# Venezuela Aff + Neg

## 1AC – Venezuela

### 1AC: Plan

#### Plan - The United States ought to remove oil-related economic sanctions on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

#### Sanctions empirically fail and backfire – relief solves.

Scarpino 24 [(Isabel, a research program administrator in the Energy, Economics, and Security Program at the Center for a New American Security), "The Real Cost of Reimposing Sanctions of Venezuela", Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/05/02/oil-sanctions-venezuela-us-iran-russia-maduro-pdvsa/>, 5-2-2024] TDI

VENEZUELA’S EVASION COOPERATION WITH U.S. ADVERSARIES is a microcosm of a broader ongoing debate about the effectiveness and overuse of sanctions. As the number of sanctioned actors grows, so does the incentive for sanctions-busting cooperation. Washington’s economic statecraft relies on the idea that its rivals need U.S. dollar reserves to trade. But when rivals are sanctioned, they seek to defy the U.S.-led international economic system. The more sanctioned actors that the United States creates, the bigger and more self-sufficient illicit economies become, rendering U.S. sanctions impotent. Yet, U.S. policymakers continue to instinctively fall back on sanctions as low-cost tools that signal outrage and reward lawmakers at the polls. This current maximalist approach is counterproductive. It encourages heavyweight anti-Western adversaries to build coalitions with smaller, sanctioned states to organize and expand illicit trade networks. This is exactly what is happening in Venezuela—Russia, China, and Iran view the distortions in Venezuela’s economy as an opportunity to build economic and ideological leverage. In Venezuela, sectoral sanctions are not just economically ineffective—they are actively hurting the country’s democratic transition and pushing Caracas closer to anti-U.S. adversaries. Thus, there is no reason that they should remain baked into Washington’s Venezuela policy. Sectoral sanctions should not serve the symbolic purpose that individual sanctions perform, both in Venezuela’s case and in the broader landscape of U.S. foreign policy.

### 1AC: Oil

#### Advantage 1 is Oil –

#### Constricted Venezuelan Oil Supply due to sanctions drive Oil up.

Fox Business 19 [(Fox Business), "Oil prices rise 3% on tighter US supply, Venezuela sanctions", Fox, https://www.foxbusiness.com/energy/oil-prices-rise-more-than-1-on-venezuela-sanctions, 1-30-2019] TDI

Oil prices rose nearly 3 percent on Wednesday, boosted by U.S. government data that showed signs of tightening supply, as investors remained concerned about supply disruptions following U.S. sanctions on Venezuela's oil industry. Prices extended gains after government data showed U.S. crude oil stockpiles rose less than expected last week due to a drop in imports, while gasoline inventories fell from record highs as refiners slowed down production. Crude inventories rose 919,000 barrels, the Energy Information Administration said, compared with analysts' expectations in a Reuters poll for an increase of 3.2 million barrels. After eight straight weeks of builds to a record high, gasoline stocks fell 2.2 million barrels last week, versus forecasts for a 1.9 million-barrel gain. "Because we had a huge drop in gasoline inventories, that gave a bullish tint to the entire report," said Phil Flynn, an analyst at Price Futures Group in Chicago. The market has been supported since Washington announced export sanctions against Venezuela on Monday, limiting transactions between U.S. companies and the state-owned oil firm PDVSA. The fight to control Venezuela, which has the world's largest oil reserves, has intensified with the new sanctions aimed at driving President Nicolas Maduro from power, the strongest U.S. measures yet against the socialist president who has overseen economic collapse and an exodus of millions of Venezuelans in recent years. The sanctions aim to freeze sale proceeds from PDVSA's exports of roughly 500,000 barrels per day of crude to the United States, the OPEC member's largest crude importer. Traders who sell Venezuelan crude to the United States are looking for avenues to keep crude flowing during the sanctions, according to people familiar with the discussions, while U.S. companies who buy Venezuelan oil have also been looking for work-arounds, seeking counsel for instance on whether the use of third party intermediaries, such as commodity merchants, can continue. "The main risks for supply could come from a violent confrontation within the country, damaging the oil infrastructure," analyst Carsten Menke at Julius Baer said.

#### Those have global ripple effects on oil supply – Venezuela is key.

Egan 19 [(Matt, BA in Journalism at College of New Jersey), "How US sanctions on Venezuela are rippling through oil markets", <https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/19/investing/venezuela-oil-sanctions-pdvsa/index.html>, CNN Business, 2-19-2019] TDI

New York CNN Business — US sanctions on Venezuela’s national oil company have accelerated the unprecedented collapse of its oil output and set off a domino effect in the global energy market. The sanctions, which were announced on January 28 in a bid to speed up Nicolas Maduro’s exit, have sent US Gulf Coast refineries scrambling to find alternate sources for the heavy crude they once relied on from Venezuela. And Venezuela, which as of last fall was the No. 4 crude importer to the United States behind only Canada, Saudi Arabia and Mexico, has been forced to find new customers and new ways to dilute its very heavy crude to ready it for export. “Sanctions are already having a crippling effect on oil supplies,” Ryan Fitzmaurice, energy strategist at Rabobank, wrote to clients in a report last week. Heavy crude is typically cheaper than light crude, but demand for it has become so intense that it’s suddenly trading at a premium to lighter barrels. US Gulf Coast refiners, led by Citgo, Chevron and Valero, blend heavy crude with lighter barrels found in US shale oilfields to churn out gasoline, diesel and jet fuel. Meanwhile, Venezuela’s government, which relies on oil exports for 90% of its revenue, is searching for other customers for its crude. Venezuela’s oil minister Manuel Quevedo traveled to India last week in an apparent bid to drum up support. “They’re scrambling to find buyers for their crude,” said Matt Smith, director of commodity research at ClipperData. Double-whammy for Venezuela Venezuela is in the throes of a massive humanitarian crisis. Millions of people are unable to get basic supplies, which has lead to starvation and illness. The country’s oil industry, its main source of income, is in sharp decline. Venezuela’s oil production plummeted from 2.4 million barrels per day in 2015 to just 1.34 million at the end of 2018, according to research firm Rystad Energy. “This freefall is poised to carry over into 2019,” Rystad analysts wrote in a recent report. Not only was the United States Venezuela’s No. 1 customer, but it was the country’s main source of naphtha, the liquid hydrocarbon mixture used to dilute crude. Without it, Venezuela’s heavy crude can’t be readily transported. Rystad Energy forecasts that some operators in Venezuela will run out of diluent by March. US oil prices are up almost 5% since the sanctions were announced. Brent, the global benchmark, is up 8%. But analysts don’t believe Venezuela is the main reason for the run-up in crude. Instead, they point to OPEC’s deeper-than-expected production cuts, turmoil in Libya and the bullish tone in global financial markets as recession fears fade. “The rally has mostly been driven by the OPEC-plus cuts,” said Artyom Tchen, Venezuela expert at Rystad Energy. “Most of the Venezuelan risk had already been priced in a long time ago.” Saudi Arabia, another major source of heavy crude, has been especially aggressive in slashing shipments to the United States. Analysts say that’s because America’s transparent and timely data make those cuts immediately clear to oil traders. “That’s where they get the most bang for the buck,” said Smith. ‘Contingency planning’ US Gulf Coast refiners are trying to find ways to replace Venezuela’s barrels. Earlier this month, Chevron (CVX) CEO Mike Wirth said the company activated “contingency planning” to maintain supply at its Pascagoula, Mississippi, refinery, which ran on an average of 70,000 barrels per day of crude from Venezuela. “We are actively working to ensure we continue to supply top quality fuels and lubricants to our customers in the United States,” Chevron said in a statement to CNN Business. Crude oil pipelines stand at the U.S. Department of Energy's Bryan Mound Strategic Petroleum Reserve in Freeport, Texas, U.S., on Thursday, June 9, 2016. Congress has mandated that the department sell as much as 18 percent of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the world's largest supply of emergency crude oil, from 2018 through 2025 to offset some unrelated government expenses. Photographer: Luke Sharrett/Bloomberg via Getty Images RELATED ARTICLE Why tapping America's oil reserve is a bad idea Valero (VLO) has stopped bringing in crude from Venezuela altogether, and has been substituting it with oil from other North American locations. Prior to the sanctions, Valero (VLO) received one-fifth of its heavy crude from Venezuela. “We’re certainly hopeful that we’ll see prompt resolution to the crisis, not only for the benefit of the crude markets, but for the welfare of the people of Venezuela,” Gary Simmons, senior vice president of supply and international operations, told analysts January 31. Western oil companies that partnered with PDVA have gotten caught in the middle. France’s Total (TOT) recently said its bank accounts were blocked. The company also evacuated its foreign workers from Venezuela, Reuters reported. Total (TOT) did not respond to a request for comment. Chevron said that its operations in Venezuela continue and the company is “committed to the country’s energy development in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.” Citgo Petroleum, the Houston-based refiner owned by PDVSA, has put on hold a $685 million refurbishment to a refinery in Aruba because of the US sanctions, Reuters reported Monday. Venezuela’s freefall to continue The oil world is bracing for the historic collapse of Venezuela’s oil output to deepen because of the crisis and US sanctions. “Maduro is looking unlikely to go without a fight — setting the stage for a prolonged power struggle that will likely lead to sustained production declines if history is any guide,” Fitzmaurice said. “We remain highly convicted that prices are undervalued given the current supply uncertainty,” Rystad Energy expects Venezuela’s oil production will decline from 1.34 million barrels per day in 2018 to just 1 million barrels this year and 890,000 barrels in 2020. If Venezuela is unable to offset the impact of US sanctions and secure new financing, production there could slide to 680,000 barrels per day in 2020, Rystad said. It’s a stunning decline given that Venezuela has more proven oil reserves than any other nation on the planet.

#### Relief solves, Middle East conflict puts Oil Markets on the brink.

Morrow 23 [(Sibel, BA at Istanbul University, Senior Oil Correspondent at AA Energy Terminal), “Oil down as Venezuela’s oil sanctions relief eases supply shortages”, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/oil/oil-down-as-venezuela-s-oil-sanctions-relief-eases-supply-shortages/39113>, AA Energy Terminal, 10-19-2023] TDI

Oil prices dropped on Thursday as the lifting of sanctions on Venezuela’s oil exports eased tight supply fears, although price declines were capped by investor caution amid the escalating tension in the Middle East and data signaling a rebound in China’s economy. International benchmark crude Brent traded at $90.88 per barrel at 10.29 a.m. local time (0729 GMT), a 0.67% loss from the closing price of $91.50 a barrel in the previous trading session on Wednesday. The American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at the same time at $86.92 per barrel, down 0.40% from Wednesday’s close of $87.27 per barrel. Brent surged suddenly on Wednesday, climbing to $93 a barrel after Iran called for an oil embargo on Israel after an Israeli airstrike on the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital in Gaza killed more than 500 people late Tuesday. However, given that Israel imports approximately 270,000 barrels of oil per day, with approximately 90,000 barrels a day imported from Kazakhstan and 50,000 barrels a day arriving from Azerbaijan, experts see little influence on oil markets. Although escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East as a result of Israel's actions against Palestine have put upward pressure on prices by boosting supply fears, the likelihood of Venezuelan oil returning is alleviating these concerns. On Wednesday, the US decided to partially ease sanctions on the oil, gas and gold sectors in Venezuela following the resumption of talks between the government and the country's opposition in Barbados. The decision by the US administration came in response to a political agreement signed between representatives of the government of Nicolas Maduro and the US-backed opposition to hold elections next year. Market sentiment was boosted after data showed that China’s value-added industrial output, an important economic indicator, rose 4% year-on-year in the first three quarters of this year. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) growth numbers indicate that the world's second-largest oil-consuming country's industrial production recovery is advancing.

#### High Oil spikes Food Prices.

Smith 22 [(Brock, Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. He received a PhD from UC-Davis in 2013 and spent three years as a Research Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Analysis of Resource Rich Economies), “How Food and Oil Prices are Linked”, <https://ageconmt.com/how-food-and-oil-prices-are-linked/>, 4-7-2022] TDI

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has rocked the global energy market. Oil and gas prices were already soaring for a variety of reasons (as detailed in my recent post), but the sanctions against Russia–one of the world’s largest oil and gas producers–along with the general uncertainty and volatility caused by a major European war have sent prices to levels unseen in nearly a decade. Since we derive such a high share of energy from fossil fuels, and since energy is an input to all products and services to some degree, high oil and gas prices are closely linked to the sustained high levels of overall inflation that the US is experiencing. But in this post I want to focus on one particularly interesting relationship: that between oil and food prices. Figures 1 and 2 below show the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) real food price index (i.e. the average international price of a “basket” of common food items) and the real oil price from 1960-2022. As you can see, there is a remarkable correlation between the movements of oil and food prices, and today we are once again seeing a spike in the oil price accompanied by a similar one in food prices. Food is currently more expensive than at any time since the 1970s. There are several reasons food prices are so influenced by oil. First and most obviously, oil is a direct input for running tractors and other farm equipment. Expensive oil also increases the cost of transporting goods to market, and agricultural goods often have to travel long distances over land, which is much more expensive than transport by sea. Fossil fuels are important further back in the supply chain as well. Natural gas (the price of which tends to be tightly linked with oil) is a major component in the production of fertilizer. The manufacturing of pesticides is also extremely energy-intensive and in some cases uses petroleum products as an ingredient. So when considering the entire supply chain, food is one of the most fossil fuel-intensive sectors in the economy. There are other more indirect links as well. The US has pursued multiple policies encouraging the production of ethanol from corn. In addition to generous ethanol subsidies, the US mandates the use of certain percentages of ethanol content in high-octane gasoline. These policies have substantially increased the demand for ethanol, and thus for corn. And when the oil price increases, it incentivizes increasing the share of biofuels in gasoline as a substitute. This increases the amount of corn (and other crops) grown for fuel rather than food, which puts upward pressure on food prices generally. The tight correlation between energy and food prices is not due solely to energy markets driving food prices. Increases in global wealth and general global demand for goods cause both prices to rise at the same time. But it’s clear that those in the agribusiness sector and anyone else interested in understanding movements in food prices need to understand the oil and gas markets as well.

#### High Food Prices cause Food Scarcity.

Braumoeller 17 [(Benjamin, Department of Political Science, Ohio State University), Food scarcity and state vulnerability: Unpacking the link between climate variability and violent unrest, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44511217> , Journal of Peace Research, May 2017] TDI

There is a long history of sudden increases in food insecurity contributing to, or directly producing, violent protests and riots as individuals take to the streets in response to shortages, dating back at leas t from the famous bread shortage that ignited the French Revolution (for a series of examples in different contexts and periods, see also Brinkman & Hendrix, 2011: 7–8).7 Indeed, during a series of violent riots in Somalia in 2008 prompted by rising food prices, one participant summarized their motivation for taking to the streets by saying: ‘I’ve never demonstrated before, but I’m not ashamed because if you can’t eat, you will do whatever you can [ ... ]’.8 Thus, our theoretical focus is on the generation of food insecurity and how it translates into violent unrest. As such, our primary theoretical interest is with food consumers. Domestic production shortfalls and higher food prices translate into food insecurity in two ways. First, food shortages decrease food availability, thus imperiling the basic ability of individuals to survive. Second, food shortages highlight food entitlements, which Sen (1981: 459) defines as ‘the ability of different sections of the populations to establish command over food using the entitlement relations in that society’. In other words, an increase in food insecurity both challenges the ability of people to procure food and emphasizes the existing differences in society between those that can and those that cannot do so. When confronting a situation of food scarcity, individuals become more willing to participate in violent demonstrations and riots, for several reasons. First, shocks to food security act as a source of grievance by denying individuals access to basic necessities. Thus, scarcity can generate competition and animosity between societal groups and between societal groups and the state over issues of food availability. Second, these shocks can also increase existing grievances, by emphasizing food entitlements. In this sense, abrupt increases in food insecurity will highlight existing inequalities and conflicts between different societal groups (e.g. occupational and ethnic differences). Finally, the desperation that food insecurity entails reduces the perceived costs associated with violence (see also Brinkman & Hendrix, 2011). Participating in violent demonstrations, while costly, may be a preferable alternative to not demonstrating and potentially being unable to feed oneself or family.

#### Food shocks cause extinction.

Cribb 19 [(Julian, Principal of Julian Cribb & Associates, Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, former Director of National Awareness at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), “Food as an Existential Risk” <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/food-or-war/food-as-an-existential-risk/8C45279588CD572FE805B7E240DE7368>, Cambridge University Press, 10-3-2019] TDI

Although actual numbers of warheads have continued to fall from its peak of 70,000 weapons in the mid 1980s, scientists argue the **danger** of nuclear conflict in fact **increased** in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. This was due to the **modernisation** of existing stockpiles, the adoption of dangerous new **tech**nologies such as robot delivery systems, hypersonic missiles, **a**rtificial **i**ntelligence and **e**lectronic **w**arfare, and the continuing **leakage** of nuclear **materials** and **knowhow** to nonnuclear nations and potential terrorist organisations. In early 2018 the hands of the ‘Doomsday Clock’, maintained by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, were re-set at two minutes to midnight, the highest risk to humanity that it has ever shown since the clock was introduced in 1953. This was due not only to the state of the world’s nuclear arsenal, but also to irresponsible language by world leaders, the growing use of social media to destabilise rival regimes, and to the rising threat of uncontrolled climate change (see below).12 In an historic moment on 17 July 2017, 122 nations voted in the UN for the first time ever in favour of a treaty banning all nuclear weapons. This called for comprehensive prohibition of “a full range of nuclear-weapon-related activities, such as undertaking to develop, test, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as the use or threat of use of these weapons.”13 However, 71 other countries – including all the nuclear states – either opposed the ban, abstained or declined to vote. The Treaty vote was nonetheless interpreted by some as a promising first step towards abolishing the nuclear nightmare that hangs over the entire human species. In contrast, 192 countries had signed up to the Chemical Weapons Convention to ban the use of chemical weapons, and 180 to the Biological Weapons Convention. As of 2018, 96 per cent of previous world stocks of chemical weapons had been destroyed – but their continued use in the Syrian conflict and in alleged assassination attempts by Russia indicated the world remains at risk.14 As things stand, the only entities that can afford to own nuclear weapons are nations – and **if humanity is to be wiped out**, it will **most likely** be as a **result of an atomic conflict** between nations. It follows from this that, if the world is to be made safe from such a fate it will need to get rid of nations as a structure of human self-organisation and replace them with wiser, less aggressive forms of self-governance. After all, the nation state really only began in the early nineteenth century and is by no means a permanent feature of self-governance, any more than monarchies, feudal systems or priest states. Although many people still tend to assume it is. Between them, nations have butchered more than 200 million people in the past 150 years and it is increasingly clear the world would be a far safer, more peaceable place without either nations or nationalism. The question is what to replace them with. Although there may at first glance appear to be no close linkage between weapons of mass destruction and food, in the twenty-first century with world resources of **food**, land and water under growing **stress, nothing can be ruled out**. Indeed, **chemical weapons** have **frequently** been deployed in the **Syria**n civil war, which had **drought**, **ag**ricultural **failure** and **hunger** among its **early drivers**. And **nuclear conflict** remains a **distinct possibil**ity in **South Asia** and the **Mid**dle **East**, especially, as these regions are already **stressed** in terms of food, land and water, and their **nuclear firepower** or access to nuclear materials is **multiplying**. It remains an open question whether **panicking regimes** in **Russia, the US**A **or** even **France** would be ruthless enough to **deploy atomic weapons** in an attempt to **quell invasion** by tens of millions of **desperate refugees**, fleeing **famine and climate chaos** in their own homelands – but the possibility ought not to be ignored. That nuclear war is at least a possible outcome of food and climate crises was first flagged in the report The Age of Consequences by Kurt Campbell and the US-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies, which stated ‘it is clear that even nuclear war **cannot be excluded** as a **political consequence** of global warming’. 15 **Food insecurity** is therefore a driver in the preconditions for the use of nuclear weapons, whether limited or unlimited. A global famine is a likely outcome of limited use of nuclear weapons by any country or countries – and would be unavoidable in the event of an unlimited nuclear war between America and Russia, making it unwinnable for either. And **that**, as the mute hands of the ‘Doomsday Clock’ so eloquently admonish, is also the **most likely scenario** for the **premature termination of the human species**. Such a grim scenario can be alleviated by two measures: the voluntary banning by the whole of humanity of nuclear weapons, their technology, materials and stocks – and by a global effort to secure food against future insecurity by diverting the funds now wasted on nuclear armaments into building the sustainable food and water systems of the future (see Chapters 8 and 9).

#### Oil Shocks independently cause conflict through diversionary war.

Karl 16 [(Terry, Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and author of The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petrostates), <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/oil-crash-hidden-consequences-213550>, “The Hidden Consequences of the Oil Crash”, Politico, 1-21-2016] TDI

Brace yourself for another stomach-churning ride. While predicting changes in the price of oil is a fool’s errand, at least two volatile scenarios lie ahead, and neither is promising. On the one hand, oil prices are likely to stay unacceptably low through 2016. On the other, today’s bust is likely to lay the basis for a sharp price spike down the road. Today’s oil glut is different from those of the past: It is due to the near-doubling of U.S. production of shale oil since 2009, as well as the response of Saudi Arabia and other petroleum exporters to this unwelcome competition. In the short term, the lifting of sanctions against Iranian oil will not help. While prices in the $20-30 per barrel range were once considered beneficial to the economy and the stock market, this is no longer the case. Low prices have led to painful budget cuts in North Dakota, Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Alaska and California; a $300 billion decline in capital investment in future extraction this year alone; the bankruptcies of dozens of energy companies; and the undercutting of incentives to build alternative clean energy. Most immediately, low prices are a catalyst for the rise in global conflict. Cheap oil translates into huge revenue losses and increased poverty, especially for Russia, Brazil and Mexico but also for Canada. In the 10 OPEC countries where oil comprises more than 85 percent of export revenue, the consequences are especially dire. Where regime stability rests on a classic “oil pact” (that is, the provision of economic benefits to key constituencies in exchange for political support or, at least, passivity), low prices create a toxic mix of weak currencies, inflation, growing debt, budget and trade deficits, rising food prices, cuts in essential services and soaring poverty. Such a grim prognosis traditionally spells the downfall of fragile governments—and, sometimes, even regimes that appear stable. In Venezuela, which is already in a constitutional crisis, this year’s projected 10 percent economic contraction will plunge its extremely polarized population into even more intense civil conflict. The already dangerous situation in the Middle East and North Africa will be intensified. Because national boundaries in that region are not resolved and political institutions are crumbling, the grim economic forecast for oil-exporting governments makes them less capable of appeasing their populations or securing their oil facilities and pipelines in the face of vicious insurgencies. The Islamic State, for example, lives off the earnings from oil fields in Syria and Iraq, and similar dynamics fund Boko Haram in Nigeria and al Qaeda affiliates in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Ironically, one likely impact of this oil glut is a future price spike. Despite all the current hype, only a relatively thin margin separates surplus from shortage. Global crude oil production has already dropped substantially, with U.S production falling to 2008 levels. The delayed actions of major producers like Chevron and ExxonMobil, which are holding off planned large-scale oil projects—and, hence, millions of barrels of future supply—has the potential to fuel a surge in prices as early as next year. And widespread conflict in oil regions—exacerbated by low and unstable oil prices—could significantly disrupt supply at almost any time. Oil-related violence underlies almost all of today’s major hotspots, even those conflicts that appear solely ethnic or religious in nature, including the Syrian Civil War and its spillover into Iraq, growing tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and the continued civil unrest in Yemen, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Nigeria, Algeria, Somalia, Libya and the Sahel, Russia and the Ukraine and Venezuela, to name a few. Many of these governments—including, notably, Russia and Saudi Arabia—have every incentive to take aggressive nationalist political action abroad to deflect attention from deteriorating economic conditions at home. Whether oil prices stay too low or suddenly spike, their very volatility perilously whiplashes both winners and losers, destabilizes economies and polities and encourages war—a compelling reason to look for new sources of energy, just in case climate change alone was not enough reason to get off the fossil fuel roller coaster.

#### Causes Nuclear WWIII.

Cobb 14 [(Kurt, Energy Reporter and Fellow at Arthur Morgan Institute), <https://oilprice.com/Energy/Energy-General/World-War-III-Its-Here-And-Energy-Is-Largely-Behind-It.html>, “World War III: It's Here And Energy Is Largely Behind It”, Oil Price, 10-16-2014] TDI

I've been advancing a thesis for several months with friends that World War III is now underway. It's just that it's not the war we thought it would be, that is, a confrontation between major powers with the possibility of a nuclear exchange. Instead, we are getting a set of low-intensity, on-again, off-again conflicts involving non-state actors (ISIS, Ukrainian rebels, Libyan insurgents) with confusing and in some cases nonexistent battle lines and rapidly shifting alliances such as the shift from fighting the Syrian regime to helping it indirectly by fighting ISIS, the regime's new foe. There is at least one prominent person who seems to agree with me, the Pope. During a visit to a World War I memorial in Italy last month Pope Francis said: "Even today, after the second failure of another world war, perhaps one can speak of a third war, one fought piecemeal, with crimes, massacres, destruction." In citing many well-known causes for war, he failed to specify the one that seems obvious in this case: the fight over energy resources. It can be no accident that the raging fights in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and the Ukraine all coincide with areas rich in energy resources or for which imported energy resources are at risk. There are other conflicts. But these are the ones that are transfixing the eyes of the world, and these are the ones in which major powers are taking sides and mounting major responses. In Syria, Iraq and Libya, of course, it is oil and also natural gas that underlies the conflict. The ISIS forces in Syria and Iraq have seized oil refineries to power their advance. They and every fighting force in the world understands that oil is "liquid hegemony." In the Ukraine natural gas supplies lurk in the background as rebels (supposedly with Russian help) fight to separate parts of eastern Ukraine from the country. The Russians who hold one of the largest reserves of natural gas in the world have threatened to cut off Ukraine, a large importer, this winter and to curtail supplies to Europe which depends on Russia for about 30 percent of its gas. The threat against Europe is in response to trade sanctions levied on Russia for its alleged role in helping Ukrainian insurgents. Since summer, a friend and I have been periodically reviewing the World War III game board to assess whether the war is heating up or cooling down. The temperature changes as we have gauged them would look like a sine wave on a graph revealing no definitive trajectory. And, that is just the kind of war that I believe World War III will be--years of indecisive battles, diplomatic ploys, half-hearted engagement by major powers, and new, unexpected conflicts arising in unexpected places. There are, of course, many other reasons for the conflicts I cite. But I wonder if the major powers would be much engaged in these conflicts if energy supplies were not at stake. So, the resource wars that are developing, especially those relating to energy, are not about direct conquest so much as concern about access to energy resources, or to put it more clearly, concern about possible interruptions to the flow of energy resources. The low-intensity confrontation in the South China Sea between China and its neighbors, Vietnam and the Philippines, is the most prominent dispute over actual ownership of energy resources rather than the mere flow of those resources. But in the article cited, the Indians, while laying no claim to resources in that area, have said publicly that they are worried that shipping through the South China Sea could be affected if the conflict heats up. Again, we are back to concern about the flow of resources by countries not directly a party to the dispute--yet. Traditional diplomacy among great powers does not seem to have been effective at resolving these conflicts. And, traditional military operations seem less than effective as well. Kurds in Syria report that U.S. airstrikes against ISIS are not working. This conflict and others like it which are characterized by poorly defined boundaries, shifting participants and unclear goals are confounding major powers and wreaking havoc on countries where these conflicts rage. One of the most obvious strategies for responding to these conflicts--deep, rapid and permanent reductions in fossil fuel energy consumption through efficiency measures, conservation, and expansion of renewable energy--does not seem to be a prominent part of the policy mix. Such a reduction would not necessarily cause these conflicts to disappear; but they might become far less dangerous since the major powers would be less interested in them and thus less likely to make a miscalculation that would lead to a larger global conflict. That is the danger that lies in my version of World War III--that it could morph into the kind of global conflict that risks nuclear confrontation between major powers--not because those powers would seek such an obviously insane outcome, but because they might miscalculate and by mistake push the conflict in this terrible direction.

### 1AC: Maduro

#### Advantage 2 is Maduro –

#### Oil Sanctions backfire and strengthen Maduro – allows him to re-center power, now is key given a unified opposition.

Scarpino 24 [(Isabel, a research program administrator in the Energy, Economics, and Security Program at the Center for a New American Security), "The Real Cost of Reimposing Sanctions of Venezuela", Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/05/02/oil-sanctions-venezuela-us-iran-russia-maduro-pdvsa/>, 5-2-2024] TDI

Last month, the Biden administration announced that sanctions relief on Venezuela would not be renewed. Reinstating the sanctions that were temporarily lifted in October was a carefully crafted decision intended to maximize the United States’ leverage. But sanctions will never be effective so long as Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro values his political survival above his country’s economic well-being. Almost a decade after the Obama administration first levied individual sanctions against the Maduro government in 2015, sanctions on Venezuela have served mainly as symbolic measures. While moral signaling is important, using sectoral sanctions exclusively as signaling devices undermines both Venezuela’s path to democracy and broader U.S. strategic objectives. Maduro’s sanctions evasion and cooperation with Russia, Iran, and China reveal that the overuse of sanctions can drive affected actors to unite beyond the watchful eye of the dollar—thus fueling, rather than curbing, illicit economies. The Barbados agreement, which was signed in October 2023 between Maduro’s government and the United States-backed opposition, effectively exchanged sanctions relief on Venezuela’s oil and gas sector for electoral guarantees. It was hailed as a diplomatic success. The agreement set an April deadline for Maduro to comply with electoral guarantees or face reimposed sanctions. While there have been some subsequent wins for Venezuela’s opposition, including a decision to allow international electoral observation for the upcoming presidential elections, Maduro’s government only partially fulfilled other commitments. In addition to upholding a 15-year ban on María Corina Machado, the candidate who won the opposition’s primary, Maduro’s government prevented her chosen substitute from even registering in the elections. An increase in repression resulted in the arbitrary detention of high-profile human rights activist Rocío San Miguel and Machado’s campaign staff as well as the expulsion of a U.N. human rights agency. Facing insufficient electoral progress and a belligerent Maduro, the White House felt compelled to take a harder stance. However, the Biden administration is unwilling to return to the “maximum pressure” policies introduced by former President Donald Trump. It has only partially reimposed sanctions. While the U.S. Treasury Department discontinued General License 44, which authorized investment in and trade with Venezuela’s oil and gas sector, it preserved General License 41, which permits Chevron’s activities in Venezuela. Companies can even apply for specific, case-by-case licenses, allowing the Biden administration flexibility to drip feed investment into Venezuela and signaling to the Maduro government that Washington remains engaged and open to talks. Francisco Palmieri, the chief of mission of the U.S. Venezuelan Affairs Unit, said last week that “License 44 should not be seen as a final decision,” underlining the White House’s hopes that ongoing talks will continue to progress. This move also allows President Joe Biden to secure energy access for the United States and its allies. Chevron is not the only U.S. company approved for operations in Venezuela; the authorizations that the Treasury Department previously issued to Repsol and Eni have not yet been withdrawn. This means that Venezuelan oil will continue to flow to the United States and Europe even as those exports are cut off from the rest of the global market. Economically, this is a pretty elegant solution. But in geopolitical terms, even these limited sanctions will likely carry acute costs. Venezuelan democracy will suffer as Caracas seeks to improve its bargaining posture vis-à-vis both the United States and the opposition. And, perhaps of greater significance to the White House, the reinstated sanctions could also hurt Washington’s long-term goals by pushing Venezuela to resume its cooperation with Iran and China as it looks to reroute oil into illicit markets. FOR MADURO, U.S. SANCTIONS ARE GOOD POLITICS. Under Chavismo—the populist-nationalist ideology of Maduro’s idolized predecessor, Hugo Chávez—sanctions are viewed as financial imperialism. They play directly into Chavismo’s narrative of an “economic war,” allowing the Maduro government to blame all of the country’s economic ills on sanctions, rather than Chavismo’s kleptocracy, further weaponizing this narrative as a campaign tool. The reimposition of sanctions comes at a particularly precarious moment for Venezuela’s opposition. The Maduro government aims to fragment the opposition, which is currently unified under the Unitary Platform. Should the platform fail to mobilize behind a single candidate or revert to an election boycott, Maduro could dominate electorally. After much scrambling and intense internal negotiations, the opposition officially nominated former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia as its presidential nominee. But analysts fear that the Supreme Judicial Tribunal will find a reason to bar González from running, just as the Electoral Council previously did with Corina Yoris, Machado’s chosen substitute. The Maduro government’s reaction so far has been more muted than expected, indicating that negotiations are ongoing with González, who appears open to exchanging security and even amnesty guarantees with the incumbent government in exchange for a peaceful transition. Venezuelans are waiting for the other shoe to drop. Now that the looming threat of sanctions has already been realized, Maduro’s reaction is not only unpredictable, but unrestrained.

#### Sanctions hurt the most vulnerable NOT the elites, bolstering Maduro’s narrative.

Rodriguez 18 [(Francisco, Francisco Rodríguez is chief economist at Torino Capital and is a former head of the Venezuelan Congressional Budget Office.), "Why More Sanctions Won’t Help Venezuela", https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/12/why-more-sanctions-wont-help-venezuela/, Foreign Policy, 1-12-2018] TDI

Venezuelans have good reason to be concerned that ordinary people will ultimately pay the price for sanctions. Recent data show that in the two months after Trump imposed financial sanctions, imports tumbled an additional 24 percent, deepening the scarcity of basic goods and lending credibility to the government’s argument that U.S. policies are directly harming Venezuelans. Instead of undermining Maduro, sanctions are making it increasingly difficult for the country’s opposition to convince voters that the welfare of Venezuelans — rather than driving Maduro from power — is its real priority. It is not the first time the opposition has made this mistake. Back in 2002, opponents of then-President Chávez called for a massive strike in the country’s oil sector. The strike brought oil production to a standstill and caused a double-digit recession in an attempt to get Chávez to resign. This event single-handedly convinced Venezuelans that they could not trust a political movement that was willing to destroy the economy in order to attain power. In a recall referendum held two years later, voters resoundingly backed Chávez. The United States and the anti-Maduro opposition will not win the hearts and minds of Venezuelans by helping drive the country’s economy into the ground.The United States and the anti-Maduro opposition will not win the hearts and minds of Venezuelans by helping drive the country’s economy into the ground. If Washington wants to show it cares about Venezuelans, it could start by providing help to those most affected by the crisis. Extending protected migrant status for Venezuelans in the United States and providing support for neighboring countries dealing with an upsurge of Venezuelan immigration would be a start, as would support for apolitical organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme, that have managed to channel aid to the country. The U.S. should also support negotiations aimed at creating institutions that make the coexistence of the country’s feuding political factions possible — rather than encouraging the wholesale replacement of one by the other.

