’s use of drones as weapons of war intensified. Americans became more aware of the practice, and President Obama outlined his vision of counterterrorism efforts, and how the use of these unmanned bombers fit into that vision. The upshot is that the administration continues to deploy drone strikes as its main counterterrorism strategy, ignoring both the high rate of civilian casualties associated with these attacks, and the high cost to U.S. taxpayers. Take a look back at some of the statements the Obama administration made about drones in 2013, and you’ll see there’s a disconnect between what is said and what actually happens, as this brief timeline will show. Drone policy and reality are not the same. Increasingly, progressives want to know what they can do to reduce or do away with this weapon of mass destruction in 2014. Winter 2013 What was said: In March, during his confirmation hearings to become CIA director, John Brennan says this about drones: “We only use these authorities and these capabilities as a last resort.” President Obama says the U.S. government would rather capture and interrogate suspected terrorists than use targeted killings, but he echoes the Bush administration claim that it is not possible to use capture methods in the tribal areas of Pakistan. He says this is because the Pakistan government’s legal authority does not extend to federally administered tribal areas (FATAs). What was done: Recently, drones strikes have occurred outside of Pakistan’s tribal areas. They continue in Somalia, and in Yemen, where 15 civilians attending a wedding were reportedly killed by a drone strike in December. Spring What was said: In May, during his speech on counterterrorism at the National Defense University at Fort McNair, President Obama first defended drone strikes as legal, and said we are still at war with Al Qaeda and its affiliates. He also said our use of drones was “heavily constrained” and only in the case where a “terrorist poses a continuing and immediate threat to the American people.” He predicted that by the end of 2014 there would be a “reduced need for unmanned strikes.” Finally, he said he was releasing the framework behind the administration’s use of drone strikes to provide greater transparency on the issue. What was done: Obama had said the Presidential Policy Guidance would provide clear guidelines, oversight and accountability of the drone program. The PPG was only two-and-a-half pages long and does not outline legal reasoning, how strikes are coordinated with broader foreign policy objectives or the scope of legitimate targets. Summer What was said: When asked when the U.S. would end drone strikes, Secretary of State John Kerry stated in an interview with Pakistan TV: “I think the president has a very real timeline and we hope it’s going to be very, very soon.” What was done: Almost immediately the State Department refuted Kerry’s statement, saying there is “no exact timeline” for ending drone strikes. Things We Still Don’t Know About Drones The Obama administration has not followed through on its promise to provide greater transparency about the drone program. Most of the legal rationale and procedures behind the drone program still have not been explained to the American public. Most importantly, there is no end date for the drone program, as the State Department admitted above. Here’s a list of things the American public still doesn’t know about drone strikes: The U.S. government’s count of civilian deaths Who can be targeted Which strikes are conducted by the U.S. The legal processes behind who the Obama administration decides to target The rationale/reasoning process in who or where they decide to strike The upshot is that drone policy continues without any transparency or accountability. It became clear last year that while our government continues to cloak this policy in mystery, innocent people are dying, as Pakistani Rafiq ur Rehman testified before Congress. His family members are just a few of the innocent victims.

### Plan

#### The United States Congress should create a statutory cause of action for damages for those unlawfully injured by targeted killing operations or their heirs that overrides the state secrets and official immunity doctrine and replaces them with carefully considered procedures for balancing the secrecy concerns.

## Solvency

#### The plan creates a deterrent effect and overcomes judicial deference and the government’s ability to assert state secret privileges.

Stephen I. Vladeck 13, Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Scholarship at American University Washington College of Law, senior editor of the peer-reviewed Journal of National Security Law and Policy, Supreme Court Fellow at the Constitution Project, and fellow at the Center on National Security at Fordham University School of Law, JD from Yale Law School, Feb 27 2013, “DRONES AND THE WAR ON TERROR: WHEN CAN THE U.S.TARGET ALLEGED AMERICAN TERRORISTS OVERSEAS?” Hearing Before the House Committee on the Judiciary, http://www.lawfareblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Vladeck-02272013.pdf

