### Elections

#### Economic collapse causes extinction - our 1NC Burrows evidence says an economic decline increases the risk of WMD terrorism, resource wars and great power conflict – all go nuclear. Decline makes cooperation impossible so backstops like interdependence would fail.

#### Regional nuclear war will cause nuclear winter and ozone depletion

[UCLA International Institute](http://www.international.ucla.edu) ‘6

([UCLA News](http://www.newsroom.ucla.edu/page.asp?relnum=7553) releas, “Nuclear War Can't Be 'Regional,'” 12-11, UCLA International Institute, <http://www.isop.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=59428>)

Even a small-scale, regional nuclear war could produce as many direct fatalities as occurred during all of World War II and disrupt the global climate for a decade or more, impacting nearly everyone on Earth. These conclusions are reported by a team of scientists from UCLA, the University of Colorado at Boulder and Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey in two research articles posted online in the journal Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics Discussions and at a press conference today at the American Geophysical Union's annual meeting in San Francisco. The new results represent the first comprehensive quantitative assessment of the consequences of a nuclear conflict between small or emerging nuclear states, said Richard Turco, professor in the UCLA Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences and a member and founding director of UCLA's Institute of the Environment. The team of scientists reviewed the current status of nuclear weapons development, analyzed data on modern megacities and applied a state-of-the-science climate model. They calculated the local effects of individual "small," Hiroshima-size (15-kiloton) nuclear detonations in urban centers, including potential casualties from the blast and radioactive fallout, Turco said. Even the smallest nuclear powers today and in the near future may have as many as 50 or more Hiroshima-size weapons in their arsenals, according to the scientists. Moreover, about 40 countries possess enough plutonium and uranium to construct substantial nuclear arsenals. "Considering the relatively small number and sizes of the weapons — perhaps less than one megaton in total yield — the potential devastation would be catastrophic and long-term," Toon said. "A single low-yield nuclear detonation in an urban center could lead to more fatalities, in some cases by orders of magnitude, than occurred in major historical wars." Megacities attacked with nuclear devices, through war or terrorism, would likely be abandoned indefinitely, inducing mass migration and long-term economic decline, Turco said.  Turco in the 1980s headed a group — whose members included Owen "Brian" Toon, a co-author on the current research, and the late Carl Sagan — that originally defined the "nuclear winter" phenomenon, a phrase that Turco coined. For a regional-scale nuclear conflict, fatality estimates range from 2.6 million to 16.7 million, Turco said. The scientists estimated the quantities of soot — the highly absorbing component of smoke — that would be generated in urban firestorms ignited by nuclear detonations. This effort was led by Toon, professor and chair of the department of atmospheric and oceanic sciences at the University of Colorado at Boulder, together with Turco and University of Colorado student Charles Bardeen. At Rutgers, Alan Robock, professor of environmental sciences and associate director of the Center for Environmental Prediction at Rutgers' Cook College, professor Georgiy Stenchikov and postdoctoral associate Luke Oman (now at Johns Hopkins University) employed a coupled atmosphere-ocean climate model to simulate the effects of the putative smoke emissions in perturbing the global climate system and causing regional climatic anomalies. The amount of soot emitted by firestorms was found to exceed 5 million metric tons in many cases. Because so many people live in megacities, the quantity of black smoke generated per kiloton of explosive yield could be more than 100 times larger than previously estimated for a full-scale superpower nuclear exchange involving thousands of megatons, according to one of the journal papers. While a regional nuclear confrontation among emerging nuclear powers might be geographically constrained, the environmental impacts could spread worldwide, Robock and his colleagues conclude. "We examined the climatic effects of the smoke produced in a regional conflict in the subtropics between two opposing nations, each using 50 Hiroshima-size nuclear weapons to attack the other's most populated urban areas," Robock said. The post-war climate simulations used soot emissions provided by Toon, Turco and Bardeen. As had been suggested in earlier nuclear winter studies, and more recently by observations of large wildfire smoke plumes, Robock's calculations indicate that a large fraction of the nuclear soot could linger in the upper atmosphere for up to a decade, producing significant cooling and reduced precipitation, with the greatest changes occurring over land. The implications for global food supplies appear grim. "A cooling of several degrees would occur over large areas of North America and Eurasia, including most of the grain-growing regions," Robock said. "As was the case with earlier nuclear winter calculations, large climatic effects would occur in regions far removed from the target areas or the countries involved in the conflict." When Robock and his team calibrated their climate model against the recorded response to the 1912 eruptions of Katmai volcano in Alaska, they found that observed temperature anomalies were accurately reproduced. On a grander scale, the 1815 eruption of Tambora in Indonesia, the largest in the last 500 years, was followed by killing frosts throughout New England in 1816 during what has become known as "the year without a summer." The weather in Europe was reported to be so cold and wet that the harvest failed and starvation stalked most of the continent. This historical event, according to Robock, perhaps foreshadows the kind of climate disruptions that would follow a regional nuclear conflict. The researchers emphasized that known climatic anomalies associated with major volcanic eruptions such as Tambora typically last for a year or so because volcanic particles tend to fall out of the atmosphere relatively quickly. By contrast, nuclear-generated soot particles may remain suspended in the upper troposphere and stratosphere for up to a decade as a result of the strong interactions between solar heat absorption by the smoke and wind patterns in the upper atmosphere. Consequently, the climatic effects can be significantly greater and longer lasting than those associated with any historical volcanic eruption. "With the exchange of 100 15-kiloton weapons as posed in our baseline scenario, the estimated quantities of smoke could lead to global climate anomalies exceeding any experienced in recorded history," Robock said. "And that's just 0.03 percent of the total explosive power of the current world nuclear arsenal." In related research, researcher Michael Mills of the University of Colorado at Boulder led a broad team, including Toon and Turco, in defining the impacts of a regional nuclear conflict on the stratospheric ozone layer. Mills' results, based on detailed simulations with a two-dimensional global chemical-transport model, reveal average column ozone losses exceeding 20 percent worldwide and persisting for at least three to four years, with mid-latitude losses as large as 30 to 40 percent and polar reductions up to 70 percent. Such ozone depletions would be unprecedented in human history and imply serious ecological and human consequences, Turco said. The primary effects on ozone are due to accelerated catalytic chemical cycles, which are caused by the heating of the stratosphere as injected soot absorbs sunlight, and to severely perturbed dynamics of the region, again owing to the soot heating. Previous studies, carried out in the 1980s with less sophisticated models, had indicated comparable or smaller ozone losses for a full superpower nuclear exchange, Mills noted. Turco said that a small nuclear state is likely to direct its weapons against population centers to maximize damage and achieve the greatest advantage, thus making such outcomes more plausible. The research team concludes that the confluence of nuclear proliferation, political instability and urban demographics forms perhaps the greatest danger to the stability of human society since the dawn of civilization.