#### Two Internal Links to Latin American Regional Instability:

#### 1] Maduro – he causes terrorism, trafficking, and crime.

Knotts 20 [(Robert, Professor of National Security Studies at the Marshall Center), “Venezuela: A Dying Country”, <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/venezuela-dying-country-0>, Marshall Center, April 2020] TDI

Today, Venezuela represents one of the largest displaced populations in the world, second only to Syria, with no relief in sight. Conservative estimates put the total of displaced refugees at over 4.1 million, with Venezuelan refugees seeking safety primarily in Colombia (~1.8 million), Peru (~860,000), Ecuador (~366,000), and the U.S. (~290,000). Smaller neighboring countries like Trinidad and Tobago (~40,000), Guyana (36,000), and Curacao (~26,000) are especially susceptible to being overwhelmed by the influx of refugees. Even Europe is not immune, with over 200,000 refuges in Spain, 50,000 in Italy and another 25,000 in Portugal.2 The OAS predicts that the number of Venezuelan refugees will surpass the number of people who fled Syria in 2020.3 Venezuela’s woes are already impacting other countries in the region. Colombia is being seriously challenged, as it shares a large, mostly unsecured border with Venezuela. While Colombian President Iván Duque Márquez attempts to implement the controversial peace process with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) that was initiated by his predecessor, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, key resources are necessarily being diverted to deal with the massive influx of refugees. Venezuela provides sanctuary to former members of the FARC that did not demobilize, as well as the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). These organizations continue to conduct violent cross-border operations and traffic illicit goods while attempting to undermine the legitimate government of Colombia. There are also reports of the Maduro government intentionally inserting released criminals into refugee caravans to cause further chaos. So while Maduro clings somewhat precariously to power in his own country, he seeks to spread discontent among Venezuela’s neighbors. Now, for a country that is already catastrophically failing, adding COVID-19 into the equation makes the prognosis even more alarming. Neighboring countries have closed their borders in an attempt to stem the outpouring of refugees, but porous and remote frontiers make this an almost impossible task. Several key countries, including Colombia, already have significant refugee populations that lack any form of documentation, therefore falling outside any formal governmental support. Colombian news outlets recently noted a “Bomba de Tiempo” (time bomb) in parts of Bogotá as Colombians begin to react negatively towards Venezuelan refugees. Chile now demands passports and visas for refugees, something that most refugees understandably lack. Ecuador, normally a transit country for refugees, is now also requiring visas. Even Peru, formally hospitable towards refugees, has begun to show strain and a degree of intolerance. The potential likelihood of Venezuelan refugees spreading COVID-19 is real, as many are already in poor health and suffering from various degrees of malnutrition. Ironically, some Venezuelans seek to return home across closed borders as they lack the means to sustain themselves in increasingly hostile countries. All this also means a significant decrease in remittances, an important source of foreign capital flow for Venezuela. Ms. Carrie Fillipeeti, the Assistant Secretary of State Western Hemisphere Affairs, recently noted that 44 percent of Venezuelan hospitals lack electricity; 66 percent do not have running water; 64 percent lack access to X-ray capability; and 94 percent have no respiratory care.4 Add to this the fact that there are only eighty-four intensive care unit beds within the country and the magnitude becomes alarming. An estimated 75 percent of qualified medical personnel have fled Venezuela, leaving an aging, more susceptible medical corps to deal with the pandemic.5 The complete unpreparedness of Venezuela, coupled with the pandemic of COVID-19, will continue to encourage exodus with all its attendant challenges. Uncontrolled migration is not the only menace emanating from Venezuela. Late last month on March 26, 2020, the U.S. Department of Justice charged Maduro and fourteen current and former Venezuelan officials with narco-terrorism, corruption, drug trafficking, and other criminal charges. U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr stated, “For more than 20 years, Maduro and a number of high-ranking colleagues allegedly conspired with the FARC, causing tons of cocaine to enter and devastate American communities.”6

#### 2] Refugee Crisis – Venezuela’s economic crisis is undermining the region’s stability through refugee exodus.

Tarallo 20 [(Mark, a veteran award-winning journalist. He has covered politics as a newspaper reporter, international trade as a wire service reporter, and executive management as a magazine writer. He also completed a journalism fellowship in the Middle East. He holds degrees from UC-Berkeley), "Venezuela Crisis Straining Regional Stability", <https://www.asisonline.org/security-management-magazine/articles/2020/07/venezuela-crisis-straining-regional-stability/>, ASIS, 7-1-2020] TDI

Venezuela entered 2020 at the center of the world’s worst refugee crisis. Millions of Venezuelans continued to flee poverty, political unrest, and violence in their home country, with many landing in neighboring countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile—the four nations that have absorbed the most people. By some estimates, Venezuelans had been leaving their county at a rate of 4,000 to 5,000 people per day. As of March 2020, the number of Venezuelan refugees, migrants, and asylum-seekers stood at 4.9 million, according to statistics from the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V). The outflux heightened concerns about the potential destabilizing impact that the mass resettling could have on the region. “Venezuela’s humanitarian crisis continues to deteriorate and impact the security and stability of the region,” wrote experts Arianna Kohan and Moises Rendon in a report on Venezuela issued earlier this year by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Venezuelas-humanitarian-crisis-continues-to-01.png Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, and the outflow of Venezuelans was reduced by coronavirus-related closed borders and lockdowns. Colombia, for example, which received an estimated 1.8 million Venezuelan migrants, closed its border with Venezuela in March 2020. Moreover, some Venezuelans who had left their homeland decided to return. By April 2020, these returning refugees were arriving at an approximate rate of up to 500 per day, according to humanitarian group estimates. But although the coronavirus pandemic has reduced the flow of refugees, it is not expected to end it as the country continues to endure several layers of problems. “Venezuelans are fleeing a profound economic and political crisis, characterized by the systematic violation of human rights and a deepening humanitarian emergency,” wrote Wilson Center analyst Oriana Van Praag in the recent report Understanding the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis. Politically, unrest continues. Nicholas Maduro claimed the country’s presidency in 2019, but his election was seen by many as unfair and tainted. More than 50 nations, including the United States, have recognized opposition leader Juan Guaidó as Venezuela’s rightful president. Economically, many Venezuelans have struggled for the last several years against wrenching poverty, including severe shortages of food and clean water. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Venezuelan economy contracted 45 percent between 2013 and 2018, and then an additional 25 percent in 2019. Infrastructure and health services have also badly deteriorated; in 2019, there were 23,860 power failures nationwide between January and May, an average of 158 a day, according to a nongovernmental organization (NGO) estimate. Venezuelans are “running from a crisis that has dragged on for years with no end in sight,” wrote Latin American affairs expert Jorge G. Castañeda in a New York Times op-ed. Venezuelans are also fleeing high levels of insecurity and violence. According to the Venezuelan Violence Observatory, there were 81.4 violent deaths per 100,000 people in 2019, the highest rate in Latin America and ahead of El Salvador and Honduras, which by comparison had homicide rates of 51 and 40 per 100,000 people, respectively. The organization also found violence to be endemic in 88 percent of Venezuelan municipalities. Various estimates suggest that Venezuela has one of the highest kidnapping rates in Latin America. 4-point-9-millionThe-number-of-Venezuelan-refugees-migrants-and-asylum-seekers,-as-of-March-2020.png For countries receiving these fleeing Venezuelans, one factor contributing to potential instability is a lack of financial support from the international community for resettlement costs. For example, in response to the recent Syrian refugee crisis, in which more than 6 million people were displaced between 2011 and 2018, the international community contributed more than $7 billion over four years for response efforts. But for the Venezuelan crisis, international response contribution over four years has been just $580 million. “Despite its magnitude, the Venezuelan crisis has only received a fraction of the international attention and funding dedicated to other conflicts, and is still seen as regional problem,” Van Praag wrote. Herbert Calderon, CPP, PCI, PSP, loss prevention manager with Gloria Group in Lima, Peru, says the Venezuela situation poses a few challenges for regional security. “And with the pandemic, the problems are increased,” says Calderon, who is ASIS senior regional vice president for Region 8C. That is partly because the challenging living conditions in Venezuela can increase the chance of coronavirus infection, which an infected person could then bring to another country, Calderon says. In Peru, the government extended a temporary work permit to arriving Venezuelans in 2017, and then roughly 500,000 Venezuelans entered their new country in 2018. As of May 2020, the total number of Venezuelans in Peru is estimated at around 860,000. In addition, many poverty-stricken Venezuelans are turning to theft and looting to survive. This creates another challenge that local law enforcement has to deal with. In Peru, the police have taken actions against the vandals, Calderon says. For the time being, the coronavirus lockdown has reduced that type of crime in general, due to the closure of businesses and a patrol-enforced curfew. And although some statistics show that Venezuelan migrants are no more likely to commit crimes than any other residents, experts say the greater competition for working class jobs that the new populations bring has increased another source of potential instability: anti-immigrant sentiment. For example, in Colombia, which has received more Venezuelans than any country, some residents publicly demonstrated against plans to house migrants in sports facilities. And false reports of Venezuelans trying to break into gated residential areas spread on social media, spurring some deportations. A Gallup poll in December found that Colombians’ attitudes toward the Venezuelan newcomers have shifted from a welcoming stance to regarding them as a problem. The pandemic has heightened this tension in some ways. The mayor of the Colombian city of Yopal has called migrants a burden who are responsible for the city’s security and health problems. And with countries like Ecuador and Peru putting up more entry barriers due to the coronavirus, some experts say newer Venezuelan refugees may have to find other places to land, which could cause the refugee crisis and related challenges to spill over to other regions.

#### Oil Sanctions are the primary cause of Venezuela’s economic crisis – they’re oil reliant.

Rodriguez 23 [(Francisco, Francisco Rodríguez is the Rice Family Professor of International and Public Affairs, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver.), "How Sanctions Contributed to Venezuela’s Economic Collapse", <https://korbel.du.edu/regional-studies/news-events/all-articles/how-sanctions-contributed-venezuelas-economic-collapse>, Institute for Comparative and Regional Studies, 1-13-2023] TDI

During the past decade, Venezuela lived through the largest economic contraction documented in the history of the Western Hemisphere. The implosion took place at the same time as the U.S. government barred oil purchases, froze government bank accounts, prohibited the country from issuing new debt, and seized tankers bound for Venezuela. One would think it should be self-evident that any account of Venezuela’s economic contraction would place economic sanctions in a central role. However, sanctions play a surprisingly limited role in most mainstream accounts of the Venezuelan crisis. A recent Council on Foreign Relations background piece on Venezuela mentioned sanctions only in passing and instead attributed the country’s economic collapse to “decades of poor governance” and the “perils of becoming a petrostate.” Likewise, Assistant Secretary of State Brian Nichols deflected questions about the impact of Venezuela sanctions asserting that “the responsibility for the humanitarian situation in Venezuela falls squarely on the shoulders of the late Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro.” Part of this is to be expected. When Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was pressed in the 1990s about the humanitarian effect of UN sanctions in Iraq, she responded by showing photos of palaces built by Saddam Hussein. When Florida Senator Marco Rubio was presented with arguments about the effects of the U.S. embargo on Cuba, he replied that the only blockade on Cuba was the one imposed by the Cuban regime. Sanctions are used in the midst of political conflicts, so it is normal that debates around their use get rapidly politicized. Many opponents of Maduro see sanctions as the only instrument through which they can pressure the regime and fear that discussions of their negative consequences play into Maduro’s hands. Yet if what we want is to understand how the international community can help Venezuelans, we also need to know the real effects of sanctions. Understanding how and when to use sanctions requires a balanced and objective debate about their impacts that is focused on the evidence and not clouded by political biases. What the Data Say For the past one hundred years, Venezuela’s economy has been highly dependent on oil, which accounts for more than 90 percent of exports and more than half of fiscal revenue. When oil revenues rise— regardless of whether it happens as a result of increased production or prices—the economy expands. When they tank, so does GDP. It is thus not surprising that Venezuela’s economic collapse coincides almost perfectly with a massive decline in oil revenues. After rising for more than a decade, oil revenues fell by 93 percent between 2012 and 2020. During this same period, per capita income declined by 72 percent. The trigger of the contraction was that Venezuela was left without foreign currency to pay for the imports that fuel its economy. Similar import and growth collapses occurred in Iraq, Libya, Iran, and other oil exporters when they faced sanctions limiting their capacity to sell oil internationally. Between 2012 and 2016, most of the decline in oil revenues was caused by falling oil prices. The price of a basket of Venezuelan oil peaked at USD $103 in 2012, and then plummeted to $36 by 2016. Up until that moment, Venezuela’s recession looked like several of its other prior historical crises, driven by a decline in its foreign currency earnings caused by changes in world oil market conditions. Obviously, Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro bear a great deal of responsibility for this recession, as their overspending and mismanagement left the country unprepared to deal with the negative terms of trade shock. However, the story from 2017 on, is different. During the following two years, oil prices rose. Normally, those years should have seen economic recovery as the country had access to increased oil revenues. In fact, when the recovery in oil markets began, many analysts projected positive growth for Venezuela. That growth did not materialize because oil production declined—a decline that evidence shows sanctions played an important role in. It is instructive to look at the data more closely. While some may tell you that the decline of the Venezuelan oil industry began long before sanctions, the data tells a different story. Venezuela’s oil output was stable in the 2008-15 period. It then declined moderately in 2016, when oil prices collapsed. Many other oil exporters saw similar declines at the time. Yet when oil prices began recovering in 2017, output stabilized in other oil producers—but not in Venezuela. That was the year that the first sanctions hit.

#### Latin American instability goes nuclear.

Krapeinevich and Lindsey 13 [(Andrew and Eric, President of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, served in the Department of Defense, on the personal staff of three secretaries of defense, the National Defense Panel, the Defense Science Board Task Force on Joint Experimentation, and the Defense Policy Board, holds an M.P.A. and a Ph.D. from Harvard University), “Hemispheric Defense in the 21ST Century”, <http://www.csbaonline.org/publications/2014/01/hemispheric-defense-in-the-21st-century/>, CSBA Online, January 2014] TDI

As the previous chapter demonstrates, for the past two hundred years the principal cause of concern for U.S. defense policymakers and planners thinking about Latin America has been the prospect that great powers outside the Western Hemisphere could exploit the military weakness and internal security challenges of the states within it to threaten U.S. security. While there is reason for optimism about the future of Latin America,58 there is also cause for concern. The region faces enduring obstacles to economic59 and political development60 as well as significant internal security challenges. As General John Kelly, the commander of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)61 noted in his March 2013 posture statement before Congress, Latin America: 􀀾I􀁀s a region of enormous promise and exciting opportunities, but it is also one of persistent challenges and complex threats. It is a region of relative peace, low likelihood of interstate conflicts, and overall economic growth, yet is also home to corrosive criminal violence, permissive environments for illicit activities, and episodic political and social protests.62 The instability and non-traditional security challenges that General Kelly cites provide potential opportunities for the United States’ major rivals to (borrowing a term from Monroe’s declaration) “interpose” themselves into the region and, by so doing, threaten regional stability and U.S. security. Two discernible trends suggest that current and prospective Eurasian rivals could seek to exploit regional conditions and dynamics in ways that could impose immense costs on the United States and divert its attention from more distant theaters overseas. The first trend is a return to a heightened level of competition among the “great powers” following two decades of U.S. dominance. The second trend concerns the growing cost of projecting power by traditional military means due to the proliferation of “anti-access/area-denial” (A2/AD) capabilities in general, and precision-guided munitions (PGMs) in particular. These trends suggest that, despite a possible decline in relative U.S. power, external forces will continue to 􀂿nd it beyond their means to threaten the hemisphere through traditional forms of power projection. Far more likely is a return of a competition similar to that which the United States engaged in with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. During that period both powers sought to avoid direct conflict with the other, given the risks of escalation to nuclear con􀃀ict. Instead each focused primarily on gaining an advantage over the other through the employment of client states and non-state groups as proxies. Proxies were employed for reasons other than avoiding a direct clash, such as gaining positional advantage (e.g., enabling the sponsor to establish bases in its country, as the Soviets did in Cuba). Proxies were also employed as a means of diverting a rival’s attention from what was considered the key region of the competition and to impose disproportionate costs on a rival (e.g., Moscow’s support of 􀀱orth Vietnam as a means of drawing o􀌆 U.S. resources from Europe). This chapter outlines trends in the Western Hemisphere security environment that outside powers may seek to exploit to advance their objectives in ways that threaten regional stability and U.S. security. This is followed by a discussion of how these external powers might proceed to do so. Seeds of Instability Crime, Illicit Networks, and Under-Governed Areas Latin America has a long history of banditry, smuggling, and organized crime. As in the case of Pancho Villa and the 1916-1917 Punitive Expedition, these activities have occasionally risen to a level at which they in􀃀uence U.S. national security calculations. Rarely, however, have these activities been as pervasive and destabilizing as they are today. Although a wide variety of illicit activity occurs in Latin America, criminal organizations conducting drug tra􀌇cking are the dominant forces in the Latin American underworld today, accounting for roughly 􀀇􀀗0 billion per year63 of an estimated 􀀇100 billion in annual illicit trade.6􀀗 Since the Colombian cartels were dismantled in the 1990s, this lucrative trade has been dominated by powerful Mexican cartels whose operations extend across the length and breadth of Mexico, as well as up the supply chain into the cocaine-producing regions of the Andean Ridge and through their wholesale and retail drug distribution networks across the United States.65 The cartels, along with countless smaller criminal organizations, comprise what the head of SOUTHCOM has described as, 􀀾a􀁀n interconnected system of arteries that traverse the entire Western Hemisphere, stretching across the Atlantic and Paci􀂿c, through the Caribbean, and up and down 􀀱orth, South, and Central America . . . 􀀾a􀁀 vast system of illicit pathways 􀀾that is used􀁀 to move tons of drugs, thousands of people, and countless weapons into and out of the United States, Europe, and Africa with an e􀌇ciency, payload, and gross pro􀂿t any global transportation company would envy.66 That being said, the drug tra􀌇cking underworld is by no means a monolithic entity or cooperative alliance. Rather, it is a fractious and brutally competitive business in which rival entities are constantly and literally 􀂿ghting to maximize their share of the drug trade and for control of the critical transshipment points, or plazas, through which it 􀃀ows. To attack their competitor’s operations and protect their own operations from rivals and the Mexican government’s crackdown that began in 2006, the cartels have built up larger, better armed, and more ruthless forces of hired gunmen known as sicarios. Using the billions of dollars generated by their illicit activities, they have acquired weapons and equipment formerly reserved for state armies or state-sponsored insurgent groups, including body armor, assault ri􀃀es, machine guns, grenades, landmines, anti-tank rockets, mortars, car bombs, armored vehicles, helicopters, transport planes, and—perhaps most remarkably—long-range submersibles.67 The cartels’ pro􀂿ts have also enabled them to hire former police and military personnel, including members of several countries’ elite special operations units68 and, in several cases, active and former members of the U.S. military.69 These personnel bring with them—and can provide to the cartels—a level of training and tactical pro􀂿ciency that can be equal or superior to those of the government forces they face. As a result of this pro􀂿ciency and the military-grade weapons possessed by the cartels, more than 2,500 Mexican police o􀌇cers and 200 military personnel were killed in confrontations with organized crime forces between 2008 and 2012 along with tens of thousands of civilians.70 In the poorer states of Central America, state security forces operate at an even greater disadvantage.71 While their paramilitary forces enable the cartels to dominate entire cities and large remote areas through force and intimidation, they are not the only tool available. The cartels also leverage their immense wealth to buy the silence or support of police and government o􀌇cials who are often presented with a choice between plata o plomo—“silver or lead.” According to the head of the Mexican Federal Police, around 2010 the cartels were spending an estimated 􀀇100 million each month on bribes to police.72 By buying o􀌆 o􀌇cials—and torturing or killing those who cannot be corrupted—the cartels have greatly undermined the e􀌆ectiveness of national government forces in general and local police in particular. This, in turn, has undermined the con􀂿dence of the population in their government’s willingness and ability to protect them. Through these means and methods the cartels have gained a substantial degree of de facto control over many urban and rural areas across Mexico, including major cities and large swathes of territory along the U.S.-Mexico border. In many of these crime-ridden areas the loss of con􀂿dence in the government and police has prompted the formation of vigilante militias, presenting an additional challenge to government control.73 Meanwhile, in the “northern triangle” of Central America (the area comprising Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador through which the cartels transship almost all cocaine bound for Mexico and the United States) the situation is even more dire. Approximately 90 percent of crimes in this area go unpunished, while in Guatemala roughly half the country’s territory is e􀌆ectively under drug tra􀌇ckers’ control.7􀀗 Further south, similar pockets of lawlessness exist in coca-growing areas in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. In Colombia and along its borders with Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru, much of the coca-growing territory remains under the control of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. A guerrilla organization founded in the 1960s as a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary movement dedicated to the overthrow of the Colombian government, the FARC embraced coca growing in the 1990s as a means of funding its operations and has subsequently evolved into a hybrid mix of left-wing insurgent group and pro􀂿t-driven cartel.76 This hybrid nature has facilitated cooperation between the FARC and ideological sympathizers like the Bolivarian Alliance, Hezbollah, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and other extremist groups77 as well as with purely criminal organizations like the Mexican cartels. Although the FARC has been greatly weakened over the past decade and no longer poses the existential threat to the Colombian government that it once did, it remains 􀂿rmly in control of large tracts of coca-producing jungle, mostly straddling the borders between Colombia and FARC supporters Venezuela and Ecuador. In summary, organized crime elements have exploited under-governed areas to establish zones under their de facto control. In so doing they pose a signi􀂿cant and growing threat to regional security in general and U.S. interests in particular. As SOUTHCOM commander General Kelly recently observed: 􀀾T􀁀he proximity of the U.S. homeland to criminally governed spaces is a vulnerability with direct implications for U.S. national security. I am also troubled by the signi􀂿cant criminal capabilities that are available 􀀾within them􀁀 to anyone—for a price. Transnational criminal organizations have access to key facilitators who specialize in document forgery, trade-based money laundering, weapons procurement, and human smuggling, including the smuggling of special interest aliens. This criminal expertise and the ability to move people, products, and funds are skills that can be exploited by a variety of malign actors, including terrorists.78 Hezbollah and the Bolivarian Alliance Hezbollah in Latin America 􀀱on-state entities recognized by the U.S. as terrorist organizations also operate in the region, most notably Lebanon-based Hezbollah, an Iranian client group. Hezbollah maintains an active presence in the tri-border area (TBA) of South America— the nexus of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay—stretching back to the 1980s. The TBA has traditionally been under-governed and is known by some as “the United 􀀱ations of crime.”79 Eight syndicate groups facilitate this activity in South America’s so-called “Southern Cone,” overseeing legitimate businesses along with a wide range of illegal activities to include money laundering, drug and arms traf- 􀂿cking, identity theft and false identi􀂿cation documents, counterfeiting currency and intellectual property, and smuggling. 􀀱ot surprisingly they are linked to organized crime and to non-state insurgent and terrorist groups, such as the FARC.80 Estimates are that over 􀀇12 billion in illicit transactions are conducted per year, a sum exceeding Paraguay’s entire GDP by a substantial amount.81 Hezbollah achieved notoriety in the region in 1992 when it bombed the Israeli embassy in Argentina. This was followed with the bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires two years later. Like many other terrorist organizations, as Hezbollah expanded it established relationships with drug cartels82 that it supports in a variety of ways. For example, the cartels have enlisted Hezbollah, known for its tunnel construction along the Israeli border, for help in improving their tunnels along the U.S.-Mexican border. In 2008, Hezbollah helped broker a deal in which one of Mexico’s major drug cartels, Sinaloa, sent members to Iran for weapons and explosives training via Venezuela using Venezuelan travel documents. 83 As the locus of the drug trade and other illegal cartel activities moved north into Central America and Mexico, Hezbollah has sought to move with it with mixed success. In October 2011, Hezbollah was linked to the e􀌆orts of an Iranian-American to conspire with Iranian agents to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the United States. The plot involved members of the Los Zetas Mexican drug cartel.8􀀗 The would-be assassin, Mansour Arbabsiar, had established contact with his cousin, a Quds Force85 handler, Gen. Gholam Shakuri. The plot is believed by some to be part of a wider campaign by the Quds Force and Hezbollah to embark on a campaign of violence extending beyond the Middle East to other Western targets, including those in the United States.86 In early September 2012, Mexican authorities arrested three men suspected of operating a Hezbollah cell in the Yucatan area and Central America, including a dual U.S.-Lebanese citizen linked to a U.S.-based Hezbollah money laundering operation. 87A few months later, in December 2012, Wassim el Abd Fadel, a suspected Hezbollah member with Paraguayan citizenship, was arrested in Paraguay. Fadel was charged with human and drug tra􀌇cking and money laundering. Fadel reportedly deposited the proceeds of his criminal activities—ranging from 􀀇50-200,000 per transaction—into Turkish and Syrian bank accounts linked to Hezbollah. In summary, Hezbollah has become a 􀂿xture in Central and Latin America, expanding both its activities and in􀃀uence over time. It has developed links with the increasingly powerful organized crime groups in the region, particularly the narco cartels, along with radical insurgent groups such as the FARC and states like Venezuela who are hostile to the United States and its regional partners. Hezbollah’s principal objectives appear to be undermining U.S. in􀃀uence in the region, imposing costs on the United States, and generating revenue to sustain its operations in Latin America and elsewhere in the world. These objectives are shared by Iran, Hezbollah’s main state sponsor. The Bolivarian Alliance As noted above, geographic, economic, and cultural factors have traditionally helped to prevent the emergence in Latin America of any real military rival to the United States. Although there are no traditional military threats in the region, there are indigenous states whose actions, policies, and rhetoric challenge regional stability and U.S. security. Over the past decade, several states have come together to form the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA), an organization of left-leaning Latin American regimes whose overarching purpose is to promote radical populism and socialism, foster regional integration, and reduce what they perceive as Washington’s “imperialist” influence in the region.89 Since its founding by Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and Fidel Castro of Cuba in December 200􀀗, the Bolivarian Alliance has expanded to include Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Dominica, Ecuador, 􀀱icaragua, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Although the members of the Bolivarian Alliance are militarily weak and pose almost no traditional military threat to the United States or its allies in the region,90 they challenge American interests in the region in other ways. First, they espouse an anti-American narrative that finds substantial support in the region and consistently oppose U.S. efforts to foster cooperation and regional economic integration.91 Second, in their efforts to undermine the government of Colombia, which they consider to be a U.S. puppet, ALBA states provide support and sanctuaries within their borders to coca growers, drug traffickers, other criminal organizations, and the FARC.92 Links to Hezbollah have also been detected.93 Perhaps of greatest concern, they have aligned themselves closely with Iran, inviting it and Syria to participate as “observer states” in the alliance. Other worrisome ALBA activities involve lifting visa requirements for Iranian citizens and hosting large numbers of Iranian diplomats and commercial exchange members that some observers believe to be Iranian intelligence and paramilitary Quds Force operatives.9􀀗 By hosting and cooperating with both foreign agents and violent non-state actors, the ALBA states have come to function as critical nodes in a network of groups hostile to the United States. A Coming Era of Proxy Wars in the Western Hemisphere? History shows that Washington has often emphasized an indirect approach to meeting challenges to its security in Latin America. Yet the United States has not shied away from more direct, traditional uses of force when interests and circumstances dictated, as demonstrated over the past half century by U.S. invasions of the Dominican Republic (1965), Grenada (1983), and Panama (1989) and the occupation of Haiti (199􀀗).Yet several trends seem likely to raise the cost of such operations, perhaps to prohibitive levels. Foremost among these trends is the diffusion of precision-guided weaponry to state and non-state entities. 92 The Second Lebanon War as “Precursor” War A precursor of this trend can be seen in the Second Lebanon War between Israel and Hezbollah.95 During the con􀃀ict, which lasted less than 􀂿ve weeks, irregular Hezbollah forces held their own against the highly regarded Israeli Defense Force (IDF), demonstrating what is now possible for non-state entities to accomplish given the proliferation of militarily-relevant advanced technologies. Hezbollah’s militia engaged IDF armor columns with salvos of advanced, man-portable, antitank guided missiles and other e􀌆ective anti-armor weapons (e.g. rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) with anti-armor warheads) in great numbers. When the IDF employed its ground forces in southern Lebanon, its armored forces su􀌆ered severe losses; out of the four hundred tanks involved in the 􀂿ghting in southern Lebanon, forty-eight were hit and forty damaged.96 Hezbollah’s defensive line was also well equipped with latest-generation thermal and low-/ no-light enhanced illumination imaging systems, while frontline units were connected to each other and higher command elements via a proprietary, 􀂿ber-optic based communications network, making collection of communications tra􀌇c by Israeli intelligence extremely di􀌇cult. Perhaps most important, Hezbollah possessed thousands of short- and medium- range rockets, often skillfully hidden below ground or in bunkers that made detection from overhead surveillance platforms nearly impossible. During the brief con􀃀ict Hezbollah’s forces 􀂿red some four thousand unguided rockets of various types that hit Israel. Hezbollah’s rocket inventory enabled its forces to attack targets throughout the northern half of Israel. Over nine hundred rockets hit near or on buildings, civilian infrastructure, and industrial plants. Some two thousand homes were destroyed, and over 􀂿fty Israelis died with several thousand more injured. The casualties would undoubtedly been greater if between 100,000 and 250,000 Israeli civilians had not 􀃀ed their homes. Haifa, Israel’s major seaport had to be shut down, as did its oil re􀂿nery.97 Hezbollah also employed several unmanned aerial vehicles for surveillance of Israel, as well as C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles used to attack and damage an Israeli corvette. 98 The G-RAMM Battlefield The brief war between Israel and Hezbollah suggests that future irregular forces may be well-equipped with enhanced communications, extended-range surveillance capabilities, and precision-guided rockets, artillery, mortars and missiles (G-RAMM) 99 able to hit targets with high accuracy at ranges measured from the tens of kilometers perhaps up to a hundred kilometers or more. In projecting power against enemies equipped in this manner and employing these kinds of tactics U.S. forces—as well as other conventional forces— will find themselves operating in a far more lethal battlefield than those in either of the Gulf wars or in stability operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, currently constituted conventional forces typically depend on large fixed infrastructure (e.g., military bases, logistics depots, ports, airfields, railheads, bridges) to deploy themselves and sustain combat operations. These transportation and support hubs also serve as the nodes through which internal commerce and foreign trade moves within a country. This key, fixed infrastructure will almost certainly prove far more difficult to defend against irregular forces armed with G-RAMM weaponry. Indeed, had Hezbollah’s “RAMM” inventory had only a small fraction of G-RAMM munitions, say 10-20 percent, it would have been able to in􀃀ict far greater damage than it did historically to Israeli population centers, key government facilities, military installations, and essential commercial assets such as ports, air􀂿elds, and industrial complexes. An irregular enemy force armed with G-RAMM capabilities in substantial numbers could seriously threaten Latin American governments as well as any U.S. (or external great power) forces and support elements attempting a traditional intervention operation. Implications for the U.S. and Other Major Powers The preceding narrative suggests that the combat potential of irregular forces is likely to increase dramatically in the coming years. As this occurs, the cost of operating conventional forces—especially ground forces—and defending key military support infrastructure is likely to rise substantially. Given these considerations the United States and other major powers external to the Western Hemisphere will have strong incentives to avoid the use of conventional forms of military power, particularly large ground forces, in favor of employing irregular proxy forces to advance their interests. Moreover, the high cost and questionable bene􀂿t of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq are likely to create strong domestic opposition in the United States to such operations for some time to come. This must be added to the United States’ greatly diminished 􀂿scal standing that has led to large cuts in planned investments in defense. These factors suggest that Washington will be much less likely to engage in direct military action in Latin America in the coming years than historically has been the case. At the same time, rivals of the United States like China and Russia may be incentivized by these trends, as well as the United States’ overwhelming military dominance in the Western Hemisphere, to avoid the direct use of force to expand their in􀃀uence in Latin America. Instead, like some of the Bolivarian Alliance members, they appear likely to follow the path taken by the Soviet Union during the Cold War and Iran today: supporting non-state proxies to impose disproportionate costs on the United States and to distract Washington’s resources and attention from other parts of the world. This is not to say that Beijing, Moscow, and Tehran would eschew future opportunities to establish bases in Latin America. As in the past, such bases can support efforts to accomplish several important objectives. They can, for example, further insulate a Latin American regime from the threat of direct U.S. military intervention, since Washington would have to account for the possibility that the conflict would lead to a direct confrontation with a more capable and potentially nuclear-armed power.100 Bases in the hemisphere can also enable external powers to conduct military assistance activities, such as training, more easily. Electronic surveillance of the United States and Latin American states could be accomplished more cheaply and effectively from forward positions. Finally, certain kinds of military capabilities, such as long-range ballistic missiles and attack submarines, could be profitably stationed in Latin America by powers external to that region, particularly if they intended to create the option of initiating con􀃀ict at some future date. These reasons, among others, have made preventing an extra-hemispheric power from establishing bases in Latin America an enduring U.S. priority. Players in a Latin American Great Game Given current trends, several powers external to the region may, either now or over the coming decade, have both the motive and the means to employ both state and non-state proxies in Latin American to achieve their interests. Principal among them is Iran, which is already engaged in supporting proxies against the United States and its partners in the Middle East and has long been developing proxies in Latin America. Additionally, there are reasons to think that China and Russia may be interested in cultivating and supporting Latin American proxies as well.

## 1AC – Venezuela [Soft Left]

### 1AC: Framing

#### Current debate reverses the logical burden of proof by assuming 100% risk of an argument once it is presented instead of requiring the DA to be built from a presumption of zero risk. This distorts debate’s potential to meaningfully speak on issues that never appears in the neg decision calculus.

Cohn 13 [(Nate, covers elections, polling and demographics for The Upshot, a Times politics and policy site. Previously, he was a staff writer for The New Republic. Before entering journalism, he was a research assistant and Scoville Fellow at the Stimson Center), [https://web.archive.org/web/20151130035555/http://www.cedadebate.org/forum/index.php/topic,5416.0.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20151130035555/http%3A//www.cedadebate.org/forum/index.php/topic%2C5416.0.html), “Improving the Norms and Practices of Policy Debate”, 11-24-2013, CEDA Debate] TDI

So let me offer another possibility: the problem isn’t the topic, but modern policy debate. The unrealistic scenarios, exclusive focus on policy scholarship, inability to engage systemic impacts and philosophical questions. And so long as these problems characterize modern policy debate, teams will feel compelled to avoid it.¶ It might be tempting to assign the blame to “USFG should.” But these are bugs, not features of plan-focused, USFG-based, active voice topics. These bugs result from practices and norms that were initially and independently reasonable, but ultimately and collectively problematic. I also believe that these norms can and should be contested. I believe it would be possible for me to have a realistic, accessible, and inclusive discussion about the merits of a federal policy with, say, Amber Kelsie. Or put differently, I’m not sure I agree with Jonah that changing the topic is the only way to avoid being “a bunch of white folks talking about nuke war.”¶ The fact that policy debate is wildly out of touch—the fact that we are “a bunch of white folks talking about nuclear war”—is a damning indictment of nearly every coach in this activity. It’s a serious indictment of the successful policy debate coaches, who have been content to continue a pedagogically unsound game, so long as they keep winning. It’s a serious indictment of policy debate’s discontents who chose to disengage. ¶ That’s not to say there hasn’t been any effort to challenge modern policy debate on its own terms—just that they’ve mainly come from the middle of the bracket and weren’t very successful, focusing on morality arguments and various “predictions bad” claims to outweigh. ¶ Judges were receptive to the sentiment that disads were unrealistic, but negative claims to specificity always triumphed over generic epistemological questions or arguments about why “predictions fail.” The affirmative rarely introduced substantive responses to the disadvantage, rarely read impact defense. All considered, the negative generally won a significant risk that the plan resulted in nuclear war. Once that was true, it was basically impossible to win that some moral obligation outweighed the (dare I say?) obligation to avoid a meaningful risk of extinction.¶ There were other problems. Many of the small affirmatives were unstrategic—teams rarely had solvency deficits to generic counterplans. It was already basically impossible to win that some morality argument outweighed extinction; it was totally untenable to win that a moral obligation outweighed a meaningful risk of extinction; it made even less sense if the counterplan solved most of the morality argument. The combined effect was devastating: As these debates are currently argued and judged, I suspect that the negative would win my ballot more than 95 percent of the time in a debate between two teams of equal ability.¶ But even if a “soft left” team did better—especially by making solvency deficits and responding to the specifics of the disadvantage—I still think they would struggle. They could compete at the highest levels, but, in most debates, judges would still assess a small, but meaningful risk of a large scale conflict, including nuclear war and extinction. The risk would be small, but the “magnitude” of the impact would often be enough to outweigh a higher probability, smaller impact. Or put differently: policy debate still wouldn’t be replicating a real world policy assessment, teams reading small affirmatives would still be at a real disadvantage with respect to reality. . ¶ Why? Oddly, this is the unreasonable result of a reasonable part of debate: the burden of refutation or rejoinder, the responsibility of debaters to “beat” arguments. If I introduce an argument, it starts out at 100 percent—you then have to disprove it. That sounds like a pretty good idea in principle, right? Well, I think so too. But it’s really tough to refute something down to “zero” percent—a team would need to completely and totally refute an argument. That’s obviously tough to do, especially since the other team is usually going to have some decent arguments and pretty good cards defending each component of their disadvantage—even the ridiculous parts. So one of the most fundamental assumptions about debate all but ensures a meaningful risk of nearly any argument—even extremely low-probability, high magnitude impacts, sufficient to outweigh systemic impacts. ¶ There’s another even more subtle element of debate practice at play. Traditionally, the 2AC might introduce 8 or 9 cards against a disadvantage, like “non-unique, no-link, no-impact,” and then go for one and two. Yet in reality, disadvantages are underpinned by dozens or perhaps hundreds of discrete assumptions, each of which could be contested. By the end of the 2AR, only a handful are under scrutiny; the majority of the disadvantage is conceded, and it’s tough to bring the one or two scrutinized components down to “zero.”¶ And then there’s a bad understanding of probability. If the affirmative questions four or five elements of the disadvantage, but the negative was still “clearly ahead” on all five elements, most judges would assess that the negative was “clearly ahead” on the disadvantage. In reality, the risk of the disadvantage has been reduced considerably. If there was, say, an 80 percent chance that immigration reform would pass, an 80 percent chance that political capital was key, an 80 percent chance that the plan drained a sufficient amount of capital, an 80 percent chance that immigration reform was necessary to prevent another recession, and an 80 percent chance that another recession would cause a nuclear war (lol), then there’s a 32 percent chance that the disadvantage caused nuclear war. ¶ I think these issues can be overcome. First, I think teams can deal with the “burden of refutation” by focusing on the “burden of proof,” which allows a team to mitigate an argument before directly contradicting its content. ¶ Here’s how I’d look at it: modern policy debate has assumed that arguments start out at “100 percent” until directly refuted. But few, if any, arguments are supported by evidence consistent with “100 percent.” Most cards don’t make definitive claims. Even when they do, they’re not supported by definitive evidence—and any reasonable person should assume there’s at least some uncertainty on matters other than few true facts, like 2+2=4.¶ Take Georgetown’s immigration uniqueness evidence from Harvard. It says there “may be a window” for immigration. So, based on the negative’s evidence, what are the odds that immigration reform will pass? Far less than 50 percent, if you ask me. That’s not always true for every card in the 1NC, but sometimes it’s even worse—like the impact card, which is usually a long string of “coulds.” If you apply this very basic level of analysis to each element of a disadvantage, and correctly explain math (.4\*.4\*.4\*.4\*.4=.01024), the risk of the disadvantage starts at a very low level, even before the affirmative offers a direct response. ¶ Debaters should also argue that the negative hasn’t introduced any evidence at all to defend a long list of unmentioned elements in the “internal link chain.” The absence of evidence to defend the argument that, say, “recession causes depression,” may not eliminate the disadvantage, but it does raise uncertainty—and it doesn’t take too many additional sources of uncertainty to reduce the probability of the disadvantage to effectively zero—sort of the static, background noise of prediction.¶ Now, I do think it would be nice if a good debate team would actually do the work—talk about what the cards say, talk about the unmentioned steps—but I think debaters can make these observations at a meta-level (your evidence isn’t certain, lots of undefended elements) and successfully reduce the risk of a nuclear war or extinction to something indistinguishable from zero. It would not be a factor in my decision.¶ Based on my conversations with other policy judges, it may be possible to pull it off with even less work. They might be willing to summarily disregard “absurd” arguments, like politics disadvantages, on the grounds that it’s patently unrealistic, that we know the typical burden of rejoinder yields unrealistic scenarios, and that judges should assess debates in ways that produce realistic assessments. I don’t think this is too different from elements of Jonah Feldman’s old philosophy, where he basically said “when I assessed 40 percent last year, it’s 10 percent now.”¶ Honestly, I was surprised that the few judges I talked to were so amenable to this argument. For me, just saying “it’s absurd, and you know it” wouldn’t be enough against an argument in which the other team invested considerable time. The more developed argument about accurate risk assessment would be more convincing, but I still think it would be vulnerable to a typical defense of the burden of rejoinder. ¶ To be blunt: I want debaters to learn why a disadvantage is absurd, not just make assertions that conform to their preexisting notions of what’s realistic and what’s not. And perhaps more importantly for this discussion, I could not coach a team to rely exclusively on this argument—I’m not convinced that enough judges are willing to discount a disadvantage on “it’s absurd.” Nonetheless, I think this is a useful “frame” that should preface a following, more robust explanation of why the risk of the disadvantage is basically zero—even before a substantive response is offered.¶ There are other, broad genres of argument that can contest the substance of the negative’s argument. There are serious methodological indictments of the various forms of knowledge production, from journalistic reporting to think tanks to quantitative social science. Many of our most strongly worded cards come from people giving opinions, for which they offer very little data or evidence. And even when “qualified” people are giving predictions, there’s a great case to be extremely skeptical without real evidence backing it up. The world is a complicated place, predictions are hard, and most people are wrong. And again, this is before contesting the substance of the negative’s argument(!)

