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Refuge CP

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1NC

Counterplan Text: The United States federal government should construct and maintain self-sufficient, remote, permanently occupied refuges meant to protect humanity from extinction events. I reserve the right to clarify in cross-ex.

The counterplan prevents extinction—even if only a few people survive, it ensures humanity will recover.

MATHENY

[Jason G. Matheny, Research Associate at the Future of Human Institute at Oxford University, Ph.D. Candidate in Applied Economics at Johns Hopkins University, holds a Master’s in Public Health from the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University and an M.B.A. from the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University, 2007 (“Reducing the Risk of Human Extinction,” Risk Analysis, Volume 27, Issue 5, October, Available Online at http://jgmatheny.org/matheny\_extinction\_risk.htm, Accessed 07-04-2011)]

Perhaps more cost effective than building refuges in space would be building them [refuges] on Earth. Elaborate bunkers exist for government leaders to occupy during a nuclear war (McCamley, 2007). And remote facilities are planned to protect crop seeds from "nuclear war, asteroid strikes, and climate change" (Hopkin, 2007). But I know of no self-sufficient, remote, permanently occupied refuge meant to protect humanity from a range of possible extinction events. Hanson (2007) argues that a refuge permanently housing as few as 100 people would significantly improve the chances of human survival during a range of global catastrophes. The Americas and Polynesia were originally populated by fewer than 100 founders (Hey, 2005 ; Murray-McIntosh et al., 1998 ). Although it would take thousands of years for 100 people to repopulate Earth, this would be a small setback compared to extinction.

**First is competition,**

**The counterplan competes through net benefits, because focusing on [x existential risk] trades off with efforts to reduce other existential risks which are more probable—only the counterplan addresses every risk.**

BOSTROM

[Nick Bostrom, Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy & Oxford Martin School, Director of the Future of Humanity Institute, and Director of the Programme on the Impacts of Future Technology at the University of Oxford, recipient of the 2009 Eugene R. Gannon Award for the Continued Pursuit of Human Advancement, holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the London School of Economics, **2011** (“The Concept of Existential Risk,” Draft of a Paper published on ExistentialRisk.com, Available Online at <http://www.existentialrisk.com/concept.html>, Accessed 07-04-2011)]

To correct for the good-story bias, one [should] might want to reduce one’s credence in exciting scenarios and upgrade one’s credence in boring outcomes. At the same time, however, one should avoid relying too heavily on a “silliness heuristic,” which penalizes hypotheses merely because similar-sounding ideas have been promoted by people viewed as not respectable—crackpots, radicals, science-fiction aficionados, and other “non-serious” folk. We might find existential-risk concerns gaining traction, only to see the ensuing resources funneled almost exclusively to the study of asteroid hazard, climate change, and a few other such “respectable” risks to the neglect of more speculative risks, such as machine superintelligence, advanced nanotechnology weaponry, future dystopian evolutionary scenarios, simulation-shutdown scenarios, synthetic biology mishaps and misuse, space-colonization races, and global totalitarianism—even though the cumulative existential risks flowing from these and other “silly-seeming” sources may be orders of magnitude greater than those from the more respectable and well-established fields. (Another plausible diversion is that research mainly gets directed at global catastrophic risks that involve little or no existential risk.)

**Second is solvency,**

The counterplan protects humanity against *all* existential threats, rather than just the ones the plan solves for.

BOSTROM

[Nick Bostrom, Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy & Oxford Martin School, Director of the Future of Humanity Institute, and Director of the Programme on the Impacts of Future Technology at the University of Oxford, recipient of the 2009 Eugene R. Gannon Award for the Continued Pursuit of Human Advancement, holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the London School of Economics, **2011** (“Existential Risks FAQ,” Version 1.0, ExistentialRisk.com, Available Online at http://www.existentialrisk.com/faq.html, Accessed 07-04-2011)]

A possibly somewhat more cost-effective project [would] might be to operate a bunker or refuge that could enable a small human population to survive a wide range of catastrophic scenarios—plagues, nuclear winters, supervolcanic eruptions, asteroid impacts, complete collapses of human food production systems, and various “unknown unknowns”. The refuge [would] might be buried deep underground, stocked with supplies to last a decade or more, and designed to be easily defendable. Ideally it would be continually staffed by a quarantined population and stocked with tools that survivors could use in subsistence agriculture upon emerging from the shelter in the aftermath of a civilization-destroying catastrophe.

Strat Sheet

This is a small but very useful file. The counterplan proposes that the USFG establish extinction refuges on Earth in order to provide insurance against existential threats. This is a powerful tool to read against debaters who read extinction first arguments. The counterplan doesn’t really “solve” anything; it just makes it more likely that humanity will survive the broadest possible range of extinction events.

Strategically, the counterplan allows you to defeat the “try or die!” and “extinction first!” frames that the aff will read in order to outweigh your disadvantages, case turns, and/or critiques. Most of these arguments will be net-benefits to the counterplan. Voila: your CP means that extinction won’t happen even if the plan is not enacted and so the impact comparison game is back on the negative’s more familiar turf.

