

# dominate

2014

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2014

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# Read this First

The aphorism that knowledge is power is as apt a mantra for debate as it is for any activity. When it comes to foreign policy, the literature base is as deep as it is broad, and our writers have done an incredible job collapsing two hundred years worth of interventions into these pages, putting you in the best position to harness the brute power of knowledge.

The 2014 Stoa edition is special in more than one way. It's the last edition of Dominate featuring the contributions of Dominate co-founder Joseph Laughon. It's also the first edition with Blaire Bayliss at the helm of our Resolutional Analysis section. But one thing hasn't changed: we are very excited to present you with this resource, and we still only ask for one thing: commit to challenging everything we say.

Here's what that commitment means: for every argument you find in Dominate, make yourself articulate three compelling arguments that refute it. We ask this because the arguments that you'll develop from refuting our ideas in this sourcebook are more valuable than our ideas themselves. Debaters are convincing, and debaters with combined decades of experience came together to create this resource. If reading this book will only make you convinced that we are right, it has done more harm than good.

Email us for a refund, no explanation required, and you can delete this off your hard drive; doing so is a reflection of an understanding of what you know you can commit to. It shows you are dedicated to bettering yourself even if it means going without a book to help you along the way.

Please come to us with any questions you have, and you will get an answer. Our email is [mail@dominatedebate.com](mailto:mail@dominatedebate.com). We are very proud of this edition of Dominate and we hope you find it helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Chi Lou', written in a cursive style.

Jon Chi Lou  
Founder





# Resolutional Analysis



# Overview

Resolved: The United States has a moral obligation to mitigate international conflicts.

What is a nation? Is it a group of people, a governing system, or a specific land mass? Was the uprising in Syria an international conflict, or was it an example of civil unrest? Is the conflict between Israel and Palestine an international conflict, or is it a national conflict? Do you consider Palestine to be an independent state?

What is a conflict? Does it have to be violent, or can it be a tax dispute like in *The Phantom Menace*? Are Israel and Iran in a state of conflict, despite the fact that there is no actual fighting taking place? Is the US morally obligated to mitigate all conflicts, or just ones with certain motivations or symptoms?

What is mitigation? Does it mean boots on the ground, or can diplomacy act as a form of mitigation? If a country tries to mitigate a conflict but only succeeds in worsening the conflict, does that attempt at mitigation still fall under the grounds of the resolution?

What is a moral obligation? Can the United States be morally obligated to help, even if we have no means of helping? Are we morally obligated to mitigate conflicts even if we have limited knowledge of that conflict? Can other countries be obligated to mitigate a conflict, or is the United States always obligated? Is there a difference between moral obligations and legal obligations? What is that difference?

Are you confused yet?

At first glance, this resolution appears to be pretty straightforward. But the more you get into the details of the resolution, you realize the importance of clear definitions. This article won't contain all the answers. However, it will include a laundry list of important analysis and questions that you need to ask yourself and research before starting off the debate season. Think of this article as a springboard—it's the best place to get started, but not the place you want to end.

## United States

Does this word really need definition? Actually yes, it does need a bit of clarification. Some may argue that the United States refers to the people of the United States in an attempt to show a source of moral obligation. The difficulty with that interpretation is that the people of the United States are more or less powerless to mitigate international conflicts. In the context of the resolution, the only definition of the United States that makes sense is to refer to the only part of the US that can get involved in international conflicts—the US government.

## Mitigate

“To cause to become less harsh or hostile; to make less severe or painful”  
– Merriam Webster

“Lessening the force or intensity of something unpleasant, as wrath, pain, grief, or extreme circumstances; the act of making a condition or consequence less severe”  
– Random House Dictionary

“Make less severe, serious, or painful” – Oxford Dictionary

“To make something less harmful, unpleasant, or bad” – Cambridge Dictionary

All of these definitions have a common theme—anything which lessens pain or discomfort of a conflict can be considered mitigation. One way this can be done is through assistance or aid. Giving the conflicting nations food, clothing, medicine or temporary shelters could all be considered mitigation. What about military aid? If the United States donates troops to one or more conflicting nations, is that considered mitigation? On one hand, military aid can help conflicts to end sooner. However, it also has the potential to increase the number of casualties experienced. Does military aid and assistance actually mitigate a conflict, or does it intensify it?