#### Refuse the fear of extinction – hyperbolic link chains are constructed to distract from systemic violence.

Jackson 12 [(Richard, PhD in Political Science from University of Canterbury), “The Great Con of National Security”, <https://richardjacksonterrorismblog.wordpress.com/2012/08/05/the-great-con-of-national-security/>, 8-5-12] TDI

It may have once been the case that being attacked by another country was a major threat to the lives of ordinary people. It may also be true that there are still some pretty serious dangers out there associated with the spread of nuclear weapons. For the most part, however, most of what you’ve been told about national security and all the big threats which can supposedly kill you is one big con designed to distract you from the things that can really hurt you, such as the poverty, inequality and structural violence of capitalism, global warming, and the manufacture and proliferation of weapons – among others.¶ The facts are simple and irrefutable: you’re far more likely to die from lack of health care provision than you are from terrorism; from stress and overwork than Iranian or North Korean nuclear missiles; from lack of road safety than from illegal immigrants; from mental illness and suicide than from computer hackers; from domestic violence than from asylum seekers; from the misuse of legal medicines and alcohol abuse than from international drug lords. And yet, politicians and the servile media spend most of their time talking about the threats posed by terrorism, immigration, asylum seekers, the international drug trade, the nuclear programmes of Iran and North Korea, computer hackers, animal rights activism, the threat of China, and a host of other issues which are all about as equally unlikely to affect the health and well-being of you and your family. Along with this obsessive and perennial discussion of so-called ‘national security issues’, the state spends truly vast sums on security measures which have virtually no impact on the actual risk of dying from these threats, and then engages in massive displays of ‘security theatre’ designed to show just how seriously the state takes these threats – such as the x-ray machines and security measures in every public building, surveillance cameras everywhere, missile launchers in urban areas, drones in Afghanistan, armed police in airports, and a thousand other things. This display is meant to convince you that these threats are really, really serious.¶ And while all this is going on, the rulers of society are hoping that you won’t notice that increasing social and economic inequality in society leads to increased ill health for a growing underclass; that suicide and crime always rise when unemployment rises; that workplaces remain highly dangerous and kill and maim hundreds of people per year; that there are preventable diseases which plague the poorer sections of society; that domestic violence kills and injures thousands of women and children annually; and that globally, poverty and preventable disease kills tens of millions of people needlessly every year. In other words, they are hoping that you won’t notice how much structural violence there is in the world.¶ More than this, they are hoping that you won’t notice that while literally trillions of dollars are spent on military weapons, foreign wars and security theatre (which also arguably do nothing to make any us any safer, and may even make us marginally less safe), that domestic violence programmes struggle to provide even minimal support for women and children at risk of serious harm from their partners; that underfunded mental health programmes mean long waiting lists to receive basic care for at-risk individuals; that drug and alcohol rehabilitation programmes lack the funding to match the demand for help; that welfare measures aimed at reducing inequality have been inadequate for decades; that health and safety measures at many workplaces remain insufficiently resourced; and that measures to tackle global warming and developing alternative energy remain hopelessly inadequate.¶ Of course, none of this is surprising. Politicians are a part of the system; they don’t want to change it. For them, all the insecurity, death and ill-health caused by capitalist inequality are a price worth paying to keep the basic social structures as they are. A more egalitarian society based on equality, solidarity, and other non-materialist values would not suit their interests, or the special interests of the lobby groups they are indebted to. It is also true that dealing with economic and social inequality, improving public health, changing international structures of inequality, restructuring the military-industrial complex, and making the necessary economic and political changes to deal with global warming will be extremely difficult and will require long-term commitment and determination. For politicians looking towards the next election, it is clearly much easier to paint immigrants as a threat to social order or pontificate about the ongoing danger of terrorists. It is also more exciting for the media than stories about how poor people and people of colour are discriminated against and suffer worse health as a consequence.¶ Viewed from this vantage point, national security is one massive confidence trick – misdirection on an epic scale. Its primary function is to distract you from the structures and inequalities in society which are the real threat to the health and wellbeing of you and your family, and to convince you to be permanently afraid so that you will acquiesce to all the security measures which keep you under state control and keep the military-industrial complex ticking along.¶ Keep this in mind next time you hear a politician talking about the threat of uncontrolled immigration, the risk posed by asylum seekers or the threat of Iran, or the need to expand counter-terrorism powers. The question is: when politicians are talking about national security, what is that they don’t want you to think and talk about? What exactly is the misdirection they are engaged in? The truth is, if you think that terrorists or immigrants or asylum seekers or Iran are a greater threat to your safety than the capitalist system, you have been well and truly conned, my friend. Don’t believe the hype: you’re much more likely to die from any one of several forms of structural violence in society than you are from immigrants or terrorism. Somehow, we need to challenge the politicians on this fact.

#### Prioritize probability – 1 percent doctrine destroys decision making.

Meskill 9 [(David, Professor at Colorado School of Mines and PhD from Harvard), <http://davidmeskill.blogspot.com/2009/12/one-percent-doctrine-and-environmental.html>, “The "One Percent Doctrine" and Environmental Faith”, December 2009] TDI

Tom Friedman's piece today in the Times on the environment (http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/09/opinion/09friedman.html?\_r=1) is one of the flimsiest pieces by a major columnist that I can remember ever reading. He applies Cheney's "one percent doctrine" (which is similar to the environmentalists' "precautionary principle") to the risk of environmental armageddon. **But this doctrine is both intellectually incoherent and practically irrelevant**. It is intellectually incoherent because it cannot be applied consistently in a world with many potential disaster scenarios. In addition to the global-warming risk, there's also the asteroid-hitting-the-earth risk, the terrorists-with-nuclear-weapons risk (Cheney's original scenario), the super-duper-pandemic risk, etc. Since each of these risks, **on the "one percent doctrine," would deserve all of our attention**, we cannot address all of them simultaneously. That is, even within the one-percent mentality, we'd have to begin prioritizing, making choices and trade-offs. But why then should we only make these trade-offs between responses to disaster scenarios? Why not also choose between them and other, much more cotidien, things we value? Why treat the unlikely but cataclysmic event as somehow fundamentally different, something that cannot be integrated into all the other calculations we make? And in fact, this is how we behave all the time. We get into our cars in order to buy a cup of coffee, even though there's some chance we will be killed on the way to the coffee shop. We are constantly risking death, if slightly, in order to pursue the things we value. Any creature that adopted the "precautionary principle" would sit at home - no, not even there, since there is some chance the building might collapse. That creature would neither be able to act, nor not act, **since it would nowhere discover perfect safety**. Friedman's approach reminds me somehow of Pascal's wager - quasi-religious faith masquerading as rational deliberation (as Hans Albert has pointed out, Pascal's wager itself doesn't add up: there may be a God, in fact, but it may turn out that He dislikes, and even damns, people who believe in him because they've calculated it's in their best interest to do so). As my friend James points out, it's striking how descriptions of the environmental risk always describe the situation as if it were five to midnight. It must be near midnight, since otherwise there would be no need to act. But it can never be five \*past\* midnight, since then acting would be pointless and we might as well party like it was 2099. Many religious movements - for example the early Jesus movement - have exhibited precisely this combination of traits: the looming apocalypse, with the time (just barely) to take action.

#### Utilitarian ethics makes decision making impossible—justifies the worst atrocities in a framework of “the greater good”. Prefer a re-orientation of impact calculus that moves past purely biological notions of value.

Weizman 11 [(Eyal, Professor at University of London), “The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza”, Book, 2011] TDI
The theological origins of the lesser evil argument still cast a long shadow on the present. In fact the idiom has become so deeply ingrained, and is invoked in such a staggeringly diverse set of contexts – from individual situational ethics and international relations, to attempts to govern the economics of violence in the context of the ‘war on terror’ and the efforts of human rights and humanitarian activists to manoeuvre through the paradoxes of aid – that it seems to have altogether taken the place previously reserved for the term ‘good’. Moreover, the very evocation of the ‘good’ seems to everywhere invoke the utopian tragedies of modernity, in which evil seemed lurking in a horrible manichaeistic inversion. If no hope is offered in the future, all that remains is to insure ourselves against the risks that it poses, to moderate and lessen the collateral effects of necessary acts, and tend to those who have suffered as a result. In relation to the ‘war on terror’, the terms of the lesser evil were most clearly and prominently articulated by former human rights scholar and leader of Canada’s Liberal Party Michael Ignatieff. In his book The Lesser Evil, Ignatieff suggested that in ‘balancing liberty against security’ liberal states establish mechanisms to regulate the breach of some human rights and legal norms, and allow their security services to engage in forms of extrajuridical violence – which he saw as lesser evils – in order to fend off or minimize potential greater evils, such as terror attacks on civilians of western states.11 If governments need to violate rights in a terrorist emergency, this should be done, he thought, only as an exception and according to a process of adversarial scrutiny. ‘Exceptions’, Ignatieff states, ‘do not destroy the rule but save it, provided that they are temporary, publicly justifi ed, and deployed as a last resort.’12 The lesser evil emerges here as a pragmatic compromise, a ‘tolerated sin’ that functions as the very justifi cation for the notion of exception. State violence in this model takes part in a **necro-economy** in which various types of destructive measure are weighed in a utilitarian fashion, not only in relation to the damage they produce, but to the harm they purportedly prevent and even in relation to the more brutal measures they may help restrain. In this logic, the problem of contemporary state violence resembles indeed an all-too-human version of the mathematical minimum problem of the divine calculations previously mentioned, one tasked with determining the smallest level of violence necessary to avert the greatest harm. For the architects of contemporary war this balance is trapped between two poles: keeping violence at a low enough level to limit civilian suffering, and at a level high enough to bring a decisive end to the war and bring peace.13 More recent works by legal scholars and legal advisers to states and militaries have sought to extend the inherent elasticity of the system of legal exception proposed by Ignatieff into ways of rewriting the laws of armed confl ict themselves.14 Lesser evil arguments are now used to defend anything from targeted **assassinations and mercy killings**, house demolitions, deportation, torture,15 to the use of (sometimes) non-lethal chemical weapons, the use of **human shields**, and even ‘**the intentional targeting of some civilians** if it could save more innocent lives than they cost.’16 In one of its more macabre moments it was suggested that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima might also be tolerated under the defence of the lesser evil. **Faced with a humanitarian A-bomb, one might wonder what, in fact, might come under the defi nition of a greater evil**. Perhaps it is time for the differential accounting of the lesser evil to replace the mechanical bureaucy of the ‘banality of evil’ as the idiom to describe the most extreme manifestations of violence. Indeed, it is through this use of the lesser evil that societies that see themselves as democratic can maintain regimes of occupation and neo-colonization. Beyond state agents, those practitioners of lesser evils, as this book claims, must also include the members of independent nongovernmental organizations that make up the ecology of contemporary war and crisis zones. The lesser evil is the argument of the humanitarian agent that seeks military permission to provide medicines and aid in places where it is in fact the duty of the occupying military power to do so, thus saving the military limited resources. The lesser evil is often the justifi cation of the military offi cer who attempts to administer life (and death) in an ‘enlightened’ manner; it is sometimes, too, the brief of the security contractor who introduces new and more effi cient weapons and spatio-technological means of domination, and advertises them as ‘humanitarian technology’. In these cases the logic of the lesser evil opens up a thick political fi eld of participation bringing together otherwise opposing fi elds of action, to the extent that it might obscure the fundamental moral differences between these various groups. But, even according to the terms of an economy of losses and gains, the concept of the lesser evil risks becoming counterproductive: less brutal measures are also those that may be more easily naturalized, accepted and tolerated – and hence more frequently used, with the result that a greater evil may be reached cumulatively. Such observations amongst other paradoxes are unpacked in one of the most powerful challenges to ideas such as Ignatieff’s – Adi Ophir’s philosophical essay The Order of Evils. In this book Ophir developed an ethical system that is similarly not grounded in a search for the ‘good’ but rather in minimizing the harms that he refers to as ‘evils’. Ophir unpacks the systemic logic of an economy of violence – the possibility of a lesser means and the risk of more damage – but insists that questions of violence are forever unpredictable and will always escape the capacity to calculate them. Inherent in Ophir’s insistence on the necessity of calculating is, he posits, the impossibility of doing so. The demands of his ethics are grounded in this impossibility.17

#### Morally prioritize your obligation to resolve slow violence against the marginalized – status quo forms of impact weighing always side-lines those.

Hunt 18 [(Dallas, PhD Candidate at University of British Columbia), “Biopolitical Disaster”, Book, 2018]

“There is a hierarchy to care**”:** theoretical concerns and applications In Frames of War (an extension and preoccupation with similar issues she outlines in her text Precarious Life), Judith Butler focuses on the ways in which particular, violent perceptions of everyday life are normalized and propagated as legible or granted “intelligibility” (through numbers, statistics, etc.). According to Butler, Frames of War follows on from Precarious Life ... especially its suggestion that specific lives cannot be apprehended as living. If certain lives do not qualify as lives or are**, from the start,** not conceivable as lives **within certain epistemological frames,** then **these lives are never lived nor lost in the full sense.** (2010: 1) For Butler, then, a primary concern is how these intelligibilities allow “a state to wage its wars without instigating a popular revolt” (xvi). Although Butler is writing within the context of the Iraq War and the “War on Terror,” her insights on precarity and modes of state violence exceed their immediate rele- vance. Indeed, as is clear below, the notions of war and settler-colonialism and the biopolitical rationalities they allow are eminently applicable to a local, Canadian context. The frames of war**,** Butler argues, are not circumscribed to combat zones with the mobilization of weapons. Instead, to Butler, “perceptual weapons” are acting onpopulations **consistently** to naturalize violences and **enlist citizens to tacitly consent to** (and, in some cases, actively participate in) **violent forms that** authorize dehumanization: “[w]aging war ... begins with the assault on the senses; the senses are the first target of war” (xvi). These perceptual violences resonate with Rob Nixon’s formulation of “slow violence” as well. To Nixon, slow violence is “a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, **an** attritional violence **that** is **typically** not viewed as violence at all**”** (2011: 3). Further, and “[c]rucially, slow violence is **often not just attritional but also exponential, operating as** a major threat multiplier; it can fuel long-term, proliferating conflictsin situations where the conditions for sustaining life become increasingly but gradually degraded” (4). Conditioning the senses or what is intelligible, then, functions as the way in which state violences are legitimized, as the frames of war dictate the “sensuous parameters of reality itself” (ix). According to Butler, the task at hand is not only to “understand ... these frames, where they come from and what kind of action they perform” (2010: 83), but also to find and articulate “those modes of representation and appearance that allow the claim of life to be made and heard” (81). While Butler is exam- ining conditions of precarity, (in)security, and disposability in the context of “the War on Terror,” and Palestine–Israel, her examination of an imperial/ colonial power exerting force and enacting violence on vulnerable and racialized populations (and in the process producing and reproducing these vulnerable populations) can be fruitfully employed in the Canadian context, though not without some alteration. Although we may not perceive the more mundane, i.e. non-military, violences visited upon Indigenous communities as “war” strictly speaking, Sora Han’s oft-cited phrase that we must think of the United States (and settler-colonial nations more broadly) not “at war” but “as war” is useful here (cited in Simpson 2014: 153, emphasis in original). If we view the biopolitical man- agement of Indigenous populations and Indigenous territories as rationalities rooted in the organizing frame of settler-colonialism, then the states of emer- gency putatively thought to be produced through war are “structural, not eventful” – that is to say, war is the very condition of settler-colonialism and not a by-product of it (154). Indeed, the largest ever domestic deployment of military forces in North America took place within Canada, in the context of the so-called “Oka crisis.” As Audra Simpson writes, the “highest number of troops in the history of Indigenous-settler relations in North America was deployed to Kanehsatà:ke, as this was the most unambiguous form of exceptional relations, that of warfare. There were 2,650 soldiers deployed...” (2014: 152). And, as Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and others have noted, Western imperial powers still refer to “enemy territories” abroad as “Indian Country” and to “wanted terrorists” as “Geronimo” (2014: 56). I follow the lineages of these Indigenous theorists who view settler-colonialism as a kind of permanent war, drawing parallels between the so-called everyday violences (displacement, sexual violence) inflicted upon Indigenous peoples in the US and Canada and the death-delivering reaches of empire embodied by the West more globally. Or, to echo Mink, the transformer/shapeshifter narrating the events in Mara- cle’s Celia’s Song: “This is war” (2014: 9). For Butler, there are varying tactics for distributing “precarity” differently, or what she describes as “that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support,” producing a “maximized precariousness for populations ... who often have no other option than to appeal to the very state from which they need protec- tion” (2010: 26). In the depictions provided in her writing, as well as that of Maracle, violence is deployed not only as “an effort to minimize precarious- ness for some and to maximize it for others,” but also as a mode of shaping the perceptions of citizens in order to make such acts legible, and hence, in a sense justifiable (Butler 2010: 54). Ultimately what Butler is advocating for is a new ethico-political orientation, one with the potential to disrupt the violent regimes of the sensible, as well as the ways in which precarity is currently allocated and distributed. Paraphrasing Jacques Rancière, Jeff Derksen also advocates for political movements that disrupt “regimes of the sensible”: “a politics of the aesthetic could ... redistribute and rethink the possibility of the subject (potentially an isolated figure) within the present and within a com- munity to come” (2009: 73). In sum, Butler’s text illustrates the ways in which State-sanctioned (and induced) precarity “perpetuates a way of dividing lives into those that are worth defending, valuing, and grieving **when they are lost, and those that are not quite lives”** (2010: 42), as well as the resistive practices that might disrupt the naturalization of “differential distribution[s] of pre- carity” (xxv). The remainder of the chapter considers to what extent Mara- cle’s texts offer such a disruption of the mundane frames of settler-colonial war within the context of an exceptional moment (an epidemic), and asks how her work gestures toward the alternatives that might be offered by Indigenous frames.

#### Structural violence outweighs and is the proximate cause of war.

Scheper-Huges and Bourgois 4 [( Nancy and Philippe, Professor of Anthropology at Upenn and Berkely), Introduction: Making Sense of Violence, in Violence in War and Peace, Book] TDI

This large and at first sight “messy” Part VII is central to this anthology’s thesis. It encompasses everything from the routinized, bureaucratized, and utterly banal violence of children dying of hunger and maternal despair in Northeast Brazil (Scheper-Hughes, Chapter 33) to elderly African Americans dying of heat stroke in Mayor Daly’s version of US apartheid in Chicago’s South Side (Klinenberg, Chapter 38) to the racialized class hatred expressed by British Victorians in their olfactory disgust of the “smelly” working classes (Orwell, Chapter 36). In these readings violence is located in the symbolic and social structures that overdetermine and allow the criminalized drug addictions, interpersonal bloodshed, and racially patterned incarcerations that characterize the US “inner city” to be normalized (Bourgois, Chapter 37 and Wacquant, Chapter 39). Violence also takes the form of class, racial, political self-hatred and adolescent self-destruction (Quesada, Chapter 35), as well as of useless (i.e. preventable), rawly embodied physical suffering, and death (Farmer, Chapter 34). Absolutely central to our approach is a blurring of categories and distinctions between wartime and peacetime violence. Close attention to the “little” violences produced in the structures, habituses, and mentalites of everyday life shifts our attention to pathologies of class, race, and gender inequalities. More important, it interrupts the voyeuristic tendencies of “violence studies” that risk publicly humiliating the powerless who are often forced into complicity with social and individual pathologies of power because suffering is often a solvent of human integrity and dignity. Thus, in this anthology we are positing a violence continuum comprised of a multitude of “small wars and invisible genocides” (see also Scheper- Hughes 1996; 1997; 2000b) conducted in the normative social spaces of public schools, clinics, emergency rooms, hospital wards, nursing homes, courtrooms, public registry offices, prisons, detention centers, and public morgues. The violence continuum also refers to the ease with which humans are capable of reducing the socially vulnerable into expendable nonpersons and assuming the license - even the duty - to kill, maim, or soul-murder. We realize that in referring to a violence and a genocide continuum we are flying in the face of a tradition of genocide studies that argues for the absolute uniqueness of the Jewish Holocaust and for vigilance with respect to restricted purist use of the term genocide itself (see Kuper 1985; Chaulk 1999; Fein 1990; Chorbajian 1999). But we hold an opposing and alternative view that, to the contrary, it is absolutely necessary to make just such existential leaps in purposefully linking violent acts in normal times to those of abnormal times. Hence the title of our volume: Violence in War and in Peace. If (as we concede) there is a moral risk in overextending the concept of “genocide” into spaces and corners of everyday life where we might not ordinarily think to find it (and there is), an even greater risk lies in failing to sensitize ourselves, in misrecognizing protogenocidal practices and sentiments daily enacted as normative behavior by “ordinary” good-enough citizens. Peacetime crimes, such as prison construction sold as economic development to impoverished communities in the mountains and deserts of California, or the evolution of the criminal industrial complex into the latest peculiar institution for managing race relations in the United States (Waquant, Chapter 39), constitute the “small wars and invisible genocides” to which we refer. This applies to African American and Latino youth mortality statistics in Oakland, California, Baltimore, Washington DC, and New York City. These are “invisible” genocides not because they are secreted away or hidden from view, but quite the opposite. As Wittgenstein observed, the things that are hardest to perceive are those which are right before our eyes and therefore taken for granted. In this regard, Bourdieu’s partial and unfinished theory of violence (see Chapters 32 and 42) as well as his concept of misrecognition is crucial to our task. By including the normative everyday forms of violence hidden in the minutiae of “normal” social practices - in the architecture of homes, in gender relations, in communal work, in the exchange of gifts, and so forth - Bourdieu forces us to reconsider the broader meanings and status of violence, especially the links between the violence of everyday life and explicit political terror and state repression, Similarly, Basaglia’s notion of “peacetime crimes” - crimini di pace - imagines a direct relationship between wartime and peacetime violence. Peacetime crimes suggests the possibility that war crimes are merely ordinary, everyday crimes of public consent applied systematically and dramatically in the extreme context of war. Consider the parallel uses of rape during peacetime and wartime, or the family resemblances between the legalized violence of US immigration and naturalization border raids on “illegal aliens” versus the US government- engineered genocide in 1938, known as the Cherokee “Trail of Tears.” Peacetime crimes suggests that everyday forms of state violence make a certain kind of domestic peace possible. Internal “stability” is purchased with the currency of peacetime crimes, many of which take the form of professionally applied “strangle-holds.” Everyday forms of state violence during peacetime make a certain kind of domestic “peace” possible. It is an easy-to-identify peacetime crime that is usually maintained as a public secret by the government and by a scared or apathetic populace. Most subtly, but no less politically or structurally, the phenomenal growth in the United States of a new military, postindustrial prison industrial complex has taken place in the absence of broad-based opposition, let alone collective acts of civil disobedience. The public consensus is based primarily on a new mobilization of an old fear of the mob, the mugger, the rapist, the Black man, the undeserving poor. How many public executions of mentally deficient prisoners in the United States are needed to make life feel more secure for the affluent? What can it possibly mean when incarceration becomes the “normative” socializing experience for ethnic minority youth in a society, i.e., over 33 percent of young African American men (Prison Watch 2002). In the end it is essential that we recognize the existence of a genocidal capacity among otherwise good-enough humans and that we need to exercise a defensive **hypervigilance to the less dramatic, permitted, and even rewarded everyday acts** of violence that **render participation in genocidal acts and policies possible** (under adverse political or economic conditions), perhaps more easily than we would like to recognize. Under the violence continuum we include, therefore, all expressions of radical social exclusion, dehumanization, depersonal- ization, pseudospeciation, and reification which normalize atrocious behavior and violence toward others. A constant self-mobilization for alarm, a state of constant hyperarousal is, perhaps, a reasonable response to Benjamin’s view of late modern history as a chronic “state of emergency” (Taussig, Chapter 31).

### 1AC: Plan

#### Plan - The United States ought to remove oil-related economic sanctions on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

#### Sanctions empirically fail and backfire – relief solves.

Scarpino 24 [(Isabel, a research program administrator in the Energy, Economics, and Security Program at the Center for a New American Security), "The Real Cost of Reimposing Sanctions of Venezuela", Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/05/02/oil-sanctions-venezuela-us-iran-russia-maduro-pdvsa/>, 5-2-2024] TDI

VENEZUELA’S EVASION COOPERATION WITH U.S. ADVERSARIES is a microcosm of a broader ongoing debate about the effectiveness and overuse of sanctions. As the number of sanctioned actors grows, so does the incentive for sanctions-busting cooperation. Washington’s economic statecraft relies on the idea that its rivals need U.S. dollar reserves to trade. But when rivals are sanctioned, they seek to defy the U.S.-led international economic system. The more sanctioned actors that the United States creates, the bigger and more self-sufficient illicit economies become, rendering U.S. sanctions impotent. Yet, U.S. policymakers continue to instinctively fall back on sanctions as low-cost tools that signal outrage and reward lawmakers at the polls. This current maximalist approach is counterproductive. It encourages heavyweight anti-Western adversaries to build coalitions with smaller, sanctioned states to organize and expand illicit trade networks. This is exactly what is happening in Venezuela—Russia, China, and Iran view the distortions in Venezuela’s economy as an opportunity to build economic and ideological leverage. In Venezuela, sectoral sanctions are not just economically ineffective—they are actively hurting the country’s democratic transition and pushing Caracas closer to anti-U.S. adversaries. Thus, there is no reason that they should remain baked into Washington’s Venezuela policy. Sectoral sanctions should not serve the symbolic purpose that individual sanctions perform, both in Venezuela’s case and in the broader landscape of U.S. foreign policy.

#### Sanctions relief empirically solves Venezuela’s economic crisis.

Forero and Vyas 23 [(Juan and Kejal, South America bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal. He was previously The Washington Post's correspondent for Colombia and Venezuela and The New York Times' Bogotá bureau chief.),"Venezuela's Economy Poised to Strengthen with sanctions relief", <https://archive.is/ap17c#selection-873.0-881.85>, 10-19-2023, Wall Street Journal] TDI

The Biden administration’s removal of an array of U.S. sanctions against Venezuela’s oil sector is designed to stabilize that country’s calamitous economy and, in time, reduce the huge outflow of migrants toward the American southwestern border, said people familiar with the negotiations that led to sanctions relief. Removing sanctions for six months on oil, gas and the mining sector as announced by U.S. officials Wednesday night is expected by economists to boost an economy that had contracted 80% and led 7.7 million people to flee over the last decade. Hundreds of thousands of them wound up in the U.S. Scenes of Venezuelans crowding the U.S. border and crowding shelters in New York and other cities have challenged President Biden, who faces a re-election next year. Talks between U.S. and Venezuelan envoys in recent months led to a tentative breakthrough, with Biden administration officials announcing American and foreign companies could produce and export Venezuelan oil and gas and conduct business with state-energy monopoly Petróleos de Venezuela. In what U.S. officials called a “partial agreement,” Venezuela would pave the way toward fair elections by respecting the opposition’s choice of candidate, letting rivals campaign on state media and permitting international observers to monitor the vote. The sharp shift in U.S. policy means Venezuela would over a year’s time have access to at least $4 billion in oil money simply by being able to export to the U.S. that is in contrast to current customers as far away as China, who import Venezuelan oil at heavy discounts to market prices due to sanctions, said Francisco Rodriguez, an economist who has had a working relationship with Venezuelan officials. Jacking up production between 250,000 and 600,000 barrels a day from the 824,000 pumped daily in September could mean anywhere from $10 billion to $19 billion annually in government revenue, he said. Once Latin America’s fifth-largest economy, Venezuela’s is now the size of the Milwaukee metropolitan area, according to International Monetary Fund data. “When the United States imposed sanctions it had a significant impact because Venezuela had lost its most important market, and many markets around the world didn’t want to do business with Venezuela,” Rodriguez said. “Now there’s space for Venezuela to produce more oil.” Thomas Shannon, a former high-ranking U.S. diplomat in Latin America, said that the sanctions had the unintended effect of accelerating migration while severing communications between Washington and Caracas. By discussing an oil opening, the issue of political prisoners and migration, including the repatriation of deported Venezuelans to their homeland, Shannon said, “both sides are looking for a way forward in the relationship.” If American companies working with the state firm, best known as PdVSA, do raise oil production, U.S. officials and economists say, then Venezuela could begin to ease a humanitarian crisis marked by 400% annual inflation, a nearly worthless currency and often dysfunctional water and electricity services.

### 1AC: Maduro

#### The Advantage is Maduro:

#### Venezuela is going through the worst crisis in the past half-century – Maduro and Sanctions are the root cause.

Kurmanaev 19 [(Anatoly, Reporter for the NY Times), <https://archive.is/XjBtz#selection-567.0-567.17>, “Venezuela’s Collapse Is the Worst Outside of War in Decades, Economists Say”, 5-17-2019, NY Times] TDI

MARACAIBO, Venezuela — Zimbabwe’s collapse under Robert Mugabe. The fall of the Soviet Union. Cuba’s disastrous unraveling in the 1990s. The crumbling of Venezuela’s economy has now outpaced them all. Venezuela’s fall is the single largest economic collapse outside of war in at least 45 years, economists say. “It’s really hard to think of a human tragedy of this scale outside civil war,” said Kenneth Rogoff, an economics professor at Harvard University and former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund. “This will be a touchstone of disastrous policies for decades to come.” To find similar levels of economic devastation, economists at the I.M.F. pointed to countries that were ripped apart by war, like Libya earlier this decade or Lebanon in the 1970s. But Venezuela, at one point Latin America’s wealthiest country, has not been shattered by armed conflict. Instead, economists say, the poor governance, corruption and misguided policies of President Nicolás Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chávez, have fueled runaway inflation, shuttered businesses and brought the country to its knees. And in recent months, the Trump administration has imposed stiff sanctions to try to cripple it further. As the country’s economy plummeted, armed gangs took control of entire towns, public services collapsed and the purchasing power of most Venezuelans has been reduced to a couple of kilograms of flour a month. In markets, butchers hit by regular blackouts jostle to sell decomposing stock by sunset. Former laborers scavenge through garbage piles for leftovers and recyclable plastic. Dejected retailers make dozens of trips to the bank in hopes of depositing several pounds’ worth of bills made worthless by hyperinflation. Here in Maracaibo, a city of two million on the border with Colombia, nearly all of the butchers in the main market have stopped selling meat cuts in favor of offal and leftovers like fat shavings and cow hooves, the only animal protein many of their customers can still afford. The crisis has been compounded by American sanctions intended to force Mr. Maduro to cede power to the nation’s opposition leader, Juan Guaidó. The Trump administration’s recent sanctions on Venezuela’s state oil company have made it difficult for the government to sell its main commodity, oil. Together with the American ban on trading Venezuelan bonds, the administration has made it harder for Venezuela to import any goods, including food and medication.

#### Oil Sanctions backfire and strengthen Maduro – allows him to re-center power, now is key given a unified opposition.

Scarpino 24 [(Isabel, a research program administrator in the Energy, Economics, and Security Program at the Center for a New American Security), "The Real Cost of Reimposing Sanctions of Venezuela", Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/05/02/oil-sanctions-venezuela-us-iran-russia-maduro-pdvsa/>, 5-2-2024] TDI

Last month, the Biden administration announced that sanctions relief on Venezuela would not be renewed. Reinstating the sanctions that were temporarily lifted in October was a carefully crafted decision intended to maximize the United States’ leverage. But sanctions will never be effective so long as Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro values his political survival above his country’s economic well-being. Almost a decade after the Obama administration first levied individual sanctions against the Maduro government in 2015, sanctions on Venezuela have served mainly as symbolic measures. While moral signaling is important, using sectoral sanctions exclusively as signaling devices undermines both Venezuela’s path to democracy and broader U.S. strategic objectives. Maduro’s sanctions evasion and cooperation with Russia, Iran, and China reveal that the overuse of sanctions can drive affected actors to unite beyond the watchful eye of the dollar—thus fueling, rather than curbing, illicit economies. The Barbados agreement, which was signed in October 2023 between Maduro’s government and the United States-backed opposition, effectively exchanged sanctions relief on Venezuela’s oil and gas sector for electoral guarantees. It was hailed as a diplomatic success. The agreement set an April deadline for Maduro to comply with electoral guarantees or face reimposed sanctions. While there have been some subsequent wins for Venezuela’s opposition, including a decision to allow international electoral observation for the upcoming presidential elections, Maduro’s government only partially fulfilled other commitments. In addition to upholding a 15-year ban on María Corina Machado, the candidate who won the opposition’s primary, Maduro’s government prevented her chosen substitute from even registering in the elections. An increase in repression resulted in the arbitrary detention of high-profile human rights activist Rocío San Miguel and Machado’s campaign staff as well as the expulsion of a U.N. human rights agency. Facing insufficient electoral progress and a belligerent Maduro, the White House felt compelled to take a harder stance. However, the Biden administration is unwilling to return to the “maximum pressure” policies introduced by former President Donald Trump. It has only partially reimposed sanctions. While the U.S. Treasury Department discontinued General License 44, which authorized investment in and trade with Venezuela’s oil and gas sector, it preserved General License 41, which permits Chevron’s activities in Venezuela. Companies can even apply for specific, case-by-case licenses, allowing the Biden administration flexibility to drip feed investment into Venezuela and signaling to the Maduro government that Washington remains engaged and open to talks. Francisco Palmieri, the chief of mission of the U.S. Venezuelan Affairs Unit, said last week that “License 44 should not be seen as a final decision,” underlining the White House’s hopes that ongoing talks will continue to progress. This move also allows President Joe Biden to secure energy access for the United States and its allies. Chevron is not the only U.S. company approved for operations in Venezuela; the authorizations that the Treasury Department previously issued to Repsol and Eni have not yet been withdrawn. This means that Venezuelan oil will continue to flow to the United States and Europe even as those exports are cut off from the rest of the global market. Economically, this is a pretty elegant solution. But in geopolitical terms, even these limited sanctions will likely carry acute costs. Venezuelan democracy will suffer as Caracas seeks to improve its bargaining posture vis-à-vis both the United States and the opposition. And, perhaps of greater significance to the White House, the reinstated sanctions could also hurt Washington’s long-term goals by pushing Venezuela to resume its cooperation with Iran and China as it looks to reroute oil into illicit markets. FOR MADURO, U.S. SANCTIONS ARE GOOD POLITICS. Under Chavismo—the populist-nationalist ideology of Maduro’s idolized predecessor, Hugo Chávez—sanctions are viewed as financial imperialism. They play directly into Chavismo’s narrative of an “economic war,” allowing the Maduro government to blame all of the country’s economic ills on sanctions, rather than Chavismo’s kleptocracy, further weaponizing this narrative as a campaign tool. The reimposition of sanctions comes at a particularly precarious moment for Venezuela’s opposition. The Maduro government aims to fragment the opposition, which is currently unified under the Unitary Platform. Should the platform fail to mobilize behind a single candidate or revert to an election boycott, Maduro could dominate electorally. After much scrambling and intense internal negotiations, the opposition officially nominated former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia as its presidential nominee. But analysts fear that the Supreme Judicial Tribunal will find a reason to bar González from running, just as the Electoral Council previously did with Corina Yoris, Machado’s chosen substitute. The Maduro government’s reaction so far has been more muted than expected, indicating that negotiations are ongoing with González, who appears open to exchanging security and even amnesty guarantees with the incumbent government in exchange for a peaceful transition. Venezuelans are waiting for the other shoe to drop. Now that the looming threat of sanctions has already been realized, Maduro’s reaction is not only unpredictable, but unrestrained.

#### Sanctions hurt the most vulnerable NOT the elites, bolstering Maduro’s narrative.

Rodriguez 18 [(Francisco, Francisco Rodríguez is chief economist at Torino Capital and is a former head of the Venezuelan Congressional Budget Office.), "Why More Sanctions Won’t Help Venezuela", https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/12/why-more-sanctions-wont-help-venezuela/, Foreign Policy, 1-12-2018] TDI

Venezuelans have good reason to be concerned that ordinary people will ultimately pay the price for sanctions. Recent data show that in the two months after Trump imposed financial sanctions, imports tumbled an additional 24 percent, deepening the scarcity of basic goods and lending credibility to the government’s argument that U.S. policies are directly harming Venezuelans. Instead of undermining Maduro, sanctions are making it increasingly difficult for the country’s opposition to convince voters that the welfare of Venezuelans — rather than driving Maduro from power — is its real priority. It is not the first time the opposition has made this mistake. Back in 2002, opponents of then-President Chávez called for a massive strike in the country’s oil sector. The strike brought oil production to a standstill and caused a double-digit recession in an attempt to get Chávez to resign. This event single-handedly convinced Venezuelans that they could not trust a political movement that was willing to destroy the economy in order to attain power. In a recall referendum held two years later, voters resoundingly backed Chávez. The United States and the anti-Maduro opposition will not win the hearts and minds of Venezuelans by helping drive the country’s economy into the ground.The United States and the anti-Maduro opposition will not win the hearts and minds of Venezuelans by helping drive the country’s economy into the ground. If Washington wants to show it cares about Venezuelans, it could start by providing help to those most affected by the crisis. Extending protected migrant status for Venezuelans in the United States and providing support for neighboring countries dealing with an upsurge of Venezuelan immigration would be a start, as would support for apolitical organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme, that have managed to channel aid to the country. The U.S. should also support negotiations aimed at creating institutions that make the coexistence of the country’s feuding political factions possible — rather than encouraging the wholesale replacement of one by the other.