**Relations are key to solving environmental destruction**

**Saunders 1.**

 (Philip, Dir – East Asian Nonproliferation Program, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Can 9-11 Provide a Fresh Start for Sino-U.S. Relations?, http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/reports/sino911.htm)

**Global warming** is an issue that **can only be addressed through global cooperation**, but cooperation has been elusive. Developing countries insist that developed countries are responsible for the problem and have resisted any binding commitments. Yet **China is** currently **the second largest emitter of carbon dioxide**, and will surpass the United States to become the largest emitter by 2020. **China's** continuing **dependence on coal** as its main source of energy **will exacerbate the problem. Efforts to address the problem of global warming without Chinese participation are unlikely to succeed**. At the same time, the solution in the Kyoto protocol (no restrictions on developing country emissions) is clearly unacceptable to Congress and has been used to justify U.S. rejection of the protocol. **An effective solution requires U.S. and Chinese participation**, which is unlikely if this deadlock cannot be resolved. The two countries could also cooperate on other environmental issues, including mitigating the air pollution caused by coal and ways for Chinese industries to adopt energy-efficient, low pollution technology.

### Impact Debate

#### Nuclear winter causes the destruction of the earth

Stephen H. Schneider, Melvin and Joan Lane Professor for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies at Stanford University, 1988, “Whatever Happened to Nuclear Winter? An Editorial,” Climatic Change, Vol. 12, p. 217