Another form of potential mitigation is diplomacy. Putting pressure on the conflicting nations to come to terms, mediating peace contracts, assisting with a ceasefire and helping to solve differences between the two countries can all be mitigation. But one important thing to note about these definitions is that they are all results based. If the United States attempts to use diplomacy to mitigate a conflict, but only ends up making the conflict worse, does that truly count as mitigation of international conflicts? What about if the diplomacy has no effect whatsoever, is that mitigation? What if the United States attempts to use diplomacy to mitigate a conflict, and the conflict ends shortly after, but not necessarily due to the diplomacy by the United States? The correlation between cause and effect can be incredibly vague, and whether or not the mitigation was successful is very much up to debate.<sup>1</sup>

## International

“Of, relating to, or affecting two or more nations” – Merriam Webster

Virtually any definition you find of the word ‘international’ is going to say the same thing—something which occurs between two or more different nations. But this definition isn’t really all that helpful, since it doesn’t tell you what conditions must exist before an event can be called ‘international’. For that reason, I recommend forgoing the definition of ‘international’ entirely, and instead defining the term ‘nation.’

“A territorial division containing a body of people of one or more nationalities and usually characterized by relatively large size and independent status” – Merriam Webster

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. Note: this type of “topicality through solvency” is dangerous because if you don’t prove you mitigate the conflict, you also run the risk of not having a topical case.

“A large aggregate of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory”

– Oxford Dictionary

This definition states that something is a “nation” based solely on territory—if a group of people inhabit a unique, independent and relatively large territory, then they are a nation. By this definition, the Civil War actually split the United States into two separate nations. Additionally, America was its own nation even prior to the American Revolution, and Myanmar is currently split into hundreds of different nations. This definition is great to use if your case relies on a large amount of nations, or if you use examples of civil wars as “international” conflicts.

One could avoid some problems by interpreting the term “independent status” to mean “international recognition.” However, even that is not always as clean-cut as one might hope. Even the international community cannot agree on the status of Palestine and Taiwan.

“A large body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own”

– Random House Dictionary

This definition combines a unique territory with a unique government. This is my personal favorite definition, since it is closest to the common man definition, and will supply the least amount of uncertainty or surprises. However, even this definition provides some unique interpretations. After all, Florida and Wisconsin occupy unique territories and have unique state governments. Does this mean that Florida and Wisconsin are different nations? Or is the united interest under our federal government enough to say that Florida and Wisconsin are actually both under the exact same government? What about Britain and Australia, whose national governments are nearly identical but run separately?

Then you run into the issue of states like Egypt and Palestine, which have not yet finished the process of creating a governmental system. Do they lose the status of “nation” until their governments are complete, or is the fact that they are trying to create a government enough to fill that requirement? What about nations like Somalia, who is perfectly contented to remain in a state of anarchy? Better yet, if you say that Egypt and Somalia are not nations, what are they?

“A large group of people of the same race who share the same language, traditions, and history, but who might not all live in one area” – Cambridge Dictionary

“A community of persons not constituting a state but bound by common descent, language, history, etc” – Collins Dictionary of the English Language

These definitions specifically remove the unique territory aspect completely, arguing that considering yourselves a unique group of people is enough to constitute yourself as a nation. Of the three types of definitions provided, this type offers the most room for argumentation. It allows for liberation groups to be considered nations, even before fighting begins and even if they lose their fight for liberation. It allows for nomadic groups to be considered nations, it allows for refugees to be considered nations and it even allows for certain political parties to be considered nations. This definition would allow for virtually any fighting whatsoever to be classified as “international conflict”—even the family disputes in Romeo and Juliet! This definition is the most ambiguous of the three. While it allows the most room for argumentation, it

provides virtually no clarification, and it is the most likely of the three definitions to be challenged.

## Conflict

“A prolonged armed struggle” – Oxford Dictionary

“A fight, battle, or struggle, especially a prolonged struggle; strife”  
– Random House Dictionary

These definitions are fairly straightforward—any time there is active fighting, armed struggle and violence, we can say that there is a conflict. This type of definition is the easiest to use and the most user-friendly, but also the most limiting. These definitions limit you to merely warlike activity, and exclude things such as the ongoing tensions between Iran and Israel.

“Competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands”  
– Merriam Webster

“A state of opposition between ideas, interests, etc; disagreement or controversy”  
– Collins Dictionary of the English Language

These definitions provide almost the exact opposite interpretation as compared to the previous definitions. While the previous definitions limited conflict to simply something being acted upon in a violent way, these definitions remove the need for action altogether, stating that a mental or ideological disagreement is all that is necessary for a conflict to exist. This definition is the broadest, but also the most desirable if your case focuses heavily on diplomatic negotiation and mitigation, or if it focuses on wars that were avoided altogether rather than merely mitigated. Instances such as the ongoing tension between Israel and Iran would be included under this definition, along with the tension between North and South Korea, and North Korea and the United States.

“An active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles”  
– Cambridge Dictionary

My personal favorite, this definition combines the best of both worlds. It requires an “active” disagreement—the disagreement must be ongoing and must be acted upon for the disagreement to be counted as a conflict. However, this definition does not restrict that action to merely an armed or violent conflict. This definition sticks to the common man interpretation of conflict without limiting the debate to war-scenario examples.

# Proving Moral Obligation

The heart of the resolution is difficult to prove. The government, as it were, doesn't have a beating heart, a conscience, or a soul. How can we expect a soulless heartless monster to have moral obligations? Valid question, and a decent argument against any affirmative, at that. It can be argued quite persuasively that governments do not have moral obligations because they are mere institutions, not people. Governments are systems through which people act, systems through which people voice their opinions, and systems which represent extensions of the people's will. As such, only the actors within the government can be moral and the government cannot have moral obligations in and of itself. Institutions and organizations cannot make moral or immoral decisions and cannot, therefore, accept the burden of upholding moral obligations.

There are several components that can comprise this argument.

1. Moral decisions must be conscious. Morality is notable only in contrast to immorality, and moral choices rest on the fundamental ability of people to discriminate between contrasting choices. If an action came not from a conscious choice between moral and immoral choices, the actor has not made a moral decision, but has become an extension of whatever natural occasion compelled him or her to take that action. We don't say that animals or machines are moral or immoral because we don't think they have that awareness of the differences between situations. Institutions are not conscious beings, and thus cannot themselves make moral decisions, but can only be extensions of thinking actors.

2. Governments have legal, not moral obligations. Corporations, organizations, and governments are all machines to an extent designed for a purpose. Corporations are structured to turn a profit for investors; governments are all at some point designed to garner and maintain power.

Obligations must be tied to consequences levied upon the actor if those obligations are not fulfilled. For people, this universal consequence is guilt, but organizations cannot feel guilt over making an immoral choice. Organizations can, however, be subject to real consequences, legal consequences, such as monetary penalties imposed on them by law. Government, specifically, is bound by an unspoken social contract to do whatever the people ask of it, and those requests may sometimes be moral, and sometimes immoral. For government, its obligation is to fulfill the people's will. When this obligation is not fulfilled, the mental restrictions on the people's hostility is lifted and a revolution becomes eminently possible.

3. The people running the government, whether it be bureaucrats or the people in a direct democracy, are responsible for the actions of the government. Even if the organization was designed with a moral purpose in mind, that does not imbue it with moral choice because it remains an agnostic means to an end. A machine designed to do good is not given the credit for the good work done. The credit goes to the one who designed and built the machine. And blame for misconduct goes to the designer as well.

The reasoning provided above might have felt shaky to you. It is. But how do we prove that government even has the ability to make moral decisions? There are several ways to do so, and we'll go through each one. We'll start with mine, the painstakingly laborious boring one.

## The Laborious One

That government can have moral obligation rests on the idea that governments themselves can be moral, which rests on the idea that the actions of a government can be subjected to moral judgment. We can use the model of morality from action or morality from role, but ultimately they both come down to whether the actions of government match a certain ideal. So first, we need to prove that the actions of government can be condemned or praised as immoral or moral.

*Premise 1: Morally culpable actions are those with a negative impact, caused by a conscious actor*

Warrant: Both sides agree this is true. Earthquakes that kill tens of thousands are never condemned as immoral because there is no consciousness involved, but terrorist attacks that kill mere hundreds are immediately condemned because of the element of conscious decision involved.

*Premise 2: Some actions have negative impacts.*

Warrant: Both sides concede this.

*Premise 3: Government is not a mindless machine*

Warrant 1: Government actions are motivated, and thus, government is far from an agnostic actor. It makes deliberate decisions every day towards specific purposes, good and bad. The government as a whole may not express the opinions of all the involved officials, but ultimately governmental actions are the result of conscious decisions—dozens, if not hundreds of decisions, fact.