At first blush, it may seem like many of these issues would be equally salient in the context of after-the-fact damages suits. But as long as such a regime was designed carefully and conscientiously, I believe that virtually all of these concerns could be mitigated. ¶ For starters, retrospective review doesn’t raise anywhere near the same concerns with regard to adversity or judicial competence. With respect to adversity, presumably those who are targeted in an individual strike could be represented as plaintiffs in a post-hoc proceeding, whether through their next friend or their heirs. And as long as they could state a viable claim for relief, it’s difficult to see any pure Article III problem with such a suit for retrospective relief.¶ As for competence, judges routinely review whether government officers acted in lawful self-defense under exigent circumstances (this is exactly what the Supreme Court’s 1985 decision in Tennessee v. Garner20 contemplates, after all). And if the Guantánamo litigation of the past five years has shown nothing else, it demonstrates that judges are also more than competent to resolve not just whether individual terrorism suspects are who the government says they are (and thus members of al Qaeda or one of its affiliates), but to do so using highly classified information in a manner that balances—albeit not always ideally—the government’s interest in secrecy with the detainee’s ability to contest the evidence against him.21 Just as Guantánamo detainees are represented in their habeas proceedings by security-cleared counsel who must comply with court-imposed protective orders and security procedures,22 so too, the subjects of targeted killing operations could have their estates represented by security-cleared counsel, who would be in a far better position to challenge the government’s evidence and to offer potentially exculpatory evidence / arguments of their own. And although the Guantánamo procedures have been developed by courts on an ad hoc basis (a process that has itself been criticized by some jurists), 23 Congress might also look to provisions it enacted in 1996 in creating the little-known Alien Terrorist Removal Court, especially 8 U.S.C. § 1534,24 as a model for such proceedings. ¶ More to the point, it should also follow that courts would be far more able as a practical matter to review the relevant questions in these cases after the fact. Although the pure membership question can probably be decided in the abstract, it should stand to reason that the imminence and infeasibility-of-capture issues will be much easier to assess in hindsight—removed from the pressures of the moment and with the benefit of the dispassionate distance that judicial review provides. To similar effect, whether the government used excessive force in relation to the object of the attack is also something that can only reasonably be assessed post hoc.¶ In addition to the substantive questions, it will also be much easier for courts to review the government’s own internal procedures after they are employed, especially if the government itself is already conducting after-action reviews that could be made part of the (classified) record in such cases. Indeed, the government’s own analysis could, in many cases, go a long way toward proving the lawfulness vel non of an individual strike.¶ As I mentioned before, there would still be a host of legal doctrines that would likely get in the way of such suits. Just to name a few, there is the present (albeit, in my view, unjustified) hostility to judicially inferred causes of actions under Bivens; the state secrets privilege;and sovereign and official immunity doctrines. But I am a firm believer that, except where the President himself is concerned (where there’s a stronger argument that immunity is constitutionally grounded),25 each of these concerns can be overcome by statute—as at least some of them arguably have been in the context of the express damages actions provided for under FISA. 26 So long as Congress creates an express cause of action for nominal damages, and so long as the statute both (1) expressly overrides state secrets and immunity doctrines; and (2) replaces them with carefully considered procedures for balancing the secrecy concerns that would arise in many—if not most—of these cases, these legal issues would be vitiated. Moreover, any concerns about exposing to liability government officers who acted in good faith and within the scope of their employment can be ameliorated by following the model of the Westfall Act, and substituting the United States as the proper defendant in any suit arising out of such an operation.27¶ Perhaps counterintuitively, I also believe that after-the-fact judicial review wouldn’t raise anywhere near the same prudential concerns as those noted above. Leaving aside how much less pressure judges would be under in such cases, it’s also generally true that damages regimes don’t have nearly the same validating effect on government action that ex ante approval does. Otherwise, one would expect to have seen a dramatic upsurge in lethal actions by law enforcement officers after each judicial decision refusing to impose individual liability arising out of a prior use of deadly force. So far as I know, no such evidence exists.¶ Of course, damages actions aren’t a perfect solution here. It’s obvious, but should be said anyway, that in a case in which the government does act unlawfully, no amount of damages will make the victim (or his heirs) whole. It’s also inevitable that, like much of the Guantánamo litigation, most of these suits would be resolved under extraordinary secrecy, and so there would be far less public accountability for targeted killings than, ideally, we might want. Some might also object to this proposal as being unnecessary—that, given existing criminal laws and executive orders, there is already a sufficiently clear prohibition on unlawful strikes to render any such damages regime unnecessarily superfluous. ¶ At least as to this last objection, it bears emphasizing that the existing laws depend entirely upon the beneficence of the Executive Branch, since they assume both that the government will (1) willfully disclose details of unlawful operations rather than cover them up; and (2) prosecute its own in cases in which they cross the line. Given both prior practice and unconfirmed contemporary reports of targeted killing operations that appear to raise serious legality issues, such as “signature strikes,” it doesn’t seem too much of a stretch to doubt that these remedies will prove sufficient.¶ In addition, there are two enormous upsides to damages actions that, in my mind, make them a least-worst solution—even if they are deeply, fundamentally flawed:¶ First, if nothing else, the specter of damages, even nominal damages, should have a deterrent effect on future government officers, such that, if a targeted killing operation ever was carried out in a way that violated the relevant legal rules, there would be liability—and, as importantly, precedent—such that the next government official in a similar context might think twice, and might make sure that he’s that much more convinced that the individual in question is who the government claims, and that there’s no alternative to the use of lethal force. Second, at least where the targets of such force are U.S. citizens, I believe that there is a non-frivolous argument that the Constitution may even compel at least some form of judicial process. 28 Compared to the alternatives, nominal damages actions litigated under carefully circumscribed rules of secrecy may be the only way to balance all of the relevant private, government, and legal interests at stake in such cases.¶ \* \* \*¶ In his concurrence in the Supreme Court’s famous decision in the Steel Seizure case, Justice Frankfurter suggested that “The accretion of dangerous power does not come in a day. It does come, however slowly, from the generative force of unchecked disregard of the restrictions that fence in even the most disinterested assertion of authority.”¶ 29 It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that targeted killing operations by the Executive Branch present the legislature with two realistic choices: Congress could accept with minimal scrutiny the Executive Branch’s claims that these operations are carried out lawfully and with every relevant procedural safeguard to maximize their accuracy—and thereby open the door to the “unchecked disregard” of which Justice Frankfurter warned. Or Congress could require the government to defend those assertions in individual cases before a neutral magistrate invested with the independence guaranteed by the Constitution’s salary and tenure protections. So long as the government’s interests in secrecy are adequately protected in such proceedings, and so long as these operations really are consistent with the Constitution and laws of the United States, what does the government have to hide?

#### Lawsuits are a visible platform advocates can use to generate media attention and public conversations. The conversations that result from the aff spillover to broader conversations about constitutional concerns and human rights issues.

Wexler 13 Lesley Wexler Professor of Law and Thomas A. Mengler Faculty Scholar, University of Illinois College of Law “The Role of the Judicial Branch during the Long War: Drone Courts, Damage Suits, and FOIA Requests” May 8 http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=2262412

This chapter suggests the judiciary may play an important role in the debate over the executive branch’s decisions regarding IHL even if it declines to speak to the substance of such cases. First, advocates may use courts as a visible platform in which to make their arguments and spur conversations about alternative, non-judicially mandated transparency and accountability measures. As they did with the trio of detention cases, advocates can leverage underlying constitutional concerns about the treatment of citizens to stimulate interest in the larger IHL issues. Second, litigants may use courts to publicize and pursue Freedom of Information (FOIA) requests and thus enhance transparency. Even if courts decline to grant FOIA requests, the lawsuits can generate media atten-tion about what remains undisclosed. Third, and most robustly, Congress may pass legislation that would facilitate either prospective review of kill lists through a so-called drone court or remove procedural barriers to retrospective damage suits for those unlawfully killed by a drone strike. Even the threat of such a judicial role may influence executive branch behavior.