#### Two Internal Links:

#### 1] Maduro – he causes terrorism, trafficking, and crime.

Knotts 20 [(Robert, Professor of National Security Studies at the Marshall Center), “Venezuela: A Dying Country”, <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/venezuela-dying-country-0>, Marshall Center, April 2020] TDI

Today, Venezuela represents one of the largest displaced populations in the world, second only to Syria, with no relief in sight. Conservative estimates put the total of displaced refugees at over 4.1 million, with Venezuelan refugees seeking safety primarily in Colombia (~1.8 million), Peru (~860,000), Ecuador (~366,000), and the U.S. (~290,000). Smaller neighboring countries like Trinidad and Tobago (~40,000), Guyana (36,000), and Curacao (~26,000) are especially susceptible to being overwhelmed by the influx of refugees. Even Europe is not immune, with over 200,000 refuges in Spain, 50,000 in Italy and another 25,000 in Portugal.2 The OAS predicts that the number of Venezuelan refugees will surpass the number of people who fled Syria in 2020.3 Venezuela’s woes are already impacting other countries in the region. Colombia is being seriously challenged, as it shares a large, mostly unsecured border with Venezuela. While Colombian President Iván Duque Márquez attempts to implement the controversial peace process with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) that was initiated by his predecessor, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, key resources are necessarily being diverted to deal with the massive influx of refugees. Venezuela provides sanctuary to former members of the FARC that did not demobilize, as well as the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN). These organizations continue to conduct violent cross-border operations and traffic illicit goods while attempting to undermine the legitimate government of Colombia. There are also reports of the Maduro government intentionally inserting released criminals into refugee caravans to cause further chaos. So while Maduro clings somewhat precariously to power in his own country, he seeks to spread discontent among Venezuela’s neighbors. Now, for a country that is already catastrophically failing, adding COVID-19 into the equation makes the prognosis even more alarming. Neighboring countries have closed their borders in an attempt to stem the outpouring of refugees, but porous and remote frontiers make this an almost impossible task. Several key countries, including Colombia, already have significant refugee populations that lack any form of documentation, therefore falling outside any formal governmental support. Colombian news outlets recently noted a “Bomba de Tiempo” (time bomb) in parts of Bogotá as Colombians begin to react negatively towards Venezuelan refugees. Chile now demands passports and visas for refugees, something that most refugees understandably lack. Ecuador, normally a transit country for refugees, is now also requiring visas. Even Peru, formally hospitable towards refugees, has begun to show strain and a degree of intolerance. The potential likelihood of Venezuelan refugees spreading COVID-19 is real, as many are already in poor health and suffering from various degrees of malnutrition. Ironically, some Venezuelans seek to return home across closed borders as they lack the means to sustain themselves in increasingly hostile countries. All this also means a significant decrease in remittances, an important source of foreign capital flow for Venezuela. Ms. Carrie Fillipeeti, the Assistant Secretary of State Western Hemisphere Affairs, recently noted that 44 percent of Venezuelan hospitals lack electricity; 66 percent do not have running water; 64 percent lack access to X-ray capability; and 94 percent have no respiratory care.4 Add to this the fact that there are only eighty-four intensive care unit beds within the country and the magnitude becomes alarming. An estimated 75 percent of qualified medical personnel have fled Venezuela, leaving an aging, more susceptible medical corps to deal with the pandemic.5 The complete unpreparedness of Venezuela, coupled with the pandemic of COVID-19, will continue to encourage exodus with all its attendant challenges. Uncontrolled migration is not the only menace emanating from Venezuela. Late last month on March 26, 2020, the U.S. Department of Justice charged Maduro and fourteen current and former Venezuelan officials with narco-terrorism, corruption, drug trafficking, and other criminal charges. U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr stated, “For more than 20 years, Maduro and a number of high-ranking colleagues allegedly conspired with the FARC, causing tons of cocaine to enter and devastate American communities.”6

#### 2] Refugee Crisis – Venezuela’s economic and political crisis causes one of the largest migrant crisis in history and it will only get worse.

Munoz-Pogossian and Winkler 23 [(Betilde and Alexandra), "The Persistence of the Venezuelan Migrant and Refugee Crisis", <https://www.csis.org/analysis/persistence-venezuelan-migrant-and-refugee-crisis>, 11-27-2023, CSIS] TDI

The outflow of refugees and migrants from Venezuela is the largest displacement crisis in the world, with almost 7.7 million migrants and refugees as of August 2023. This is an even greater number than the displacement of Syrians or Ukrainians outside of their countries. Despite these numbers, the Venezuelan migrant and refugee crisis, quite unfortunately, has climbed down the list of political and policy priorities, with fewer headlines in the media and sporadic policy conversations in Washington. On one hand, there is a sense that this is the new normal for the region and that host countries in Latin America and the Caribbean will have to continue to manage the influx of 6.4 million Venezuelans and counting as best as they can. On the other hand, it seems that neighboring countries across the region are willing to continue discussions on how best to address migration and forced displacement, but by removing the Venezuelan political focus from the center of the migrant and refugee discussion. The truth is, however, that this is a crisis that persists, and is likely to continue as long as the root causes are not addressed. The efforts from the region to respond have been commendable thus far. They have varied but have generally followed a spirit of regional solidarity as well as pragmatism in the wake of large-scale Venezuelan inflows. Important regional innovations have also characterized this recent period. Receiving countries in the Americas have extended options to displaced Venezuelans to regularize their status (often with financial support and encouragement from the United States), and other policies have also sought to ensure access to the labor market, health services, and basic education. Despite these efforts, the reality is that the region is still recovering from Covid-19 setbacks. Venezuelan migrants are now leaving countries like Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile, where they had originally migrated, due to low salaries, inflation, and lack of jobs, and are making the dangerous trek to reach the U.S. border. To understand the scale of these flows, going by the number of Venezuelans crossing the Darién Gap, the remote stretch of rainforest located between Colombia and Panama, a record 400,000 migrants have crossed during the first nine months of this year, according to Panamanian officials, and Venezuelans account for an estimated 60 percent of those, namely around 240,000, the most of any nationality. In search of the American dream, record numbers of migrants have also reached the U.S.-Mexico border, with 262,633 Venezuelans having crossed just in 2023, up from 189,520 in 2022. The root causes that generated this unprecedented flow of migrants and refugees, including democratic breakdown, repression, and a lack of basic human rights, remain unchanged in Venezuela. There is also a deep economic crisis driven by devastating policies and a kleptocracy that has characterized the political landscape during the last 20 years. There are also challenges for Venezuelans in receiving countries, such as limited access to legal documentation, basic services, economic opportunities, and rising xenophobia. In addition, with the sometimes tumultuous changes in governments in Latin America, Venezuelans prefer to leave receiving countries than to go through another national crisis. All these elements will remain throughout 2023, and therefore migration flows should be expected to continue, and even increase in 2024. The Venezuelan migrant and refugee crisis is still a crisis, and it does not look like it will fix itself anytime soon. Here are some reasons why. Venezuelans continue to migrate, even if it means risking their own lives. The challenges faced by the 7,710,887 displaced Venezuelans throughout the world, and the stories of so many of them moving throughout the Americas demonstrates the danger they are in—especially when they attempt to cross the harrowing Darién Gap. This 575,000 hectares of jungle between Panama and Colombia has become one of the Western Hemisphere’s most pressing focal points of the crisis. According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), migrants are exposed to “multiple human rights violations, including sexual violence, murders, disappearances, trafficking, robbery and intimidation by organized criminal groups.” Despite this life-threatening journey—which can take almost 10 days—the numbers, as reported by Panamanian authorities, have gone up exponentially, from the almost unthinkable record of nearly 250,000 in 2022 to more than 330,000 in 2023. A gut-wrenching element is that one in five of these migrants were children. Regardless of initiatives such as the Humanitarian Parole for Venezuelans in the United States, and the Safe Mobility initiative (which was announced by the United States government to provide legal pathways to the United States for refugees and migrants in South and Central America) migrants continue to cross the jungle. In August alone, almost 82,000 people made the trek through the Darién, by far the largest single-month total on record. The United States has also tried joint efforts with the Colombian and Panamanian authorities to end the “irregular movement of people” by signing an ambitious agreement in April. But the countries’ expectations to end migration through the Darién Gap, reduce poverty, and create jobs and new legal pathways, all in just 60 days, only confirmed they were unrealistic from the start. Unless more comprehensive and impactful action to address this humanitarian crisis is prioritized, also focusing on addressing the root causes, other political and criminal interests will continue to make a profit from the desperation of these Venezuelans.

#### Migrants in neighboring countries face heightened risk of murder and sexual violence.

France24 21 [(France24), "Almost 2,000 Venezuelan refugees murdered in Colombia in five years, NGO says", https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210624-almost-2-000-venezuelan-refugees-murdered-in-colombia-in-five-years-ngo-says , 6-24-2021, France24] TDI

At least 1,933 Venezuelan migrants were killed in Colombia between 2015 and 2020, and another 836 are "considered missing," a Colombian NGO said Wednesday. "While the national murder rate has been decreasing steadily... the murder rate of the Venezuelan population has grown and is 2.8 times higher," said Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) in a report. In a report on the situation based on official figures and complaints collected by the organization, the NGO said that "the irregular situation of a significant part of the population...has led them to face discrimination, xenophobia or stigmatization." Nearly six million people have fled Venezuela, which has been in recession for eight years, and thecountry plunged into political crisis in January 2019 when opposition leader Juan Guaido, who was parliamentary speaker at the time, declared himself acting president after Nicolas Maduro claimed a re-election victory widely condemned internationally as fraudulent. Some 1.8 million of those Venezuelan refugees are in Colombia, which began granting official residency to almost a million of them in March. The government hopes to deliver a document by the end of the year that gives undocumented migrants a period of 10 years to acquire a resident visa. Colombia and Venezuela have no diplomatic relations and share a porous border of about 1,400 miles (2,200 kilometers). The NGO also warned about the sexual violence being perpetrated against the migrant population: 2,319 Venezuelans, mostly underage girls, suffered sexual attacks between 2015 and 2020.

#### Oil Sanctions are the primary cause of Venezuela’s economic crisis – they’re oil reliant.

Rodriguez 23 [(Francisco, Francisco Rodríguez is the Rice Family Professor of International and Public Affairs, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver.), "How Sanctions Contributed to Venezuela’s Economic Collapse", <https://korbel.du.edu/regional-studies/news-events/all-articles/how-sanctions-contributed-venezuelas-economic-collapse>, Institute for Comparative and Regional Studies, 1-13-2023] TDI

During the past decade, Venezuela lived through the largest economic contraction documented in the history of the Western Hemisphere. The implosion took place at the same time as the U.S. government barred oil purchases, froze government bank accounts, prohibited the country from issuing new debt, and seized tankers bound for Venezuela. One would think it should be self-evident that any account of Venezuela’s economic contraction would place economic sanctions in a central role. However, sanctions play a surprisingly limited role in most mainstream accounts of the Venezuelan crisis. A recent Council on Foreign Relations background piece on Venezuela mentioned sanctions only in passing and instead attributed the country’s economic collapse to “decades of poor governance” and the “perils of becoming a petrostate.” Likewise, Assistant Secretary of State Brian Nichols deflected questions about the impact of Venezuela sanctions asserting that “the responsibility for the humanitarian situation in Venezuela falls squarely on the shoulders of the late Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro.” Part of this is to be expected. When Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was pressed in the 1990s about the humanitarian effect of UN sanctions in Iraq, she responded by showing photos of palaces built by Saddam Hussein. When Florida Senator Marco Rubio was presented with arguments about the effects of the U.S. embargo on Cuba, he replied that the only blockade on Cuba was the one imposed by the Cuban regime. Sanctions are used in the midst of political conflicts, so it is normal that debates around their use get rapidly politicized. Many opponents of Maduro see sanctions as the only instrument through which they can pressure the regime and fear that discussions of their negative consequences play into Maduro’s hands. Yet if what we want is to understand how the international community can help Venezuelans, we also need to know the real effects of sanctions. Understanding how and when to use sanctions requires a balanced and objective debate about their impacts that is focused on the evidence and not clouded by political biases. What the Data Say For the past one hundred years, Venezuela’s economy has been highly dependent on oil, which accounts for more than 90 percent of exports and more than half of fiscal revenue. When oil revenues rise— regardless of whether it happens as a result of increased production or prices—the economy expands. When they tank, so does GDP. It is thus not surprising that Venezuela’s economic collapse coincides almost perfectly with a massive decline in oil revenues. After rising for more than a decade, oil revenues fell by 93 percent between 2012 and 2020. During this same period, per capita income declined by 72 percent. The trigger of the contraction was that Venezuela was left without foreign currency to pay for the imports that fuel its economy. Similar import and growth collapses occurred in Iraq, Libya, Iran, and other oil exporters when they faced sanctions limiting their capacity to sell oil internationally. Between 2012 and 2016, most of the decline in oil revenues was caused by falling oil prices. The price of a basket of Venezuelan oil peaked at USD $103 in 2012, and then plummeted to $36 by 2016. Up until that moment, Venezuela’s recession looked like several of its other prior historical crises, driven by a decline in its foreign currency earnings caused by changes in world oil market conditions. Obviously, Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro bear a great deal of responsibility for this recession, as their overspending and mismanagement left the country unprepared to deal with the negative terms of trade shock. However, the story from 2017 on, is different. During the following two years, oil prices rose. Normally, those years should have seen economic recovery as the country had access to increased oil revenues. In fact, when the recovery in oil markets began, many analysts projected positive growth for Venezuela. That growth did not materialize because oil production declined—a decline that evidence shows sanctions played an important role in. It is instructive to look at the data more closely. While some may tell you that the decline of the Venezuelan oil industry began long before sanctions, the data tells a different story. Venezuela’s oil output was stable in the 2008-15 period. It then declined moderately in 2016, when oil prices collapsed. Many other oil exporters saw similar declines at the time. Yet when oil prices began recovering in 2017, output stabilized in other oil producers—but not in Venezuela. That was the year that the first sanctions hit.

#### Sanctions are causally responsible for structural violence and impact on human life and health that disproportionately effects marginalized groups.

Weisbrot and Sachs 19 [(Mark and Jeffrey, researchers at Center for Economic and Policy Research), "Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment: The Case of Venezuela", <https://cepr.net/images/stories/reports/venezuela-sanctions-2019-04.pdf>, April 2019, Center for Economic and Policy Research] TDI

The Impact of Sanctions on Human Life and Health One result of the sanctions, as described above, is to deprive the Venezuelan economy of many billions of dollars of foreign exchange needed to pay for essential and lifesaving imports. The sanctions implemented in 2019, including the recognition of a parallel government, accelerated this deprivation and also cut off Venezuela from most of the international payments system, thus ending much of the country’s access to these essential imports including medicine and food — even those that could normally be bought with available dollars. There is no doubt that all of these sanctions since August 2017 have had severe impacts on human life and health. While it is impossible to specify the counterfactual — what would have happened if there were no sanctions — we can first look at some of the deterioration of health indicators (including health care and health-related infrastructure and capacity) between 2017 and 2018. According to the National Survey on Living Conditions (ENCOVI by its acronym in Spanish), an annual survey of living conditions administered by three Venezuelan universities, there was a 31 percent increase in general mortality from 2017 to 2018. 35 This would imply an increase of more than 40,000 deaths.36 This would be a large loss of civilian life even in an armed conflict, and it is virtually certain that the US economic sanctions made a substantial contribution to these deaths. The percentage of deaths due to the sanctions is difficult to estimate because the counterfactual is unknowable, but it is worth noting that the counterfactual in the absence of sanctions could even be that mortality would have been reduced (see below), in the event that an economic recovery would have taken place. Since these are annual statistics, they would not take into account the impact of the sanctions during the last four months of 2017. As noted above, the impact of the August 2017 sanctions on the collapse of oil production and therefore access to imports was quite immediate, so we would expect some of the increased mortality to show up in 2017. In 2018 the Venezuela Pharmaceutical Federation reported that shortages of essential medicines were 85 percent.37 According to a September 2018 study by CodeVida and Provea, more than 300,000 people were at risk because of lack of access to medicines or treatment. This includes an estimated 80,000 people with HIV who have not had antiretroviral treatment since 2017, 16,000 people who need dialysis, 16,000 people with cancer, and 4 million with diabetes and hypertension (many of whom cannot obtain insulin or cardiovascular medicine).38 These numbers by themselves virtually guarantee that the current sanctions, which are much more severe than those implemented before this year, are a death sentence for tens of thousands of people who cannot leave the country to find medicines elsewhere. This is especially true if the projected 67 percent drop in oil revenue materializes in 2019. But the accelerating economic collapse that current sanctions have locked in have many more impacts on health and premature deaths. According to the Venezuelan Medical Federation, some 22,000 doctors — about one third of the total — have left the country.39 As migration accelerates in 2019 due to the tightening sanctions, more of these health professionals, as well as others with necessary technical skills, will leave Venezuela. According to the March 2019 UN Report “Venezuela: Overview of Priority Humanitarian Needs,” ENCOVI surveys find that due to malnutrition, some 22 percent of children under five are stunted.40 Food imports have dropped sharply along with overall imports; in 2018 they were estimated at just $2.46 billion, as compared with $11.2 billion in 2013.41 They can be expected to plummet further in 2019, along with imports generally. The increasing collapse of export revenue and therefore imports has also created massive public health problems in the areas of water and sanitation. The most recent UN Report notes that “lack of access to water, soap, chlorine and other hygiene inhibits hand washing and household water treatment” and that “households not connected to the water network are using improperly treated and unsafe surface water and wells.”42 CodeVida found that for 2018, “79 percent of health facilities experience shortages in water supply,”43 while ENCOVI reports that 61 percent of schools “are in communities without daily access to potable water.”44 The electricity crisis has also impacted hospitals and health care. It is not known how many people have died as a result of power failures in hospitals, but during the March blackouts there were press reports of fatalities due to loss of electricity.45 As noted above, the sanctions contributed substantially to the duration and impact of the blackouts. The UN Report finds that the groups most vulnerable to the accelerating crisis include children and adolescents (including many who can no longer attend school); people who are in poverty or extreme poverty; pregnant and nursing women; older persons; indigenous people; people in need of protection; women and adolescent girls at risk; people with disabilities; and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex.

#### 71 Venezuelans die every day due to the crisis.

MC 19 [(Mercy Corps), "The facts: Venezuela’s humanitarian crisis", <https://europe.mercycorps.org/en-gb/blog/facts-venezuela-crisis>, 8-13-2019] TDI

For several years Venezuela — once the richest country in South America — has been hurtling toward economic, social and institutional collapse, spurring a regional humanitarian crisis and mass migration. Families are struggling to survive inside Venezuela, while others are making desperate journeys to leave their home country entirely. The regional humanitarian crisis is now the worst in the Western Hemisphere, with more than 4 million refugees and migrants. That's about 10 per cent of the country's total population. Four out of every 10 people still in Venezuela want to leave. The UN estimates there will be 5.3 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants by the end of 2019, rivaling the scale of the Syrian refugee crisis. By 2020, there will be 8 million Venezuelan refugees, making this crisis the largest refugee crisis in the world. You can help. Learn more about the ongoing crisis in Venezuela and the region and join us in supporting the families who have fled. What is going on in Venezuela in 2020? Where are Venezuelans fleeing to? How have Venezuelans’ lives changed? What are Venezuelans doing to survive? What’s been the impact of this migration on Colombia? What is Mercy Corps doing to help? How can I help? The statistics in Venezuela are startling: Nearly 90 per cent of the country’s population lives below the poverty line and more than half of families are unable to meet basic food needs. But what happened to cause these issues? Venezuelans are facing malnutrition Because of the economic collapse, Venezuelans are struggling to buy enough food to feed themselves and their families. In fact, the situation in Venezuela is so dire that the Secretary General of the Organization of American States said last year that newborns in Syria have a better chance of survival than those born in Venezuela today. There are few health services left Medical facilities in Venezuela are breaking down and losing their electricity at the same time that the cost of medications has become astronomical. There is a shortage of around 85 per cent of all medicines in the country. Meanwhile, 13,000 doctors have left Venezuela in the past four years. Without access to proper medical care, people have become more vulnerable to treatable and communicable diseases like tuberculosis and malaria. As noted in a recent Human Rights Watch report, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that malaria cases in Venezuela have consistently increased in recent years — from fewer than 36,000 in 2009 to more than 414,000 in 2017. Society in Venezuela is breaking down Jobs in Venezuela have all but disappeared, and with violence on the rise and reliable access to food, healthcare and medicine deteriorating, more than 3 million Venezuelans have left since 2015. Venezuela has one of the highest crime rates in the world. In 2017, more than 73 Venezuelans died a violent death every day.

## 1AR Frontlines

### 1AR – AT: Oil Prices Turn

#### High Oil Prices are unsustainable – demand destruction.

Iordache 23 [(Ruxandra, curated, edited and published UK and foreign breaking news briefs), “Oil prices near $100 per barrel raise questions over demand destruction”, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/09/29/a-potential-oil-price-rally-to-100-per-barrel-raises-questions-over-demand-destruction.html>, CNBC, 9-29-2023] TDI

Supply cuts from heavyweight crude producers have helped drive oil prices near $100 per barrel — fueling some to consider the potential for future demand destruction. Brent crude futures rose 63 cents per barrel from the Thursday settlement to $96.01 per barrel on Friday at 11 a.m. London time and sit well above prices observed in the first half of the year. The gains could prove short lived, some analysts warn. Sushant Gupta, research director of Asia refining at Wood Mackenzie, on Monday said “there are all signs that we could potentially see $100 per barrel in quarter four,” but warned that global economic fragility and incoming seasonal demand drops in the first quarter would make this unsustainable long term. In a Friday report, ING analysts signaled the oil market is “clearly in overbought territory.” At the heart of price support are a series of voluntary cuts that fall outside of the official policy of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, known as OPEC+. First is a 1.66 million-barrel-per-day decline implemented by some OPEC+ members until the end of 2024. Topping this, Saudi Arabia and Russia pledged to respectively remove another 1 million barrel per day of production and 300,000 barrels per day of exports until the end of this year. This adds to a picture of improving Chinese demand — which analysts say could soon peak — and inventory drops. Some say buyers can weather the storm of high prices. Seven European refiners and traders, who spoke under anonymity because of contractual obligations, told CNBC that local buyers can withstand oil prices veering into triple digits without lowering their output runs. All of the sources pointed to firm refining margins, meaning the difference between the value of refined products and the price of the crude feedstock to generate them is favorable. Uncertainty lingers over further China fuel export quotas, while Russia’s indefinite ban of its fuel exports — which Europe cannot purchase because of sanctions that followed Moscow’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine — has tightened availabilities of refined products and could particularly worsen global diesel shortages. Sanctions-disrupted access to Russian crude and OPEC+ cuts have shrunk availabilities of high-density and high-sulfur crude to Western buyers, encumbering their task to produce certain refined products. Refinery margins so far have nevertheless been attractive enough that some refiners have lightened their seasonal maintenance to take advantage, one refiner said. Refined oil product demand could yet stay strong in the West, as Thanksgiving and winter vacations boost travel in the U.S. and Europe, and the hurricane season looms — which can historically disrupt both local refining and crude production. “We estimate a high-impact hurricane event this year could result in a temporary loss of monthly offshore crude oil production of about 1.5 million barrels per day (b/d) and a nearly equivalent temporary loss of refining capacity,” the U.S. Energy Information Administration said in July. “Outages on that scale could increase monthly average U.S. retail gasoline prices by between 25 cents per gallon and 30 cents per gallon.” ‘Self-fulfilling prophecy’ Some European market participants polled by CNBC doubted triple-digit oil prices are sustainable in the long term, with three pointing to possible demand destruction — where customers gradually answer persistently high prices with fewer purchases. A fourth said demand destruction is a potential question, once prices hit $110 per barrel. “Sometimes high oil prices can become a self-fulfilling prophecy,” Indian Energy Minister Hardeep Singh Puri warned in August. “The self-fulfilling prophecy means that at a particular point of time comes a tipping, and then there’s a fall of demand.” One of the market sources also noted that steep backwardation — where current prices exceed future ones and a key metric to assess the viability of storage — discourages stocking refined products, leaving the market vulnerable to any disruptions.

#### High Oil Prices cause petro-aggression – amplifies conflicts.

Bunzel 18 [(Theodore, political section of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and in international economics at the U.S. Treasury), “Do High Oil Prices Mean More International Conflict?”, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/05/30/do-high-oil-prices-mean-more-international-conflict/>, American Interest, 5-30-2018] TDI

As oil prices reach three-year highs, **history** tells us that we should expect **more interstate aggression**. When asked in a recent interview about his famously sympathetic gaze into Russian President Vladimir Putin’s soul in 2001, former President George W. Bush argued that rising oil prices had **fundamentally changed** his interlocutor: “When I looked into his eyes and saw his soul, Russia was broke . . . [t]he **price of oil goes up** and **Putin changed**.” Does the relationship between oil prices and Russian behavior to which Bush alluded hold true? The higher the price of oil, the more aggressive Russia becomes? And what about other petrostates? Might it be true for those as well? We may soon have more evidence for the proposition. Oil prices are brushing off 2016 lows and hitting three-year highs. Brent crude has been hovering above $70 a barrel since April, up from lows of around $30 in early 2016, fueled by OPEC production cuts and rising geopolitical tensions (over issues like the Iran deal). Though nuances, complications, and exceptions abound, the **academic** and **historical evidence** on balance tells us that, as we transition from a lower to a higher oil price regime, we can generally expect a **darker geopolitical outlook**. As rising oil revenues gives Russia, Saudi, Iran, and other oil-exporters an added sense of confidence, it may at least selectively inflameinterstate tensions and lead to **more aggressive behavior**. That possibility, alongside an **increasingly hawkish U.S. national security team** and a President who appears to feel rather **“unchained”** of late, points to a potentially **combustible mix just ahead**. It is generally taken for granted that aspects of geopolitics can function as a key input into oil prices. Trump’s mere threat of a U.S. strike in Syria, for example, caused oil to spike by 2 percent on April 11. In addition to short-term effects, geopolitical competition can influence prices in other ways. To give just one general example, as Soviet power spread into parts of the Third World after the independence era, some states felt safer nationalizing their oil industries to escape Western company control (Iraq in 1961, for example), and prices rose as a consequence. But the relationship may also work the other way around: Oil prices can also be a key input into geopolitics. **Many studies** have demonstrated that oil prices have a **direct effect** on the domestic stability of petrostates. This makes ample intuitive sense: Higher prices **fill public coffers**, allowing governments to palliate needy populations and potential elite opposition groups by dispensing more largesse. Some regime **elites** may reason that a firmer grip on power may **free them to carry out more assertive foreign** **policies without fear of being undermined at home**. There are, however, several complications to this general intuition. Some states already have sufficiently buoyant revenues relative to their small populations to satisfy their publics and feed clientelistic networks. Providing largesse can also backfire if prices drop; taking away something valuable that people have grown used to is a dangerous game, especially when elites aren’t ready to play it. And then of course there is the famed “oil curse”: For all sorts of reasons, from “Dutch disease” economic distortions to the derangement of normal citizen-state relationships, oil riches can in time undermine regimes, weakening and even destroying them. That said, a more recent body of research has empirically demonstrated the intuitive twin of this conclusion: Higher prices cause greater interstate aggression by oil-producing countries. Why would this be the case? Greater oil revenue flushes petrostates with **confidence and** **also** cash that they can put toward military spending or foreign adventures. To take one obvious example, we need only look to Iran’s using its oil revenue to fund proxy groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Furthermore, military spending by one regional oil producer can beget spending by others, fueling regional arms races that can make aggression and conflict by miscalculation more likely. The onset of the Iran-Iraq War in September 1980 may be a prime example of that dynamic. Most prominent among the empirical studies is Cullen S. **Hendrix’s** 2014 paper, which shows a statistically significant relationship between higher oil prices and “dispute behavior” (military actions short of actual war) by oil-exporters. (Hendrix also summed it up nicely in this Washington Post piece.) He found that “all things being equal, a one standard deviation ($18.60) increase in the price per barrel of oil from the sample mean ($33.81) is associated with a 13 percent increase in the frequency of [dispute behavior]” in oil-exporting states. He also found that, above $**77 a barrel**, oil-exporters are significantly more dispute prone than non-oil exporters. Hendrix also explores the potential complication of **reverse causality**: Could dispute behavior by oil-exporting countries be driving prices higher, rather than the other way around? A key analytical consideration here is timing. We can all agree that geopolitical activity affects prices in the short-term (such as the Syria example mentioned above), but is this reverse causality true on a sustained basis? Parsing out long-term signal from short-term noise, Hendrix examines whether elevated aggregate dispute behavior affects oil prices at the yearly—rather than daily or weekly—level, and finds that this relationship does not hold. His explanation here is that other players typically step in to redress markets: “While dispute behavior may drive prices changes in the short term . . . the **strategic significance of oil prices** and oil-exporting states encourages **major powers** to act in ways that **stabilize markets**, either through market intervention . . . or direct, armed intervention.” Jeff **Colgan** of Brown University has also touched on this topic, finding through his research that oil has fueled—in some way—one quarter to one half of interstate wars since 1973. He also notes that oil-producers are 50 percent more likely to engage in conflict than non-oil producers. Colgan identifies eight, non-mutually exclusive causal mechanisms for how oil fuels international conflict, most of which are implicitly exacerbated by higher prices. They are: “(1) resource wars, in which states try to acquire oil reserves by force; (2) petro-aggression, whereby oil insulates aggressive leaders such as Saddam Hussein or Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini from domestic opposition and therefore makes them more willing to engage in risky foreign policy adventurism; (3) the externalization of civil wars in oil-producing states (“petrostates”); (4) financing for insurgencies—for instance, Iran funneling oil money to Hezbollah; (5) conflicts triggered by the prospect of oil-market domination, such as the U.S. war with Iraq over Kuwait in 1991; (6) clashes over control of oil transit routes, such as shipping lanes and pipelines; (7) oil-related grievances, whereby the presence of foreign workers in petrostates helps extremist groups such as al-Qaeda recruit locals; and (8) oil-related obstacles to multilateral cooperation, such as when an importer’s attempt to curry favor with a petrostate prevents multilateral cooperation on security issues.” Though he doesn’t substantiate statistically that higher prices lead to more conflict through these channels, he implies it heavily. For example, he writes that, “the low oil prices of the 1990s have given way to higher and more volatile prices, increasing the magnitude of the consequences one can expect from oil-conflict linkages.” While the emerging academic evidence may validate the claim that higher oil prices lead to more aggression, the historical and anecdotal evidence is somewhat mixed, and understandably so. Oil price is clearly only one of many inputs into foreign policy decision-making, and an indirect one at that. No leader thinks, “Now that oil is at $X, I’m going to invade my neighbor.” Context obviously matters, too: No one imagines that Ecuador or Norway is going to invade or try to blackmail a neighbor just because spot prices rise 15 or 30 percent in a given six-month period. Price levels seep into decision-making **more** subtly, affecting interlocking beliefs about strategic behavior generally and specific cases more particularly; they may fuel self-confidence by shoring up budget outlooks and funding the tools of more aggressive behavior in contexts where such behavior could conceivably make sense. Moreover, there are many contravening (and occasionally countervailing) complications. Prominent among these is the fact that low oil prices can incentivize states to “wave the flag” in order to distract from domestic difficulties—so the impact of low oil prices might lead to more aggressive behavior in some cases. That suggests that neither high nor low prices per se may be the trigger affecting behavior, but rather notable changes in price that become politically salient in one way or another. And there’s also the tricky issue of timing: Over what timeframe does increased oil revenue fuel aggression? Is it in anticipation of higher prices, in direct response to the current pricing levels, or is there more of a lag in effect as oil revenue slowly shores up—or is expected to shore up—budgets and military spending over time? The answer might depend on specific cases and leadership cadres. There is also a scaling problem. If a 20 percent rise in oil prices makes a more assertive foreign policy more likely in a given country, does a 40 percent rise make it twice as likely? Or put differently, how much of a difference in price, and presumably in expected revenues, does it take to cross a threshold where it might have an impact on decision-making? Are there multiple thresholds? Russia exemplifies these issues. Taking the same long view as George W. Bush in his interview, it seems self-evident that rising oil prices and higher government revenues over the course of the 2000s gave Putin confidence, funded military expansion and modernization, and helped enable Russia’s most revanchist tendencies. Between 2003 and 2013, Russian military expenditure doubled as the price of Brent crude rose from a low of around $20 a barrel in 2001 to a high of more than $140 a barrel in 2008. Russia, as the saying goes, is a gas station with nuclear weapons**;** a higher pump price thus means more weapons**, nuclear and otherwise**. But when you cross reference this conclusion with specific acts of Russian aggression over the past roughly twenty years, the picture gets much more complicated. When Russia invaded Georgia in August 2008, oil was above $100 a barrel. Same with Russia’s invasion of Crimea in 2014. But Russia also dramatically intervened in Syria in September 2015, when oil had dropped to around $50 a barrel and the economy was sputtering due to both low energy prices and Western sanctions. Here, many analysts plausibly described these interventions as a way of rallying Russians to the flag and distracting them from domestic hardship. More likely, Putin saw an emergency in Syria that simply had to be dealt with, no matter the cost or risk; the Assad regime was in danger of collapsing, and Syria is Russia’s only ally offering ports and bases in the Mediterranean basin. So Russia is a bit of a mixed bag, but on balance its behavior—especially over a long timeframe—appears to support the thesis. Saudi Arabia’s role in the 1973 Yom Kippur war also illustrates the tricky question of timing. Saudi funding of the effort was enabled by a financial buffer created by a rise in revenues from the late 1960s, and was likely justified by an expected rise in revenues due to an oil price increase that was anticipated, in part, because of the very war it was in the process of financing. Its reserves had already grown so large that, for the first time, Saudi Arabia could ride out a supply (and revenue) disruption and still finance a war. But the Saudis helped finance a war that they themselves did not participate in. So if rising oil prices led to greater interstate aggression, it did so in this case in a particularly indirect way. These are all interesting and important nuances that attenuate any direct causal connection one might be tempted to draw between oil prices and conflict. So it would be nice to know if historical studies have shown any significant statistical relationship between fluctuations in key sources of government revenue (and what memoirs and archives tell us about how those situations were perceived) and interstate behavior. It would be even nicer to drill down into such studies to find cases where specific lucrative commodities—for example, European colonial profits such as from British opium sales in China, or cotton grown in Egypt—made any difference in the behavior of the relevant governments. Alas, such studies do not exist. But regardless of the timeframe and mechanism, academic and historical studies alike do suggest that higher oil prices have generally lead to more aggressive, or at least riskier, behavior in recent decades—whether in anticipation of higher prices, immediately in their wake, or only after sufficient revenue stores are built up. So are we at a point in the energy price cycle where, all else equal, we should expect greater interstate conflict? We’re close to Hendrix’s $77 a barrel threshold, above which oil-exporters are significantly more dispute-prone than non-oil exporters. But given the nuances just described, this specific price threshold is probably too cute. The more realistic argument to make is about the effect of a higher-price vs. lower-price paradigm over a multi-year horizon (particularly in light of the timing issue and potential lag). And if the period of the past two years (when Brent largely hovered between $40 and $60) was a lower-price paradigm, 2018-19 is potentially gearing up to be a higher-price paradigm driven by continued supply cuts by OPEC, tight global inventories, and—in a coincidental way—heightened geopolitical risks. We’ll see how these factors play out, but if oil prices remain elevated we may begin to subtly feel their effects on behavior by Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and perhaps others. None of this is to say that oil prices are the most important factor in the geopolitical outlook over the near, medium, or long-term. The reputed hawkishness of Mike Pompeo and John Bolton, the effect of the upcoming mid-term elections on Trump’s decision-making, and reactions to potential exogenous shocks (for example, a major clash in Syria between U.S. or Israeli and Iranian or Russian forces) will play a much more direct and important role in shaping the geopolitical landscape. But a higher oil price regime (if it holds) could well make petrostates like Iran, Saudi, and Russia more aggressive—either in challenging the United States and Europe in the case of Russia, or by exacerbating ongoing proxy conflicts in and around the Middle East in the cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia. Given these and other dynamics, we should expect a bumpy ride ahead.

### 1AR – AT: Human Rights DA

#### Sanctions worsen Human Rights – multiple warrants:

#### 1] Broadness – risk-averse banks will cut-off human rights groups.

WOLA 20 [(Washington Office of Latin America), "New Report Documents How U.S. Sanctions Have Directly Aggravated Venezuela’s Economic Crisis", <https://www.wola.org/2020/10/new-report-us-sanctions-aggravated-venezuelas-economic-crisis/>, WOLA, 10-29-2020] TDI

A tendency towards risk aversion has led banks and financial institutions operating in Venezuela or with Venezuelan institutions to over-comply with U.S. sanctions. This has had an impact across Venezuelan society. As a result, human rights groups, humanitarian organizations, and private companies have had their bank accounts closed, and seen legitimate transactions denied or frozen for long periods of time.

#### 2] Restricts access of basic goods.

WOLA 20 [(Washington Office of Latin America), "New Report Documents How U.S. Sanctions Have Directly Aggravated Venezuela’s Economic Crisis", <https://www.wola.org/2020/10/new-report-us-sanctions-aggravated-venezuelas-economic-crisis/>, WOLA, 10-29-2020] TDI

The report details how U.S. sanctions are affecting the most vulnerable in Venezuela. While U.S. sanctions don’t explicitly restrict food and medicine imports, Venezuela’s economy is heavily dependent on oil revenue as a source of hard currency so that private and public businesses can import needed goods. U.S. sanctions have contributed to a steep drop in Venezuelan imports. The report finds that the value of average monthly public imports dropped by 46 percent (to $500 million) in 2019 and another 50 percent (to $250 million) in 2020. A tendency towards risk aversion has led banks and financial institutions operating in Venezuela or with Venezuelan institutions to over-comply with U.S. sanctions. This has had an impact across Venezuelan society. As a result, human rights groups, humanitarian organizations, and private companies have had their bank accounts closed, and seen legitimate transactions denied or frozen for long periods of time. While it is common for proponents of U.S. sectoral sanctions to claim that the measures have no broader impact because all of the pre-sanctions oil revenue was stolen by Venezuela’s ruling elite, this is inaccurate. While the public sector is rife with corruption, it is simply false that none of Venezuela’s oil revenue in the years prior to U.S. sanctions was used to facilitate imports. In fact, an analysis of the percentage variation in imports and oil exports in Venezuela from 1998 to 2018 shows a close association—meaning revenue from oil exports has long been used to cover imports of everything from food, fuel, medicine and other basic goods.