Warrant 2: Government is nothing but for the people involved. People with brains run government (whether they use them is questionable), and are the defining characteristic of any government; therefore government cannot be blameless for immoral actions. If government made decisions as mere reaction on an animalistic or mechanical level, we would have replaced it long ago with computers.

Obviously people can be held accountable for their actions—no one disputes that. What I am suggesting, however, is that government, literally being nothing more than a group of people, can be held to at least the same responsibility that an individual can.

*Conclusion: Therefore, governmental actions can be condemned as immoral or lauded as praiseworthy.*

## Moral Obligation from Social Contract

The previous argument establishes that governmental actions are not magically free from moral consideration. How do we go on to prove that government has inherent moral obligations?

*Premise 1: All governments use force. We realize that for any government to be put into place and for that government to be effective and efficient, there must be laws, and those laws must be enforced. Without enforcement, there is in effect no law and no government. Thus every real*



government must require the use of force and violence in order to uphold and enforce the laws of the land.

*Premise 2:* All critical, defining actions of government, if not committed by a government, would be considered immoral. If I imprison people without a cause, or if I kill people who have not done anything to me, those would be immoral actions. Force and violence are immoral actions per se, and every government must use those immoral actions merely to maintain its existence. Thus, government is always initially immoral.

*Premise 3:* At this point, the idea of government is on the rocks. To uphold its power, it needs to commit violence. There had better be a really good reason for it to exist. And there is. But there no single answer for what justifies government: some say it is upholding human rights, some say it is promoting general welfare, some say it is carrying out the will of the people. Whatever that answer is, it has to be an extremely compelling and weighty benefit brought to the people care of this otherwise villainous entity. We have a scale. On one side of the scale, all the immoral actions of government tip it entirely in that direction. On the other side, there must be something to balance the scale. It is the need to balance the scale—the need to justify government's inherent immorality—that creates the moral obligation of government.

Thus, the question of the resolution is, in effect, “is mitigating international conflicts a social good that government must deliver to the people to balance out its moral scale?”

## Collective Responsibility

Government has more obligation than any individual or group in the country. This idea is a much simpler and more elegant approach to proving governmental obligation. The argument simply says that government is the representative of the collective, and as such, it has unique obligations.

*Premise: The government can do more than any individual.*

Warrant: Typically groups of people have more force than individuals, but specifically in the case of government, it also has power as a result of being recognized as the authority. The whole is more than the sum of its parts; government is more powerful than the sum of its people, and it has more obligations than masses of individuals combined.

*Premise: Moral obligation is proportionate to ability*

Warrant: If you cannot help, you have no obligation to help. If you can, you do. Otherwise, we would end up with morally untenable situations like babies getting condemned for not helping the poor. The government is able to give aid on a level that no other entity can, and thus has the obligation to help.

*Conclusion:* Government, in many instances being the only entity capable of helping, has the moral obligation to help. In addition, government has more responsibility than any individual within its borders because of the authority it claims over its people.

## Amorality K

The idea that government has no morality directly links into the mindset of promoting amoral government. If governments have no moral obligations, officials can justify committing any type of atrocities they want under the guise of “legal obligation.” If we divorce anything from the idea of morality, that is incredibly dangerous. We are saying that governments have no ability to be moral. Government now has no obligation to do anything except what the people say, and that allows the government to do anything. Keep in mind the fact that the government is still run by sentient people who are aware of what they are doing and how their actions impact people. We are giving those agents of government the license to commit cruelty in the name of fulfilling legal obligation, and that is perhaps one of the most dangerous mindsets ever perpetuated by debaters and it needs to stop.

# Mindsets

Why? At the end of the debate round, after you've packed up your pens and said sayonara to your timekeeper, the judge has to ask himself why. Why is the resolution true? Why is the resolution false? He can think back to your value, but sometimes that doesn't answer the question. "The resolution is true because liberty" doesn't mean a thing. When you're in a debate round, you're not trying to sell the judge your value. You're trying to sell him your *mindset*, your justifications: your reasons why.

That's why instead of providing you with a values page this year, we here at Dominate have decided to provide you with a mindsets page. How are foreign policy decisions justified? How can you spin your case around a common theme, find values and applications to match that mindset and then sell that mindset to a judge? Read on.