The affirmative can argue that the counterplan only prevents extinction but not the decimation of modern civilization. That’s true. Most of the justifications for “try or die!” and “extinction first!”, however, are not about maintaining humanity at its present stage of development but rather ensuring that humanity in some form continues to exist.

There is one card that can be read to present an “Existential Risk Tradeoff DA” as a net-benefit to the counterplan. This should almost certainly be used as a tiebreaker or as a shield against affirmative responses rather than as a standalone net-benefit.

Overview

The counterplan prevents extinction—

It establishes a self-sufficient, remote, permanently occupied refuge to ensure that humanity can survive any catastrophic event. Even if the aff’s worst-case predictions of global destruction are true, the counterplan ensures that it does not escalate to extinction.

The counterplan means extinction is no longer a trump card—

Evaluate the impacts in the debate without worrying about extinction risks – “try or die” claims are not relevant in a world where “die” is removed from the equation.

AT- Not Feasible

Yes feasible.

HANSON

[Robin Hanson, Professor in the Department of Economics at George Mason University, 2007 (“Catastrophe, Social Collapse, and Human Extinction,” Forthcoming Chapter in Global Catastrophic Risk, August, Available Online at http://hanson.gmu.edu/collapse.pdf, Accessed 07-04-2011)]

If we value future generations of humanity, we may be willing to take extra efforts to prevent the extinction of humanity. For types of disasters where variations in individual ability to resist disruptions are minor, however, there is little point in explicitly preparing for human extinction possibilities. This is because there is almost no chance that an event of this type would put us very near an extinction borderline. The best we could do here would be to try to prevent all large disruptions. Of course there can be non extinction-related reasons to prepare for such disruptions. On the other hand, there may be types of disasters where variations in resistance abilities can be important. If so, there might be a substantial chance of finding a post-disaster population that is just above, or just below, a threshold for preserving humanity. In this case it is reasonable to wonder what we might do now to change the odds. The most obvious possibility would be to create refuges with sufficient resources to help preserve a small group of people through a very large disruption, the resulting social collapse, and a transition period to a post-disaster society. Refuges would have to be strong enough to survive the initial disruption. If desperate people trying to survive a social collapse could threaten a refuge’s longterm viability, such as by looting the refuge’s resources, then refuges might need to be isolated, well-defended, or secret enough to survive such threats. We have actually already developed similar refuges to protect social elites during a nuclear war (McCamley, 2007). Though nuclear sanctuaries may not be designed with other human extinction scenarios in mind, it is probably worth considering how they might be adapted to deal with non-nuclear-war disasters. It is also worth considering whether to create a distinct set of refuges, intended for other kinds of disasters. I imagine secret rooms deep in a mine, well stocked with supplies, with some way to monitor the surface and block entry. A important issue here is whether refuges could by themselves preserve enough humans to supply enough genetic diversity for a post-disaster society. If not, then refuges would either have to count on opening up at the right moment to help preserve enough people outside the sanctuary, or they would need some sort of robust technology for storing genes and implanting them. Perhaps a sperm bank would suffice.Developing a robust genetic technology might be a challenging task; devices would have to last until the human population reached sufficient size to hold enough genetic diversity on its own. But the payoff could be to drastically reduce the required post-collapse population, perhaps down to a single fertile female. For the purpose of saving humanity reducing the required population from one thousand down to ten is equivalent to a factor of one hundred in current world population, or a factor of one hundred in the severity of each event. In the example of figure 1, it is the same as reducing the disaster event rate by a factor of fifty. Refuges could in principle hold many kinds of resources which might ease and speed [end page 11] the restoration of a productive human society. They could preserve libraries, machines, seeds, and much more. But the most important resources would clearly be those that ensure humanity survives. By comparison, on a cosmic scale it is a small matter whether humanity takes one thousand or one hundred thousand years to return to our current level of development. Thus the priority should be resources to support a return to at least a hunter-gatherer society. It is important to realize that a society rebuilding after a near-extinction crisis would have a vastly smaller scale than our current society; very different types and mixes of capital would be appropriate. Stocking a sanctuary full of the sorts of capital that we find valuable today could be even less useful than the inappropriate medicine, books, or computers often given by first world charities to the third world poor today. Machines would quickly fall into disrepair, and books would impart knowledge that had little practical application. Instead, one must accept that a very small human population would mostly have to retrace the growth path of our human ancestors; one hundred people cannot support an industrial society today, and perhaps not even a farming society. They might have to start with hunting and gathering, until they could reach a scale where simple farming was feasible. And only when their farming population was large and dense enough could they consider returning to industry. So it might make sense to stock a refuge with real hunter-gatherers and subsistence farmers, together with the tools they find useful. Of course such people would need to be disciplined enough to wait peacefully in the refuge until the time to emerge was right. Perhaps such people could be rotated periodically from a well protected region where they practiced simple lifestyles, so they could keep their skills fresh. And perhaps we should test our refuge concepts, isolating real people near them for long periods to see how well particular sorts of refuges actually perform at returning their inhabitants to a simple sustainable lifestyle.