#### 3] Inequality – sanctions disproportionately affect minorities which hurts democratic transition.

Rossi 23 [(Rina, member of Survivors + Allies, a UC Berkeley alumna, and graduate student at New York University where she is a FLAS Fellow. Her writing has been published in the Kennedy School Review, Latino Book Review and Georgetown Public Policy Review), "US Sanctions are Robbing Venezuelans of Basic Human Rights", <https://gppreview.com/2023/07/03/us-sanctions-are-robbing-venezuelans-of-basic-human-rights/>, Georgetown Policy Review, 7-3-2023] TDI

Recently, the Biden Administration has indicated that it will begin to provide sanctions relief. However, Venezuelan opposition representative Fernando Blasi argues that these strides are proceeding too slowly. Specifically, Blasi asserts that sanctions left in place by the Trump administration still persist, and the Biden Administration has not done much to ease sanctions other than supplying a license to Chevron allowing them to resume restricted oil production in Venezuela. According to Blasi, these Trump-era sanctions prioritized a regime change in Venezuela. Blasi noted that sanctions relief would provide reassurance for Venezuelans struggling with the stark reality of inflation in the country, which has led to school teachers walking out of their jobs to protest their meager salaries, and many children suffering from malnutrition and stunted growth. In particular, a third of Venezuelans are not getting enough food to eat, as estimated by the United Nations’ World Food Programme in 2020. Clearly, citizens are suffering, and these sanctions are not making the country more democratic. The economic burdens that US sanctions imposed on Venezuelans disrupt access to basic human necessities like healthcare, food and running water. Venezuela’s water agency, Hidrocapital, reported that 15-20 percent of Venezuelans do not have access to potable water in Caracas because the government cannot obtain access to foreign-constructed parts necessary to repair damaged pipes and pumps due to US sanctions placed on the foreign water pump companies. This creates a negative feedback loop: While Hidrocapital trucks are instructed to carry water to communities in need, the lack of truck parts due to the sanctions on foreign companies has decreased the number of water trucks that deliver to those in need by 75 percent. Due to the lack of water, along with food and medical shortages, there was a 31 percent increase in the general mortality rate in Venezuela from 2017 to 2018, a period that also saw significant increases in US sanctions, amounting to more than 40,000 deaths. Furthermore, this lack of potable water has led Venezuelans to take matter into their own hands, some of whom collect water in buckets, in order to survive. As of November 2022, it has been estimated that Venezuelans suffer from no water for 109.2 hours in each 162 hour week. Additionally, a United Nations report found that women and adolescent girls, the LGBTQI+ community, pregnant women, disabled individuals, indigenous people, impoverished Venezuelans and older persons are disproportionately affected by the US sanctions in Venezuela. The message is clear: sanctions cause further inequities that undermine the democratization of power. Unclear to the majority of Americans, however, is that the US Department of State, at the command of multiple US Presidents, has been orchestrating a large-scale human rights crisis for decades. These sanctions are illegal, and violate the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS). Ironically, the head of the OAS has defended the US sanctions despite the violations of their own charter, raising significant concerns about the legitimacy and biases of the organization. Regardless, executive orders imposing sanctions must note that the US is suffering from a “national emergency” and is facing “an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security” due to Venezuela’s actions. We must condemn these malicious and inhumane sanctions that are stripping Venezuelans of basic human rights. We must hold the Biden Administration, who indicated in 2021 that they were in “no rush” to lift the US sanctions on Venezuela, accountable. Likewise, legislators, think tanks and non-governmental organizations who claim to promote human rights must accurately spread global awareness on the unfortunate reality of how US sanctions have contributed to the Venezuelan economic and humanitarian crisis. In compliance with the idealized American values of equality, justice, and humanitarianism, we must stand in solidarity with our Venezuelan brothers and sisters, hold our representatives accountable, and continue to spotlight how the ills of the US State Department have detrimental effects on people and democracy.

### 1AR – AT: Oil Industry DA

#### No Impact to Biodiversity.

Hance 18 [(Jeremy, wildlife blogger for the Guardian and a journalist with Mongabay focusing on forests, indigenous people, climate change and more), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/radical-conservation/2018/jan/16/biodiversity-extinction-tipping-point-planetary-boundary>, “Could biodiversity destruction lead to a global tipping point?”, 1-16-2018, Guardian] TDI

Just over 250 million years ago, the planet suffered what may be described as its greatest holocaust: ninety-six percent of marine genera (plural of genus) and seventy percent of land vertebrate vanished for good. Even insects suffered a mass extinction – the only time before or since. Entire classes of animals – like trilobites – went out like a match in the wind. But what’s arguably most fascinating about this event – known as the Permian-Triassic extinction or more poetically, the Great Dying – is the fact that anything survived at all. Life, it seems, is so ridiculously adaptable that not only did thousands of species make it through whatever killed off nearly everything (no one knows for certain though theories abound) but, somehow, after millions of years life even recovered and went on to write new tales. Even as the Permian-Triassic extinction event shows the fragility of life, it also proves its resilience in the long-term. The lessons of such mass extinctions – five to date and arguably a sixth happening as I write – inform science today. Given that extinction levels are currently 1,000 (some even say 10,000) times the background rate, researchers have long worried about our current destruction of biodiversity – and what that may mean for our future Earth and ourselves. In 2009, a group of researchers identified nine global boundaries for the planet that if passed could theoretically push the Earth into an uninhabitable state for our species. These global boundaries include climate change, freshwater use, ocean acidification and, yes, biodiversity loss (among others). The group has since updated the terminology surrounding biodiversity, now calling it “biosphere integrity,” but that hasn’t spared it from critique. A paper last year in Trends in Ecology & Evolution scathingly attacked the idea of any global biodiversity boundary. “It makes no sense that there exists a tipping point of biodiversity loss beyond which the Earth will collapse,” said co-author and ecologist, José Montoya, with Paul Sabatier Univeristy in France. “There is no rationale for this.” Montoya wrote the paper along with Ian Donohue, an ecologist at Trinity College in Ireland and Stuart Pimm, one of the world’s leading experts on extinctions, with Duke University in the US. Montoya, Donohue and Pimm argue that there isn’t evidence of a point at which loss of species leads to ecosystem collapse, globally or even locally. If the planet didn’t collapse after the Permian-Triassic extinction event, it won’t collapse now – though our descendants may well curse us for the damage we’ve done. Instead, according to the researchers, every loss of species counts. But the damage is gradual and incremental, not a sudden plunge. Ecosystems, according to them, slowly degrade but never fail outright. “Of more than 600 experiments of biodiversity effects on various functions, none showed a collapse,” Montoya said. “In general, the loss of species has a detrimental effect on ecosystem functions...We progressively lose pollination services, water quality, plant biomass, and many other important functions as we lose species. But we never observe a critical level of biodiversity over which functions collapse.”

#### Venezuela not key – we’ll insert a picture of the 36 global bio-diversity hotspots.

IFAW 24 [(International Fund for Animal Welfare), "What are biodiversity hotspots?", <https://www.ifaw.org/journal/what-are-biodiversity-hotspots>, 4-9-2024, IFAW] TDI

What does ‘biodiversity hotspot’ mean? There are 36 areas around the globe that are labeled as biodiversity hotspots. To be considered a biodiversity hotspot, the region must meet these criteria: It must have at least 1,500 native vascular plant species that are found nowhere else on Earth. Vascular plants are those that have conducting tissue, like ferns, trees, and flowers. It must have lost 70% or more of its original vegetation. Biodiversity hotspots are areas that have experienced the extreme end of the impacts of human activity, climate change, and other threats. The origin of biodiversity hotspots goes back to the 1980s. In 1988, British ecologist Norman Myers published a list of 10 areas he identified as tropical forest hotspots, due to their high biodiversity and high levels of habitat loss. In the late 1990s, researchers performed an extensive global review and proposed the criteria listed above. This led to 25 areas being officially designated as biodiversity hotspots. In 2005, the number grew to 34. In 2011, researchers recognized the 35th hotspot, the Forests of East Australia. In 2016, the 36th and newest hotspot was recognized, the North American Coastal Plain.



#### No Extinction from Warming – new studies prove over-hype and tech solves.

* Extinction Tipping Point is implausible – we’re on track for 3 degrees, not 4-5 degrees
* Tech and Energy Modernization Solve – Renewable Energy is replacing Fossil Fuels which reduces Climate Mortality by a rate of 5.

Nordhaus 20 [(Ted, American author, environmental policy expert, and the director of research at The Breakthrough Institute, citing new climate change forecasts), “Ignore the Fake Climate Debate”, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ignore-the-fake-climate-debate-11579795816>, Wall Street Journal, 1-23-2020] TDI

Beyond the headlines and social media, where Greta Thunberg, Donald Trump and the online armies of climate “alarmists” and “deniers” do battle, there is a real climate debate bubbling along in scientific journals, conferences and, occasionally, even in the halls of Congress. It gets a lot less attention than the boisterous and fake debate that dominates our public discourse, but it is much more relevant to how the world might actually address the problem. In the real climate debate, no one denies the relationship between human emissions of greenhouse gases and a warming climate. Instead, the disagreement comes down to different views of climate risk in the face of multiple, cascading uncertainties. On one side of the debate are optimists, who believe that, with improving technology and greater affluence, our societies will prove quite adaptable to a changing climate. On the other side are pessimists, who are more concerned about the risks associated with rapid, large-scale and poorly understood transformations of the climate system. But most pessimists do not believe that runaway climate change or a hothouse earth are plausible scenarios, much less that human extinction is imminent. And most optimists recognize a need for policies to address climate change, even if they don’t support the radical measures that Ms. Thunberg and others have demanded. In the fake climate debate, both sides agree that economic growth and reduced emissions vary inversely; it’s a zero-sum game. In the real debate, the relationship is much more complicated. Long-term economic growth is associated with both rising per capita energy consumption and slower population growth. For this reason, as the world continues to get richer, higher per capita energy consumption is likely to be offset by a lower population. A richer world will also likely be more technologically advanced, which means that energy consumption should be less carbon-intensive than it would be in a poorer, less technologically advanced future. In fact, a number of the high-emissions scenarios produced by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change involve futures in which the world is relatively poor and populous and less technologically advanced. Affluent, developed societies are also much better equipped to respond to climate extremes and natural disasters. That’s why natural disasters kill and displace many more people in poor societies than in rich ones. It’s not just seawalls and flood channels that make us resilient; it’s air conditioning and refrigeration, modern transportation and communications networks, early warning systems, first responders and public health bureaucracies. New research published in the journal Global Environmental Change finds that global economic growth over the last decade has reduced climate mortality by a factor of five, with the **greatest benefits documented in the poorest nations.** In low-lying Bangladesh, 300,000 people died in Cyclone Bhola in 1970, when 80% of the population lived in extreme poverty. In 2019, with less than 20% of the population living in extreme poverty, Cyclone Fani killed just five people. “Poor nations are most vulnerable to a changing climate. The fastest way to reduce that vulnerability is through economic development.” So while it is true that poor nations are most vulnerable to a changing climate, it is also true that the fastest way to reduce that vulnerability is through economic development, which requires infrastructure and industrialization. Those activities, in turn, require cement, steel, process heat and chemical inputs, all of which are impossible to produce today without fossil fuels. For this and other reasons, the world is unlikely to cut emissions fast enough to stabilize global temperatures at less than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, the long-standing international target, much less 1.5 degrees, as many activists now demand. But recent forecasts also suggest that many of the worst-case climate scenarios produced in the last decade, which assumed unbounded economic growth and fossil-fuel development, are also very unlikely. There is still substantial uncertainty about how sensitive global temperatures will be to higher emissions over the long-term. But the best estimates now suggest that the world is on track for 3 degrees of warming by the end of this century, not 4 or 5 degrees as was once feared. That is due in part to slower economic growth in the wake of the global financial crisis, but also to decades of technology policy and energy-modernization efforts. “We have better and cleaner technologies available today because policy-makers in the U.S. and elsewhere set out to develop those technologies.” The energy intensity of the global economy continues to fall. Lower-carbon natural gas **has** displaced coal **as the primary source of new fossil energy**. The falling cost of wind and solar energy has begun to have an effect on the growth of fossil fuels. Even nuclear energy has made a modest comeback in Asia.

#### Venezuelan Oil Emissions not key – it’s oil is a drop into the bucket to the 74 million barrels per day produced by the top 10 oil producers.

EIA No Date [(US Energy Information Administration), "What countries are the top producers and consumers of oil?", <https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=709&t=6>, EIA] TDI



### 1AR – AT: QPQ Counterplan

#### Maduro will do anything to stay in power and will cheat on the condition.

Meakem ’24 [Allison; Associate Editor, Foreign Policy. “Venezuela’s Strongman Wonders Whether to Risk Free Elections for Sanctions Relief.” https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/01/02/venezuela-elections-maduro-machado-economy-sanctions-migration/] TDI

Now, Maduro is in a bind: If he wants enduring sanctions relief from the United States, he will have to allow Machado to run. Her chances of ousting him in a free and fair election are good. Machado is considered popular and won the opposition primary with more than 90 percent of the vote.

So far, Machado is the only declared candidate in the yet-to-be-confirmed presidential race. Maduro is widely expected to run again as the PSUV’s candidate; Venezuelan presidents serve six-year terms and face no limits on reelection. Only a plurality is required to win.

Maduro appears to be worried about his prospects. He recently called a referendum on whether Venezuela should incorporate the disputed (and oil-rich) Essequibo region, which falls within Guyana’s international boundaries but which most Venezuelans claim as their own. The move — approved by 95 percent of voters but with disputed turnout — was widely perceived as an attempt to curry nationalist fervor ahead of the expected elections. Now, there are genuine fears of a land war in Latin America. The things autocrats will do to stay in power.

### 1AR – AT: Lima Group Sanctions Counterplan

#### The Lima Group fails.

Bosworth ’22 [James; Founder, Hxagon. “Latin America Needs to Learn From the Lima Group’s Failure on Venezuela.” https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/maduro-venezuela-lima-group-latin-america-dictatorships/] TDI

Today, it is clear that the Lima Group failed to achieve its lofty goals. Since its formation five years ago, every country in South America has seen a transition of power except Venezuela — and some more than one. Yet Maduro sits more comfortably in Caracas now than he did before the Lima Group was created. At this point, of the 12 original members of the Lima Group, at least five have turned from Guaido and now recognize Maduro’s regime as the legitimate government of Venezuela. Brazil’s former President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, who is running against current President Jair Bolsonaro in the October election, will likely add to that number next year.

#### Transnational organized crime is a myth.

Mueller ’21 [John; Political science department & senior research scientist, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, Ohio State University; Visiting fellow, Brookings Institution, Hoover Institution and Norwegian Nobel Institute. “Proliferation, Terrorism, Humanitarian Intervention, and Other Problems.” *The Stupidity of War*, Chapter 7.]

In 2011, a White House report proclaimed that transnational organized crime poses a significant and growing threat to national and international security, with dire implications for public safety, public health, democratic institutions, and economic stability. However, as Peter Andreas points out in a study of the issue, it is not at all clear that international crime is increasing as an overall percentage of global commerce. In fact, trade liberalization has sharply reduced incentives to engage in smuggling practices designed to evade taxes and tariffs, which were historically a driving force of illicit commerce. More importantly, he continues, the image of an octopus-like network of crime syndicates that runs the underworld through its expansive tentacles is a fiction invented by sensationalistic journalists, opportunistic politicians, and Hollywood scriptwriters. In contrast, international crime tends to be defined more by fragmentation and loose informal networks than by concentration and hierarchical organization.67 Thus, like a parasite, international crime works best when it keeps a low profile and best of all when no one even notices it is there. Thus, by its very nature it does not want to take over the international system or threaten national security. It has no incentive to kill or dominate its host.

# Neg

### Oil Industry DA

#### Sanctions causally decrease Venezuelan oil production.

Oliveros 20 [(Luis, Economist, Central University of Venezuela (UCV)), "The Impact of Financial and Oil Sanctions on the Venezuelan Economy", <https://www.wola.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Oliveros-report-summary-ENG.pdf>, Washington Office on Latin America , October 2020] TDI

EFFECTS ON THE OIL INDUSTRY A. COMERCIALIZATION OF CRUDE OIL AND OIL PRODUCTS However, the sanctions have had a significant impact on the oil industry. While the 2017 sanctions did not affect the commercialization (export and import) of crude oil and its products between the United States and Venezuela, they negatively impacted Venezuelan oil production due to the fact that it became much more difficult for state oil company PDVSA and its partners to access credit. This not only affected access to financial credit (creating new debt, as well as restructuring and re-negotiating with creditors), but also providers, clients, and partners, which are fundamental to maintain stable levels of oil production in any company The oil sanctions implemented against PDVSA in January 2019, which prohibited exports to the main U.S. market for Venezuelan oil, resulted in an increase of exports to China, India, and other countries. In a short time, these sanctions produced an accelerated decline in the company’s client portfolio and cargo transporters, resulting in a considerable contraction in oil exports from the country. Moreover, PDVSA was forced to provide discounts in order to sell its crude oil and pay a premium to acquire fuel and other needed products (detailed information about this is rather opaque, and thus it is difficult to determine the precise overall loss). B. CALCULATING THE IMPACT ON OIL PRODUCTION AND FISCAL REVENUES Since August 2017, the average monthly production of Venezuelan oil has fallen almost 5 times faster than during the pre-sanctions period; in the 18 months prior to the imposition of the 2017 sanctions, the average monthly decline in oil production was 1 percent.

#### That’s good – Venezuela’s oil is uniquely destructive on bio-diversity and carbon emissions.

Berg 21 [(Ryan, Ryan C. Berg is director of the Americas Program and head of the Future of Venezuela Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He is also an adjunct professor at the Catholic University of America and visiting research fellow at the University of Oxford’s Changing Character of War Programme. His research focuses on U.S.-Latin America relations, authoritarian regimes, armed conflict, strategic competition, and trade and development issues. He also studies Latin America’s criminal groups and the region’s governance and security challenges. Previously, Dr. Berg was a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where he helped lead its Latin America Studies Program.), "The Role of the Oil Sector in Venezuela’s Environmental Degradation and Economic Rebuilding", <https://www.csis.org/analysis/role-oil-sector-venezuelas-environmental-degradation-and-economic-rebuilding#:~:text=This%20is%20driven%20by%20the,simply%20burn%20it%20off%20instead.&text=The%20carbon%20dioxide%20and%20methane,warming%20and%20accelerating%20climate%20change>., CSIS, 10-12-2021] TDI

The Issue Venezuela’s oil sector currently sits at historic lows, both in terms of its production and its environmental impact. Decrepit pipelines and decaying refineries, unrestricted flaring of greenhouse gases, and government hostility toward environmental groups have all contributed to a growing crisis in one of the world’s most biodiverse countries. While the Maduro regime often cites international sanctions as the cause of decline, Venezuela’s oil sector woes are rooted in kleptocracy, incompetence, workforce mismanagement, and corruption dating back to the Chávez era. Even in a scenario of political transition, where sanctions relief would be on the table, it is unrealistic to assume that the ongoing environmental degradation caused by the country’s crumbling oil sector would vanish automatically. Thus, questions of conservation and biodiversity protection should be elevated as key considerations in negotiations taking place between the opposition and the Maduro regime. The international community can do its part by elevating the voice of civil society actors within Venezuela and working to highlight the Maduro regime’s disregard for the environment in the lead up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference. Introduction The grave consequences of Venezuela’s environmental degradation can be felt in every corner of the country—and even the wider region. In the waterways near the Caribbean Sea, fishermen haul in oil-soaked catches from blackened boats. Recent satellite imagery provided by the National Aeronautical and Space Administration of Lake Maracaibo, one of the country’s most ecologically diverse areas owing to its brackish waters, shows the body of water swirling with oil slicks.1 Oil workers fear for their safety as decrepit infrastructure contributes to mounting problems. Within the Amazon, Indigenous communities and environmental activists contend with well-armed criminal groups expanding the practice of illegal mining.2 While these challenges have been percolating for years, a combination of policy, corruption, incompetence, neglect, and criminal intent under President Nicolás Maduro has accelerated the onset of an acute environmental crisis in Venezuela. Despite paying lip service to the ideals of “eco-socialism,” the regime in Caracas has presided over a significant decline in environmental standards. In 2016, for instance, Venezuela’s state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA) announced it would stop reporting oil spills. That same year, Maduro announced the creation of the Orinoco Mining Arc, an expansive area in the south of the country that largely served as a legal patina for an uptick in illegal mining by criminal syndicates and guerrilla groups in this region.3 The United Nations has denounced the exploitation and abuses that take place in the Orinoco Mining Arc.4 Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international bodies that have spoken out against this downward spiral have, in turn, been criticized and targeted by the Venezuelan government, which appears to have little interest in being held accountable for its ecological malfeasance.5 While the list of environmental challenges Venezuela faces runs the gamut from deforestation to chemical pollution to poaching and more, one of the most consequential challenges by far is the decrepit state of the country’s oil sector. The Venezuelan petrostate has the dual burden of depending on oil for nearly 99 percent of its export revenue while simultaneously being unable to make necessary repairs to oil infrastructure or retain a skilled workforce thanks to years of mismanagement, corruption, and kleptocracy.6 Between 2010 and 2016, PDVSA self-reported more than 46,000 oil spills, a number that has likely increased since official reports stopped in 2016. Venezuela also ranks in the top seven countries in the world for gas flaring, the combustion of natural-gas byproducts that release major quantities of methane into the atmosphere.7 Currently, these problematic trends show few signs of abating. Indeed, Tareck El Aissami, Venezuela’s minister of petroleum and of industries and national production, has announced a plan to more than double oil production to 1.5 million barrels per day by the end of 2021.8 While oil increases have been halting and inconsistent, any rapid increases in oil production under the Maduro regime—without concomitantly swift improvements in oil infrastructure—will only mean more spills, more flaring, and an even greater toll on the environment. Despite paying lip service to the ideals of “eco-socialism,” the regime in Caracas has presided over a significant decline in environmental standards. Rising Venezuelan oil production is not solely the product of domestic policy, either. Venezuela is an increasingly viable partner in the eyes of companies such as the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), which has shown a disposition to return to Venezuela after a potential softening of the U.S. sanctions architecture. The push to increase oil production is likely to continue, as the two most probable political outcomes for Venezuela both feature a potential relaxation of international sanctions. In any political transition that hands over power to the Venezuelan opposition, the United States and the international community would likely taper off sanctions dramatically. Meanwhile, the removal of sanctions serves as a powerful incentive for the Maduro regime to participate in its current negotiations in Mexico City with the Venezuelan opposition. Certainly, oil will remain a central facet of Venezuela’s economy for the foreseeable future; a critical question remains whether the oil sector will continue on its downward trajectory toward greater ecological devastation or if Venezuela can chart a more environmentally sustainable course. This brief proceeds in four parts. First, it sketches the decline in Venezuela’s oil sector from the 1950s to today. Next, it details the severe and manifold environmental consequences of current Venezuelan oil production. It then outlines how oil would impact a possible political transition in Venezuela and what such a transition would mean for oil and the environment. Lastly, it concludes with a series of policy recommendations for how the United States can broach the tangled relationship between economic recovery, political transition, and environmental degradation. The Decline of an Oil Powerhouse Venezuela has been producing oil commercially for over a century, and today the country possesses roughly 300 billion barrels of proven oil reserves—the largest in the world.9 However, Venezuela’s oil production has undergone wild swings over the latter half of the twentieth century, shifting from record-high production in the early 1970s, with over 3.5 million barrels per day (bpd), to a precipitous decline through the 1980s and early 1990s, to once again eclipsing 3 million bpd in the late 1990s, to the current, paltry numbers of around 500,000 bpd. In the decades following the discovery and commercial exploitation of oil in Venezuela, its production was largely the purview of foreign companies. In 1943, the government passed the Hydrocarbons Law, which required oil companies to turn over 50 percent of their profits to the Venezuelan state. During this period, Venezuela was the world’s third largest oil producer, trailing only the Soviet Union and the United States. This gave the state an important source of income but, as in many petrostates, bound Venezuela tightly to the fluctuating global price of oil.10 However, the consequences of Venezuela’s overreliance on oil rents became increasingly clear during the 1950s, when overproduction led to a steady decline in oil prices. In response to the drop in prices, Venezuela banded together with fellow oil-producing economies to found the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960. OPEC sought to manage the supply of oil and prevent the kind of overproduction that tends to drive prices down. The organization proved successful; first it brought a modest rise in prices, then it exceeded all expectations in 1973. That year, a five-month embargo coordinated by OPEC against countries supporting Israel in the October War saw oil prices spike from around $3 to $12 per barrel.11 Venezuela rode this boom to record the highest GDP per capita in Latin America throughout the 1970s, while then-president Carlos Andrés Pérez triumphantly announced the arrival of “La Gran Venezuela,” which would use oil wealth to further develop the nation. One of the first steps in this process was to decrease reliance on the operations of foreign oil companies, nationalizing the industry through the creation of PDVSA in 1976. PDVSA by and large succeeded in producing oil, managing to reach a 2.3 million bpd output during its first four years of operation.12 Yet elected officials proved far less capable when it came to realizing the dream of “La Gran Venezuela.” Several successive administrations turned a blind eye to corruption, while a multitude of state-owned enterprises provided ample opportunity for embezzlement, fueling Venezuela’s budding kleptocracy. Some estimates valued the total amount lost to corruption and mismanagement during these decades at over $100 billion.13 President Pérez himself was removed from his second term by the Supreme Court after he was found to have embezzled nearly $3 million. These scandals emerged even as PDVSA neared record-high levels of oil production of around 3.5 million bpd in 1997 and 1998. Venezuela’s failure during the late twentieth century to curb endemic corruption and reinvest oil revenues in building a more diversified economy set the stage for the oil industry’s downfall. While the cracks in Venezuela’s oil industry were already visible in the 1990s, the policies of Hugo Chávez, who swept into power on a disruptive leftist agenda in 1999, exacerbated those cracks into gaping holes. Chávez initially sought to curb the country’s vulnerability to price fluctuations by reinvigorating OPEC to keep oil between $22 and $28 per barrel.14 However, opposition to Chávez’s authoritarian style of governance mounted. Following an attempted coup in 2002, thousands of workers went on strike, calling for new elections. PDVSA workers were heavily involved in this strike, dropping oil production to as low as 50,000 bpd. Chávez responded by firing around 18,000 PDVSA employees, nearly half of the company’s total workforce at the time, replacing them with retirees and regime loyalists.15 The consequences for PDVSA’s operations were grave: the strike and its aftermath precipitated a large outflow of talent from the oil sector. After 2003, Venezuela would never again hit its oil production target of 3 million bpd. Just four years later, Venezuela’s oil industry took another hit when Chávez ordered the expropriation of ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips’ assets in 2007. These companies had been brought in to develop Venezuela’s Orinoco Belt, which contains vast but difficult-to-process, superheavy crude-oil reserves. The expropriation prompted a flight of foreign capital from Venezuela, leaving the country unable to access much of its heavy crude reserves efficiently.16 Furthermore, without foreign direct investment, Venezuela found it nearly impossible to update its oil infrastructure, leading to dilapidated pipelines and hazardous equipment that exacerbated the environmental toll of the country’s oil production. Simultaneously, Venezuela under Chávez built a series of unsustainable economic ties with China, Russia, and Cuba. In the case of China and Russia, Venezuela racked up large amounts of debt. For instance, it has been the recipient of 45 percent of all Chinese policy-bank loans since 2005.17 Russian investment has been comparably lower and primarily related to military financing, although the oil company Rosneft has spent over $1 billion on oil-field development in Venezuela as well.18 Without cash to pay down these debts, the Chávez administration was forced to dip into oil exports, and roughly a third of PDVSA’s oil production in 2012 was sent to China as repayment in kind. Oil exports were further diluted by Venezuela’s partnership with Cuba, which in pre-Covid-19 years received as much as 90,000 bpd of heavily discounted oil in order to circumvent U.S. sanctions.19 Squeezed by foreign creditors and facing a dramatic decline in domestic production, Venezuela found itself increasingly pushed into a corner with precious few exit strategies. Nicolás Maduro, who ascended to the presidency in 2013 following Chávez’s death, continued many of his predecessors’ policies. Foreign debt grew steadily, and inflation began its precipitous climb from double to quadruple digits. When oil prices began to slide in 2014, ending with oil selling for under $30 a barrel in 2015—a far cry from the record-setting $140–$180 per barrel that Chávez enjoyed and subsequently squandered—the negative trends assailing Venezuela’s economy came to a head.20 A workforce gutted of technical and managerial expertise waged a losing battle against collapsing infrastructure that was already hemorrhaging oil into the surrounding environment. Production declined precipitously from 2.5 million bpd in 2016 to 1.5 million bpd in 2018. By 2020, Venezuelan oil output had slid to 500,000 bpd, an overall loss in production of 3 million bpd from 1998 figures.21 Following Venezuela’s presidential crisis and U.S. recognition of Juan Guaidó as constitutional interim president in January 2019, Venezuela found itself under an intensified sanctions regime. In contrast to previous targeted sanctions, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced a sanctions effort against PDVSA as an entity.22 However, while the Maduro regime deflects blame and points to sanctions as the root of the oil sector’s ills, the trends of corruption, kleptocracy, authoritarianism, and disregard for decrepit infrastructure all have legacies stretching back years, if not decades. The seeds of Venezuela’s oil-sector destruction were sown by Chávez and watered by Maduro. Therefore, it does not follow that the removal of sanctions would swiftly resurrect an industry that had been struggling to stay upright years before their imposition.23 The seeds of Venezuela’s oil-sector destruction were sown by Chávez and watered by Maduro. The Environmental Impact of Venezuela’s Oil Sector The consequences of Venezuela’s crumbling oil infrastructure are both varied and severe. These include coastal spills that have proven devastating to marine biodiversity, as well as inland pipeline ruptures and unrestricted flaring that produces vast amounts of harmful gasses. Further compounding this environmental degradation is the Venezuelan government’s and PDVSA’s reluctance to share information regarding oil spills. This leaves local communities and international watchdogs to do the heavy lifting in reporting on environmental issues. Yet their cries often fall on deaf ears, as the government in Caracas remains unwilling or unable to fix major environmental risks in a timely or effective manner. The Maduro regime often prevents scientists and experts from accessing areas where spills have occurred and declines to report on cleanup methods—or indeed whether there was a cleanup effort at all. The clearest manifestations of the sector’s impact on the surrounding environment are oil spills. Many of these occur along the country’s coastal refineries, where heavy crude oil is processed before it can be shipped out. In 2012, the large Amuay refinery exploded, sending a toxic fireball into the air for days. By the time the Chávez government tamed the fire, it was the largest refinery explosion in in 15 years, killing nearly 50 people and injuring hundreds more.24 In July 2020, an oil spill originating in the El Palito refinery leaked over 20,000 barrels into the water, spreading into the protected Morrocoy National Park, an ecologically rich area home to mangroves, coral reefs, and several endangered species.25 The spill itself was not detected until August, when independent satellite reporting confirmed the existence of oil in the waters near Morrocoy. In late August, PDVSA announced it was taking steps to clean up the oil, but the company neither addressed the crumbling infrastructure that led to the spill nor invested in cleaning anything beyond beaches, allowing the oil that remained in the ocean to continue to circulate. In June 2021, an oil tank at Punta Cardón in Falcón State leaked through a crack in its base. Rather than repair it, the base was instead left to leak its contents—3.6 million liters of gasoline—over the course of nine days. The facility had not been checked since 2016, despite an order to perform biyearly maintenance.26 The El Palito incident reflects a common pattern in Venezuela, especially among coastal spills. Just weeks later, an underwater pipeline in Río Seco burst and began spilling into local fishing grounds. The incident was first captured in a video posted to social media.27 Again, PDVSA took no action until a protest organized by the fishing community elevated the issue and led to local beach cleanup efforts. Even after PDVSA intervened, the consequences for the local economy were disastrous. Oil either kills or contaminates nearby marine life, leading to a severe drop in the fishing upon which coastal economies largely depend. What fish they can catch tend to contain traces of hydrocarbons, sickening those who eat them and further detracting from the well-being of local communities. Spills have longer-lasting impacts as well, with NGOs and climate experts indicating many ways in which oil remains in the ecosystem long after visible signs of leakage vanish. Hydrocarbons can be deposited in the sediment on the ocean floor, where they can be released back into the water at a later date, while damage to coral reefs can have a domino effect on biodiversity that may take years to reverse. Indeed, the Morrocoy National Park is expected to require at least 50 years to make a full recovery, assuming no future spills delay this further.28 In all of these incidents, there is a disturbing pattern: the Venezuelan regime’s desire to reopen refineries as soon as possible exacerbates the response, prevents lessons learned, and makes future catastrophes more likely to occur. Inland, Venezuela also relies on an aging network of pipelines to move oil and liquified natural gas from wells to refineries—a challenge that is exacerbated by Venezuela’s extra-heavy type of crude. In March 2021, an explosion along a key natural-gas pipeline ground oil production in 85 wells to a halt.29 PDVSA itself estimates that around $8 billion in investment would be necessary for updates to the pipeline infrastructure alone in order to return oil production to late 1990s levels.30 In all likelihood, this is an underestimate, yet it reflects the undeniable fact that the Venezuelan government simply cannot afford, and chooses not to invest in, updating aging pipelines. And although PDVSA is no longer reporting spills, the head of Venezuela’s Unitary Federation of Petroleum and Gas Workers estimates that oil spills are an almost daily occurrence in some states, painting a troubling picture as pipelines continue to degrade.31 At the oil wells themselves, a poisonous combination of poor infrastructure, lack of capital, and a drought of technical expertise has exacerbated the equally toxic problem of flaring. Flaring is a means to relieve pressure that builds up in the form of flammable natural gas during pumping. While a necessary safety measure in some cases to reduce the risk of explosions at oil wells, flaring is also a major source of greenhouse-gas emissions. As previously mentioned, Venezuela was the sixth largest flaring country in 2020, with the volume of flared gas rising despite dramatic losses in oil production.32 This is driven by the fact that Venezuela’s energy sector has lost much of its capacity to collect and utilize natural gas, choosing to simply burn it off instead.33 The carbon dioxide and methane released from unrestricted flaring have global implications, contributing to ocean warming and accelerating climate change.

#### Venezuelan Oil drives Climate Change.

Herrera and Urdaneta 23 [(Isayen and Sheyla, International Correspondents for the NY Times), “Venezuela’s Oil Industry Is Broken. Now It’s Breaking the Environment.”, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/22/world/americas/venezuela-oil-energy-environment.html>, NY Times, 7-22-2023] TDI

Soon after President Hugo Chávez rose to power in the 1990s with promises to use the country’s oil wealth to lift up the poor, he fired thousands of oil workers, including engineers and geologists, and replaced them with political supporters, took control of foreign-owned oil assets, and neglected safety and environmental standards. Then, in 2019, the United States accused Mr. Chavez’s successor, President Nicolás Maduro, of election fraud and imposed economic sanctions, including a ban on Venezuelan oil imports, to try to force him from power. The country’s economy collapsed, helping to fuel a mass exodus of Venezuelans who could not afford to feed their families even as Mr. Maduro has managed to maintain his repressive hold on power. After grinding nearly to a halt, the oil sector has seen a modest rebound, in part because the Biden administration last year allowed Chevron, the last American company producing oil in Venezuela, to restart operations on a limited basis. The national oil industry’s travails have been worsened by a corruption investigation into missing oil money that has so far led to dozens of arrests and the resignation of the country’s oil minister. In eastern Venezuela, rusting refineries burn off methane gases that are part of the fossil fuel industry’s operations and are important drivers of global warming. Even though Venezuela produces far less oil than it once did, it ranks third in the world in methane emissions per barrel of oil produced, according to the International Energy Agency.