## Affirmative Mindsets

### Human Needs Trump All

We are human beings. As such, we have intrinsic value that is worth more than any philosophy, social norm or any amount of money. When we see another human suffering, we have a moral obligation to step in and help. International conflicts are inherent sources of human suffering, and thus it is our moral responsibility to mitigate that conflict as much as possible to protect those who may be affected by it.

Officially, this concept is known as cosmopolitan egalitarianism: the idea that all humans are equally deserving, no matter what their nationality is. Although this argument is usually confined to immigration debates, it has more than a little impact on this resolution. As philosopher Joseph Carens puts it, "Citizenship in Western liberal democracies is the modern equivalent to feudal privilege—an inherited status that greatly enhances one's life chances. Like feudal birthrights privileges, restrictive citizenship is hard to justify when one thinks about it closely."<sup>1</sup> This mindset was also supported by Mill's essay *On Liberty*, under which he argues that the very purpose of government is to limit human suffering as much as possible. Mill once stated that, "[Government's] business is to increase to the utmost the pleasures, and diminish to the utmost the pains, which men derive from one another." Aristotle's writings on Just War Theory even support this mindset, as he argues that war is only justified when that war will save human life, or lead to comparative justice.

This mindset is easy to argue since most debaters will not tackle it straight on. It is supported by most philosophers as well as most of the debaters you will face. However, you have to make your arguments carefully—if it sounds as though you are simply attempting to provide shock value or win on bias, this style of argumentation can backfire.

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<sup>1</sup> Carens, Joseph. "Immigration." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 10 May 2010. Web. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/immigration/#CosEga>

Supporting Values: Cosmopolitan Egalitarianism, Humanity, Human Rights, Individual Rights, Human Dignity, Life, Liberty, Property, Justice, Equality, Utilitarianism, anything you believe that all people deserve.

To Ignore Abuse is to Condone it

As Edmond Burke once stated, “All that is necessary for evil to thrive is for good men to do nothing.”

Our society is not simply a collection of countries—it is a network of countries. Organizations such as the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the United Nations all deal with the cooperation of countries. We are no longer isolated. Each country now must stand up for the values it cherishes at all times, or else it will be publically be seen as abandoning those values. To ignore international conflict is to condone that conflict, to say that it is acceptable and to give that conflict legitimacy. This was supported by the philosopher Rawls:

“It is a grave oversimplification to suggest that there is a neat line defined by human rights where national sovereignty ends and tolerance stops. There is no need to deny that human rights are helpful in identifying the limits of justifiable toleration, but there are several reasons to doubt that they simply define that boundary. First, the “fulfillment” of human rights is a very vague idea. No country fully satisfies human rights; all countries have significant human rights problems. Some countries have large human rights problems, and many have massive problems (“gross violations of human rights”). Beyond this, the responsibility of the current government of a country for these problems also varies. The main responsibility may belong to the previous government and the current government may be taking reasonable steps to move towards greater compliance. Further, defining human rights as norms that set the limits of national sovereignty requires restricting human rights to only a few fundamental rights. Rawls suggests the following list: “the right to life (to the means of subsistence and security); to liberty (to freedom from slavery, serfdom, and forced occupation, and to a sufficient measure of liberty of conscience to ensure freedom of religion and thought); to property (personal property); and to formal equality as pressed by the rules of natural justice (that is, that similar cases be treated similarly)” (Rawls 1999, 65). As Rawls recognizes this list leaves out most freedoms, rights of political participation, equality rights, and social rights. Leaving out any protection for equality and democracy is a high price to pay for assigning human rights the role of setting the bounds of tolerance, and we can accommodate Rawls' underlying idea without paying it. The intuitive idea that Rawls uses is that countries engaging in massive violations of the most important human rights are not to be tolerated — particularly when the notion of toleration implies, as Rawls thinks it does, full and equal membership in good standing in the community of nations.”<sup>2</sup>

This argument can be strengthened when you considered that the United States can be argued to be the leader of the free world. We set the standard for democracy in the rest of the world, and should set the bar for what government should and should not do. For more information supporting America's role as global leader, check out the book *Advancing Democracy Abroad: Why We Should and How We Can* by Michael McFaul.

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<sup>2</sup> “Human Rights.” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 7 Feb. 7 2003, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights-human/>

Supporting Values: Activism, Justice, International Tranquility, Integrity, Courage, Accountability

## Borders are Imaginary

What do you mean by “other nations?” Or “other governments?” This mindset argues that legal formality is just that—a formality. States, borders, countries and laws are simply a creation of the imagination. When it comes down to it, we’re all just people. Thus the government should be judged based on the exact same moral standards as every other group of people.

