# Reducing National Debt Con

**Ayn Rand once said, “You can avoid reality, but you cannot avoid the consequences of avoiding reality.” It is because Brendan and I agree with Rand that we must negate Resolved: The United States federal government should prioritize reducing the federal debt over promoting economic growth. We offer framework and three contentions to support this reasoning.**

#### Framing: Whichever side benefits the US and the world in the long term, should win the round

#### Contention One: US debt helps maintain hegemony

#### Kimberly Amadeo, who has a masters degree in finance and international management from M.I.T. says in 2018, the U.S. budget deficit by year is how much more the Federal government spends than it receives in revenue annually. The Fiscal Year 2018 U.S. budget deficit is $833 billion, which is at historically high levels.

**Kimberly Amadeo**, (President of World Money Watch, economic analyst, market manager, Masters in Finance & International Management from Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management, M.S.P. from Boston College), 10-29-**2018**, "Is the U.S. Budget Deficit Really That Bad?," Balance, https://www.thebalance.com/us-deficit-by-year-3306306

The U.S. [budget deficit](https://www.thebalance.com/budget-deficit-definition-and-how-it-affects-the-economy-3305820) by year is how much more the [federal government spends](https://www.thebalance.com/current-u-s-federal-government-spending-3305763) than it receives in [revenue](https://www.thebalance.com/current-u-s-federal-government-tax-revenue-3305762) annually. The [Fiscal Year 2018 U.S. budget deficit](https://www.thebalance.com/current-u-s-federal-budget-deficit-3305783) is $833 billion. That's at historically high levels.

#### Next, Carmel Gate, graduate of University of Pennsylvania with degrees in political science and economics show us, the large deficit that the U.S. runs is the action of the hegemon supporting and integrating a challenger and preserving it’s leadership. The deficit has benefited U.S. hegemony as it accelerated the integration of trading, which reduces U.S. costs to preserve it’s own leadership. Second, it keeps China tranquil, which further helps U.S. hegemony.

**Carmel Gate** (Graduate of University of Pennsylvania with degrees in political science and economics), November **2008**, "U.S. Hegemony, China, and the U.S. Current Account Deficit," https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229870762\_US\_Hegemony\_China\_and\_the\_US\_Current\_Account\_Deficit

The U.S. runs a large current account deficit, much of which is with China. I argue that this is the action of a liberal hegemon supporting and integrating a potential challenger and so preserving its hegemony. The U.S. current account deficit supports China in two ways. First, it increases demand for Chinese exports. The Chinese economy has grown faster than it would have if the U.S. had not had a current account deficit with China. Second, and more speculatively, this accelerated U.S. demand for Chinese exports has helped China integrate its large population of un- and underemployed labor and so reduced political instability in the context of rapid economic growth. It has benefited U.S. hegemony in two political ways. First, it has accelerated the rate at which China has integrated into the U.S.-led liberal trading order created in the mid-1940s and so enhances U.S. hegemony: China is the plausible peer competitor whose economic size might allow it to challenge the existing liberal trading order or even challenge the U.S. militarily; increasing integration makes it much more costly for China to challenge the U.S. and the liberal trading order. The cost for China to challenge the order (This) reduces U.S. costs to preserve its position as hegemon and the congenial environment it created for itself in the second-half of the twentieth century. Second, and more speculatively, a China that is domestically tranquil poses less of a threat to it’s neighbors and so further reduces U.S. costs to preserve its position. I first discuss the U.S. as a liberal hegemon. I then consider China and its economic and political challenges. I conclude by discussing how China benefits from the U.S. acting as a hegemon and how U.S. hegemony preserves itself by addressing these Chinese issues.

#### Lastly, Thomas Barnett of the U.S. Naval War College states in 2011, the United States must strive to maintain it’s hegemony because our leadership has been the single greatest force for peace the world has ever known. America introduced globalization that resulted in democracy, human rights, liberation for women, doubling of life expectancy, tenfold global GDP increase, and a 99% reduction in death due to conflict.