#### Bio-diversity loss cascades and causes Extinction.

Torres 16 [(Emil, conservationist, science advocate & educator. 2 years based in Amazon rainforest, now exploring science around the world), <http://futureoflife.org/2016/05/20/biodiversity-loss/>, “Biodiversity Loss: An Existential Risk Comparable to Climate Change”, Future of Life, 5-20-2016] TDI

According to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, the two greatest existential threats to human civilization stem from climate change and nuclear weapons. Both pose clear and present dangers to the perpetuation of our species, and the increasingly dire climate situation and nuclear arsenal modernizations in the United States and Russia were the most significant reasons why the Bulletin [decided](http://thebulletin.org/press-release/doomsday-clock-hands-remain-unchanged-despite-iran-deal-and-paris-talks9122) to keep the Doomsday Clock set at three minutes before midnight earlier this year. But there is another existential threat that the Bulletin overlooked in its Doomsday Clock announcement: biodiversity loss. This phenomenon is often identified as one of the many consequences of climate change, and this is of course correct. But biodiversity loss is also a contributing factor behind climate change. For example, deforestation in the Amazon rainforest and elsewhere reduces the amount of carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere by plants, a natural process that mitigates the effects of climate change. So the causal relation between climate change and biodiversity loss is bidirectional. Furthermore, there are myriad phenomena that are driving biodiversity loss in addition to climate change. Other causes include ecosystem fragmentation, invasive species, pollution, oxygen depletion caused by fertilizers running off into ponds and streams, overfishing, human overpopulation, and overconsumption. All of these phenomena have a direct impact on the health of the biosphere, and all would conceivably persist even if the problem of climate change were somehow immediately solved. Such considerations warrant decoupling biodiversity loss from climate change, because the former has been consistently subsumed by the latter as a mere effect. Biodiversity loss is a distinct environmental crisis with its own unique syndrome of causes, consequences, and solutions—such as restoring habitats, creating protected areas (“biodiversity parks”), and practicing sustainable agriculture. Deforestation of the Amazon rainforest decreases natural mitigation of CO2 and destroys the habitats of many endangered species. The sixth extinction. The repercussions of biodiversity loss are potentially as severe as those anticipated from climate change, or even a nuclear conflict. For example, according to a 2015 [study](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26601195) published in Science Advances, the best available evidence reveals “an exceptionally rapid loss of biodiversity over the last few centuries, indicating that a sixth mass extinction is already under way.” This conclusion holds, even on the most optimistic assumptions about the background rate of species losses and the current rate of vertebrate extinctions. The group classified as “vertebrates” includes mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and all other creatures with a backbone. The article argues that, using its conservative figures, the average loss of vertebrate species was 100 times higher in the past century relative to the background rate of extinction. (Other scientists have suggested that the current extinction rate could be as much as 10,000 times higher than normal.) As the authors write, “The evidence is incontrovertible that recent extinction rates are unprecedented in human history and highly unusual in Earth’s history.” Perhaps the term “Big Six” should enter the popular lexicon—to add the current extinction to the previous “Big Five,” the last of which wiped out the dinosaurs 66 million years ago. But the concept of biodiversity encompasses more than just the total number of species on the planet. It also refers to the size of different populations of species. With respect to this phenomenon, multiple studies have confirmed that wild populations around the world are dwindling and disappearing at an alarming rate. For example, the 2010 [Global Biodiversity Outlook](https://www.cbd.int/gbo3) report found that the population of wild vertebrates living in the tropics dropped by 59 percent between 1970 and 2006. The report also found that the population of farmland birds in Europe has dropped by 50 percent since 1980; bird populations in the grasslands of North America declined by almost 40 percent between 1968 and 2003; and the population of birds in North American arid lands has fallen by almost 30 percent since the 1960s. Similarly, 42 percent of all amphibian species (a type of vertebrate that is sometimes called an “ecological indicator”) are undergoing population declines, and 23 percent of all plant species “are estimated to be threatened with extinction.” [Other studies](http://commondreams.org/views/2016/02/10/biodiversity-loss-and-doomsday-clock-invisible-disaster-almost-no-one-talking-about) have found that some 20 percent of all reptile species, 48 percent of the world’s primates, and 50 percent of freshwater turtles are threatened. Underwater, about 10 percent of all coral reefs are now dead, and another 60 percent are in danger of dying. Consistent with these data, the 2014 [Living Planet Report](http://bit.ly/1ssxx5m) shows that the global population of wild vertebrates dropped by 52 percent in only four decades—from 1970 to 2010. While biologists often avoid projecting historical trends into the future because of the complexity of ecological systems, it’s tempting to extrapolate this figure to, say, the year 2050, which is four decades from 2010. As it happens, a 2006[study](http://science.sciencemag.org/content/314/5800/787) published in Science does precisely this: It projects past trends of marine biodiversity loss into the 21st century, concluding that, unless significant changes are made to patterns of human activity, there will be virtually no more wild-caught seafood by 2048. 48% of the world’s primates are threatened with extinction. Catastrophic consequences for civilization. The consequences of this rapid pruning of the evolutionary tree of life extend beyond the obvious. There could be surprising effects of biodiversity loss that scientists are unable to fully anticipate in advance. For example, prior research has shown that localized ecosystems can undergo abrupt and irreversible shifts when they reach a tipping point. According to a 2012 [paper](http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v486/n7401/full/nature11018.html) published in Nature, there are reasons for thinking that we may be approaching a tipping point of this sort in the global ecosystem, beyond which the consequences could be catastrophic for civilization. As the authors write, a planetary-scale transition could precipitate “substantial losses of ecosystem services required to sustain the human population.” An ecosystem service is any ecological process that benefits humanity, such as food production and crop pollination. If the global ecosystem were to cross a tipping point and substantial ecosystem services were lost, the results could be “widespread social unrest, economic instability, and loss of human life.” According to Missouri Botanical Garden ecologist Adam Smith, one of the paper’s co-authors, this could occur in a matter of decades—far more quickly than most of the expected consequences of climate change, yet equally destructive. Biodiversity loss is a “threat multiplier” that, by pushing societies to the brink of collapse, will exacerbate existing conflicts and introduce entirely new struggles between state and non-state actors. Indeed, it could even fuel the rise of terrorism. (After all, climate change has been [linked](http://thebulletin.org/climate-change-and-syrian-uprising) to the emergence of ISIS in Syria, and multiple high-ranking US officials, such as former US Defense Secretary [Chuck Hagel](http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/603441)and CIA director [John Brennan](http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/cnsnewscom-staff/cia-director-cites-impact-climate-change-deeper-cause-global), have affirmed that climate change and terrorism are connected.) The reality is that we are entering the sixth mass extinction in the 3.8-billion-year history of life on Earth, and the impact of this event could be felt by civilization “in as little as three human lifetimes,” as the aforementioned 2012 Nature paper notes. Furthermore, the widespread decline of biological populations could plausibly initiate a dramatic transformation of the global ecosystem on an even faster timescale: perhaps a single human lifetime. The unavoidable conclusion is that biodiversity loss constitutes an existential threat in its own right. As such, it ought to be considered alongside climate change and nuclear weapons as one of the most significant contemporary risks to human prosperity and survival.

#### Warming causes Extinction.

Kareiva 18 [(Peter, Ph.D. in ecology and applied mathematics from Cornell University), “Existential risk due to ecosystem collapse: Nature strikes back”, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0016328717301726>, Futures, September 2018] TDI

In summary, six of the nine proposed planetary boundaries (phosphorous, nitrogen, biodiversity, land use, atmospheric aerosol loading, and chemical pollution) are unlikely to be associated with existential risks. They all correspond to a degraded environment, but in our assessment do not represent existential risks. However, the three remaining boundaries (**climate change**, global **freshwater** cycle, **and** ocean **acidification**) do **pose existential risks**. This is **because of** intrinsic **positive feedback loops**, substantial lag times between system change and experiencing the consequences of that change, and the fact these different boundaries interact with one another in ways that yield surprises. In addition, climate, freshwater, and ocean acidification are all **directly connected to** the provision of **food and water**, and **shortages** of food and water can **create conflict** and social unrest. Climate change has a long history of disrupting civilizations and sometimes precipitating the collapse of cultures or mass emigrations (McMichael, 2017). For example, the 12th century drought in the North American Southwest is held responsible for the collapse of the Anasazi pueblo culture. More recently, the infamous potato famine of 1846–1849 and the large migration of Irish to the U.S. can be traced to a combination of factors, one of which was climate. Specifically, 1846 was an unusually warm and moist year in Ireland, providing the climatic conditions favorable to the fungus that caused the potato blight. As is so often the case, poor government had a role as well—as the British government forbade the import of grains from outside Britain (imports that could have helped to redress the ravaged potato yields). Climate change intersects with freshwater resources because it is expected to exacerbate drought and water scarcity, as well as flooding. Climate change can even impair water quality because it is associated with heavy rains that overwhelm sewage treatment facilities, or because it results in higher concentrations of pollutants in groundwater as a result of enhanced evaporation and reduced groundwater recharge. **Ample clean water** is not a luxury—it **is essential for human survival**. Consequently, cities, regions and nations that lack clean freshwater are vulnerable to social disruption and disease. Finally, ocean acidification is linked to climate change because it is driven by CO2 emissions just as global warming is. With close to 20% of the world’s protein coming from oceans (FAO, 2016), the potential for severe impacts due to acidification is obvious. Less obvious, but perhaps more insidious, is the interaction between climate change and the loss of oyster and coral reefs due to acidification. Acidification is known to interfere with oyster reef building and coral reefs. Climate change also increases storm frequency and severity. Coral reefs and oyster reefs provide protection from storm surge because they reduce wave energy (Spalding et al., 2014). If these reefs are lost due to acidification at the same time as storms become more severe and sea level rises, coastal communities will be exposed to unprecedented storm surge—and may be ravaged by recurrent storms. A key feature of the risk associated with climate change is that mean annual temperature and mean annual rainfall are not the variables of interest. Rather it is extreme episodic events that place nations and entire regions of the world at risk. These extreme events are by definition “rare” (once every hundred years), and changes in their likelihood are challenging to detect because of their rarity, but are exactly the manifestations of climate change that we must get better at anticipating (Diffenbaugh et al., 2017). Society will have a hard time responding to shorter intervals between rare extreme events because in the lifespan of an individual human, a person might experience as few as two or three extreme events. How likely is it that you would notice a change in the interval between events that are separated by decades, especially given that the interval is not regular but varies stochastically? A concrete example of this dilemma can be found in the past and expected future changes in storm-related flooding of New York City. The highly disruptive flooding of New York City associated with Hurricane Sandy represented a flood height that occurred once every 500 years in the 18th century, and that occurs now once every 25 years, but is expected to occur once every 5 years by 2050 (Garner et al., 2017). This change in frequency of extreme floods has profound implications for the measures New York City should take to protect its infrastructure and its population, yet because of the stochastic nature of such events, this shift in flood frequency is an elevated risk that will go unnoticed by most people. 4. The combination of positive feedback loops and societal inertia is fertile ground for global environmental catastrophes **Humans** are remarkably ingenious, and **have adapted** to crises **throughout** their **history**. Our doom has been repeatedly predicted, only to be averted by innovation (Ridley, 2011). **However**, the many **stories** **of** human ingenuity **successfully** **addressing** **existential risks** such as global famine or extreme air pollution **represent** environmental c**hallenges that are** largely **linear**, have immediate consequences, **and operate without positive feedbacks**. For example, the fact that food is in short supply does not increase the rate at which humans consume food—thereby increasing the shortage. Similarly, massive air pollution episodes such as the London fog of 1952 that killed 12,000 people did not make future air pollution events more likely. In fact it was just the opposite—the London fog sent such a clear message that Britain quickly enacted pollution control measures (Stradling, 2016). Food shortages, air pollution, water pollution, etc. send immediate signals to society of harm, which then trigger a negative feedback of society seeking to reduce the harm. In contrast, today’s great environmental crisis of climate change may cause some harm but there are generally long time delays between rising CO2 concentrations and damage to humans. The consequence of these delays are an absence of urgency; thus although 70% of Americans believe global warming is happening, only 40% think it will harm them (http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us-2016/). Secondly, unlike past environmental challenges, **the Earth’s climate system is rife with positive feedback loops**. In particular, as CO2 increases and the climate warms, that **very warming can cause more CO2 release** which further increases global warming, and then more CO2, and so on. Table 2 summarizes the best documented positive feedback loops for the Earth’s climate system. These feedbacks can be neatly categorized into carbon cycle, biogeochemical, biogeophysical, cloud, ice-albedo, and water vapor feedbacks. As important as it is to understand these feedbacks individually, it is even more essential to study the interactive nature of these feedbacks. Modeling studies show that when interactions among feedback loops are included, uncertainty increases dramatically and there is a heightened potential for perturbations to be magnified (e.g., Cox, Betts, Jones, Spall, & Totterdell, 2000; Hajima, Tachiiri, Ito, & Kawamiya, 2014; Knutti & Rugenstein, 2015; Rosenfeld, Sherwood, Wood, & Donner, 2014). This produces a wide range of future scenarios. Positive feedbacks in the carbon cycle involves the enhancement of future carbon contributions to the atmosphere due to some initial increase in atmospheric CO2. This happens because as CO2 accumulates, it reduces the efficiency in which oceans and terrestrial ecosystems sequester carbon, which in return feeds back to exacerbate climate change (Friedlingstein et al., 2001). Warming can also increase the rate at which organic matter decays and carbon is released into the atmosphere, thereby causing more warming (Melillo et al., 2017). Increases in food shortages and lack of water is also of major concern when biogeophysical feedback mechanisms perpetuate drought conditions. The underlying mechanism here is that losses in vegetation increases the surface albedo, which suppresses rainfall, and thus enhances future vegetation loss and more suppression of rainfall—thereby initiating or prolonging a drought (Chamey, Stone, & Quirk, 1975). To top it off, overgrazing depletes the soil, leading to augmented vegetation loss (Anderies, Janssen, & Walker, 2002). Climate change often also increases the risk of forest fires, as a result of higher temperatures and persistent drought conditions. The expectation is that **forest fires will become more frequent** and severe with climate warming and drought (Scholze, Knorr, Arnell, & Prentice, 2006), a trend for which we have already seen evidence (Allen et al., 2010). Tragically, the increased severity and risk of Southern California wildfires recently predicted by climate scientists (Jin et al., 2015), was realized in December 2017, with the largest fire in the history of California (the “Thomas fire” that burned 282,000 acres, https://www.vox.com/2017/12/27/16822180/thomas-fire-california-largest-wildfire). This **catastrophic fire** embodies the sorts of positive feedbacks and interacting factors that **could catch humanity off-guard and produce a** true **apocalyptic event.** Record-breaking rains produced an extraordinary flush of new vegetation, that then dried out as record heat waves and dry conditions took hold, coupled with stronger than normal winds, and ignition. Of course the record-fire released CO2 into the atmosphere, thereby contributing to future warming. Out of all types of feedbacks, water vapor and the ice-albedo feedbacks are the most clearly understood mechanisms. Losses in reflective snow and ice cover drive up surface temperatures, leading to even more melting of snow and ice cover—this is known as the ice-albedo feedback (Curry, Schramm, & Ebert, 1995). As snow and ice continue to melt at a more rapid pace, millions of people may be displaced by flooding risks as a consequence of sea level rise near coastal communities (Biermann & Boas, 2010; Myers, 2002; Nicholls et al., 2011). The water vapor feedback operates when warmer atmospheric conditions strengthen the saturation vapor pressure, which creates a warming effect given water vapor’s strong greenhouse gas properties (Manabe & Wetherald, 1967). Global warming tends to increase cloud formation because warmer temperatures lead to more evaporation of water into the atmosphere, and warmer temperature also allows the atmosphere to hold more water. The key question is whether this increase in clouds associated with global warming will result in a positive feedback loop (more warming) or a negative feedback loop (less warming). For decades, scientists have sought to answer this question and understand the net role clouds play in future climate projections (Schneider et al., 2017). Clouds are complex because they both have a cooling (reflecting incoming solar radiation) and warming (absorbing incoming solar radiation) effect (Lashof, DeAngelo, Saleska, & Harte, 1997). The type of cloud, altitude, and optical properties combine to determine how these countervailing effects balance out. Although still under debate, it appears that in most circumstances the cloud feedback is likely positive (Boucher et al., 2013). For example, models and observations show that increasing greenhouse gas concentrations reduces the low-level cloud fraction in the Northeast Pacific at decadal time scales. This then has a positive feedback effect and enhances climate warming since less solar radiation is reflected by the atmosphere (Clement, Burgman, & Norris, 2009). The key lesson from the long list of potentially positive feedbacks and their interactions is that **runaway climate change,** and runaway perturbations have to be taken as a serious possibility. Table 2 is just a snapshot of the type of feedbacks that have been identified (see Supplementary material for a more thorough explanation of positive feedback loops). However, this list is not exhaustive and the possibility of undiscovered positive feedbacks **portends** even greater **existential risks**. The many environmental crises humankind has previously averted (famine, ozone depletion, London fog, water pollution, etc.) were averted because of political will based on solid scientific understanding. We cannot count on complete scientific understanding when it comes to positive feedback loops and climate change.

### High Oil Prices Good

#### Concede Oil Prices are high due to restricted supply – that’s good:

#### Low oil prices cause Middle East and Russian war.

Champion 21 [(Marc, senior reporter for international affairs at Bloomberg), “What countries will fight over when Green Energy dominates”, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-03-16/what-countries-will-fight-over-when-green-energy-dominates>, Bloomberg, 3-16-2021] TDI

Until renewable dominance is reached, though, oil could have a long and destructive tail. For about three centuries, access to fossil fuels has shaped the rise and fall of great powers. Plentiful, well-located coal mines helped fire Britain’s industrial revolution and the expansion of its empire. Oil and gas fueled the former Soviet Union’s military power and shaped “the American century,” including U.S. alliances and fleet deployments. “We’re not even close to a world dominated by renewables,’’ says Andreas Goldthau, who heads research at Germany’s Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies on the systemic impacts of the shift to clean energy. World of Oil Choke points for oil shipments around the globe Source: U.S. Energy Agency Administration Note: Barrels of oil per day in 2016 Changing such a fundamental driver of the global pecking order could have multiple consequences. Vladimir Putin might struggle to sustain Russia’s rise as an “energy superpower.” An implosion of the U.S. shale industry, combined with China’s dominance in renewables manufacturing, could define the 21st century’s great superpower contest. The rationale for American alliances and military bases in the Middle East would weaken. A sudden loss of oil revenues could trigger Arab Spring-style revolts against the most brittle petrostate autocracies. The one thing we know about transitions, Goldthau says, is that “they are never, never linear.’’ Think of the post-Cold War Yugoslav conflicts, or the shift away from planned economies that the former communist bloc began in the late 1980s. Many ex-republics, from Ukraine to Turkmenistan, remain in turmoil or stalled well short of market democracy 30 years later. Nor do transitions necessarily end with a neatly tied bow. The Canadian scientist Vaclav Smil has mapped out coal’s fall from 95% of primary energy use in 1900, to just 26% a century later. Yet in absolute terms, global consumption rose from an estimated 800 million tons a year in 1900 to about 5.5 billion tons today. Though the same might not happen to oil, the fuel is likely to burn much longer than most climate scientists would prefer. Coal's Long Tail Oil provided a lower % of global primary energy consumption until 1960s Source: Vaclav Smil, Energy in the 20th Century: Resources, conversions, costs, uses and consequences It’s hard to see a smooth, rapid energy transition taking place in the current competitive and nationalistic environment, says Eirik Waerness, chief economist of Norway’s state-owned energy giant Equinor ASA. He took part in Grimsson’s commission, and generally agrees with its optimistic conclusions. “For the energy transition to happen fully, we probably need a relatively benign geopolitical climate,” Waerness says. “There is to some extent a virtuous circle we have to create here.” While the sources of clean energy are available to everyone, the battle will be over who profits from the products used to harness them. Solar panels, wind turbines and batteries will be in such demand that countries are already jostling to make sure they get their share of the pie. Many will get left behind. The Solar-Powered Future Is Being Assembled in China The production line at the Longi plant in Xi'an, China. Photographer: Qilai Shen/Bloomberg About 60% of solar panels are manufactured by Chinese companies, a level of market influence the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries can only dream of when it comes to oil. That creates a big trade advantage, but not one President Xi Jinping can easily leverage for geopolitical ends. “What are you worried about? You buy it, you run it and once you have what you have they can’t take it away from you,” says Karen Smith Stegen, a professor of political science at Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany, who has examined the potential of 165 countries to emerge from the transition as political winners and losers. Global inequalities and rivalries will instead likely center on access to technology and finance, standard setting and control of key raw materials. China controls more than 90% of some of the rare earth metals needed for electric vehicles and offshore wind turbines. It already used that monopoly power once, cutting off Japan’s supply after a 2010 clash near islands both nations claim to own. Japan has since reduced the share of its rare earth imports that come from China by more than a third to reduce its exposure. Rare Muscle In November, Johnson’s U.K. will host the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland, where countries will negotiate the rules for the road ahead. Leaders want to make sure everyone else is doing their fair share to cut emissions, and that their countries don't lose out. That fear could lead to what German economist Hans-Werner Sinn has called the “green paradox.” He argues the transition could prompt oil producers—especially those with high extraction costs or shallow reserves—to start pumping as fast as they can while demand lasts. The increased supply would boost carbon emissions and also lower the price of crude, making it more competitive with renewables and slowing the move to cleaner energy. Cheap oil could also decimate the budgets of fragile regimes before they have time to find other sources of revenue. A February study by U.K. think tank Carbon Tracker found that 40 fossil-fuel dependent governments would suffer an average 51% drop in oil and gas revenues if global climate targets are met. That could destabilize governments and leave the likes of Nigeria or Iraq unable to afford security to deal with threats from terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram and Islamic State. Hooked on Oil Oil and gas revenue as a percent of total government revenue, 2015-2018 average Source: Carbon Tracker A report last month by the European Council on Foreign Relations concluded that rich countries will have to help plug the financial holes. The EU’s Green Deal, in particular, it said could have as great an effect on regional geopolitics as on the Earth’s climate. The bloc produces less than 10% of global CO₂ emissions, but neighbors such as Algeria, Azerbaijan, Russia and Turkey depend on its market to buy a large share of their exports. Many of these are carbon intensive and vulnerable to the EU’s planned carbon border tax. And there’s no guarantee that making nations more energy self-sufficient will reduce conflict. Oil is the most actively traded commodity on the planet, and any steep decline in demand would reduce those interactions. “What we know is trade is a good thing,” says Goldthau at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies. “When states are interdependent they have a lower appetite for conflict.”

#### Economic contraction beyond current levels sparks Russian lash-out. Great-power war.

Frederick 22 [(Bryan, PhD, associate director of the Strategy and Doctrine Program within RAND Project AIR FORCE), “Pathways to Russian Escalation Against NATO from the Ukraine War”, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA1971-1.html>, Rand, 7-26-22] TDI

Pathway 3: Domestic Instability in Russia Sparks Aggression A dramatic increase in domestic, economic, and political instability in Russia also could lead the Kremlin to decide to attack NATO member states. Crucially, Russian leaders see antigovernment protests as a key element of a potential Western-backed campaign to overthrow their regime. According to Russian strategists, several other components of such a campaign are taking place: instability on Russia’s periphery, a buildup of U.S. forces near Russian borders, and Western economic warfare (Podberezkin, 2015, p. 303). Eventually, these strategists say, this campaign would culminate in direct kinetic strikes on the homeland. Therefore, Moscow is more likely to see large-scale protests that begin in the current environment as evidence of a coordinated Western campaign to topple the Russian government. Against this backdrop, officials from the United States or other NATO governments speaking openly about the possible “physical elimination” of President Putin, as one NATO foreign minister put it (“Luxembourg Foreign Minister Calls … ,” 2022), or highlighting the prospect that domestic unrest would depose the current regime, could heighten the Russian leadership’s perceptions that popular discontent is driven by U.S. or allied intelligence operations and therefore constitutes a non-kinetic attack on the homeland. The Kremlin would likely conflate the security of the regime and the security of the country. To plausibly affect the Kremlin’s calculus about horizontal escalation, instability would have to grow significantly in size and scope beyond the relatively small antiwar protests that took place during the first weeks of the war in major cities. However, as opposed to the war itself, the dramatic economic contraction that has resulted from the war might well be the spark for such broader popular unrest once economic pain is felt over the medium to long term. The protests would likely need to reach the point where they threaten to exceed the Russian government’s ability to control them before Moscow would contemplate taking actions abroad. Because the Russian government would likely view protests of this scale as a non-kinetic NATO attack, it might decide to strike NATO allies to compel a cessation of external support for the domestic threat. Russian responses are more likely to begin with non-kinetic attacks (e.g., cyberattacks against critical infrastructure targets such as power grids, power plants, or key information or telecommunications systems, including satellites) in an effort to dissuade future perceived NATO aggression at minimal cost. If these attacks are successful in substantially disrupting U.S. or allied economic and political life, the United States or other allies might feel compelled to respond in kind by disrupting similar systems within Russia. Such attacks, which would compound existing stresses from the war, could lead Russian leadership to conclude that it has exhausted non-kinetic options for reducing NATO threats to regime survival and therefore decide to turn to kinetic attacks.

#### NATO-Russia War goes Nuclear.

Brookes 22 [(Peter, Heritage Foundation senior fellow and a former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense), “Russia’s Small Nukes are a Big Problem for European Security” <https://ispaim.mapn.ro/webroot/fileslib/upload/files/Monitor%20Strategic/ms122022.pdf#page=47>, ISPAIM, 3-5-2022] TDI

With Russia’s ongoing war in Ukraine, now is a good time to take note of a little-spoken-of, but glaring, imbalance between America’s and Russia’s nuclear arsenals—and how it could affect stability in Europe and the interests of the United States and those of its European allies and partners. If asked, many Americans and Europeans probably believe that the United States and Russia are pretty evenly matched in terms of the number of nuclear weapons both sides have in their arsenals. While their beliefs are entirely understandable, they are not completely correct Under the 2010 bilateral New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty—also known as New START—the United States and Russia have a similar number of deployed strategic (i.e., high-yield and long-range) nuclear weapons: 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads each.1 But not all of Washington’s or Moscow’s nuclear weapons are covered by New START. Indeed, Russia has nearly a 10:1 advantage over the United States and NATO in non-strategic (i.e., low-yield and short-range) nuclear weapons (NSNWs).2 Assessments based on open sources estimate that Russia has about 2,000 NSNWs. It is similarly assessed that the United States and NATO have about 200 NSNWs in their arsenal.3 It is postulated that half of those U.S.-NATO weapons are located in the United States and half are based in Europe as part of NATO’s nuclear forces.4 While capable of significant destruction, these tactical nuclear weapons are lower in yield – or explosive power – and are meant for use on the battlefield against military installations or troop and equipment concentrations as opposed for use against counterforce or countervalue targets such as ICBM missile fields, command and control nodes, and or population centers (e.g., cities). It is believed that Russia can deploy these weapons on multiple tactical systems including dual-capable short-range or theater ballistic missiles, torpedoes, and anti-ship missiles.5 Indeed, it is expected that Russia’s new hypersonic weapons may be dual-capable (i.e., conventional or nuclear armed) as well.6 Major nuclear weapons states, including Russia, have said that a nuclear war could never be won and therefore should never be fought. However, there are deep concerns among policy makers and security analysts outside Russia about whether Moscow fully embraces that idea or if it is just convenient diplomatic rhetoric. Also of increasing concern is a Russian military doctrine associated with battlefield nuclear weapons known as “escalate to deescalate.” This topic is of particularly interest right now with the war in Ukraine ongoing since late February 2022. According to the 2018 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review (NPR): “Russia considers the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to be the principal threats to its contemporary geopolitical ambitions. Russian strategy and doctrine emphasize the potential coercive and military uses of nuclear weapons. It mistakenly assesses that the threat of nuclear escalation or actual first use of nuclear weapons would serve to “de-escalate” a conflict on terms favorable to Russia. These mistaken perceptions increase the prospect for dangerous miscalculation and escalation.”7 The NPR further asserts that: “Moscow threatens and exercises limited nuclear first use, suggesting a mistaken expectation that coercive nuclear threats or limited first use could paralyze the United States and NATO and thereby end a conflict on terms favorable to Russia. Some in the United States refer to this as Russia’s “escalate to de-escalate” doctrine. “Deescalation” in this sense follows from Moscow’s mistaken assumption of Western capitulation on terms favorable to Moscow.”8 Though the Russians seemingly refute the existence of this doctrine by its American name at least, some sources assert that the policy may actually have been developed in the late 1990s, when now-Russian President Vladimir Putin was chairman of the Russian National Security Council under President Boris Yeltsin.9 The idea behind escalate to deescalate is that Russia might employ one tactical nuclear weapon (or more) during a conventional conflict with NATO forces for the purposes of preventing a defeat, consolidating territorial gains, or even freezing a conflict in place without the prospect of further fighting. Indeed, because of the large, nearly 10:1 disparity between the number of Russian and U.S. tactical nuclear weapons, Moscow may think a nuclear response from NATO is not a credible threat due to Russia’s asymmetric advantage. Other factors may also play a role in Russian calculations, including a perception that NATO’s large membership would have difficulty finding a political-military consensus on an appropriate response, including a nuclear option. An example of the potential use of this Russian nuclear doctrine in a hypothetical scenario might be helpful here: Moscow attacks one—or all—of the Baltic States with its conventional forces to establish control over some, or all, of these nations’ territory, returning them to Russia’s control as they were in the Soviet era. Invoking Article V, NATO responds with conventional forces to protect and restore the sovereignty of these three allied states. Concerned about the inferiority of its conventional forces in this fight against the allied powers, Moscow then contemplates exploding a low-yield tactical nuclear weapon somewhere in theater as a warning of Russia’s potential escalation from the conventional to the nuclear domain of warfare, including the potential future use of high-yield, strategic nuclear weapons. In Moscow’s eyes, perhaps NATO will become concerned about the possible escalation of the fighting from the conventional to the nuclear—especially Russia’s potential use of more powerful nuclear weapons against European and American cities. In response, NATO may consider pausing its counteroffensive against Russian forces in the Baltics. Indeed, Moscow may misperceive that if NATO does not have sufficient tactical nuclear weapon capabilities to respond in kind, it would be inclined to seek de-escalation rather than launch a strategic nuclear weapon at Russia and risk moving further up the escalation ladder—a response that could lead to all-out nuclear war. Using its tactical nuclear weapon advantage over NATO and having strategic nuclear parity with Washington, Moscow could threaten additional low-yield nuclear strikes unless fighting ends on Russia’s terms. Ideally for Moscow, NATO might decide that there is no good option available to respond and chooses to cease hostilities, locking in Moscow’s ill-gotten gains in the Baltics. With these political-military calculations in mind, Russia takes a chance on the expected NATO response and explodes a 10-kiloton tactical nuclear weapon near or in the European theater. As a result, nuclear deterrence fails for the first time in history not due to the use of strategic nuclear weapons that so many people are aware of, but the imbalance of battlefield nuclear weapons between NATO and Russia.

#### Middle East turmoil goes nuclear.

Silverstein 21 [(Richard, writes the Tikun Olam blog), “Iran-Israel tensions: The threat of nuclear disaster looms large”, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/iran-israel-tensions-threat-nuclear-war-looms-large>, Middle East Eye, 4-23-2021] TDI

Israel had a near-miss of potentially catastrophic proportions on Thursday. As it has done hundreds of times in the past decade, the Israeli air force attacked Iranian bases inside Syria. In response, Syrian forces fired anti-aircraft missiles of a rather primitive Soviet model, one of which overflew its target and landed some 30 kilometres from Israel’s Dimona nuclear reactor. Israel said recently that it was bolstering its defences around Dimona for just such an eventuality. Although an Iranian general taunted Israel, implying that Iran had some responsibility for the attack, that doesn’t appear to be the case. But the missile landing inside Israel does show that if Iran wanted to attack Dimona, it has the capacity. And despite Israel’s best efforts, an Iranian missile could hit its target. With that, one of the worst nuclear disasters in the region’s history could unfold, including a Chernobyl-type radioactive leak that could endanger not only all of Israel, but also many of its neighbours.A US general has assured a Senate committee that the Syrians weren’t intending to attack Israel. Rather, a misguided missile meant to target an Israeli warplane overshot its target. He blamed it on “incompetence”, as if that was supposed to be somehow reassuring; rather, it only reinforces how easy it is even for a mistake to cause a nuclear disaster.Campaign of terror Certainly, if either Israel or Iran wanted to bomb each other’s nuclear facilities, they could do so successfully. An Israeli attack would probably cause less catastrophic damage, but only because Iran’s nuclear programme is not nearly as developed as Israel’s. An Iranian direct hit on Dimona would cause incalculable damage due to the plutonium reactor at the facility. Nor does this happen in a vacuum: Israel has maintained a decade-long campaign of terror attacks on Iranian military bases and nuclear scientists. Most recently, it bombed the Natanz nuclear facility, destroying the power generation source and damaging older-generation centrifuges. It also attacked an Iranian Revolutionary Guard spy ship off the Yemeni coast this month. Iran has responded in its own limited way, restrained by its need to maintain good relations with nuclear-deal signatories. For Israel, the attacks are a low-risk proposition. It defies US opposition (if there is any) with a wink and a nod, and the attacks look good on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s résumé. To weather his corruption trial and retain public support, he needs external enemies (and internal enemies, but that’s a different story). Iran provides these in spades.Eliminating Israeli leverage The US could exert control over this scenario by eliminating Israeli leverage. If it agreed to lift sanctions in exchange for Iran’s return to low levels of uranium enrichment, as designated in the nuclear deal negotiated by the Obama administration, Israel’s rejectionist approach would become moot. The problem is that US President Joe Biden is running scared from Republican opposition to any nuclear deal with Iran. Besides, he has designated the Middle East a low priority for his administration. There is some faint hope in the US announcement that it is ready to lift a partial set of sanctions. However, the list on offer is quite limited, and will certainly not satisfy the Iranians. Such half-measures present an example of the limitations of the Biden approach. He should instead make a full-throated commitment to end this dithering once and for all. Israel is mounting a full-court press this coming week as it sends its Mossad and military intelligence chiefs, along with its army chief of staff, to Washington in an attempt to influence nuclear negotiations as they enter what may be a final stage. According to Haaretz, army chief of staff Aviv Kochavi “will also raise other issues, including Iran’s military expansion in Syria and the instability of Lebanon. Israel is concerned about the possibility that Hezbollah will try to … [foment] conflict with Israel.” The hypocrisy of Israel’s refusal to acknowledge its own massive military interventions in Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and even Iraq, while decrying Iran’s involvement in Syria, is almost breathtaking. There is next to no chance that any of this will enter into the considerations of negotiators in Vienna. Unlike Israel, they are interested in doing a nuclear deal, not engaging in wishful thinking. Combustible Middle East mix Returning to the Biden administration’s global goals, the Middle East doesn’t care about presidential priorities. It contains a combustible mix of corrupt elites and overbearing dictators who do not shirk from causing mayhem in their domains. And one of them, perhaps a desperate Israeli prime minister or an ageing ayatollah eager to preserve his honour and legacy, could inadvertently (or intentionally) set the entire region aflame. If Biden doesn’t act quickly and decisively, there is a sizeable risk that another missile from one country or the other will hit a target and cause devastation. That would mark a point of no return, like the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, which led to World War One. The difference is that in 1914, armies fought with guns, bayonets and artillery. Today, they will fight with F-35s, ballistic missiles and possibly nuclear weapons.