What then is the current status of nuclear winter research? The single most important conclusion, I believe, from the work that has been conducted in the five years since the q-TAPS article, is the widespread consensus that has developed that the environmental and societal 'indirect' effects of a nuclear war are likely to be extremely serious, probably more threatening for the earth as a whole than the direct blasts or radioactivity in the target zones. Detailed international studies of the vulnerability of social and ecological systems (e.g., by Harwell and Hutchinson, 1985) followed up and confirmed earlier suggestions of Ehrlich and Ehrlich (1972), and Schneider and Mesirow, pp. 203-4, (1976) that societal chaos could ensue in non-combatant nations following a NATO/Warsaw Pact war. More recently, calculations made by Ghan and MacCracken at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and here at NCAR suggest that summer temperature depressions of several degrees C could be felt one or two years after a nuclear war was fought. Perhaps more significantly, precipitation decreases in the subtropics could lead to substantial soil moisture reductions in the summer monsoon belts of the north latitudes. (However, some moisture increases were noted in midlatitudes by Thompson even though temperature declines were observed, because the decrease in evaporation exceeded that of the decrease in precipitation.) Nevertheless, these results suggest that 'chronic' (a term coined by a SCOPE study - Pittock et al., 1985) effects could be substantially more serious than had been initially thought.

#### Existence precedes the ability to ascribe value and respect the environment

Paul Wapner. 2003. Associate Prof. and Dir. Global Env’t. Policy Prog. – American U., Dissent, “Leftist criticism of “nature””, Winter, 50:1.

All attempts to listen to nature are social constructions--except one. Even the most radical postmodernist must acknowledge the distinction between physical existence and nonexistence. As I have said, postmodernists accept that there is a physical substratum to the phenomenal world even if they argue about the different meanings we ascribe to it. This acknowledgment of physical existence is crucial. We can't ascribe meaning to that which doesn't appear. What doesn't exist can manifest no character. Put differently, yes, the postmodernist should rightly worry about interpreting nature's expressions. And all of us should be wary of those who claim to speak on nature's behalf (including environmentalists who do that). But we need not doubt the simple idea that a prerequisite of expression is existence. This in turn suggests that preserving the nonhuman world-in all its diverse embodiments-must be seen by eco-critics as a fundamental good. Eco-critics must be supporters, in some fashion, of environmental preservation. Postmodernists reject the idea of a universal good. They rightly acknowledge the difficulty of identifying a common value given the multiple contexts of our value-producing activity. In fact, if there is one thing they vehemently scorn, it is the idea that there can be a value that stands above the individual contexts of human experience. Such a value would present itself as a metanarrative and, as Jean Francois Lyotard has explained, postmodernism is characterized fundamentally by its "incredulity toward meta-narratives." Nonetheless, I can't see how postmodern critics can do otherwise than accept the value of preserving the nonhuman world. The nonhuman is the extreme "other"; it stands in contradistinction to humans as a species. In understanding the constructed quality of human experience and the dangers of reification, postmodernism inherently advances an ethic of respecting the "other." At the very least, respect must involve ensuring that the "other" actually continues to exist. In our day and age, this requires us to take responsibility for protecting the actuality of the nonhuman. Instead, however, we are running roughshod over the earth's diversity of plants, animals, and ecosystems. Postmodern critics should find this particularly disturbing. If they don't, they deny their own intellectual insights and compromise their fundamental moral commitment.

### Case

#### Their doomsday impacts are tautological and exaggerated- scientists manipulate the data and use overly simplistic models to fit the catastrophe paradigm

Myers ‘12

[Todd Myers, Environmental Director of the Washington Policy Center. <http://www.realclearscience.com/articles/2012/07/03/to_predict_catastrophe_ignore_the_past_106314.html> ETB]

