THE STAR WARS PROBLEM:

MILITARY INTERVENTION, PACIFISM, AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

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Humanitarian interventionism, as encapsulated by the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, is based partially on the premise that there is always someone left to save. However, new and emerging wartime technologies have the potential to kill or destroy entire societies almost instantaneously (like the Death Star's destruction of Alderaan in the Star Wars universe).

In the face of near certainty that future wars will involve the use of society-killer weapons, anti-war pacifism becomes more compelling. In particular, we have reasons to develop a robust theory of pacifist interventionism, rather than relying on traditional (military) humanitarian interventionism. I conclude by sketching a theory of pacifist interventionism: proactive, nonviolent forms of cross-border intervention aimed at reducing the likelihood of atrocity before it begins.