#### Karl flows Neg – it’s not just shocks but low prices that drive conflict.

Karl 16 [(Terry, Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and author of The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petrostates), <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/oil-crash-hidden-consequences-213550>, “The Hidden Consequences of the Oil Crash”, Politico, 1-21-2016] TDI

Oil prices drive not just economics, but geopolitics. Alliances rise and fall over petroleum. Expensive oil props up governments in Russia and Iran, provides stability in Middle Eastern countries and also offers a revenue stream to extremist groups in Nigeria and Iraq. Domestically, high-priced oil spurs innovation in alternative energy; it has also driven America’s shale boom. For all these reasons and more, the collapsing value of oil will have profound consequences around the world, with the potential to destabilize regimes, remake regions and alter the global economy in lasting and unforeseen ways. So as the global markets process the uncertainty ahead, Politico Magazine asked a panel of leading experts on energy, economics and geopolitics to tell us: As we cheer for cheap gas, what aftershocks should we be bracing for? \*\*\* ‘The oil price drop will be one of the pivotal issues of 2016, and probably beyond’ John McLaughlin is distinguished practitioner-in-residence at Johns Hopkins University at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies The oil price drop will be one of the pivotal issues of 2016, and probably beyond. Oil prices are notoriously hard to predict, but every indication is that they will not go up markedly, and may drop further. Countries (like Saudi Arabia) that were once able to manipulate prices with OPEC agreements have lost that ability in part because counterparts—especially those already in deep trouble (Venezuela), or those coming back online (Iran)—want to chase market share by pumping freely. Moreover, if a major producer looks for supply-cutting allies outside OPEC, they will trigger a catch-22 phenomenon: If prices go up, it will re-energize U.S. shale entrepreneurs, who have cut back investments due to low oil prices, but who are agile enough to reenter the market quickly—pushing production back up and limiting the impact of restraint elsewhere. The political impact is likely to be strongest among countries, especially in the Persian Gulf, that have invested billions in social programs and subsidies to discourage Arab Spring-like protests. And in Russia, which needs oil prices north of $100 per barrel to meet its budget projections, the time-honored response to economic hardship is to mobilize nationalist sentiment with foreign adventures, one of the multiple motives for Putin’s plunge into Syria. \*\*\* ‘What keeps the Middle East’s countries together … when the oil money runs out?’ Ian Bremmer is president of the Eurasia Group Geopolitically, the impact of low oil prices is concentrated in the Middle East, where political structures are brittle and based on oil wealth-supported patronage. Across the region, there are immediate and direct security threats without any social, political or economic reform processes in place to address the challenges these regimes face from the inside. What keeps these countries together—as well as those that rely on them for support—when the oil money runs out? The United States, China and Japan, the world’s three largest economies, benefit mightily from being far away from those tensions. Europe, not so much. \*\*\* It could become ‘the mother of all oil crises’ Gal Luft is co-director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security High gas prices dominated the past three presidential elections, and encouraged politicians to address one of America’s most notable vulnerabilities: the dependence on oil as the sole source of energy powering our transportation sector. But with the collapse of oil prices, this dependency has become a non-issue, and America’s commitment to wean itself from petroleum has gone by the wayside. We have been here before: The response to the oil crises of the late 1970s (increased oil production worldwide and enhanced energy efficiency) caused prices to fall in the subsequent decade. The party didn’t last for long. Between 1998 and 2008, oil prices rose seven-fold, triggering the Great Recession. This might happen again if the global economy snaps back from its stagnation. As long as the global transportation sector—cars, trucks, ships, planes—is married to oil, and as long as most of the world’s conventional crude reserves are in the hands of repressive regimes, it’s only a matter of time before prices head back to triple digits. Just like the perfect storm of price-depressing factors that brought us to the current ebb, the current situation in the oil market holds the seeds of what could become the mother of all oil crises. If we veer away from trying to open the transportation sector to fuels made from resources other than oil, the party will end with a bad hangover. \*\*\* ‘Now is the time for presidential candidates to tell us what they intend to do when oil prices go back up’ T. Boone Pickens is chairman and CEO of BP Capital and architect of the Pickens Plan, an energy plan for America I have been through boom-and-bust cycles in the oil and gas industry all my life. Each one has had one thing in common: Because no political leader had the foresight to enact an energy plan when prices were reasonable, when prices went too high or low, there was surprise and distress. The Saudis are risking everything on their misguided attempt to destroy America’s shale oil and gas industry. We have shut down thousands of rigs and shed 200,000 jobs. New investment is non-existent and nations around the world—from the Middle East to Central America, whose economies are wholly dependent on oil exports—are on the brink of economic collapse. It doesn’t matter whether oil bottoms out at $29 or $27 a barrel. What matters is that, for the first time in a half-century, we look over the horizon and plan for the day when supplies begin to thin, when economies begin to recover and when oil prices begin to move back up. Now is the time for presidential candidates to tell us what they intend to do when oil prices go back up, probably very quickly. Waiting until that happens and responding with shock and a demand for congressional hearings is just not enough. It’s always good to have a plan. How about we start with a North American Energy Alliance? \*\*\* The dip ‘may help strengthen the long-term prospects of alternative energy’ Dan Esty is Hillhouse professor at Yale University Many energy market experts see $30 barrels of oil as a threat to clean energy investments, particularly renewable power projects. But this conclusion reflects too narrow a view of the world. Just as today’s low oil price is a function of the forces of supply and demand at a particular moment in time, the market for renewable power has various supply and demand pressures that shape the flow of investment into wind power, solar arrays and other kinds of alternative energy. Thus, while a low oil price raises the bar on what it will take to make a renewable power project cost-effective in the coming years, the December 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change offers a dramatic countervailing signal to clean-energy markets, promising a dramatic increase in the demand for clean energy over coming decades. As a result, investment in renewable power remains robust. In fact, the likely short-term drop in fossil fuel costs may help strengthen the long-term prospects of alternative energy. If the developers of wind, solar and other alternative energy projects are forced to cut costs, their technologies will be more cost-competitive over time. When you hear that cheap oil sounds the death knell for clean energy, don’t bet on it. \*\*\* ‘Good for American consumers and U.S. foreign policy’ John Deutch is an emeritus Institute professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Massively lower oil and gas prices are good for American consumers and U.S. foreign policy. That will be true for as long as the prices last, which will likely be one or two more years, doubtfully for five years, and almost certainly not for a decade. But the low prices have a cost, too, and the stresses they cause are not hidden: Increased consumption of carbon-emitting fossil fuels, lower profits for private oil companies, major challenges for firms seeking to introduce clean-energy technologies and economic difficulties for major resource holders account for just some of the strain. Some countries most affected by the low price of oil—Russia, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, most notably—may face political instability as a result. It is difficult to predict whether those changes will lead to political shifts to the left or right, but they’re unlikely to affect the flow of oil and gas to world markets. \*\*\* These prices ‘spell the downfall of frail governments’ Terry Lynn Karl is professor of Political Science at Stanford University and author of The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petrostates Brace yourself for another stomach-churning ride. While predicting changes in the price of oil is a fool’s errand, at least two volatile scenarios lie ahead, and neither is promising. On the one hand, oil prices are likely to stay unacceptably low through 2016. On the other, today’s bust is likely to lay the basis for a sharp price spike down the road. Today’s oil glut is different from those of the past: It is due to the near-doubling of U.S. production of shale oil since 2009, as well as the response of Saudi Arabia and other petroleum exporters to this unwelcome competition. In the short term, the lifting of sanctions against Iranian oil will not help. While prices in the $20-30 per barrel range were once considered beneficial to the economy and the stock market, this is no longer the case. Low prices have led to painful budget cuts in North Dakota, Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Alaska and California; a $300 billion decline in capital investment in future extraction this year alone; the bankruptcies of dozens of energy companies; and the undercutting of incentives to build alternative clean energy. Most immediately, low prices are a catalyst for the rise in global conflict. Cheap oil translates into huge revenue losses and increased poverty, especially for Russia, Brazil and Mexico but also for Canada. In the 10 OPEC countries where oil comprises more than 85 percent of export revenue, the consequences are especially dire. Where regime stability rests on a classic “oil pact” (that is, the provision of economic benefits to key constituencies in exchange for political support or, at least, passivity), low prices create a toxic mix of weak currencies, inflation, growing debt, budget and trade deficits, rising food prices, cuts in essential services and soaring poverty. Such a grim prognosis traditionally spells the downfall of fragile governments—and, sometimes, even regimes that appear stable. In Venezuela, which is already in a constitutional crisis, this year’s projected 10 percent economic contraction will plunge its extremely polarized population into even more intense civil conflict. The already dangerous situation in the Middle East and North Africa will be intensified. Because national boundaries in that region are not resolved and political institutions are crumbling, the grim economic forecast for oil-exporting governments makes them less capable of appeasing their populations or securing their oil facilities and pipelines in the face of vicious insurgencies. The Islamic State, for example, lives off the earnings from oil fields in Syria and Iraq, and similar dynamics fund Boko Haram in Nigeria and al Qaeda affiliates in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Ironically, one likely impact of this oil glut is a future price spike. Despite all the current hype, only a relatively thin margin separates surplus from shortage. Global crude oil production has already dropped substantially, with U.S production falling to 2008 levels. The delayed actions of major producers like Chevron and ExxonMobil, which are holding off planned large-scale oil projects—and, hence, millions of barrels of future supply—has the potential to fuel a surge in prices as early as next year. And widespread conflict in oil regions—exacerbated by low and unstable oil prices—could significantly disrupt supply at almost any time. Oil-related violence underlies almost all of today’s major hotspots, even those conflicts that appear solely ethnic or religious in nature, including the Syrian Civil War and its spillover into Iraq, growing tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and the continued civil unrest in Yemen, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Nigeria, Algeria, Somalia, Libya and the Sahel, Russia and the Ukraine and Venezuela, to name a few. Many of these governments—including, notably, Russia and Saudi Arabia—have every incentive to take aggressive nationalist political action abroad to deflect attention from deteriorating economic conditions at home.

#### Specifically, cause cyber lash-out.

Karl 16 [(Terry, Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and author of The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petrostates), <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/oil-crash-hidden-consequences-213550>, “The Hidden Consequences of the Oil Crash”, Politico, 1-21-2016] TDI

But a word of caution: What’s sinking oil prices is Saudi Arabia’s logical refusal to give up market share to higher-cost competitors by unilaterally cutting its own output. Oil exporters suffering from low prices now include not just bystanders like Nigeria and Venezuela, but also Iran, newly empowered by the lifting of nuclear sanctions and eager to earn more by resuming oil exports. Now Russia is in the neighborhood, too—militarily formidable, the master of covert, disguised and proxy warfare, and likely to run out of money this year or next. Much higher oil prices and the lifting of Ukraine-spawned sanctions by the West are vital to Putin’s political survival, which he engineers by seeming to protect his people from the crises he creates. Either Russia or Iran, perhaps covertly or deniably, could use cyber-attacks to ~~cripple~~ destroy Saudi Arabia’s highly centralized oil capacity. Over decades, Saudi forces have defeated all such attacks, but the attackers need to succeed only once. The game is getting dangerous—not just for the Saudis, but for the entire world.

#### Cyber wars go nuclear.

Gady 15 [(Franz, Associate Editor of The Diplomat, Senior Fellow with the EastWest Institute), “Could Cyber Attacks Lead to Nuclear War?”, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/05/could-cyber-attacks-lead-to-nuclear-war/>, Diplomat, May 2015] TDI

Short fuses on U.S. and Russian strategic forces have particularly increased the risk of accidental nuclear war, according to Cartwright, while ”the sophistication of the cyberthreat [to nuclear weapons] has increased exponentially.” “One-half of their [U.S. and Russian] strategic arsenals are continuously maintained on high alert. Hundreds of missiles carrying nearly 1,800 warheads are ready to fly at a moment’s notice,” a policy report compiled by a study group chaired by the retired U.S. general summarized. “At the brink of conflict, nuclear command and warning networks around the world may be besieged by electronic intruders whose onslaught degrades the coherence and rationality of nuclear decision-making,” the report further points out. The War Games-like scenario could unfold in one of the following three ways: First, sophisticated attackers from cyberspace could spoof U.S. or Russian early warning networks into reporting that nuclear missiles have been launched, which would demand immediate retaliatory strikes according to both nations’ nuclear warfare doctrines. Second, online hackers could manipulate communication systems into issuing unauthorized launch orders to missile crews. Third and last, attackers could directly hack into missile command and control systems launching the weapon or dismantling it on site ( a highly unlikely scenario). To reduce the likelihood of such an scenario ever occurring, Cartwright proposes that Moscow and Washington should adjust their nuclear war contingency plan timetables from calling for missiles to be launched within 3 to 5 minutes to 24 to 72 hours. Reducing the lead time to prepare nuclear missiles for launch would not diminish the deterrent value of the weapons, Cartwright, who headed Strategic Command from 2004 to 2007 and was vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before retiring in 2011, emphasized. However, the Obama White House has so far rejected the idea, particularly due to the recent deterioration of U.S.-Russia relations. Also, Robert Scher, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities, testified in Congress this month arguing “it did not make any great sense to de-alert forces” because nuclear missiles “needed to be ready and effective and able to prosecute the mission at any point in time.” Cartwright’s credibility may have also suffered among Washington policy circles ever since he has been under investigation for leaking information about the top secret Stuxnet virus – a sophisticated cyber weapon allegedly jointly developed by Israel and the United States – to the New York Times. Nevertheless, a co-authored paper, seen in draft by The Diplomat, argues that “cyber weapons and strategies have brought us to a situation of aggravated nuclear instability that needs to be more explicitly and more openly addressed in the diplomacy of leading powers, both in private and in public.” The authors, Greg Austin of the EastWest Institute in New York (and a regular contributor to The Diplomat) and Pavel Sharikov of the Russian Academy of Sciences, have concluded that “Russia now sees U.S. plans to disrupt the command and control of its nuclear weapons as the only actual (current) threat at the strategic level of warfare.” Laura Saalman of the Asia Pacific Research Centre in Hawaii has also warned of the need to look at the impact of U.S. strategies and nuclear force posture on China in a 2014 paper titled “Prompt Global Strike: China and the Spear”.

### QPQ Counterplan

#### The United States should condition removal of economic sanctions on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on free and fair elections.

#### Unilateral withdrawal is ineffective. Only conditionality maximizes sanctions leverage.

Gillespie & Schatzker ’22 [Patrick; Staff Writer, Bloomberg. Eric; Editor-at-Large, Bloomberg. “US Needs to See More From Maduro to Ease Venezuela Sanctions.” https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-19/us-needs-to-see-more-from-maduro-to-ease-sanctions-on-venezuela] TDI

“The unilateral lifting of sanctions on Venezuela is not going to improve the lives of Venezuelans,” US National Security Council Senior Director Juan Gonzalez said on Thursday, speaking remotely at Bloomberg’s New Economy Gateway Latin America hosted in Panama City. “Lifting of sanctions is only going to line the pockets of the regime.”

Gonzalez’s remarks come after Panama President Laurentino Cortizo and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet at the same event this week called for the US to lift its sanctions on the Latin American nation. Their argument is that while the sanctions have punished ordinary citizens suffering from high inflation and food shortages, they haven’t affected the regime of President Nicolas Maduro.

Yet Gonzalez, who this year met with Maduro in a rare visit to Caracas, said that sanctions relief should be a consequence of the Venezuelan government allowing for bigger political freedoms in the country.

### Lima Group Sanctions Counterplan

#### The United States should propose multilateral economic sanctions on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Lima Group.

#### They say yes, which maximizes the costs and pressure of sanctions.

Rendon & Price ’19 [Moises; Director, Future of Venezuela Initiative, Fellow with the Americas Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies. Max; Intern, CSIS Americas Program. “Are Sanctions Working in Venezuela?” https://www.csis.org/analysis/are-sanctions-working-venezuela] TDI

There is significant evidence of the impact of sanctions on Maduro’s power. Not only have targeted economic sanctions limited his ability to finance his regime’s antidemocratic activities and human rights abuses by reducing oil and illegal mining earnings, but they have also strained his inner circle. His control over state institutions and assets is slipping along with public confidence in his regime. The United States has instituted a strategy of risk; the current administration’s interminable threat to impose further sanctions leaves Maduro and his accomplices unsure as to how far it will go, forcing them to fear the worst.

Most recently, sanctions have increased leverage for democratic forces within Venezuela. Maduro recently agreed to send a delegation to Barbados to reopen talks with the opposition after dialogues stalled earlier this year. The increased pressure of sanctions was a key factor in his decision to negotiate with political adversaries, as he and his inner circle are more limited than ever in their capacity to travel and engage with financial assets.

That said, there are areas for improvement in sanctions strategy. The first important step is to encourage multilateral adoption of currently targeted sanctions. Unilateral sanctions, even from the most powerful economy in the world, have limited results. In addition to incorporating allied neighbors Colombia and Brazil, the United States should take advantage of the Lima Group, which has recently taken a strong stance on Maduro’s crusade against democracy. If this is successfully achieved, the strategy can be extended outward to the Organization of American States and perhaps even the United Nations (although Chinese and Russian veto power on the Security Council would make this difficult).

The United States and its allies must use sanctions deliberately as a tool to shut down Maduro’s criminal activities. By closing off criminal sources of revenue for him and his cohorts in Venezuela, Maduro’s relative exit costs can be lowered, which will in turn increase the likelihood of a peaceful transition. While barriers to exiting power are always high, sanctions can isolate Maduro to the point where resigning is a welcome alternative.

#### Sanctions are key to combat Maduro’s corruption:

#### **ECONOMIC COSTS. Sanctions effectively constrain revenue for illicit projects.**

Rendon & Price ’19 [Moises; Director, Future of Venezuela Initiative, Fellow with the Americas Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies. Max; Intern, CSIS Americas Program. “Are Sanctions Working in Venezuela?” https://www.csis.org/analysis/are-sanctions-working-venezuela] TDI

Sanctions are undoubtedly cutting off financing to the Maduro regime, limiting the government’s ability to import food and medicine amid economic freefall. However, reversing sanctions against Maduro and giving the regime access to revenues will not fix the humanitarian crisis for three main reasons:

Although government revenues have been used in the past to bankroll social programs, Maduro’s regime has neglected to provide food and medicine to the Venezuelan people. Instead, they have directly profited from these revenues, funding illicit projects and buying the loyalty of military officials. Sanctions are designed to choke off these earnings, weakening Maduro’s grasp on power and therefore accelerating the restoration of democracy.

According to the Venezuelan constitution, Maduro has not been the legitimate president of the country since January 10th, 2019. Over 50 countries have denounced his regime and recognized Juan Guaidó as interim president until free and fair elections can be held. Granting financial access to Maduro only serves to undermine calls for free and fair elections. Instead, the legitimate government of Venezuela should be given authority over the nation’s resources and institutions.

Alternative approaches to the humanitarian crisis can more effectively relieve the suffering of Venezuelans without empowering Maduro with the state’s assets and resources.

#### DIPLOMATIC LEVERAGE. Sanctions are key to pressure Maduro into concessions.

Feierstein et al. ’23 [Mark; Senior Advisor, Latin America Program. Keith Mines; Vice President, Latin America. Nicolás Devia-Valbuena; Program Analyst, Latin America. “Six Ways to Help Sustain Venezuela’s Negotiations.” https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/01/six-ways-help-sustain-venezuelas-negotiations] TDI

1. Keep U.S. sanctions in play as a negotiation tool.

From the dstart, the Venezuelan negotiations have been challenged to productively bring to bear the only real leverage the opposition has over the Maduro regime: relief from U.S. sanctions. Employing sanctions relief as a tool is often difficult due to U.S. domestic criticism that it emboldens a dictator. But for the talks to continue and to ultimately bear fruit, American policymakers will need to continue to offer sanctions relief in coordination with the democratic opposition and in response to genuine steps by the government to open political space, while avoiding the negotiations morphing into a dialogue between the United States and Maduro regime.

#### Pressure is working. Unilateral removal greenlights Maduro.

Rendon & Fernandez ’20 [Moises; Director, Future of Venezuela Initiative, Fellow with the Americas Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies. Claudia; Research associate, CSIS Future of Venezuela Initiative. “Can Sanctions on Venezuela Be Improved?” https://www.csis.org/analysis/can-sanctions-venezuela-be-improved] TDI

The Treasury Department should continue to monitor and evaluate the effects of sanctions on Venezuela. But despite their flaws, unless the Maduro regime agrees to a democratic transition, sanctions should not be lifted at this stage. To do so would exacerbate the suffering of the Venezuelan people by prolonging Maduro’s grip on power while undermining the efforts of the international community to re-establish democracy and prosperity in Venezuela.

The Maduro regime continues to downplay the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, and there is no compelling evidence to suggest this will change significantly amid Covid-19. On the contrary, despite signing an agreement to address Covid-19 with the interim government led by Guaidó, the regime continues to systematically and deliberately block the work of vital humanitarian organizations, such as the World Food Programme, while jailing political dissidents, censoring journalists, and looting natural resources. If sanctions were lifted, there is no reason to believe that the regime — which has a history of mismanaging, politicizing, and neglecting welfare programs — would be willing, or even able, to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, the bulk of which began long before sanctions were imposed.

Finally, it is important to recognize that, while Maduro remains in power, sanctions have effectively constrained the regime. In each negotiation effort, lifting sanctions has been the top priority for the Maduro regime, giving the opposition more leverage. And, by extending sanctions to Rosneft’s trading units, the United States has successfully cut off one of the Maduro regime’s most important lifelines. Maduro and his cronies have also partially been cut off from U.S. and European financial systems as a result of individual sanctions, and visa sanctions have left these officials diplomatically isolated. All of these effects may be deterring other officials from engaging in corrupt activities. That said, corrupt Venezuelans linked to the Maduro regime continue to enjoy impunity in many countries in the world, including in the United States. Finally, sanctions have played a vital role in shielding Venezuela’s foreign assets — such as U.S.-based CITGO Petroleum Corporation — from creditors.

Sanctions have never incited a change in government, and there is no reason to believe that the Venezuelan case is any different. Rather, they are one tool within a broader foreign policy toolkit. This toolkit includes actions from the State Department, including the recent Democratic Transition Framework, which laid out the steps the regime and military officials would need to take in order for sanctions to be lifted. It also includes steps by the Department of Justice, such as the indictments that were unveiled in March against 14 current and former regime officials.

As the situation in Venezuela evolves, sanctions must be monitored, evaluated, and, if necessary, adjusted to minimize collateral damage and facilitate humanitarian work. But lifting sanctions at this time would eliminate the opposition’s leverage and undermine diplomatic and judicial efforts to pressure the Maduro regime.

#### The plan has no chance of solving. Venezuela won’t cooperate after sanctions removal.

Meakem ’24 [Allison; Associate Editor, Foreign Policy. “Venezuela’s Strongman Wonders Whether to Risk Free Elections for Sanctions Relief.” https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/01/02/venezuela-elections-maduro-machado-economy-sanctions-migration/] TDI

It’s unclear whether the much-heralded agreement will bear fruit, however. Ryan C. Berg of the Center for Strategic and International Studies called the deal a “huge gamble” in Foreign Policy in December 2023, as sanctions relief preceded any major moves by Maduro. Berg warned that Maduro may already be violating the accord by failing to lift bans on political opponents. In late December, the United States conducted a prisoner swap with Venezuela that saw 10 Americans and 20 political prisoners released from incarceration in the country. Washington sent a jailed Maduro ally to Caracas in return.

#### Otherwise, Venezuela sponsors transnational organized crime.

GAO ’23 [Government Accountability Office. “Venezuela’s Political Unrest Has Made Drug Trafficking, Money Laundering, and Other Crimes Easier.” https://www.gao.gov/blog/venezuelas-political-unrest-has-made-drug-trafficking-money-laundering-and-other-crimes-easier] TDI

Political unrest, financial collapse, and corruption in Venezuela have created an environment that allows transnational criminal organizations to operate unchecked. Their illegal activities include illicit finance (like money laundering), as well as trafficking of people, drugs, and arms.

In 2019, the U.S. ceased to recognize Nicolás Maduro as Venezuela's president and suspended embassy operations in Venezuela. Federal agencies have also taken steps to prevent illegal activities from affecting the U.S.

The Maduro regime and transnational crime organizations

U.S. agencies have indicated that the Maduro regime tolerates transnational criminal organizations’ operations within Venezuela, including some groups that the U.S. has designated as terrorist organizations. Corrupt Venezuelans have participated in and profited from these illicit activities.

Illicit finance. Both the departments of State and Treasury have reported that Venezuela is susceptible to illicit financial activities. Furthermore, between 2017 and 2022, State consistently determined that Venezuela is a major money laundering country.

Illicit financial flows related to Venezuela include proceeds from the sale of commodities, such as oil and gold, and drug trafficking.

* Oil remains a major source of income for Venezuela and has been a mechanism for fraud and corruption, according to Treasury officials. Venezuelan oil continues to be exported to other countries, such as China.
* Illicitly-mined gold from Venezuela is another source of illicit profit. Before entering international markets, its origins are disguised in the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, according to U.S.-government–funded research. Venezuelan gold is subsequently exported to countries in Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia.
* State has described Venezuela as a preferred drug trafficking route, predominately for moving cocaine to global markets. In April we reported to Congress about how Colombian cocaine is trafficked through Venezuela to the U.S., Europe, and Africa. Corrupt Venezuelans are collaborating with drug traffickers, according to the Commander of the U.S. Southern Command. These activities undermine U.S. counternarcotics goals in the region.

#### Institutionalization of organized crime is existential.

Boyd & Henkin ’22 [Marcus; Head, Geospatial Analysis, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, University of Maryland. Samuel; Senior Faculty Specialist & Researcher, Geospatial Research Unit, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, University of Maryland. "TOC as a Growing Threat to Regional, Global Security," Global Security Review, Volume 2, Number 8] TDI

Transnational organized crime (TOC) is a significant and growing threat to the security of the United States and a major security challenge in other critical regions of the world. TOC continues to expand dramatically in size, scope, and influence with major destabilizing effects. In recent years, TOC entities have embraced new, and often violent, practices and advanced strategies to circumvent the traditional norms of legal economies and evade security interventions often operating through a vast economic system of dark networks and economies — illicit and illegal sourcing, labor inputs, production, products and services, supply chains, and consumer operations.1 Within these clandestine systems, TOC entities are expanding their operations, diversifying their activities, as well as exploiting the increased blurring between illicit and licit activities. The rapid evolution of TOC entities in the past 15 years has engendered a more convoluted, violent, and destabilizing convergence of threat vectors challenging security regimes in detecting, disrupting, and dismantling the (il)licit and (il)legal of transnational criminal enterprises.

The Shadow Economy of Transnational Organized Crime

The typical consumer only ever experiences the point of sale for the illicit/illegal good. They do not see the hierarchical structures and transnational trade that undergirds their purchase. The shadow economy, as Medina and Schneider notes, goes by many names and, depending on how it is defined, represents a significant share of global GDP. For example, among 158 states the average size of a state’s shadow economy relative to their GDP was 31.9% between 1991 and 20152 . By some estimates revenues generated by transnational crime are estimated to be worth as much as $2.2 trillion annually3 . This, of course, does not account for the countless other goods and services illicitly and/or illegally produced and purchased around the world not captured in estimates.

In this piece, we will demonstrate the general hierarchical structure of TOC entities that promulgate a significant proportion of the shadow economy and, in turn, how the existing legitimate economic structures make TOC entity activities profitable and difficult to curtail. At their core, TOCs are driven by market forces and opportunity, and they seek to maximize and sustain profits, similar to licit businesses. Yet while TOC entities operate like other legitimate businesses, albeit with (il)legal/ (il)licit goods and services, they actively work to circumvent, evade, and ignore economic norms exercising corrupt, exploitative, and violent means to perpetuate their profit maximization.

The shadow economy consists of two different economies: The illicit economy and the illegal economy. The illicit economy is akin to the informal economy, that is, activities that are largely legal—selling food and other goods. These activities become illicit when they are done “extra-institutionally;” meaning the proceeds are not taxed and are not “recorded” by the government, or the proper permits and other bureaucratic operating requirements are not met. None of these activities are captured in national GDP estimates.4 Conversely, the illegal economy consists of productive activities that run counter to domestic and/or international law. Some illegal productive activities (e.g., production of narcotics and drugs) are profitable enough to indirectly impact GDP, while others typically do not.

TOC entities thrive in the shadow economy because they are institutionally adept at navigating between the (il)licit and the (il)legal. In a recent radio interview, sociologist Federico Varese who primarily focuses on Mafia hierarchy, suggested that TOC entities are three conjoined entities: 1) producers of goods and services; 2) traffickers of the goods; and 3) overall TOC governance actors.5 TOC governance exists to unify existing shadow economy structures in a similar fashion as a corporation would vertically integrate its supply chain. More specifically, TOC entities in Latin America have become polycrime entities,6 embracing multiple types and forms of criminality. Increasingly, TOC entities are structured in such a way to encourage polycrime activity. This is particularly relevant to narcotraffickers, but is also applicable to other criminal entities for whom narcotics production, trafficking, and/or distribution are not their primary type of activity.7 These entities now have decades of experience in illicit and illegal practices that benefit multiple different types of transnational criminal activity. With transnational networks in place, weapons trafficking, human trafficking and/or smuggling, intellectual property crime, counterfeit products, and counterfeit drugs all become viable productive activities.8

We suggest that there is a fourth role within TOC entities: the “violence worker.” Violence workers are those members of TOC entities that use violence to enforce (bureaucratic) order. Violence workers appear organically, and become specialized, in the ranks of producers, traffickers, and governors, and work to reinforce TOC goals through the use of violence. The “order-enforcement” exercised by violence workers functions as a determined logic of coercion and violence aimed to define the extent of TOC governance.9 Significantly, order-enforcement requires a substantial balancing act so that the fear constituted by TOC vio lence workers creates economic opportunities without fully delegitimizing their standing, especially those that blend illicit and licit activities, or draws significant attention from state interventionary forces.10 In other words, violence workers employ order-enforcement to normalize TOC entities’ claims of legitimacy to govern and operate across their territories. As TOC entities grow and diversify, violence workers have become more indispensable.

For some organized criminal entities, violence workers mainly serve a productive role, meaning that they manage “strong arm” activities like extortion, protection rackets, burglaries, and robberies. In more sophisticated polycrime transnational organized criminal entities, violence workers commit similar activities, and involve violence specialization, like firefights (tiroteos), assassinations (asesinatos), and raids (incursiónes) at varying levels of intensity and tactical action, to ensure successful trafficking operations.11 The economic gains from rudimentary violence work are rather insignificant compared with the funds received from successful trafficking operations. Moreover, varying levels and intensity of violence maintained by violence workers across all scales of TOC activity engenders a “criminal governance” that functions in opposition to and often in collusion with the state’s capacity to govern, occupying an occluded space between everyday criminal (bureaucratic) activity and violent conflict.12

Borrowing from Mancur Olson’s work, violence workers who support TOC entities are disinclined from participating in what Olson termed “roving banditry” because as “stationary bandits,” they are economically successful and not raising the ire of state entities that could counter their efforts. However, when states flex their muscles and challenge TOC sovereignty, it incentivizes violence workers to organize against state forces and civilian populations to maintain the entity’s existing business practices. Even though violence workers are indispensable to TOC entities in stimulating and maintaining illicit practices, (semi-) legitimate economic structures and individuals, socalled “facilitators”, make TOC activities even more profitable by crossing the between the shadow economy and global economy to serve legitimate customers and TOC entities alike.13 Facilitators serve wittingly, and sometimes unwittingly, to connect TOC entities to legitimate economic structures, like offshore bank accounts and shell corporations, in order to sustain growing polycrime infrastructures. Violence workers and facilitators both function to advance perpetuation of TOC activities and their profitability underpinning the foundations of the shadow economy.

Recent TOC Trends

In the past, TOC entities largely remained regional in their operational scope with strict hierarchical structures. Today, TOC entities are more variable and volatile embracing new, and often violent, operational strategies increasing not only their diversification of illicit activities, but also, the density of those illicit activities. Additionally, TOC entities increasingly engage in illicit activities that transgress territories and borders of a single state. This expansion poses serious threats to neighboring states and their citizens, generating both direct and indirect economic harm, affecting social structures, like public health, and hindering the development and stability of states.14 Notable trends in TOC that present significant challenges today include:

Fragmentation: TOC fragmentation has led to increasingly adaptable, agile, and competitively violent criminal organizations with varying structures and wider networks.

Geographical expansion: TOC expansion has led to greater contestation over illicit inputs, routes, and markets globally.

Diversification: TOC entities are diversifying their criminal portfolios, thus increasing their criminal density, seeking greater profits, consolidation of markets, and safeguarded supply chains.

Legitimate entanglement: TOC entities are becoming increasingly entangled with legitimate businesses and actors, including state actors (e.g., corrupt security force personnel), and especially, banking institutions to launder money.

Specialization: TOC entities pursue cross-national specialization, forging networked criminal connections at regional and global scales.

Virtual: There is an increasing role of cyber capabilities in TOC as TOC entities exploit online dark networks (i.e., the dark web) and licit online economic platforms, to sell goods and services.

The most indelible issues we face when countering TOC involve the metastasizing and merging of regional entities into global juggernauts. The initial Medellín and Cali cartels were transnational because they produced their goods in Colombia and Bolivia and they were transported to, and sold in, the United States. Yet we have seen subsequent Mexican cartels — Sinaloa and Loz Zetas, for example — expand their reach globally partnering with European, Asian, Australian, and African organized criminal entities to reshape the drug trade.15 This has been evident most recently in the mixing of Mexican and European assets to produce highly refined crystal meth that has taken over the European recreational drug scene. In late 2020, police raids in The Netherlands discovered a professional crystal meth lab that was truly global: Mexicans cooked the meth using Dutch-made equipment and chemicals sourced from China. The recent raids have uncovered links to the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), one of the newer and most violent Mexican cartels.16 CJNG and the Sinaloa cartel have also been linked to the recent proliferation of fentanyl that has fueled the opioid epidemic in the United States over the last few years.17 Cartels send envoys to China to purchase dual use precursor chemicals and/or bulk shipments of fentanyl, and then ship those to Mexican ports, like Lázaro Cardenas, where cartel members take possession of the material for further processing, trafficking, and then vending.18 These methods, at the current economy of scale, make these operations incredibly profitable. The profitability and global nature have led to increases in violence brought about by difficulties managing the hierarchy across global space in addition to the opportunity to earn profit at all levels.

Conclusion

These characteristics of TOC entities — the increasingly global scope of their reach, the institutionalization of violence, and the fine line between illicit and illegal — have profound implications for the global economy. The implications of the capacity and capabilities to counter TOC profoundly shape if, when, and how these current and emerging trends continue to produce violent and destabilizing consequences. The growth in criminal density and geographical expansion of TOC entities across various regions in the world, including the U.S. Southern Border, will only continue to produce instability. As TOC entities form more sophisticated networks and means of transnational operation, it is necessary to consider ways to enhance data collection, analysis, and information sharing capabilities across states to keep pace with the rapidly changing dynamics of TOC activities, and to address gaps in policy and practice to counter TOC.

### turns case (soft left)

#### Maduro is the ‘greatest sanction on the Venezuelan people’.

Rendon & Fernandez ’20 [Moises; Director, Future of Venezuela Initiative, Fellow with the Americas Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies. Claudia; Research associate, CSIS Future of Venezuela Initiative. “Can Sanctions on Venezuela Be Improved?” https://www.csis.org/analysis/can-sanctions-venezuela-be-improved] TDI

While the sanctions program can, and should, be improved, the authors argue that lifting sanctions would be counterproductive and is not likely to improve humanitarian and economic conditions for Venezuelans at this time. Indeed, the greatest sanction on the Venezuelan people is the Maduro regime, which continues to plunder the country’s natural resources, harbor criminal activity, and violate human rights with impunity.

### Politics Link

#### Politics Link

Toosi 22 [(Nahal, POLITICO's senior foreign affairs correspondent), "Lawmakers cry foul as Biden mulls lifting some sanctions", <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/10/20/lawmakers-cry-foul-as-biden-mulls-lifting-some-sanctions-00062611>, Politico, 10-20-2022] TDI

Joe Biden has readily imposed sanctions against U.S. adversaries throughout his presidency. Now he’s finding out that lifting them is a lot harder. In recent months, as Biden has mulled reducing such penalties against countries such as Venezuela and Iran, he’s run headlong into opposition in Congress. Some lawmakers, knowing the topic will play well on the campaign trial, vow to do everything they can to stop the sanctions from being lifted. It’s the type of drawn-out political fight that could make U.S. sanctions less effective over time if adversaries come to believe that, no matter what they do, Washington will never lift penalties on them. It’s playing out as the United States, determined to limit its military exposure abroad, has grown more reliant on sanctions, including against Russia. “U.S. politics constrains our ability to provide sanctions relief, even when the executive branch wants it,” said Edward Fishman, a former State Department official who helped craft sanctions strategy for the Obama administration. “The on switch is much easier to press than the off switch The latest example involves Venezuela. For weeks, there have been reports that Biden is considering lifting some U.S. sanctions on Venezuelan autocrat Nicolas Maduro in part to get the country’s oil back on the market amid energy crises sparked by Russia’s war in Ukraine. But as word got out of the plan, Republicans from all over slammed Biden. They said he should not go soft on a dictator like Maduro, whose country also happens to be a hot issue in the swing state of Florida, home to many politically active Venezuelan-Americans. “This Admin continues to place America last and embolden our adversaries,” tweeted GOP Rep. Andy Biggs of Arizona. As criticism has intensified, Biden administration officials have insisted they haven’t changed their policy on Venezuela and won’t reduce the sanctions unless Maduro takes steps to restore democracy — the primary reason the sanctions were imposed in the first place. That involves negotiating with the Venezuelan opposition, the officials have said.

### Elections Link

#### Sanctions are key to win Florida.

Neuman 22 [(William, 6-6-2022), "Venezuela sanctions aren’t working. Don’t repeat the mistakes of the Cuba embargo", <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/06/venezuela-sanctions-arent-working-dont-repeat-the-mistakes-of-the-cuba-embargo>, Guardian, 6-6-2022] TDI

Trump saw that he could weaponize Venezuela policy in the 2020 election in Florida, with its large bloc of Hispanic voters, including Cuban Americans, attuned to Venezuela’s fall into authoritarianism. In effect, he made Venezuela the new Cuba – threatening to invade, and piling on sanctions. As foreign policy, Trump’s approach was a failure: it did not remove Maduro or improve conditions in Venezuela. But as an election strategy it was a great success; Trump easily won Florida in 2020 and Republicans gained two congressional seats there. When Biden became president, he inherited a trap. Any change toward Venezuela could be cast as being soft on Maduro and might cost Democrats even more votes in Florida in the midterms and in 2024.

### 1NC – Sanctions Good

#### Post-Barbados, more aggressive sanctions are key – Biden cannot back-down.

Berg 23 [(Ryan, Director of the Americas program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.), “What’s Wrong With Biden’s Venezuela Policy”, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/12/12/biden-maduro-venezuela-sanctions-esequibo-guyana/> , Foreign Policy, 12-12-2023] TDI

The Biden administration recently shifted its Venezuela policy—and it’s already in trouble. Whereas the previous administration heaped a pile of sanctions on the Maduro regime in an effort to stymie its human rights abuses and corruption, the Biden administration has presided over a significant softening of the Venezuelan sanctions architecture. This softening amounts to a major test of the administration’s ability to reach what has been a bipartisan goal of freer and fairer presidential elections in Venezuela, on a longer road to full re-democratization. But now Maduro is returning to his old antics of arresting opposition figures and is even threatening to annex Esequibo, a region administered by neighboring Guyana but long disputed by Venezuela. It’s clear that the Biden administration must reboot its Venezuela policy or face strategic insolvency against an adversarial regime. FOLLOWING THE OCTOBER SIGNING of two partial accords in Barbados between the Maduro regime and the opposition Unitary Platform, the Biden administration announced a six-month period of sanctions relief for Maduro. This was in effect a huge gamble, permitting the Maduro regime a near full return to international oil, gas, minerals, and secondary bonds markets. A windfall beckons for Maduro, with the temporary relief potentially equating to $10 billion in additional revenue—more than one-tenth of Venezuela’s GDP—at a critical time. The Barbados agreements are a set of narrow accords that do not commit the Maduro regime to major concessions on freer and fairer presidential elections in Venezuela. The regime did pledge space for independent media, election observation missions, and respect for internal candidate selection process. However, the electoral apparatus remains under the influence of the regime, the media is dominated by Maduro’s allies, and censorship ensures a steady drumbeat of regime views in major outlets. The Biden administration imposed two additional demands in exchange for sanctions relief. First, the Maduro regime must release political prisoners, including unjustly detained American citizens. Second, the Maduro regime had to outline a procedure for lifting candidate bans, which have blocked the country’s political opposition for years. The most significant of these bans is on María Corina Machado, the resounding winner of the Unitary Platform’s primary, who is prevented from competing in 2024. The Biden administration announced that it would review progress on these demands by Nov. 30, with the threat of a “snapback” on sanctions if the Maduro regime balked. The Maduro regime’s recent course of action should be interpreted as having violated the Barbados agreements. This tracks a pattern of behavior from the previous seven agreements between the opposition and regime. For instance, the regime has run afoul of its commitment to media outlets covering the primary—it did this through censorship, harassment, and intimidation, as well as cutting internet access during the transmission of poll results. Machado’s triumphant victory, in which she won 92 percent of the vote, had barely receded when the Maduro regime launched an investigation into the primary process, and through its control of the Supreme Court, “suspended” the results. The regime has also forced primary organizers to appear before prosecutors and demanded information on those who participated, potentially compromising the identities of millions and exposing them to coercion and punishment, as happened after a recall referendum against then-President Hugo Chávez in 2004. Consider, also, the Maduro regime’s manufactured crisis with its neighbor Guyana. The regime has engaged in a massive campaign of distraction by reactivating an old claim to Esequibo, a territory administered by Guyana. While it is easier to stake a claim than to pitch a tent, Maduro has whipped the country into a nationalist frenzy, threatened to fully annex the territory, and announced plans to administer and develop it. This has put much of South America on high alert, and it has also worked to blunt the opposition’s momentum. Meanwhile, Maduro has launched investigations into opposition figures for “treason” and issued arrest warrants for several members of Machado’s team on the spurious basis that they took money from ExxonMobil, which is one of the primary companies operating in Esequibo. With the Biden administration’s end of November deadline nearly reached, the Maduro regime presented a “process” for lifting candidate bans. The process requires banned candidates to request the admission of their appeal with the country’s comptroller general. If admissibility is granted, the case will then be decided by Venezuela’s Supreme Court—the same regime-controlled institution that recently suspended the results of the opposition’s primary. Problematically, once decisions have been rendered on political bans, opposition candidates are expressly prohibited from speaking about and criticizing those decisions—in essence inserting a censorship clause into the process. Yet the Biden administration did not move to reimpose sanctions on the Maduro regime at this point. In fact, senior administration officials said that they “welcome the announcement of a process to reinstate all candidates for the 2024 Venezuelan election.” The Biden administration’s blessing of Maduro’s process has afforded the regime an alternative—and more face-saving—avenue to continue its electoral machinations. Since its inception, one of the most enduring features of Chavismo as a political movement is not only that it maneuvers to win most elections, but that it also leverages tools such as candidate bans and cooptation of political parties to confront an ersatz opposition. Now, rather than having to force a do-over of the opposition’s primary, which would have induced an outcry from the international community, Maduro has the Biden administration’s blessing to review candidate bans and use the sham process as another tool to ensure its preferred opponent in 2024. Venezuela, after all, placed dead last in the World Justice Project’s annual Rule of Law Index, with the entry noting the near absolute control exercised by the executive over nominally independent institutions. In other words, the “process” in question is tantamount to Maduro indicating when he will decide on candidate bans, all while masquerading as rule of law. The inclusion of institutions with no independence will permit Maduro to claim that candidates had their day in (regime-controlled) court, followed by an enforceable ban on their ability to speak out. Given that her ban was just “reaffirmed” by the same comptroller general in June, it is unimaginable that Machado will win her appeal and thus the right to run for president in 2024. The Biden administration will be complicit in the sidelining of an opposition candidate who received an unprecedented 92 percent of the primary vote. This failure of American policy stems from a lack of understanding of Maduro’s calculations. It is likely that the value of sanctions relief to Maduro’s reelection efforts decreased upon witnessing the opposition’s primary, wherein throngs of people previously attracted to Chavismo lined up to vote for the change Machado represents. An expected boost in the regime’s social spending would be insufficient to compensate for Maduro’s abysmal approval ratings. While sanctions relief is a necessary condition for Maduro to reactivate Venezuela’s moribund economy, it is not existential. The regime has already rebuffed a “maximum pressure” sanctions campaign by utilizing repression and following the mantra that “poverty is better than defeat.” Moreover, by failing to message clearly to Maduro the exact costs of not abiding by the Barbados agreements, senior Biden administration officials encouraged him to take his chances. Maduro is betting that even if the Biden administration does reimpose sanctions eventually, the new architecture will still be a net positive for his regime. Lastly, Maduro has several tools at his disposal to push back. Nearly 8 million Venezuelans have been forced to migrate because of widespread and systematic human rights abuses and an economic implosion, with 50,000 of them showing up at the southern U.S. border in the month before the Barbados agreements. Maduro may threaten to rip up a recent agreement to accept returnee flights; this would generate trouble for Biden’s own reelection efforts. Maduro also understands the importance of the price of gas in U.S. elections and seems to have convinced Biden that in the tight international market engendered by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and conflict in the Middle East, the United States could use more Venezuelan crude. All signs point to the Biden administration’s desire to normalize relations with Venezuela, and Maduro knows that.