The Nature article, however, suffers from numerous simple statistical errors and assumptions rather than evidence. Its authors do nothing to deal with the fundamental mistakes that led Ehrlich and others like him down the wrong path so many times. Instead, the paper simply argues that with improved data, this time their predictions of doom are correct.¶ Ultimately, the piece is a good example of the great philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn’s hypothesis, written 50 years ago, that scientists often attempt to fit the data to conform to their particular scientific paradigm, even when that paradigm is obviously flawed. When confronted with failure to explain real-world phenomena, the authors of the Nature piece have, as Kuhn described in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, devised “numerous articulations and ad hoc modifications of their theory in order to eliminate any apparent conflict.” Like scientists blindly devoted to a failed paradigm, the Nature piece simply tries to force new data to fit a flawed concept.¶ A Paradigm of Catastrophe¶ What would lead scientists to make such simplistic assumptions and flat-line projections? Indeed, what would lead Nature editors to print an article whose statistical underpinnings are so flawed? The simple belief in the paradigm of inevitable environmental catastrophe: humans are doing irreparable damage to the Earth and every bit of resource use moves us closer to that catastrophe. The catastrophe paradigm argues a simple model that eventually we will run out of space and resources, and determining the date of ultimate doom is a simple matter of doing the math.¶ Believing in this paradigm also justifies exaggeration in order to stave off the serious consequences of collapse. Thus, they describe the United Nations’ likely population estimate for 2050 as “the most conservative,” without explaining why. They claim “rapid climate change shows no signs of slowing” without providing a source citation for the claim, and despite an actual slowing of climate change over the last decade.¶ The need to avoid perceived global catastrophe also encourages the authors to blow past warning signs that their analysis is not built on solid foundations – as if the poor history of such projections were not already warning enough. Even as they admit the interactions “between overlapping complex systems, however, are providing difficult to characterize mathematically,” they base their conclusions on the simplest linear mathematical estimate that assumes nothing will change except population over the next 40 years. They then draw a straight line, literally, from today to the environmental tipping point.¶ Why is such an unscientific approach allowed to pass for science in a respected international journal? Because whatever the argument does not supply, the paradigm conveniently fills in. Even if the math isn’t reliable and there are obvious counterarguments, “everyone” understands and believes in the underlying truth – we are nearing the limits of the planet’s ability to support life. In this way the conclusion is not proven but assumed, making the supporting argument an impenetrable tautology.¶ Such a circumstance creates the conditions of scientific revolutions, where the old paradigm fails to explain real-world phenomena and is replaced by an alternative. Given the record of failure of the paradigm of resource catastrophe, dating back to the 1970s, one would hope we are moving toward such a change. Unfortunately, Nature and the authors of the piece are clinging to the old resource-depletion model, simply trying to re-work the numbers.¶ Let us hope policymakers recognize the failure of that paradigm before they make costly and dangerous policy mistakes that impoverish billions in the name of false scientific assumptions.

#### Human technological intervention necessary for survival

J. G. Matheny, Ph. D. candidate, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, December 6, 2007, “Ought we worry about human extinction?,” online: http://jgmatheny.org/extinctionethics.htm

Moral philosophers have not written much about human extinction. This may be because they underestimate the potential benefits of human survival and/or the risks of human extinction. If we survive the next few centuries, humanity could allow Earth-originating life to survive a trillion years or more. If we do not survive, Earth-originating life will probably perish within a billion years. If prolonging the survival of Earth-originating life is morally important, then there may be nothing more important than reducing the near-term risks of human extinction. Keywords: extinction, population ethics, intergenerational justice, catastrophic risk, existential risk, risk analysis, animal welfare, environmental ethics Word count: 3,400 Introduction

It was only in the last century, with the invention of nuclear weapons, that the probability of human extinction could be appreciably affected by human action. Ever since, human extinction has generally been considered a terrible possibility. It’s surprising, then, that a search of JSTOR and the Philosopher’s Index suggests contemporary philosophers have written little about the ethics of human extinction. In fact, they seem to have written more about the extinction of other animals. Maybe this is because they consider human extinction impossible or inevitable; or maybe human extinction seems inconsequential compared to other moral issues.

In this paper I argue that the possibility of human extinction deserves more attention. While extinction events may be very improbable, their consequences are grave. Human extinction would not only condemn to non-existence all future human generations, it would also cut short the existence of all animal life, as natural events will eventually make Earth uninhabitable.The value of future lives. Leslie (1996) suggests philosophers’ nonchalance toward human extinction is due in large part to disagreements in population ethics. Some people suppose it does not matter if the number of lives lived in the future is small -- at its limit, zero.[2] In contrast, I assume here that moral value is a function of both the quality and number of lives in a history.[3] This view is consistent with most people’s intuition about extinction (that it’s bad) and with moral theories under which life is considered a benefit to those who have it, or under which life is a necessary condition for producing things of value (Broome, 2004; Hare, 1993; Holtug 2001, Ng, 1989; Parfit 1984; Sikora, 1978). For instance, some moral theories value things like experiences, satisfied preferences, achievements, friendships, or virtuous acts, which take place only in lives. On this view, an early death is bad (at least in part) because it cuts short the number of these valuable things. Similarly, on this view, an early extinction is bad (at least in part) because it cuts short the number of these valuable things. I think this view is plausible and think our best reasons for believing an early death is bad are our best reasons for believing an early extinction is bad. But such a view is controversial and I will not settle the controversy here.

I start from the premise that we ought to increase moral value by increasing both the quality and number of lives throughout history. I also take it, following Singer (2002), this maxim applies to all sentient beings capable of positive subjective feelings.