#### Courts become rallying points to debate specific applications of broader issues.

Cole 11 David, Professor, Georgetown University Law Center. Where Liberty Lies: Civil Society and Individual Rights After 9/11 Wayne Law Review, Winter, 57 Wayne L. Rev. 1203, lexis

Learned Hand's assertion that as long as "liberty lies in the hearts of men and women . . . it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it," simultaneously captures an essential truth and overstates its case. n330 It is true that without a culture that values constitutional rights, formal legal protections are likely to be largely unavailing. But it is not quite true that when such a culture exists, "it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it." The Constitution and the courts play a critical role in inculcating, reinforcing, and implementing the culture of the rule of law. They remind us of the values we hold in highest esteem. Court cases can serve as focal points for debating the application of these enduring constitutional values to current conditions. And courts can and often do enforce constitutional rights where the political branches would not.

#### The poorly informed public continues to prop up Obama’s drone policy. Current government justifications enable it to discount alternate media narratives and cast a fog over public debate about drones.

Naiman 13 Robert Naiman is Policy Director at Just Foreign Policy. Mr. Naiman edits the Just Foreign Policy daily news summary and writes on U.S. foreign policy at Huffington Post. Naiman has worked as a policy analyst and researcher at the Center for Economic and Policy Research and Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch. He has masters degrees in economics and mathematics from the University of Illinois and has studied and worked in the Middle East. “WikiLeaks and the Drone Strike Transparency Bill” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-naiman/wikileaks-and-the-drone-s\_b\_4282595.html