#### Sanctions work

Rendon and Price 19 [(Moises and Max, Former Senior Associate (Non-resident), Americas Program), "Are Sanctions Working in Venezuela?", <https://www.csis.org/analysis/are-sanctions-working-venezuela>, CSIS, 9-3-2019] TDI

The Efficacy of Sanctions There is significant evidence of the impact of sanctions on Maduro’s power. Not only have targeted economic sanctions limited his ability to finance his regime’s antidemocratic activities and human rights abuses by reducing oil and illegal mining earnings, but they have also strained his inner circle. His control over state institutions and assets is slipping along with public confidence in his regime. The United States has instituted a strategy of risk; the current administration’s interminable threat to impose further sanctions leaves Maduro and his accomplices unsure as to how far it will go, forcing them to fear the worst. Most recently, sanctions have increased leverage for democratic forces within Venezuela. Maduro recently agreed to send a delegation to Barbados to reopen talks with the opposition after dialogues stalled earlier this year. The increased pressure of sanctions was a key factor in his decision to negotiate with political adversaries, as he and his inner circle are more limited than ever in their capacity to travel and engage with financial assets.

#### Sanctions work – even if by themselves, they haven’t achieved policy objectives, they are a critical leveraging option to amplify other tools.

Rendon and Fernandez 20 [(Moises and Claudia, Former Senior Associate (Non-resident), Americas Program), "Can Sanctions on Venezuela Be Improved?", <https://www.csis.org/analysis/can-sanctions-venezuela-be-improved>, CSIS, 6-22-2020] TDI

Finally, it is important to recognize that, while Maduro remains in power, sanctions have effectively constrained the regime. In each negotiation effort, lifting sanctions has been the top priority for the Maduro regime, giving the opposition more leverage. And, by extending sanctions to Rosneft’s trading units, the United States has successfully cut off one of the Maduro regime’s most important lifelines. Maduro and his cronies have also partially been cut off from U.S. and European financial systems as a result of individual sanctions, and visa sanctions have left these officials diplomatically isolated. All of these effects may be deterring other officials from engaging in corrupt activities. That said, corrupt Venezuelans linked to the Maduro regime continue to enjoy impunity in many countries in the world, including in the United States. Finally, sanctions have played a vital role in shielding Venezuela’s foreign assets—such as U.S.-based CITGO Petroleum Corporation—from creditors. Sanctions have never incited a change in government, and there is no reason to believe that the Venezuelan case is any different. Rather, they are one tool within a broader foreign policy toolkit. This toolkit includes actions from the State Department, including the recent Democratic Transition Framework, which laid out the steps the regime and military officials would need to take in order for sanctions to be lifted. It also includes steps by the Department of Justice, such as the indictments that were unveiled in March against 14 current and former regime officials.

#### Sanctions have put Maudro on the brink – ineffective sanctions are resolved by Biden re-calibration, not concessions.

Meacham 24 [(Carl, Former Director, Americas Program at CSIS), "Reassessing U.S. Sanctions Strategy Towards Venezuela", <https://globalamericans.org/reassessing-u-s-sanctions-strategy-towards-venezuela/>, Global Americans, 4-19-2024] TDI

And while the situation may look dire inside the country, the truth is that the Venezuelan regime is the least popular it has been since Chavez took power in 1999, due in no small part to the increased repression and humanitarian crisis of the Maduro government. Poll after poll show that Maduro would lose in a landslide were free and fair elections permitted, something not lost on the regime itself, which has made unprecedented efforts to repress and divide the opposition ahead of the July 28 elections. The U.S., in coordination with the international community, should continue to support the opposition’s right to compete, and issue new individual sanctions on any regime officials found guilty of participating in the rigging of July’s elections. Past policies may have failed, but now is a time to redouble U.S. efforts to support a democratic Venezuela rather than concede to the Maduro dictatorship. The reimposition of sanctions by the Biden administration reflects a reasoned recalibration of U.S. policy towards Venezuela without normalizing the Maduro regime. It marks a promising new position in the continued struggle for a free Venezuela, hopefully a first step in the right direction, rather than the last.

#### Sanctions relief goes to social spending – election season.

Armas and Buitrago 23 [(Mayela and Deisy, International Political Correspondents at Reuters), "With elections coming and relaxed sanctions, Venezuela is set to raise social spending", <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/with-elections-coming-relaxed-sanctions-venezuela-is-set-raise-social-spending-2023-11-09/> , Reuters, 11-9-2023] TDI

CARACAS, Nov 9 (Reuters) - The Venezuelan government will be in a strong position to increase social spending to woo voters in 2024 as relief from some U.S. sanctions allows more oil income to flow into government coffers, analysts say. The United States in October temporarily rolled back some oil industry sanctions and lifted a ban on bond trading sanctions in exchange for an electoral deal between the government of President Nicolas Maduro and Venezuela's opposition. Washington has conditioned an extension of the relief on the release of political prisoners and what it says are "wrongfully detained" Americans, as well as the lifting of public office bans on people including the winner of the opposition's primary nominating contest. The relaxed sanctions could lead to $1.4 billion in additional income for Venezuela over the next six months, analyst firm Sintesis Financiera said in a report. The additional oil income is expected to arrive gradually, partly though the redirection of exports. One oil industry source told Reuters they expect export income to grow by 40% per month. Under the previous sanctions, state-run oil company PDVSA had to sell to Asian markets via intermediaries, a strategy that cut into government profits. "The increase in income will be gradual," said Jose Vielma, a ruling party lawmaker and member of the finance committee for the government-allied national assembly. "The contribution will go to social spending and services." The communications ministry and ruling party PSUV did not respond to requests for further comment on spending plans. The increased income will almost certainly lead to greater financial laxity "given the need to improve popular support for the government ahead of elections in the second half of 2024," said Sintesis Financiera. The government has traditionally increased social spending, public sector salaries, food distribution and housing construction projects ahead of elections, though national income has been limited over the last five years because of the sanctions and problems at PDVSA. SALARY INCREASES? If the sanctions relaxations continue next year and oil production goes up, the additional income could reach $7 billion in 2024, consulting firm Ecoanalitica said. "In electoral periods clientelist spending increases, and it's possible we'll see workers getting bonuses or improvements in the distribution of food," said Venezuelan political consultant and analyst Oswaldo Ramirez. "The challenge for the government is to convert that into votes... The ruling party has lost votes in part because of delays in salary increases and pensions," he said. The government has already this year launched new social programs - which it calls "missions" - for young people and women, the first since 2017. Such social programs distribute food, houses and even goods like motorcycle parts, cellphones and computer tablets.

#### Sanctions did not cause Venezuela’s crisis.

Aldekoa 19 [(Jon, Higher Degree in Administration and Finance at Mises Institute), "The Data Shows Socialists — Not Sanctions — Destroyed Venezuela’s Economy", <https://mises.org/mises-wire/data-shows-socialists-not-sanctions-destroyed-venezuelas-economy>, Mises Institute, 1-15-2021] TDI

However, in May 2019, a report was published by Brookings that refutes these claims. This new report, Impact of the 2017 Sanctions on Venezuela: Revisiting the Evidence (Bahar, Bustos, Morales, and Santos 2019), finds that the methodology Weisbrot and Sachs utilized did not allow them to estimate the causal effect of the sanctions and that accordingly their conclusions are incorrect for two reasons. First, in the absence of an adequate counterfactual, the effects of the sanctions cannot be separated from the negative economic trends in Venezuela that preceded them. Second, the deterioration observed by Weisbrot and Sachs could also be explained by other, more important factors beyond the 2017 sanctions that have not been taken into account. If we stick to the data, regardless of which socioeconomic indicator we choose, it seems clear that the sharp economic downturn began long before 2017. Access to International Financial Markets Prior to August 2017, international markets had already stopped the flow of credit to Venezuela. The spread of Venezuela’s sovereign debt — the premium that holders of sovereign bonds demand that the country pay above the “risk-free” rate — was on average 2,884 basis points in the 30 days before the sanctions were announced. This is 7.8 times more than the margin paid by the rest of Latin America and 9.5 times more than what was paid by emerging markets during the same period. As can be observed in the following graph, the imposition of sanctions did not have an impact on the Venezuelan spread. Image On the contrary, the spread only increased — by 1,013 basis points — when Nicolás Maduro announced the creation of a commission for refinancing and restructuring Venezuela’s foreign debt. The data indicate that by August 25, 2017, the Venezuelan government’s capacity to issue debt was either severely limited or nonexistent and investors had already discounted possible sanctions and their potential impact. Oil Production Weisbrot and Sachs argue in their report that Venezuela’s problems worsened as a consequence of the sanctions. They use Colombian oil production as the counterfactual to determine the sanctions’ impact on Venezuela. For Colombia’s oil production to be considered a suitable comparison, both trends should be similar prior to the sanctions imposed on Venezuela. However, although the trends seem similar for the period selected by Weisbrot and Sasch, they differ significantly if we go back further back in time. Image Therefore, it would not be reasonable to expect parallel trends after the sanctions. In fact, the evolution of Colombia’s oil production is due to very different underlying factors, which would explain the different trends. Some analysts agree that the fall in Venezuela’s oil production is nothing more than a continuation of a decline that began with the dismissal of more than eighteen thousand workers from PDVSA (the state-owned oil and natural gas company) after the national strike during Hugo Chávez’s presidency. This dismissal resulted in an important loss in administrative and technical capacity (Forero 2003). Even during the golden age of oil, 2004–14, Venezuela’s oil production fell by 24 percent between 2005 and 2016. Another comparison can be made with oil production in countries that belong to OPEC (excluding Venezuela). As the following graph shows, the trends in oil production were similar before the fall in oil prices (even since 2013). However, oil production in OPEC countries did not decrease after the fall in crude oil prices at the beginning of 2016. In Venezuela, on the other hand, oil production began to collapse. Image Can we conclude that the difference in oil production between OPEC countries and Venezuela is a result of the sanctions? Based on the data, the answer is no. In fact, there is no counterfactual that is appropriate for analyzing Venezuela’s oil-production trends. Socioeconomic Consequences Weisbrot and Sachs’s work attributes the negative performance of Venezuela’s socioeconomic indicators entirely to the August 2017 sanctions. They argue that Venezuela lacks enough foreign currency to import food and medicines to satisfy the population’s basic needs because of the fall in oil production and the consequent decrease in revenue. In contrast, Brookings’s new report concludes that it is impossible to measure the effect of the observed decrease in production before the sanctions. Furthermore, the significant deterioration in Venezuela’s socioeconomic conditions began in 2013 and cannot be observed in any other part of the region. The following image shows the value of food imports from Latin America over time. In 2016, the year before the sanctions were imposed, Venezuela was already importing 71 percent less than its maximum in 2013. Image Something similar occurred with imports of medicine and medical equipment. Venezuelan imports fell by 68 percent between 2013 and 2016, whereas they stayed constant in the rest of the region. In other words, most of the fall happened before the sanctions in August 2017. By the end of 2017, Venezuelan imports of these basic sanitary products constituted only 8 percent of the amount observed in 2013. Image Next, the daily measure of the purchasing power of the Venezuelan minimum wage is analyzed in terms of the cheapest calories available, calculated by Douglas Barrios of the Center for International Development at Harvard University (CENDAS, for its acronym in Spanish). Using the prices reported by CENDAS for fifty-eight products at more than fifty points of sale in the metropolitan area of Caracas, they obtained the maximum quantity of daily calories that can be purchased with a minimum wage, on average, for every month between 2010 and 2018. As can be seen in the following graph, there has been a sharp reduction in Venezuelans’ calorie intake, but this decrease began long before the sanctions of 2017. Image The data show that at the moment when the sanctions were imposed, an entire minimum wage could only buy 6,132 of the cheapest calories available per day, 92 percent less than in January 2010. This represents only 56 percent of the minimum dietary needs of a family of five people, which is estimated to be 10,800 daily calories. While the purchasing power of the minimum wage continued to decrease after August 2017 (at levels that only enable the purchase of hundreds of calories), it is impossible to determine how much of this decrease was simply a continuation of the strong trend observed before the sanctions were imposed. Weisbrot and Sachs also associate a 31 percent increase in the overall mortality rate recorded in Venezuela between 2017 and 2018 (according to their own sources) with the sanctions, concluding that they have been directly responsible for forty thousand deaths. These data have supposedly been extracted from an internal report by the United Nations about Venezuela, Overview of Priority Human Needs (March 2019), which, it seems, is not publicly available. Therefore, to make a comparison that is objective and publicly available, we use data on infant mortality are used because it is often recognized as a good indirect measure of the overall quality of public health services. Image The graph shows infant mortality rates in the first year of life expressed per thousand live births in Latin America over time. In line with the previous findings, the decline in infant mortality (and the correlated increase in overall mortality rates) preceded the imposition of sanctions in August 2017. Conclusion Although it is probable that the sanctions have had some impact on oil production in Venezuela, the analysis in Brookings’s report does not find sufficient evidence to conclude that the sanctions were responsible for the worsening of the socioeconomic crisis. At this moment, there are not sufficient publicly available data to rigorously estimate a causal effect. The Brookings report therefore concludes that most of the deterioration of socioeconomic indicators occurred prior to the sanctions of August 2017. In fact, a large part of the suffering and devastation in Venezuela has been inflicted by those in power since 1999 and not as much by the sanctions imposed in 2017.

### 1NC – AT: Oil Volatility

#### Oil shocks have no impact—innovation corrects and stabilizes

Ro 14 [(Sam, deputy editor of Business Insider), “Oil Price Shocks Aren't As Harmful As They Used To Be”, <https://www.businessinsider.com/impact-of-oil-price-shock-2014-6>, 6-30-2014, Business Insider] TDI

Oil is a critical source of energy. In the past, a major oil price shock meant devastation for economic growth. "Our obsession with oil prices comes with good reason," writes Morgan Stanley economist Ellen Zentner. "Abrupt and sharp increases in oil prices have played a key role in precipitating recessions in 1973-75, 1980-81, 1990-91, 2001 and 2008-09." Recent turmoil in Iraq has sent oil prices much higher. But economists aren't ready to freak out just yet. "**Over time, however, those** shocks **to the relative price of oil** have spurred innovations that have led to a more efficient use of energy inputs,**"** continued Zentner. "Alongside growing use of other energy inputs, **those** innovations have reduced the world economy’s dependence on oil." Zentner presented this chart showing how a decreasing amount of energy has been needed to generated a dollar's worth of GDP in the world. It may not be immediately intuitive how this could be. Zentner offers a more micro level example that anyone who's been in a car can appreciate. US households have also adjusted consumption patterns over time. When gasoline prices rise, drivers tend to reduce mileage in response and/or seek out more fuel efficient vehicles. This altered behavior, coupled with shifting demographic factors and a slow labor market recovery since the financial crisis, has weighed on vehicle miles driven and lessens the aggregate impact of price increases at the pump. In the 12 months ended May 2014, average vehicle miles driven remained below the previous peak (reached in November 2007) for a 76th straight month. In 1990, consumers devoted 3.8% of total consumption to motor fuels. By 2013, that share had fallen to 2.3% (Exhibit 3).

#### Impact of shocks is small and short-term – empirics.

Bastianin 16 [(Andrea, University of Milan - Department of Economics), “The Impacts of Oil Price Shocks on Stock Market Volatility: Evidence from the G7 Countries”, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421516304475>, October 2015, Energy Policy] TDI

Figure 1 shows the responses of realized volatility to different oil shocks in each of the G7 countries. The shocks presented are expected to generate an increase in the price of crude oil. Thus, we consider a negative oil supply shock, which represents an unpredictable decrease of oil production, and positive shocks to aggregate and oil-specific demand. The leftmost column shows that oil supply shocks do not have a significant impact on volatility. In all countries the response is close to zero and statistically insignificant. On average, during the period 1975-2015, stock market volatility has not responded to oil price shocks originating from the supply side, neither in oil-importing nor in oil-exporting G7 countries. From the second column we see that a positive aggregate demand shock immediately reduces volatility in all G7 countries. This decrease is significant at the 68% level and lasts up to six months. Eleven months after the shock the sign of the response becomes positive for Canada, the U.K. and the U.S., although it is significant at the 68% confidence level only for Canada, where the higher level of volatility is persistent. This pattern might be explained considering the two simultaneous effects of an unexpected increase in aggregate demand. On the one hand, this innovation could be interpreted as good news by stock markets and reduce volatility, since a positive shock to aggregate demand implies increased economic activity and lower uncertainty about future cash flows. On the other hand, higher aggregate demand could trigger a rise in the price of oil and slowdown the economy, causing an increase in volatility. The impulse response functions for the G7 economies indicate that initially the first effect prevails and volatility decreases in all countries, while in the medium-run the second effect is stronger and boosts volatility in the U.K., the U.S. and Canada. The fact that an oil net-exporter, such as Canada, experiences a significant increase in volatility after a year might be due to its high degree of energy intensity5 , which implies that if the price of crude rises industry costs will undergo a major increase and thus boost volatility. The third column presents the response of volatility to oil-specific demand shocks. The countries showing significant responses are Canada and the U.S.. They follow a similar path, which consists of an initial decrease in volatility and a switch to positive response after three to four months. The positive sign is significant at the 68% level for the U.S. for seven months. In Canada, the positive sign is significant at the 95% level from the fifth until the eleventh month after the shock, then its significance decreases to 68% until the fifteenth month. After more than a year the response returns close to zero. The initial decrease in volatility might be due to the fact that when an oil-specific demand shock occurs investors are not sure whether it is caused by higher aggregate demand or by higher precautionary demand. The volatility increase in the next months could indicate that higher precautionary demand, which being strictly related to expectations about future oil supply shortages, reflects macroeconomic uncertainty and therefore higher stock market volatility. The responses of volatility in the U.K., France and Germany are similar to those above, but the effect is only significant at the 68%. In Japan a positive oil-specific demand shock causes a permanent decrease in volatility that on impact is also statistically significant at the 68% level. Lastly, also in Italy the initial response of volatility to an oil-specific demand shock is negative and statistically significant using the 68% confidence interval only for the third month, while it remains close to zero the following months. Overall, the initial response of stock market volatility to a positive oil-specific demand shock is negative in all G7 countries, with slightly different timing. In a few months the sign switches from negative to positive and remains above zero for almost a year in all countries but Japan and Italy, where the response reverts close to zero in five months. 3.2 Forecast Error Variance Decomposition Table 1 shows the percentage contributions of each oil market shock to the overall variability of stock market volatility, based on the forecast error variance decomposition of the structural VAR models presented earlier. The results indicate that in the first month the contribution of oil market shocks to volatility is close to zero. As the horizon increases, the effects of shocks to aggregate demand and oil-specific demand gain a little more importance, while the contribution of oil supply shocks is negligible over the whole period considered.

#### Oil volatility’s inevitable.

Kemp 18 [(John, Reuters Market Analyst), “COLUMN-Oil prices, or how I learned to stop worrying and embrace the cycle: Kemp”, https://energynow.com/2018/04/column-oil-prices-or-how-i-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-embrace-the-cycle-kemp/ , 4-25-2018, Energy Now] TDI

The oil industry has been characterised by deep and prolonged boom-bust cycles since the first modern well was drilled in 1859. Deep cycles are the natural condition of the oil industry and there is no reason to think the future will be any different. DEEP CYCLES00 Cyclical behaviour is the oil market’s most distinctive characteristic and deeply rooted in the industry’s structure rather than mistakes by its leaders. Price cycles stem from the low price-elasticity of supply and demand, the prevalence of backward-looking expectations and behaviour, and the lumpiness of new discoveries and investments. They also stem from the prevalence of positive and negative feedback mechanisms, which alternately amplify and dampen the initial impact of price changes. The oil market is really multiple sub-markets for crude, fuels, refining, services, engineering, construction, drilling, skilled labour, steel, raw materials etc. Each market is subject to its own feedback mechanisms, operating at different speeds and timescales, with constantly changing supply and demand. Balancing “the oil market” would mean balancing all these sub-markets simultaneously. In practice, the sub-markets are never simultaneously balanced or in a state of equilibrium except accidentally and never for very long. STABILISATION? Economist Paul Frankel’s “Essentials of Petroleum”, published in 1946, remains the best explanation of the oil industry’s boom-bust cycle. Frankel noted the basic features of the oil industry made for “continuous crises” with hectic prosperity followed all too swiftly by complete collapse. Frankel concluded the oil industry was not self-adjusting and had an inherent tendency towards extreme crisis. As a result, he was sympathetic to the need for “leading interests” and “planners” to act as “eveners” and “stabilizers”. Frankel urged a form of managed competition, in which oil producers would recognise their common interests and coordinate their policies at strategic level while remaining competitors at tactical level. (I’m not sure how this distinction would work in practice. Frankel did not explain it in detail and seems to have been unsure himself). At different times, Frankel argued that the role of adjusters and eveners had been played by monopolies such as Standard Oil, the major international oil firms, and governments, sometimes in combination. But this was the least convincing part of Frankel’s argument. There is no evidence that any monopoly or combination of interests has ever managed to stabilise the market for long. Even the long period of apparent stability during the 1950s and 1960s came to a dramatic end with the oil shock of 1973 (which was rooted in the long period of low prices during the previous two decades). The price cycle cannot be tamed. Oil-producing companies and countries have to learn to ride with the volatility.

### 1NC – AT: Food Wars

#### No food impact.

Demarest 15 [(Leila, PhD Researcher at the Centre for Research on Peace and Development), “Food price rises and political instability: Problematizing a complex relationship”, *The European Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 27, No. 5] TDI

6. Conclusions and Way Forward While some progress has been made in improving our understanding of the linkages between rising food prices and conflict, several important gaps remain. Firstly, notions of conflict and political instability are often used interchangeably, while these concepts and the relationships between them remain to some extent vague. The ‘food riot’ concept in particular leads to confusion. Although it is popularly seen as a violent rise of the masses, in reality, many peaceful events are gathered under this term, while violence is often committed by the state rather than by hungry consumers. The term also presupposes that food is the central issue at hand, which does not necessarily have to be the case. Many misunderstanding arise from the second gap identified in this paper: the uncritical data gathering based on international news reports. Not only are these remarkably inconsistent, they also make use of classifications which are not scientifically investigated. Finally, causal mechanisms in the relationship between rising food prices and conflict often remain assumptions in the literature and lack empirical foundation. Three crosscutting avenues for improvement therefore exist: better concept definitions, better data gathering, and more focus on contexts. Clearly defined concepts and categorizations of conflict and instability are a necessary foundation for research on the linkages between rising food prices and conflict. For (food) protests in particular, purposeful categorizations require an enhanced insight in the events that took place on the ground. Local news sources for data gathering can prove to be more reliable than Western (English) media to accomplish this. Event descriptions are also likely to be more detailed in local sources, which allows for a first-hand qualitative analysis of causes and context. As international food prices are likely to remain high, improving our understanding of the causal mechanisms which can lead to conflict remains crucial. We can draw important lessons from the literature on poverty and conflict, resource scarcity and conflict, and regime transition in Africa. The causal role of economic factors alone has continuously been questioned, and ‘context’ or prevailing political, economic, and social factors play a crucial role in the conflict outcome. The argument that adverse economic shocks seem more of a trigger to conflict rather than an important cause is not particularly remarkable in itself. Yet while many authors acknowledge this, the focus often remains on the trigger. Resource scarcity, climate change, population growth, or food insecurity often remain the starting point of analyses, with researchers consequently tracing the divergent (theoretical) possibilities for conflict. In the end, most admit that these factors do not automatically lead to conflict everywhere, and stress the importance of context. Because the theoretical possibilities for conflict are so large, however, the context factor remains rather understudied with as most agreed upon notions that elements of ‘grievance’ and ‘collective action’ are required. It is hence important to focus more on the ‘contexts’ that can lead to conflict and, in doing so, to make the distinction between different forms of conflict. This also implies a data collection exercise. Contextual data are currently collected at the aggregate, national level, and only on a yearly basis, which can lead to spurious relations. While the use of these variables is increasingly questioned in civil war studies, we can also doubt their strength in the study of highly localized, one-time events such as riots. I particularly make the case for ‘bringing politics back in’. The policies taken by the government are crucial in the violent escalation of social conflict (e.g. accommodation versus repression), but the only variable currently in use to explain state behaviour seems to be the country-level regime type variable (Polity IV or Freedom House), which is also used with regards to highly localized conflicts. Other ways in which politics matter, can be the strength of the political opposition. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, for example, was probably better organized than other opposition groups to make use of economic unrest.

### 1NC – AT: Latin America Instability

#### No Latin American instability – democracy consolidation and macroeconomic stability.

Feinberg et al. 15—Richard Feinberg is a professor of international political economy at the Graduate School of IR and Pacific Studies, UC San Diego [Richard, “Better Than You Think: Reframing Inter-American Relations; Harold Trinkunas is a senior fellow and director of Brooking’s Latin America Initiative am; Emily Miller is a Research Assistant at Brooking’s Latin America Initiative [“Better Than You Think: Reframing Inter-American Relations,” *Latin America Initiative in Foreign Policy at Brookings*, March, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Better-Than-You-Think-Reframing-InterAmerican-Relations.pdf>]

Much of the contemporary U.S. policy toward the hemisphere has its roots in the 1990s. In the wake of the end of the Cold War, the regional agenda became crowded with new initiatives and institutions: the Summit of the Americas, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, a reoriented Organization of American States (OAS) focused on democracy promotion and a reinvigorated Inter-American Court of Human Rights. At its core, this agenda was intended to consolidate and give regional institutional weight to core U.S. interests in the region, namely free elections, free markets, free trade and cooperative security. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the United States redoubled efforts to secure regional cooperation on combating terrorism and controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Even if some specific initiatives have run aground, such as the FTAA, or have been troubled, such as recent Summits, the hemispheric agenda of the United States has by and large been achieved. In country after country, international and domestic actors have aligned to produce the triumph of democracy and sustainable market-based economies, leading a wave of democratization and liberalization that has swept the globe since the 1970s. The region experienced its last (brief) interstate conflict between Ecuador and Peru in 1995, and the probability of war in Latin America is vanishingly small, an astounding achievement when compared to present troubles in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. In addition, although international terrorism and proliferation have not vanished from the region, Latin America is far better off than any other part of the world on this security dimension.22 In contrast to 1980, democracy is now by and large consolidated, with only a few exceptions of backsliding (shown in Figure 5),23 and military coups have become increasingly rare. Latin American democracies have pioneered new forms of political and social inclusion, such as participatory budgeting and conditional cash transfer programs. Civil society has flourished across much of the region, and there is a vibrant media in many countries. Across Latin America, we have generally witnessed stronger economic growth and better macroeconomic management during the past decade than in the previous two. In the wake of the 1980s debt crisis, bouts of hyperinflation and financial crises in the 1990s, regional political and economic leaders have been much more cautious, accumulating substantial international reserves and keeping close watch on inflation. By 2011, the nine largest economies in Latin America had, on average, accumulated reserves equivalent to 16 percent of GDP.24 At the end of 2013, Brazil was sitting on $376 billion and Mexico on $177 billion (Figure 6). Inflation has fallen dramatically from over 200 percent between 1990 and 1995 to an average of six percent since 2010.25 This improved macroeconomic management has produced significant reductions in poverty and improvements in social inclusion. The size of the middle class in Latin America has also nearly doubled since 2002,26 contributing to economic growth and new demands for improved governance. Figure 727 illustrates the sustained GDP per capita growth and poverty reduction beginning in 2003, which contrast with the income stagnation of the 1980s and modest improvements of the 1990s. Similarly, Figure 8 demonstrates consistent downward trends in inequality in some of the region’s largest economies.28 While Latin America remains the most unequal region of the world,29 it is clear that sound macroeconomic policies have contributed to improved social equity, either directly through broad-based growth, or indirectly through enabling states to finance targeted redistributive policies. The region’s rapid recovery from the 2008 global financial crisis is evidence of the strength of the macroeconomic policies and institutions that have prevailed thus far. This has meant that much of the region has needed fewer loans and external assistance, and also that Latin American leaders have less need to adhere to external conditions for financial support. For example, in 2014 the Brazilian economy slowed down but its external reserves are so large that it does not need to revert to the multilateral institutions for funds or advice. Rather, international markets and competitive pressures are tilting the internal debate in Brazil toward more market-friendly policies, as signaled by the recent appointments of a more orthodox finance minister, Joaquim Levy, and market-oriented politicians to the agriculture and industry portfolios. Latin America has also expanded its participation in global trade and its range of trading partners. In conjunction with a fall in average tariffs from 39 percent in 1985 to 10 percent in 2005, Latin America’s export volume quadrupled.30 There is now a broad array of free trade agreements in place across the region, not only among Latin American states but also with China, Europe and the United States. This tangible multi-polarity offers nations more options for economic development and export-led growth. For example, growing commodity exports toward China during the 2000s (Figure 9) reflects rising demand relative to traditional Latin American export markets such as Europe and the United States. Latin America’s diversified trade is not the “fault” of U.S. policy inattention but rather a reflection of structural shifts in the global economy. For Latin America, this is a healthy development because it reduces the risks of being tied to the economic prospects of any one region of the world; vulnerabilities of course remain, as South America depends heavily on commodity exports and Central America and Mexico are subject to the ups and downs of the U.S. economy. Inter-state peace in Latin America has become the status quo. States in the region rarely militarize disputes, and civil conflicts have declined as well; Figure 10 plots civil and international conflicts as measured by magnitude scores that reflect “societal-systemic impact.”31 According to Figure 10, the only nations currently plagued by major episodes of civil violence are Colombia and Mexico, both drug-fueled conflicts.32 Even though most states in the region continue to share some disputed borders, such sources of friction are by and large the province of diplomats and lawyers arguing cases at the International Court of Justice in The Hague rather than of armies.33 Latin America has in place a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and the two leading nuclear technology powers, Argentina and Brazil, have a longstanding non-proliferation institution, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), that monitors their mutual rejection of the pursuit of nuclear weapons.34 While fears about international terrorism in the region have occasionally made headlines in the United States post 9/11, the last major incidents occurred in 1992 and 1994 when Hezbollah agents attacked the Israeli Embassy and Jewish Cultural Center in Buenos Aires. In its most recent report on terrorism in the region, the U.S. State Department maintained that the majority of terrorist attacks in Latin America were committed by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). However such tactics by transnational criminal organizations and insurgents in the hemisphere are largely aimed at domestic audiences rather than linked to international terrorist networks.35 The bottom line is that since the end of the Cold War, Latin America has advanced far and fast along a number of political, security, economic and social dimensions. It is impossible to untangle the relative weight of the external and internal factors contributing to this felicitous outcome, but it is safe to say that Latin American countries have made themselves much more democratic, peaceful and prosperous, and that past instruments of U.S. influence, when smartly deployed, have largely worked themselves out of a job. These achievements are deeply compatible with longrange core U.S. interests in regional peace, democracy and human rights, market-based economies and free trade. As such, a return to a mid-20th century interventionist foreign policy is neither feasible nor desirable.

#### Latin America instability doesn’t escalate – multiple warrants.

Sanchez and Casey 19 [(Wilder and Samuel, researcher who focuses on geopolitical, military and cyber security issues), “Are main battle tanks obsolete? The view from Latin America”, <https://www.defenceiq.com/armoured-vehicles/articles/is-heavy-armour-obsolete-the-view-from-latin-america>, 2-7-2019, Defence IQ] TDI

Lessons from recent conflicts in Latin America The last inter-state war between two Latin American states was the short 1995 border conflict between Ecuador and Peru. Other regional conflicts in the post-World War II era were the Falklands/Malvinas war between Argentina and the United Kingdom in 1982; the 1981 border conflict between Ecuador and Peru; and the 1969 Soccer War between El Salvador and Honduras. Meanwhile, the U.S. military’s most recent interventions in the region were in Haiti in 1994 (Operation Uphold Democracy) and in Panama in 1989 (Operation Just Cause). While there are ongoing border disputes (e.g. Bolivia and Chile or Guyana and Venezuela) and tensions (mostly coming out of Venezuela these days), security threats in the region are generally insurgent in nature. For example, terrorist movements like Colombia’s ELN and EPL, Peru’s Shining Path, or Paraguay’s EPP; narco-cartels in Mexico; or organised gangs such as the Maras in Central America or the Primero Comando da Capital in Brazil. These entities are highly mobile and operate in isolated regions or in urban areas. Recent Tank Acquisitions in Latin America Latin American governments continue to acquire new (or used) platforms for their armed forces, but heavy armour is not purchased particularly often. Some recent deals worth noting are: In December 2018, the Brazilian Army completed the transfer of 25 M41C light tanks to the Uruguayan army. “Of the 25 vehicles, 15 were completely refurbished by Brazil while the remaining 10 will be used for parts. Those that will remain intact will be assigned to armoured infantry units, which currently use M24 light tanks,” Jane’s explains. In 2016, Russia delivered 50 T-72B1 tanks to Nicaragua. The platforms are “an upgrade of the 1970s-era main battle tank and feature explosive reactive armour and thermal weapon sights, among other improvements.” Venezuela has received a plethora of Russian weaponry over the past couple of decades, though these deals have been quite scarce in recent years due to Caracas’ financial crisis. Amongst the acquisitions are T-72 tanks, as well as infantry fighting vehicles like the BMP-3M, and an array of transport vehicles. "Latin American governments continue to acquire new (or used) platforms for their armed forces, but heavy armour is not purchased particularly often" As for other nations, while no other major sales have occurred, there are ongoing reports about armoured vehicles in need of modernization or replacement. For example, Chile possesses Leopard 2A4 tanks, and it will be interesting if they will be upgraded anytime soon, given that the Chilean government is replacing the famous Copper Law, which helps fund the Ministry of Defence. Meanwhile, Peru has yet to find a replacement for its old T-55 tanks, while Ecuador recently upgraded several AML and M113 A2 Plus armoured vehicles, as the country does not possess heavy armour. RECOMMENDED: Armoured vehicle mobility: Strike brigades and future trends As for Mexico, its fleet consists of light and medium armoured vehicles. Finally, Colombia also possesses light armoured vehicles; for example, media reports published in late January show vehicles that appear to be the EE-09 Cascavel, a 6x6 light tank, on patrol in urban areas close to the border with Venezuela. Latin American Armoured Vehicle Requirements The intrastate conflict that has plagued many Latin American countries is one of the strongest drivers for defence spending. Many countries continue to acquire new (or refurbished) platforms, such as Brazil’s new carrier Atlantico, Chile’s new Sikorsky S-70i Blackhawk helicopters, Argentina’s used AB-206 helicopters, or Mexico’s new patrol vessel Reformador. As for Peru, the Andean state has commenced the construction of a second landing platform vessel, BAP Paita. However, when it comes to heavy armour (or even medium armour) new contracts have been quite scarce in recent years. One argument in favour of procuring heavy armour is so that nations can maintain minimal deterrence capabilities. While interstate warfare is very unlikely, it does not mean that the scenario is impossible. The Venezuelan government’s behaviour, particularly during the 2008 crisis in the Andes is an example of this ever-present possibility. Nevertheless, given the region’s current peaceful status, limited defence budgets and other security threats, it is understandable that regional governments have other priorities. Moreover, the focus for Latin American governments is the acquisition of multipurpose platforms, which can be utilized not solely for war.