Life’s prospectsThe human population is now 6 billion (6 x 109). There are perhaps another trillion (1012) sentient animals on Earth, maybe a few orders more, depending on where sentience begins and ends in the animal kingdom (Gaston, Blackburn, and Goldewijk, 2003; Gaston and Evans, 2004). Animal life has existed on Earth for around 500 million years. Barring a dramatic intervention, all animal life on Earth will die in the next several billion years. Earth is located in a field of thousands of asteroids and comets. 65 million years ago, an asteroid 10 kilometers in size hit the Yucatan , creating clouds of dust and smoke that blocked sunlight for months, probably causing the extinction of 90% of animals, including dinosaurs. A 100 km impact, capable of extinguishing all animal life on Earth, is probable within a billion years (Morrison et al., 2002). If an asteroid does not extinguish all animal life, the Sun will. In one billion years, the Sun will begin its Red Giant stage, increasing in size and temperature. Within six billion years, the Sun will have evaporated all of Earth’s water, and terrestrial temperatures will reach 1000 degrees -- much too hot for amino acid-based life to persist. If, somehow, life were to survive these changes, it will die in 7 billion years when the Sun forms a planetary nebula that irradiates Earth (Sackmann, Boothroyd, Kraemer, 1993; Ward and Brownlee, 2002). Earth is a dangerous place and animal life here has dim prospects. If there are 1012 sentient animals on Earth, only 1021 life-years remain. The only hope for terrestrial sentience surviving well beyond this limit is that some force will deflect large asteroids before they collide with Earth, giving sentients another billion or more years of life (Gritzner and Kahle, 2004); and/or terrestrial sentients will colonize other solar systems, giving sentients up to another 100 trillion years of life until all stars begin to stop shining (Adams and Laughlin, 1997). Life might survive even longer if it exploits non-stellar energy sources. But it is hard to imagine how life could survive beyond the decay of nuclear matter expected in 1032 to 1041 years (Adams and Laughlin, 1997). This may be the upper limit on the future of sentience.[4] Deflecting asteroids and colonizing space could delay the extinction of Earth-originating sentience from 109 to 1041 years. Assuming an average population of one trillion sentients is maintained (which is a conservative assumption under colonization[5]), these interventions would create between 1021 and 1053[billion] life-years. At present on Earth, only a human civilization would be remotely capable of carrying out such projects. If humanity survives the next few centuries, it’s likely we will develop technologies needed for at least one of these projects. We may already possess the technologies needed to deflect asteroids (Gritzner and Kahle, 2004; Urias et al., 1996). And in the next few centuries, we’re likely to develop technologies that allow colonization. We will be strongly motivated by self-interest to colonize space, as asteroids and planets have valuable resources to mine, and as our survival ultimately requires relocating to another solar system (Kargel, 1994; Lewis, 1996). Extinction risks Being capable of preserving sentient life for another 1041 years makes human survival important. There may be nothing more important. If the human species is extinguished, all known sentience and certainly all Earth-originating sentience will be extinguished within a few billion years. We ought then pay more attention to what Bostrom (2002) has called “existential risks” -- risks “where an adverse outcome would either annihilate Earth-originating intelligent life or permanently and drastically curtail its potential.” Such risks include: an asteroid or comet strikes Earth, creating enough debris to shut down photosynthesis for months; a supervolcano erupts, creating enough debris to shut down photosynthesis; a nearby supernova unleashes deadly radiation that reaches Earth; greenhouse gasses cause a radical change in climate; a nuclear holocaust creates enough debris to cause a “nuclear winter,” shutting down photosynthesis; a genetically engineered microbe is unleashed, by accident or design, killing most or all of humanity; or a high-energy physics experiment goes awry, creating a “true” vacuum or strangelets, destroying the Earth (Bostrom 2002; Bostrom and Cirkovic 2006; Leslie 1996, Posner 2004, Rees 2003). To me, most of these risks seem very unlikely. But dishearteningly, in their catalogs of these risks, Britain ’s Astronomer Royal, Sir Martin Rees (2003), gives humanity 50-50 odds of surviving the next few centuries, and philosophers John Leslie (1996) and Nick Bostrom (2002) put our chances at 70% and 75%, respectively.