The Senate Intelligence Committee recently took an important step by passing an intelligence authorization which would require for the first time -- if it became law -- that the administration publicly report on civilian casualties from U.S. drone strikes. Sarah Knuckey, Director of the Project on Extrajudicial Executions at New York University School of Law and a Special Advisor to the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, calls this provision "an important step toward improving transparency," and notes that "Various U.N. officials, foreign governments, a broad range of civil society, and many others, including former U.S. Department of State Legal Advisor Harold Koh ... have called for the publication of such basic information." This provision could be offered as an amendment in the Senate to the National Defense Authorization Act. It could be offered in the House as an amendment on the intelligence authorization, or as a freestanding bill. But it's not likely to become law unless there's some public agitation for it (you can participate in the public agitation here.) Forcing the administration to publish information is crucial, because in the court of poorly informed public opinion, the administration has gotten away with two key claims that the record of independent reporting strongly indicates are not true: 1) U.S. drone strikes are "narrowly targeted" on "top-level terrorist leaders," and 2) civilian casualties have been "extremely rare." Poll data shows that majority public support of the drone strike policy is significantly based on belief in these two false claims; if the public knew that either of these claims were not true, public support for the policy would fall below 50%. By keeping key information secret, the administration has been able to avoid having its two key claims in defense of the policy refuted in media that reach the broad public. You might think that if a key reason that it's been difficult to do anything politically in the U.S. about the drone strike policy has been the apparent public support for the policy among people who do not know that the strikes have not been "narrowly targeted" on "top-level terrorist leaders" and who do not know that civilian casualties have not been extremely rare, then if there were a proposed transparency reform that could force the administration to disclose information that would likely contribute greatly to knowledge among the general public that these two key claims are not true, it should be a no-brainer that critics of the policy should vigorously support this reform. Sadly, it is not, apparently, a no-brainer, because there are people who claim that transparency reforms are meaningless. And while it is tempting to try to ignore such people, they have a disproportionate impact to their numbers because most people don't have the life experience that would enable them to easily judge between the competing claims "transparency reforms are important" and "transparency reforms are meaningless." Our starting point is that many Americans, compared to Europeans, are politically disengaged, alienated from political engagement most of the time. So when you put out a call for people to engage Congress, you have a group of people who get it right away and take action, and a another group of people who think, "Engage Congress? Not that again," and treat it as a huge personal sacrifice to engage Congress, like you asked them to volunteer for a root canal. These people are looking for any excuse to not take action. So if someone pops up and says, "transparency reforms are meaningless," these people have an excuse not to take action. "Oh, this proposed reform is controversial, not everyone agrees, so I don't have to do anything." To people who want to claim that transparency reforms are meaningless, I want to say this: tell it to WikiLeaks. What was the fundamental strategic idea of WikiLeaks? What was the fundamental insight that Julian Assange deeply grasped that caused him to initiate this project, at great personal risk to himself and his close collaborators? It was that governments are hiding key information that the public has the right to know, that allowing governments to continue to hide this information fundamentally undermines democratic accountability, and that forcing this information into public debate fundamentally enables democratic accountability. Case in point: Just Foreign Policy issued a crowd-sourced reward for WikiLeaks to publish the secret negotiating text of the Trans Pacific Partnership agreement, which, among many other concerns, critics like the AARP have charged threatens the ability of the U.S. government to make medicines safe and affordable under the Affordable Care Act. This week, WikiLeaks delivered, publishing the negotiating text of the "intellectual property" chapter of the TPP, the most controversial part of the agreement, including the negotiating positions of different countries. (If you made a pledge to the reward, you can fulfill your pledge here. ) Publishing this information generated a lot of press. (Google "WikiLeaks and TPP.") It also allowed critics of the agreement, like Public Citizen, Doctors Without Borders, and the Electronic Frontier Foundation to respond directly to the TPP text in making their criticisms. Predictably, some journalists wrote what they often write about such disclosures: that there was nothing really shocking for insiders who were closely following the issue. And, in a narrow sense, that's not untrue. But it missed the point. In general, disclosing "secret" government policies mostly isn't about educating journalists and other insiders who are closely following the issues. It's about educating the broad public, which never saw this information clearly presented in major media. In a democracy, it's hard to keep the basics of important public policies secret from well-informed people who are following closely. Official secrecy is mainly about keeping them from the broad public, because official secrecy allows the government to keep the broad public in a fog of competing claims that can't be directly verified and are therefore never resolved in major media. Critics charge that X, but the government denies it. Who knows for sure? The New York Times recently had an editorial in favor of the TPP. Critics complained, saying: 1) either you're endorsing an agreement that you've never seen or 2) you have seen the agreement, and instead of doing journalism, you're collaborating in keeping the public in the dark. No, we haven't seen the agreement, the Times responded. We're just endorsing the idea of an agreement. Never mind what the actual agreement is. That's the kind of "public debate" you can have when the policy is secret - whether you like the official story about the policy, rather than the actual policy. (Now that part of the TPP text has been leaked, the Times is quiet.) This is the same problem we face with the drone strike policy: people like the official story about the drone strike policy, in which drones are a magic super-weapon that only kills terrorist leaders and not civilians, not the actual policy, about which they have no idea. When Edward Snowden leaked information about the NSA's blanket surveillance on Americans, many insiders said, "Yeah, we thought the NSA was doing that, we couldn't prove it, but no-one who follows the NSA was surprised." But the broad public had no clue, because it had never been clearly reported where most people could see it, because critics' claims couldn't be directly verified. When Snowden blew the whistle, the broad public found ou t, and that's why it's plausible that Congress will now force a change in policy. And that shows that transparency matters. Where we are now with the drone strike policy is where we were with the NSA before Snowden's revelations: insiders know what's going on, but the broad public doesn't. An illustration: earlier this week, I and others engaged in some "street lobbying" of Jeh Johnson, President Obama's nominee to head the Department of Homeland Security. When he was previously in government, Johnson was the Pentagon's top lawyer, and thus participated in constructing the administration's purported legal justifications for the drone strike policy (which still have not been fully disclosed to Congress and the public.) Now, as head of DHS, he's not going to play that role directly. But he's still going to have significant influence, because he'll be in the meeting of the national security department heads, because he's well-connected, and because, by his own account, he cares deeply about the rule of law and working to ensure that the drone strike policy transparently complies with the rule of law. I was lobbying Johnson to support the drone strike transparency bill, so that the administration would have to disclose information about civilian casualties. He said he would look into the bill and consider it. During the discussion, one of my colleagues challenged Johnson about a particular drone strike. Johnson gave the standard administration defense, about people who are planning to attack the United States. I interrupted him: "That's a small percentage of the people being killed by drone strikes." "That's true," Johnson said. That's true. When I called him on it, Johnson immediately conceded that the story that the drone strike policy is all about narrowly targeting people who are trying to attack the United States is basically not true. It's true that the U.S. has tried to target some people who have attacked or tried to attack the United States. But that's a small percentage of the people who have been killed. And so, in the main, that's not what the drone strike policy is about; in particular, the claim that drone strikes have been "narrowly targeted" on "top-level terrorist leaders" is not true. ("I believe it very likely that one of my enemies is standing in that crowd of 50 people, therefore I am going to blow up the crowd" does not constitute "narrow targeting.") Why would Johnson concede to me that a central administration claim in defense of its drone strike policy is basically not true? Because he wasn't giving an interview to a mainstream journalist. He was just talking to some guy on a street corner who wasn't recording what he was saying, a person who had little presumed ability to reach the broad American public, a person who could, at worst, tell some mainstream journalist what Johnson said, which Johnson could then promptly deny. He could say he was misquoted or misunderstood, and life would go on. And so we're left with the usual fog. Critics say X, U.S. officials deny it. Who really knows what the truth is? Johnson was having an insider conversation, conceding that which all insiders know, but which the broad public does not know: the drone strike policy is not narrowly targeted on people who are trying to attack the United States.

#### Mobilizing civil society organizations is the most effective way to restrain executive power.

Cole 11 David, Professor, Georgetown University Law Center. Where Liberty Lies: Civil Society and Individual Rights After 9/11 Wayne Law Review, Winter, 57 Wayne L. Rev. 1203, lexis