Thomas P.M. **Barnett** (Former Senior Strategic Researcher and Professor in the Warfare Analysis & Research Department, Center for Naval Warfare Studies, U.S. Naval War College American Military Geostrategist and Chief Analyst at Wikistrat, worked as the Assistant for Strategic Futures in the Office of Force Transformation in the Department of Defense) 3-7-**2011**, "The New Rules: Leadership Fatigue Puts U.S., and Globalization, at Crossroads," https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/8099/the-new-rules-leadership-fatigue-puts-u-s-and-globalization-at-crossroads

It is worth first examining the larger picture: We live in a time of arguably the greatest structural change in the global order yet endured, with this historical moment's most amazing feature being its relative and absolute lack of mass violence. That is something to consider when Americans contemplate military intervention in Libya, because if we do take the step to prevent larger-scale killing by engaging in some killing of our own, we will not be adding to some fantastically imagined global death count stemming from the ongoing "megalomania" and "evil" of American "empire." We'll be engaging in the same sort of system-administering activity that has marked our stunningly successful stewardship of global order since World War II. Let me be more blunt: As the guardian of globalization**,** the U.S. military has been the greatest force for peace the world has ever known. Had America been removed from the global dynamics that governed the 20th century, the mass murder never would have ended.Indeed, it's entirely conceivable there would now be no identifiable human civilization left, once nuclear weapons entered the killing equation. But the world did not keep sliding down that path of perpetual war. Instead,America stepped up and changed everything by ushering in our now-perpetual great-power peace. We introduced the international liberal trade order known as globalization and played loyal Leviathan over its spread. What resulted was the collapse of empires, an explosion of democracy, the persistent spread of human rights, the liberation of women, the doubling of life expectancy, a roughly 10-fold increase in adjusted global GDP and a profound and persistent reduction in battle deaths from state-based conflicts. That is what American "hubris" actually delivered. Please remember that the next time some TV pundit sells you the image of "unbridled" American military power as the cause of global disorder instead of its cure. With self-deprecation bordering on self-loathing, we now imagine a post-American world that is anything but. Just watch who scatters and who steps up as the Facebook revolutions erupt across the Arab world. While we might imagine ourselves the status quo power, we remain the world's most vigorously revisionist force. As for the sheer "evil" that is our military-industrial complex, again, let's examine what the world looked like before that establishment reared its ugly head. The last great period of global structural change was the first half of the 20th century, a period that saw a death toll of about 100 million across two world wars. That comes to an average of 2 million deaths a year in a world of approximately 2 billion souls. Today, with far more comprehensive worldwide reporting, researchers report an average of less than 100,000 battle deaths annually in a world fast approaching 7 billion people. Though admittedly crude, these calculations suggesta 90 percent absolute drop anda 99 percent relative drop in deaths due to war.

#### When the U.S. grows the economy, it allows our government to incorporate other countries into our economic system. This allows the U.S. to be the leader they are today.

#### Contention Two: Economic growth solves climate change

#### Phil Torres, a Cornell graduate with degrees in entomology and biology, contextualizes in 2016, climate change is the largest threat to public health, as it causes wars, terrorist attacks, ecological collapse, agricultural failures, economic uncertainty, and political instability. In addition, it will aggravate poverty, social tensions, and weak political institutions. We are approaching a sudden and irreversible societal collapse, which will elevate the likelihood of nuclear wars, terrorism, and pandemics.