Our world becomes more and more globalized over time. International organizations urge cooperation between countries, internet and television are blending cultures together and international efforts are expanding. Supported by philosophers like John Dewey and Marshall McLuhan, the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* explains this mindset as such:

“Geographical distance is typically measured in time. As the time necessary to connect distinct geographical locations is reduced, distance or space undergoes compression or “annihilation.” The human experience of space is intimately connected to the temporal structure of those activities by means of which we experience space. Changes in the temporality of human activity inevitably generate altered experiences of space or territory. Theorists of globalization disagree about the precise sources of recent shifts in the spatial and temporal contours of human life. Nonetheless, they generally agree that alterations in humanity's experiences of space and time are working to undermine the importance of local and even national boundaries in many arenas of human endeavor.”<sup>3</sup>

National boundaries are slowly losing importance in our global world—and that’s not necessarily a bad thing. The philosophy of Global Justice states that this is actually a good thing—globalization helps us to better ensure that all people are treated right, regardless of their nationality and circumstances. The concept of Global Justice, or Social Justice as it is sometimes known, is the idea that all men are equal and that government should work towards the equality of all men. Sometimes matched with the value of Societal Minimum, Global Justice believes that so long as the government is capable of promoting justice, it should. That includes any and all cases where humans are in need. By this theory, the government is more than simply a body that does the will of its people or serves a simple function in the world—the government becomes a body for good.<sup>4</sup>

Supporting Values: Humanity, Globalization, Justice, International Activism, Kant’s Categorical Imperative, Cosmopolitan Egalitarianism

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<sup>3</sup> “Globalization.” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 1 Jun. 2002. Web. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/globalization/>

<sup>4</sup> “Justice as a Virtue.” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Web. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-virtue/>

## Help Others, Help Ourselves

When we help other countries, we're actually helping ourselves. In the same way that helping to keep other countries' nuclear arsenals safe from terrorists also helps keep America safe, keeping international conflicts at a minimum helps to prevent that conflict from spreading into other countries. Essentially, helping other nations actually helps the United States.

Hobbes' Leviathan theory stated that government's main purpose was to promote order and that the government should be big enough so that it can crush any problems and disorder. This Leviathan should provide peace to its country. It's important to note that this theory was not specifically domestic—it applied to international problems and disorder as well.

This mindset can be very strong since it sidesteps most negative arguments. However, at the same time you have to be careful to uphold your affirmative burden. While many debaters will take your mindset as an affirmation of the resolution, many will argue that it does not prove the resolution to be true. The statement "we should help others because it will help us" seems to imply that the moral obligation held is for countries to protect their own citizens. Smart negatives will argue that an affirmation of the resolution requires the aff to prove that mitigating international conflict is inherently an obligation held by governments—not just a means to an end.

Supporting Values: National Security, Domestic Tranquility, Social Contract,

## Negative Mindsets

### National Sovereignty and International Backlash

The negative argument from the standpoint of national security and nationalism essentially states that every country must have the right to collective self-determination. Each state is sovereign and as such, deserves proper decision making power. To violate that right by interfering in a state's internal affairs would not only be a violation of collective self-determination and the political system, but it would also be a slap in the face to that country's legitimacy. Each nation has its own identity, its own culture and its own way of life. That should be respected. This highly isolationist way of thinking points out an interesting concept on the negative side—the concept of national sovereignty. How should we react when assistance violates a country's self-determination, political system, culture or way of life? Can it truly be morally obligated to take such action, even if it mitigates a conflict?

Many current news analysts have argued that when a country tries to assist, it actually takes over. One reason why intervention into the Palestine/Israel conflict is so difficult is because it is almost impossible to mitigate or solve the conflict (or even enter in with some form of assistance or aid) without seeming to declare a "right" and "wrong" side. When you try to mitigate international conflict, many times you are only trying to force a compromise where no compromises can be reached. Such a quest will only end in the destruction of national sovereignty and disaster for all involved.

Another thing to take into consideration is the international backlash. Despite the globalized state of world politics and the decision that free nations must now be "leaders" in the world, states still reject intervention into most of their conflicts. This fact defeats many affirmative arguments regarding how countries are viewed and considered. This is especially true with the

United States. We have taken it upon ourselves to be, essentially, the world's global policeman. But do we really deserve that honor? What is it about our country, politics and way of life that makes us the perfect standard for the world? Are we really qualified to play God, trampling other nations' sovereignty and diminishing their authority because we think we know better? These are the kinds of questions the affirmative really has to be able to answer.