The force of ordinary electoral politics also cannot account for the shift in U.S. counterterrorism policy. None of the Bush administration's initial initiatives sparked majoritarian opposition. To the contrary, [\*1244] President Bush, who had very low approval ratings shortly before 9/11, shot up in popularity when he declared the "war on terror," and was reelected in 2004, in large measure on his promise to deliver security. n235 Apart from opposition to the war in Iraq, there was little widespread popular pressure on President Bush to rein in his security initiatives. Despite this evidence, Eric Posner and Adrian Vermeule have argued that in the modern era, political checks are all there are when it comes to restraining executive power. n236 They maintain that Congress, the courts, and the law itself cannot effectively constrain the executive, especially in emergencies, but that this need not concern us because the executive is adequately limited by political forces. At first blush, the past decade might appear to vindicate Posner and Vermeule's views, as political forces, broadly speaking, seem to have been at least as effective at checking the President as were Congress or the judiciary. n237 But there is in fact little evidence that electoral politics or majoritarian sentiment played much, if any, role in persuading President Bush to ratchet back his security initiatives. While formal judicial and legislative checks cannot tell the whole story, the alternative account is not "politics" as Posner and Vermeule define and describe it, but a much more complex interplay of civil society, law, politics, and culture: what I have called "civil society constitutionalism." Posner and Vermeule contend that the separation of powers is, for all practical purposes, defunct, as executive power has dramatically expanded relative to the other branches in the modern era. n238 Like many commentators before them, Posner and Vermeule attribute this development to the growth of the administrative state n239 and to the near-constant state of emergency in which modern American government now seems to operate. n240 But where other commentators view these developments as profound challenges to our constitutional order, Posner and Vermeule insist that ordinary political constraints on the executive are sufficient. n241 [\*1245] In my view, Posner and Vermeule simultaneously underestimate the constraining force of law and overestimate the influence of political limits on executive overreaching. Sounding like Critical Legal Studies adherents, they sweepingly claim that law is so indeterminate and manipulable as to constitute only a "façade of lawfulness." n242 But in assessing law's effect, they look almost exclusively to formal indicia--statutes and court decisions. n243 That approach disregards the role that law plays without coming to a head in a judicial decision or legislative act. As the post-9/11 period illustrates, when law is reinforced and defended by civil society institutions, it can have a disciplining function long before cases reach final judgment, and even when no case is ever filed, a reality to which anyone who has worked in the executive branch will attest. n244 Executive officials generally cannot know in advance whether their actions will attract the attention of civil society watchdogs, or lead to court review. They often cannot know whether such oversight--whether by a court, a legislative committee, or a nongovernmental organization--will be strict or deferential. As long as there is some risk of such oversight, the resultant uncertainty itself is likely to have a disciplining effect on the choices they make. There are, in short, plenty of reasons why executive lawyers generally take legal limits seriously. They take an oath and are acculturated to do so. They know that claims of illegality can undermine their objectives. And they cannot predict when a legal claim will be advanced against them. Similarly, in focusing exclusively on statutes and their enforcement by courts, Posner and Vermeule disregard the considerable checking function that Congress's legal oversight role plays through means short of formal statutes, such as by holding hearings, launching investigations, requesting information about doubtful executive practices, or restricting federal expenditures. The effectiveness of these checks, moreover, will often turn on the strength of civil society. If there are significant watchdogs in the nongovernmental sector and/or the media focused on executive actions, ready to bring allegedly illegal conduct to public attention, the law will have substantial deterrent effect, with or without actual court decisions.

### “Targeted” Killing

#### Drone strikes cause thousands of civilian deaths and massive disruptions of daily life.

Stanford Human Rights Clinic 12 “Living Under Drones Death, Injury, and Trauma to Civilians From US Drone Practices in Pakistan” Stanford International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic (IHRCRC) and Global Justice Clinic (GJC) at NYU School of Law September http://livingunderdrones.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Stanford-NYU-LIVING-UNDER-DRONES.pdf

First, while civilian casualties are rarely acknowledged by the US government, there is significant evidence that US drone strikes have injured and killed civilians. In public statements, the US states that there have been “no” or “single digit” civilian casualties.”2 It is difficult to obtain data on strike casualties because of US efforts to shield the drone program from democratic accountability, compounded by the obstacles to independent investigation of strikes in North Waziristan. The best currently available public aggregate data on drone strikes are provided by The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ), an independent journalist organization. TBIJ reports that from June 2004 through midSeptember 2012, available data indicate that drone strikes killed 2,562-3,325 people in Pakistan, of whom 474-881 were civilians, including 176 children.3 TBIJ reports that these strikes also injured an additional 1,228-1,362 individuals. Where media accounts do report civilian casualties, rarely is any information provided about the victims or the communities they leave behind. This report includes the harrowing narratives of many survivors, witnesses, and family members who provided evidence of civilian injuries and deaths in drone strikes to our research team. It also presents detailed accounts of three separate strikes, for which there is evidence of civilian deaths and injuries, including a March 2011 strike on a meeting of tribal elders that killed some 40 individuals. Second, US drone strike policies cause considerable and under-accounted for harm to the daily lives of ordinary civilians, beyond death and physical injury. Drones hover twenty-four hours a day over communities in northwest Pakistan, striking homes, vehicles, and public spaces without warning. Their presence terrorizes men, women, and children, giving rise to anxiety and psychological trauma among civilian communities. Those living under drones have to face the constant worry that a deadly strike may be fired at any moment, and the knowledge that they are powerless to protect themselves. These fears have affected behavior. The US practice of striking one area multiple times, and evidence that it has killed rescuers, makes both community members and humanitarian workers afraid or unwilling to assist injured victims. Some community members shy away from gathering in groups, including important tribal dispute-resolution bodies, out of fear that they may attract the attention of drone operators. Some parents choose to keep their children home, and children injured or traumatized by strikes have dropped out of school. Waziris told our researchers that the strikes have undermined cultural and religious practices related to burial, and made family members afraid to attend funerals. In addition, families who lost loved ones or their homes in drone strikes now struggle to support themselves.

#### Despite the lies from defense officials, the images from drones are too pixelated to be precise- the public needs to know civilian casualties are commonplace.

Linebaugh 13 Heather Linebaugh “I worked on the US drone program. The public should know what really goes on” Dec 29 http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/29/drones-us-military/print