Torres 16 (Affiliate scholar @ Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies, Graduate of [Cornell University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornell_University), with degrees in [entomology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entomology) and [biology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biology). PhD candidate @ Rice University in tropical conservation biology), Op-ed: Climate Change Is the Most Urgent Existential Risk, <http://ieet.org/index.php/IEET/more/Torres20160807>)

Climate change and biodiversity loss, shouldtake priority right now over every other known threat. Wars, more or less likely in a world marked byextreme weather events**,** megadroughts**,** food supply disruptions**,** and sea-level rise? Are terrorist attacks, more or less likely in a world beset by the collapse of global ecosystems**,** agricultural failures**,** economic uncertainty**,** andpolitical instability? Both government officials and scientists agree that the answer is “more (are) likely.” For example, the current Director of the CIA, John Brennan, recently identified “the impact of climate change” as one of the “deeper causesof this rising instability” in countries like Syria**,** Iraq**,** Yemen**,** Libya, and Ukraine. Similarly, the former Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel, has described climate change as a “threat multiplier” with “the potential to exacerbate many of the challenges we are dealing with today — from infectious disease to terrorism.” The Department of Defense has also affirmed a connection. In a 2015 report, it states, “Global climate change will aggravate problems such as poverty**,** social tensions**,** environmental degradation**,** ineffectual leadershipandweak political institutions that threaten stability in a number of countries.” Scientific studies have further shown a connection between the environmental crisis and violent conflicts. For example, a 2015 paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences argues that climate change was a causal factor behind the record-breaking 2007-2010 drought in Syria. This drought led to a mass migration of farmers into urban centers, which fueled the 2011 Syrian civil war. Some observers, including myself, have suggested that this struggle could be the beginning of World War III, given the complex tangle of international involvement and overlapping interests. The study’s conclusion is also significant because the Syrian civil war was the Petri dish in which the Islamic State consolidated its forces, later emerging as the largest and most powerful terrorist organization in human history. A Perfect Storm The point is that climate change and biodiversity loss could very easily push societies to the brink of collapse. This will exacerbate existing geopolitical tensionsand introduce entirely new power struggles between state and nonstate actors. At the same time, advanced technologies will very likely become increasingly powerful and accessible. As I’ve written elsewhere, the malicious agents of the future will have bulldozers rather than shovels to dig mass graves for their enemies. The result is a perfect storm of more conflicts in the world along with unprecedentedly dangerous weapons. If the conversation were to end here, we’d have ample reason for placing climate change and biodiversity loss at the top of our priority lists. But there are other reasons they ought to be considered urgent threats. I would argue that they could make humanity more vulnerable to a catastrophe involving superintelligence and even asteroids. The basic reasoning is the same for both cases. Consider superintelligence first. Programming a superintelligence whose values align with ours is a formidable task even in stable circumstances. As Nick Bostrom argues in his 2014 book, we should recognize the “default outcome” of superintelligence to be “doom.” Now imagine trying to solve these problems amidst a rising tide of interstate wars, civil unrest, terrorist attacks, and other tragedies? The societal stress caused by climate change and biodiversity loss will almost certainly compromise important conditions for creating friendly AI, such as sufficient funding, academic programs to train new scientists, conferences on AI, peer-reviewed journal publications, and communication/collaboration between experts of different fields, such as computer science and ethics. It could even make an “AI arms race” more likely, thereby raising the probability of a malevolent superintelligence being created either on purpose or by mistake. Similarly, imagine that astronomers discover a behemoth asteroid barreling toward Earth. Will designing, building, and launching a spacecraft to divert the assassin past our planet be easier or more difficult in a world preoccupied with other survival issues? In a relatively peaceful world, one could imagine an asteroid actually bringing humanity together by directing our attention toward a common threat**.** But if the “conflict multipliers” of climate change and biodiversity loss have already catapulted civilization into chaos and turmoil, I strongly suspect that humanity will become more, rather than less, susceptible to dangers of this sort. Context Risks We can describe the dual threats of climate change and biodiversity loss as “context risks.” Neither is likely to directly cause the extinction of our species. But both will define the context in which civilization confronts all the other threats before us. In this way, they could indirectlycontribute to the overall danger of annihilation — and this worrisome effect could be significant. For example, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the effects of climate change will be “severe,” “pervasive,” and “irreversible.” Or, as a 2016 study published in Nature and authored by over twenty scientists puts it, the consequences of climate change “will extend longer than the entire history of human civilization thus far.” Furthermore, a recent article in Science Advances confirms that humanity has already escorted the biosphere into the sixth mass extinction event in life’s 3.8 billion year history on Earth. Yet another study suggests that we could be approaching a sudden**,** irreversible, catastrophic collapse of the global ecosystem. If this were to occur, it could result in “widespread social unrest, economic instability and loss of human life.” Given the potential for environmental degradation to (will) elevate the likelihood of nuclear wars, nuclear terrorism, engineered and pandemics.