Estimating the probabilities of unprecedented events is subjective, so we should treat these numbers skeptically. Still, even if the probabilities are orders lower, because the stakes are high, it could be justified to invest in extinction countermeasures. Matheny (2007) found that, even with traditional social discounting, investing in asteroid detection and mitigation is justified under standard cost-effectiveness analysis.Ought humanity be saved? Even accepting that future lives have value and that extinction risks can be cost-effectively reduced, there could still be reasons not to worry about human extinction. For instance, human lives might have negative moral value, in which case human extinction could be a good thing. This might have been Bertrand Russell’s sentiment when he wrote, “Although it is a gloomy view to suppose that life will die out, sometimes when I contemplate the things that people do with their lives I think it is almost a consolation.”[6] In the 20th century, more people, in absolute numbers, died of war, famine, and pestilence than ever before. But in the same century, more people did not die of war, famine, and pestilence than ever before. So even if we're especially pessimistic about average human welfare during the last century compared to others, it would be hard to argue that total welfare decreased. As long as average welfare was greater than zero – that is, the average life was preferable to suicide – then the century was a success for humanity. We will be capable of even greater moral nightmares in this century than in the last, but we will also be capable of securing greater welfare for a larger fraction of humanity. I suspect in this century, the average life will again be worth living, assuming we survive the century to judge. We should be more pessimistic when we review how nonhuman animals have fared in the last century. At present around 50 billion animals are raised and killed each year to feed humanity. (Many million animals are used for clothing, product testing, research, and entertainment, but their numbers are insignificant by comparison.) Since World War 2, with the invention of "factory farming," farm animals’ welfare has significantly deteriorated, as they now live in conditions that frustrate their most basic instincts (Singer, 2002, chapter 3). At the same time, we’re probably the only animal on Earth that routinely demonstrates compassion for other species. Such compassion is nearly universal in developed countries but we usually know too little, too late, for deeply ingrained habits, such as diets, to change. If improvements in other public morals were possible without any significant biological change in human nature, then the same should be true for our treatment of nonhuman animals, though it will take some time.

Even without any change in public morals, it seems unlikely we will continue to use animals for very long – at least, nowhere near 50 billion per year. Our most brutal use of animals results not from sadism but from old appetites now satisfied with **inefficient technologies** that have not fundamentally changed in 10,000 years. Ours is the first century where newer technologies -- plant or in vitro meats, or meat from brainless animals -- could satisfy human appetites for meat more efficiently and safely (Edelman et al, 2005). As these technologies mature and become cheaper, they will likely replace conventional meat. If the use of sentient animals survives much beyond this century, we should be very surprised. This thought is a cure for misanthropy. As long as most humans in the future don't use sentient animals, the vast number of good lives we can create would outweigh any sins humanity has committed or is likely to commit. Even if it takes a century for animal farming to be replaced by vegetarianism (or in vitro meats or brainless farm animals), the century of factory farming would represent around 1012 miserable life-years. That is one-billionth of the 1021 animal life-years humanity could save by protecting Earth from asteroids for a billion years. The century of industrialized animal use would thus be the equivalent of a terrible pain that lasts one second in an otherwise happy 100-year life. To accept human extinction now would be like committing suicide to end an unpleasant itch. If human life is extinguished, all known animal life will be extinguished when the Sun enters its Red Giant phase, if not earlier. Despite its current mistreatment of other animals, humanity is the animal kingdom’s best long-term hope for survival.

### AT Aff spills over

#### You don’t change the mind of policy makers

Solt ‘04

(Roger, Debate Coach – U. Kentucky, “Debate’s Culture of Narcissism”, Contemporary Argumentation and Debate, Vol. 25, p. 46)

**In a**nother **early formulation, critical argument was deemed preferable because, unlike arguments resting on** the illusory notion of **policy fiat, it could have a real world** political **impact. This approach seems to have waned** in recent years, and it has done so **for good reason**. The idea of policy **fiat is sometimes dismissed as utopian, but the notion that a winning ballot in a college debate round could trigger a world-transforming social movement borders on megalomania**. Beyond college debate’s few hundred active participants, **some fraction of America**’s hundreds of millions **probably has a vague intimation that** something like **college debate exists**. (They do, after all, watch “The Apprentice.”) **But they are certainly not attentive to its outcomes**, no newspaper reports debate results (“kritik of capitalism 3, capitalism 1”), nor do they understand its intricacies. **And those relative few** who do know something about debate **know that it is a** competitive **game and that a** judge’s **ballot does not signify** conviction **or ideological conversion** (as those of use who have voted for arguments like “nuclear war good” can readily attest.) **People do not make fundamental** moral and political **judgments based on individual** debate **rounds**; nor should they. **Reflective people** surely **have better bases for their beliefs than** the outcomes of **fast, short, competitive debates**.