Whenever I read comments by politicians defending the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Predator and Reaper program – aka drones – I wish I could ask them a few questions. I'd start with: "How many women and children have you seen incinerated by a Hellfire missile?" And: "How many men have you seen crawl across a field, trying to make it to the nearest compound for help while bleeding out from severed legs?" Or even more pointedly: "How many soldiers have you seen die on the side of a road in Afghanistan because our ever-so-accurate UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] were unable to detect an IED [improvised explosive device] that awaited their convoy?" Few of these politicians who so brazenly proclaim the benefits of drones have a real clue of what actually goes on. I, on the other hand, have seen these awful sights first hand. I knew the names of some of the young soldiers I saw bleed to death on the side of a road. I watched dozens of military-aged males die in Afghanistan, in empty fields, along riversides, and some right outside the compound where their family was waiting for them to return home from the mosque. The US and British militaries insist that this is an expert program, but it's curious that they feel the need to deliver faulty information, few or no statistics about civilian deaths and twisted technology reports on the capabilities of our UAVs. These specific incidents are not isolated, and the civilian casualty rate has not changed, despite what our defense representatives might like to tell us. What the public needs to understand is that the video provided by a drone is not usually clear enough to detect someone carrying a weapon, even on a crystal-clear day with limited cloud and perfect light. This makes it incredibly difficult for the best analysts to identify if someone has weapons for sure. One example comes to mind: "The feed is so pixelated, what if it's a shovel, and not a weapon?" I felt this confusion constantly, as did my fellow UAV analysts. We always wonder if we killed the right people, if we endangered the wrong people, if we destroyed an innocent civilian's life all because of a bad image or angle. It's also important for the public to grasp that there are human beings operating and analysing intelligence these UAVs. I know because I was one of them, and nothing can prepare you for an almost daily routine of flying combat aerial surveillance missions over a war zone. UAV proponents claim that troops who do this kind of work are not affected by observing this combat because they are never directly in danger physically.

#### Even if casualties are declining, we need to remain vigilant- when we see casualties as statistics or just a side effect of war, we lose restraint and our moral bearing to the world.

Sullivan 13 Andrew Sullivan he won a Harkness Fellowship to Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, and earned a Masters degree in Public Administration, he was the editor of The New Republic, currently founding editor at The Dish “The Damage Done By Drones, Ctd “ Oct 23 http://dish.andrewsullivan.com/2013/10/23/the-damage-done-by-drones-ctd/

I agree. Unintended collateral civilian casualties are not war crimes, and never have been. But the moral equation shifts, it seems to me, when the belligerent stops truly seeing these casualties as morally deeply troubling. This is particularly true when it comes to the anti-septic feel of drone warfare, where human beings can be seen simply as distant statistics. There comes a point at which indifference to civilian casualties veers toward a war crime. That was my problem with the Israelis’ pulverization of Gaza in 2009. They did not seem particularly agonized by it at all, despite the huge imbalance of fatalities on each side of that conflict. With that kind of technological power, restraint is even more essential if we are not to lose our soul. The way in which the Obama administration began to scale down drone warfare in the growing evidence of such casualties suggests to me a mindset attempting to avoid the worst aspects of such a war – not surrendering to it. But it’s a blurry line, and we need to remain extremely vigilant about it for moral and strategic reasons. Multiple civilian deaths do not, after all, help the case against al Qaeda in Pakistan.

#### Dependence on drones perpetuates a binary way of thinking where we don’t consider other options. This has locked us into an endless war.

Bacevich 12 Andrew Bacevich, professor of history and international relations at Boston University, Interview wil Bill Moyers, March 23 http://billmoyers.com/wp-content/themes/billmoyers/transcript-print.php?post=5190

Again, one would refer to Afghan history here, that this is simply not a place that accommodates foreign invaders who think they know how to run the place better than the local population. But what I would want to emphasize, I think, is that by last year, I think Obama himself had given up on the notion that counterinsurgency provided a basis for U.S. strategy and had, indeed, begun to implement Plan C. And Plan C is targeted assassination. Plan C is relying on drones, unmanned aerial vehicles with missiles, and also commandos, special operation forces, in order to conduct military operations, in essence on a global basis, identifying those who could pose a threat to us. And without regard to congressional authority, without regard to considerations of national sovereignty, to go kill the people we think need to be killed. Plan C is already being implemented. BILL MOYERS: Most people seem to accept it as an alternative to failure in Afghanistan, and as a way of keeping American soldiers out of harm's way. ANDREW BACEVICH: Well, and also they accept it because of course, it doesn't cost us anything. We are not, the people are not engaged in any serious way. The people are not asked to sacrifice. The people are asked only to applaud when we are told after the fact that an attack has succeeded. For example, the raid into Pakistan that killed Osama bin Laden. And I would applaud, and do applaud, the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. But I also have this question to ask. And that is, what is the political objective of a strategy of targeted assassination? How many people do we think we're going to kill? How long are we going to kill people in Yemen or in Somalia or in Pakistan before we get to some point where we can say, “Yes, now our political purposes have been achieved, and therefore the war can end, that Plan C will have run its course?” And my fear is that we'll never, we'll never run out of targets. And that describes where we are. BILL MOYERS: That's Option C, right? ANDREW BACEVICH: Option C is where we are. And I think that the reason-- but the reason Option-- we should critically scrutinize Option C is that permanent, open-ended war cannot be good for the country. Permanent, open-ended war, in essence, is an abdication of strategic thought. Are we so unimaginative, are we so wedded to the reliance on military means, that we cannot conceive of any way to reconcile our differences with groups, nations, in the Islamic world, and therefore bring this conflict to an end? And there may be some people who would answer, “No, there is no way.” Well, I-- woe betide our nation, if indeed there is no alternative but endless war. BILL MOYERS: But being a realist, as you are, I'm confident that you think as I do that somewhere, even as we speak, there are terrorists plotting how they can inflict harm on the United States. ANDREW BACEVICH: Let me emphasize. There is some value, there is some utility in Plan C. That there are people out there who are plotting. Whose minds cannot be changed. And we do need to identify them and do whatever is necessary to ensure that they cannot harm us. But, those groups, those individuals exist within a milieu, a political context, a culture. And it seems to me that the strategic imperative is to understand that milieu, to understand the grievances that ultimately gave rise to this animosity expressing itself in terrorist activity. And as a realist, and somebody who's not given to optimism, it seems to me that there are indications that we can engage or have some hope in positive change.