#### Finally, Ronald Bailey states in 2015, that economic growth best combats our changing climate. Since 1980, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide air pollution, is down 85, 80, and 60 percent, even as real U.S. GDP more than doubled. Furthermore, deforestation halts and reverses when per capita incomes reach a threshold of around $4,200.

**Ronald Bailey**, (Bailey attended the [University of Virginia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Virginia), where he earned a B.A. in philosophy and economics in 1976.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Bailey#cite_note-secrets-2) He worked briefly as an economist for the [Federal Energy Regulatory Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Energy_Regulatory_Commission), Bailey was the 1993 Warren T. Brookes Fellow in Environmental Journalism at the [Competitive Enterprise Institute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competitive_Enterprise_Institute) (CEI). He has lectured at Harvard University, Rutgers University, [McGill University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McGill_University), [University of Alaska](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Alaska), Université du Québec, the [Cato Institute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cato_Institute), the Instituto de Libertad y Desarrollo (Chile), and the [American Enterprise Institute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Enterprise_Institute).), November 30, **2015**, “Fast Growth Can Solve Climate Change,” Scientific American, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/fast-growth-can-solve-climate-change/ (accessed 12/7/18)

Economic development initially worsens environmental externalities such as deforestation and pollution, including the accumulation of climate-damaging greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and oceans. But long term, pollution and deforestation can start to improve as economic growth boosts the incomes of once poor people. The wealthier people become the more they demand and get improved environmental quality via regulation and market mechanisms that promote cleaner and less resource-intensive processes and technologies. For example, since 1980, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide air pollution, is down 85, 80, and 60 percent, respectively, even as real U.S. GDP more than doubled. Data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ latest global forest trends report shows that deforestation halts and reverses when per capita incomes reach a threshold of around $4,200. Economies increasingly grow by squeezing more value out of less stuff. The World Watch Institute reports that U.S. carbon intensity (the amount of CO2 emitted to produce a dollar of GDP) has fallen 60 percent since 1990.

#### When the economy grows, it allows for our government to regulate as well as solve our climate change threat.

#### Contention Three: Income Inequality

#### Christopher Ingraham, a data analyst and reporter on economics, states in 2018, that the economy has been funneling income from the pockets of the 99 percent to the coffers of the 1 percent. Concentration of income among the rich has put the U.S. at levels of inequality not seen before World War II.

Christopher Ingraham, (B.A. from Cornell, Data analyst and reporter on politics and economics) February 6, 2018, “How rising inequality hurts everyone, even the rich,” Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/02/06/how-rising-inequality-hurts-everyone-even-the-rich/?utm_term=.f1fd0e059f97> (accessed 12/7/18)

Over the past 40 or so years, **the** American **economy has been funneling** wealth and **income**, reverse Robin Hood-style, **from the pockets of the** bottom **99 percent to the coffers of the** top **1 percent**. The total transfer, to the richest from everyone else, amounts to 10 percent of national income and 15 percent of national wealth. It's part of a massive **concentration of** wealth and **income among the rich** that **has put the U**nited **S**tates **at levels of inequality not seen** in this country since **before** World War II. It's a trend that economists such as Thomas Piketty believe will continue unchecked in the coming decades, with the top 1 percent of Americans capturing a quarter or more of the national income by 2030.