#### Smarter publics are necessary to check government overreaching by exposing the illusions that keep certain institutions in power.

Williams 8 Daniel R, Associate Professor of Law, Northeastern University School of Law.Penn State Law Review, Summer, 113 Penn St. L. Rev. 55

The classic Frankfurt School diagnosis of American culture is grim and pessimistic. Jurgen Habermas rebels against the pessimism that pervades Dialectic of the Enlightenment, but he does not repudiate the essential diagnosis found there, though he surely seeks to deepen it with what he regards as a more nuanced investigation into the true roots of Enlightenment rationality. 157 For our purposes, to this observation of humanity's destructive fetish with means-ends rationality, we may add Habermas's emphasis on the public sphere as an optimistic source of rationality. 158 In the idealized vision that Habermas presents, the public sphere consists of voluntary associations dedicated to promoting unconstrained rational interchange among free and equal participants of good will. 159 It is in the public sphere, if truly healthy (free from the [\*93] distortions of domination), that the common good can be gleaned. 160 It is in the public sphere that government overreaching can be checked and averted. 161 On this view, world public opinion, cultivated within vibrant public spheres that somehow escape the distortions of governmental and corporate propaganda, may function, in this post-Cold War era that has bled into the Age of Terror, as the only potential countervailing force to the dominant super-power, the United States. What a vibrant public sphere provides are tools to resist naturalistic illusions undergirding social institutions and practices that preserve and promote spheres of inequality and regimes of domination, but that seem to be socially necessary. The idea here is well-rehearsed in the literature of critical theory: that which is socially constructed is made to appear fixed and natural; that which serves narrow interests of power and privilege is made to appear to serve everyone. 162 A culture beholden to means-ends thinking is a culture that has lost its capacity for critical theorizing, and such a culture is, as a result, at the mercy of its illusions. A vibrant public sphere that successfully exposes illusions, which conceal unhealthy conditions for society, is crucial to social change, for the exposing of such illusions is exactly what loosens the screws that keep unworthy social institutions intact. 163 A vibrant public sphere is the environment for rendering institutions malleable and open to change, which is why thinkers from Kant to Habermas regard "the public sphere as the definitive institution of democracy." 164

#### When we see solutions only in terms of war it becomes to easy for the military industrial complex to perpetuate cycles of violence.

Lawrence 9 Grant, “Military Industrial "War" Consciousness Responsible for Economic and Social Collapse,” OEN—OpEdNews, March 27

As a presidential candidate, [Barack Obama](http://obama.senate.gov/) called [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_%282001%E2%80%93present%29) ''the war we must win.'' He was absolutely right. Now it is time to win it... Senators [John McCain](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0564587/) and Joseph Lieberman [calling](http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/inbox/story/960269.html) for an expanded war in Afghanistan "How true it is that war can destroy everything of value." Pope Benedict XVI [decrying](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iuue8kE-e0lYZVFpt4RlbX4M_IEw) the suffering of Africa Where troops have been quartered, brambles and thorns spring up. In the track of great armies there must follow lean years. Lao Tzu on [War](http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/salt/salt09.htm) As Americans we are raised on the utility of war to conquer every problem. We have a drug problem so we wage war on it. We have a cancer problem so we wage war on it. We have a crime problem so we wage war on it. Poverty cannot be dealt with but it has to be warred against. Terror is another problem that must be warred against. In the [United States](http://maps.google.com/maps?ll=38.8833333333,-77.0166666667&spn=10.0,10.0&q=38.8833333333,-77.0166666667%20%28United%20States%29&t=h), solutions can only be found in terms of wars. In a society that functions to support a massive military industrial war machine and empire, it is important that the terms promoted support the conditioning of its citizens. We are conditioned to see war as the solution to major social ills and major political disagreements. That way when we see so much of our resources devoted to war then we don't question the utility of it. The term "war" excites mind and body and creates a fear mentality that looks at life in terms of attack. In war, there has to be an attack and a must win attitude to carry us to victory. But is this war mentality working for us? In an age when nearly half of our tax money goes to support the war machine and a good deal of the rest is going to support the elite that control the war machine, we can see that our present war mentality is not working. Our values have been so perverted by our war mentality that we see sex as sinful but killing as entertainment. Our society is dripping violence. The violence is fed by poverty, social injustice, the break down of family and community that also arises from economic injustice, and by the managed media. The cycle of violence that exists in our society exists because it is useful to those that control society. It is easier to sell the war machine when your population is conditioned to violence. Our military industrial consciousness may not be working for nearly all of the life of the planet but it does work for the very few that are the master manipulators of our values and our consciousness. Rupert Murdoch, the media monopoly man that runs the "Fair and Balanced" [Fox Network](http://www.fox.com/), Sky Television, and [News Corp](http://www.newscorp.com/) just to name a few, [had](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rupert_Murdoch) all of his 175 newspapers editorialize in favor of the [Iraq war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_War). Murdoch snickers when [he says](http://www.newscorpse.com/ncWP/?p=341) "we tried" to manipulate public opinion." The Iraq war was a good war to Murdoch [because,](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2004/07/b122948.html) "The death toll, certainly of Americans there, by the terms of any previous war are quite minute." But, to the media manipulators, the phony politicos, the military industrial elite, a million dead Iraqis are not to be considered. War is big business and it is supported by a war consciousness that allows it to prosper. That is why more war in Afghanistan, the war on Palestinians, and the other wars around the planet in which the [military industrial complex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military-industrial_complex) builds massive wealth and power will continue. The military industrial war mentality is not only killing, maiming, and destroying but it is also contributing to the present social and economic collapse. As mentioned previously, the massive wealth transfer that occurs when the American people give half of their money to support death and destruction is money that could have gone to support a just society. It is no accident that after years of war and preparing for war, our society is crumbling. Science and technological resources along with economic and natural resources have been squandered in the never-ending pursuit of enemies. All of that energy could have been utilized for the good of humanity, ¶ instead of maintaining the power positions of the very few super wealthy. So the suffering that we give is ultimately the suffering we get. Humans want to believe that they can escape the consciousness that they live in. But that consciousness determines what we experience and how we live. As long as we choose to live in "War" in our minds then we will continue to get "War" in our lives. When humanity chooses to wage peace on the world then there will be a flowering of life. But until then we will be forced to live the life our present war consciousness is creating.

### Impact Framing

#### You should actively privilege probability in your decision calculus

#### The likelihood of a scenario should be the combination of the warrants debaters make, the probability their authors assign to a given scenario, and the defense from the other team.

#### Probability of the impact shouldn’t be evaluated in isolation- statistical analysis tells us that to calculate the final probability of a scenario, the individual probabilities of each internal link should be multiplied together. Each internal link makes the scenario less and less likely.

#### We should actively transition away from the card=truth currency model of debate- debaters find any number of unreasonable and improbable scenarios and assert that since they read a card that impact is 100% likely. Debates should more heavily privilege a burden of proof, not a burden of rejoinder.

#### Debate’s current race to hyperbole reduces our ability to discuss and compare actual impacts that aren’t hyperbole. As a critic you must be more skeptical of “risk of a link” logic and more willing to dismiss ridiculously improbable scenarios.

Odekirk 10 Scott, debate coach 8/6/10, Impact Hyperbole: A Dilemma of Contemporary Debate Practice, http://puttingthekindebate.com/2010/08/26/impact-hyperbole-a-dilemma-of-contemporary-debate-practice/

It seems as though debate is stuck in a loop of nuclear wars and no value to life. We have a difficult time of conceiving of a terminal impact that doesn’t end in some ultimate destruction. Without terminal impacts such as nuclear war or the root of all claims, we have a tough time comparing and weighing impacts. Our arguments for spill over connect even the most improbable of scenarios. Take for example our Africa war arguments. Given that Africa, as a continent, largely lack nuclear capabilities the chances of a conflict escalating in this area of the world are slim at best, but still debate returns to evidence written by The Rabid Tiger Project. In fact if you google “http://www.rabidtigers.com/rtn/newsletterv2n9.html”, you will find the great majority of the hits are debate links. This particular scenario is largely a debate creation and the scholarly world around it seems to have largely dismissed this single article as lacking credibility. Even in a debate context, this particular evidence is difficult to take seriously with a big debate on the line. Beyond the most terrible of impact evidence though, a world of equally terrifying scenario’s exist. According to the debate community, we face nuclear war because of any of the following: economic collapse in any number of countries across the globe, a lack of US leadership, use of US hard power (pre-emption, imperialist expansion, etc), India-Pakistan conflict, Middle East escalation, Iran nuclearization, capitalism, the lack of capitalism, patriarchy, racism, nuclear terrorism, US response to a terrorist attack, Taiwan independence, Chinese collapse, Russian aggression, Russian collapse, or accidental launch of nuclear weapons. That’s a short list and I am certain it doesn’t contain all the ways a nuclear war could break out as described in debate scenarios. If one listened closely to the debate community, a sense of inevitable doom would most certainly replace any belief in a long life. As much as it would seem I am poking fun at the policy debate community, kritik debaters caught in the same loop. External impacts to our criticisms are often extinction claims. A great number of K’s end in root of all claims or no value to life claims. In a very similar pattern, our kritiky impacts reflect the same sense of terminal destruction we find in the policy community we often subject to kritik. Possibly living under the sword of Damocles has had more impact on our psyche than Americans give it credit. Possibly living in the information age has resulted in the ability to read any old nut as great impact evidence without the effective critical thinking skills to discern who or what qualifies as credible. Possibly debate as a community lacks a language by which to communicate the dangers of racism, sexism, homophobia, economic justice, poor foreign relations, or terrorism. Is this tumble into impact hyperbole a problem? Well, it definitely does not reflect the sort of care a scholar takes in his/her work. It lacks the humility of limited claims backed only with probable warrants. Although there are some scenarios which could escalate into extinction or which do explain important pre-conditions for violence or meaningful living, these scenarios are much more limited than the debate community gives credence. In theory, the repetition of these hyperboles naturalize them or, at least, make them appear natural/normal. Our community convinces itself the impacts we discuss are credible threats. We are a population believing in an exaggerated reality – a hyper real if you will. Before we give ourselves the credit of knowing that our impacts are exaggerated, let us consider those of us who move on to work in think tanks or write law reviews who assess the threats of nuclear wars to the United States. In fact, this honor, think tank writer, is given out at the NDT every year. Perhaps a better question is, what is the value of our current impact debate? We don’t really help avoid nuclear wars or prevent violence by making every possible interaction into a discussion of the potential for either. If all of these scenarios result in gruesome ending for life on Earth, then the issues become very muddled. The result may be a sort of nihilism which in its conclusion is more Darwinian than Nietzsche. If we decide there is a impact hyperbole problem, what then is the alternative? Of course, the literature is our guide to a sensible form of impact debate, but we wouldn’t be in this predicament without literature. No debater asserts these impacts; they read cards. Cards = Truth Currency. A solution is a better internal link debate. How do the scenarios unfold? To examine the internals means examining all the many different ways the world would intervene in order to prevent the terminal impact from occurring. Debate judges can only work with what debaters give them, but we too must be willing to tell a team their impacts are overblown when this argument is part of the debate. Giving a debate ballot to the team who finds a 1% risk of extinction is a silly judging paradigm at best. At worst, it reflects a lack of critical thinking on the part of a debate critic. I am most definitely not saying critics should intervene and make impact arguments that are not in the debate, but giving more weight to impact defense is an important start to reign in our impact hyperbole.