#### Next, Geoff Riley, an economist of thirty years writes in 2019, that as society develops and becomes richer, the economy grows and the urban-rural gap is reduced. When this economic growth happens, income inequality is lowered.

**Geoff Riley** (Geoff Riley has been teaching Economics for thirty years. He has over twenty years experience as Head of Economics at leading schools. He writes extensively and is a contributor and presenter on CPD conferences in the UK and overseas), **2019**, "Economic Growth," tutor2u, https://www.tutor2u.net/economics/reference/economic-growth-rising-inequality-and-rapid-growth

As a society develops and becomes richer, the urban-rural gap is reduced and old-age pensions, unemployment benefits, and other components of a social safety net have the effect of lowering inequality. The shape of a possible Kuznets Curve is shown in the next diagram. Trends over the last 30 years show income inequality increasing within countries and between them. For emerging countries, inequality has risen in most countries – suggesting that many nations have been on the rising part of the curve. Of the BRIC countries and other leading developing countries, only Brazil has seen an eventual fall in measured income inequality. Partly this is the result of deliberate inclusive growth policies including the conditional cash transfer policy explained in our chapter on Brazil.

#### Ultimately, Robert Creamer, a political scientist from Duke University states in 2009, that income inequality is dangerous for long-term survival. Increasing inequality of income leads to concentrated power, which is directly contrary to a democratic society.

Robert Creamer, (B.A. political science at Duke, University of Chicago degree in ethics and society, political organizer, strategist, and author, owner of Strategic Consulting Group—a political consulting firm that works on many of the country’s most significant issue campaigns, married to Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky of Illinois, 2009) **2009**, “Why Growing Income Inequality Is Bad for America,” The Huffington Post, October 27th, Available Online at <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-creamer/why-growing-income-inequa_b_335115.html>, Accessed 10-27-2009

Finally, increased income inequality is completely undemocratic. It is a betrayal of our most fundamental democratic values. And it is dangerous to our prospects for long-term survival. The increasing inequality of income leads inexorably to increasing inequality in the distribution of wealth. Power in the society is more and more concentrated (power) in the hands of a few. It becomes more and more likely that some of our most powerful citizens came to that station not because of their merit, but because they got it the "old fashion way" -- they inherited it. That is directly contrary to our shared belief in a more democratic society -- where power and opportunity are broadly shared -- where no one's power or station in life are determined by accident of birth. The earliest Americans came to this continent to escape tyranny, aristocracy and plutocracy. Progressives who stand up against the increasing concentration of economic power in the hands of a few are standing for one of the proudest traditions of our democracy. And our commitment to the democratic distribution of power is not simply an expression of utopian idealism. In his brilliant study of why societies in the past have failed, called Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed , Pulitzer Prize-winning physiologist and ethno-geographer Jared Diamond concluded that one of the most common factors was "rational behavior" by actors -- and decision-making elites -- that benefited some individual or private self-interest but was harmful to the prospects of the entire society. He found that this was often complicated because the benefits to a small group that profited from the action were great in the short run, and the resulting damage to everyone else was not very palpable or immediate, except over time. This problem became especially acute when elites thought they could insulate themselves from the consequences of communal disaster. Then, they were even less prone to make decisions in the public interest. The increased inequality in the distribution of wealth and income makes this kind of decision-making more and more likely. We see when the interests of the wealthy stand in the way of solutions to the problems of climate change and environmental destruction -- or when we fail to raise enough money for the public education that benefits all children because the few who can afford private schools refuse to pay "higher taxes." The creation of a democratic society, built on egalitarian principles, is the only real systematic means of assuring that the interests of the entire society are not sacrificed to those of powerful elites. Most stories of decisions leading to catastrophic collapse involve decision-making elites whose interests diverge from the society at large. Democracy is the only real antidote. The undemocratic increase in the distribution of wealth and income is not only wrong. It is also dangerous to our future survival.

#### It is because income inequality is such a big issue and lead to a laundry list of impacts that Brendan and I can only see a PRO ballot.