Supporting Values: National Sovereignty, National Security, International Tranquility

...We Suck at Helping

We really do.

This argument is extremely easy to make. The argument is that governments are not good at mitigating international conflict. Horror stories can be shown, statistics can be shown and all of this ultimately proves that governments who try to mitigate conflict end up doing more harm than good. This is especially true of United States aid, where horror stories are more than common. (See the Applications chapter for specific examples.)

This argument would attempt to prove that whatever justifications the aff provides for governmental mitigation of conflict (justice, liberty, equality) will ultimately not be achieved, and thus governments are not morally obligated to try.

Note: if you run this value, it is incredibly easy to come off as saying "even if governments do have moral obligations, that wouldn't work." Remember that this is a values round, not a policy round—the question is what a government is morally obligated to do. Ensure that all your arguments center around government's moral obligations, and not necessarily the pros and cons of acting upon their obligations.

Supporting Values: Effective Aid, Pragmatism, Wise Policy, Real-World

Only Its Own Citizens

According to John Locke, governments are given the legitimate right to rule based upon the social contract. The social contract is an imaginary contract between the people and the government—so long as the people upholds the will of the people and protects the rights of those people, the government deserves to rule. But that social contract is specific to the people living within the government—it says nothing about citizens outside. The impact of this is that when governments use their power to assist people outside of their social contract, they lose the right to rule and the government should be uprooted by its citizens. (The popular response to this is "What if the people want the government to help mitigate international conflict?" But that argument is really irrelevant, because it does not address the fact that the government has no inherent obligation to mitigate international conflict. Just point out that in proposing this argument, the affirmative has agreed that the government's true moral obligation is to fulfill the will of its people, not to mitigate international conflicts.)

Another argument that stems from this concept is the idea that the mitigation of international conflict is not the government's job, but is the job of another entity entirely. International conflicts

should be mitigated and/or prevented—but does it have to be the government that mitigates international conflicts? What about international organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations or even Private Firms?

Take a tip from Hayek—private markets rock. By supporting the free market, you support better businesses—and thus better international conflict mitigation. Even Keynes would agree that putting money into the marketplace helps the economy. Bastiat wrote in *The Law* that taxation is nothing less than legal plunder—the taking of one man’s property and giving it to another. If the government engages in this for the benefit of its own citizens, then it can be excused if it promotes their own rights. But to give it to those who do not pay taxes is nothing but the redistribution of wealth. Thus, it goes beyond the purpose of government and should belong in the private marketplace rather than the government. Despite some of the horror stories, privately owned soldiers actually have quite an impressive track record. (See Applications chapter for details and evidence.)

Supporting Values: Free Market, Capitalism, Economic security, Social Contract, National Security, Frugality

## Governments Do Not Have Moral Obligations

This argument takes an approach similar to the one you saw in the aff section above—that governments are imaginary, and thus do not physically exist in reality. The affirmative stance on this fact would be that governments therefore have the same obligations as a group of people. However, this could also be taken to mean that as a non-entity government have no obligations whatsoever—any obligations would belong to the individuals, not the government. Another way of making this argument would be to draw a distinction between an obligation for moral, civil and legal reasons. The government may have an obligation to intervene—but is that reason a moral one?

Ayn Rand in her book *The Virtue of Selfishness* took this logic a step further, stating that obligations as a whole do not exist, even for the individual. Ayn Rand writes that “duty” is nothing by a man-made idea, and a way of making others feel as though they owe something to others. However, she points out that we owe nothing to the vast collective of the world, and thus have no obligations towards them.

Supporting Values: best run as a kritik or fact case without a stated value



# Pitfalls to Avoid

Vitamin pills on an empty stomach, putting tomatoes in your fruit salad, wearing a fur coat to an animal rights convention, and these five things:

## Assuming the Purpose of Government

Why are governments created? What is a government supposed to do? What things are considered moral or immoral in the government? Is the government held to different moral standards than individuals are, or than other groups of people are? What are government's obligations?

Many debaters will start off the year with simplistic assumptions regarding the purpose of government. ("The purpose of government is to please its people." "The purpose of government is to uphold individual rights." "The purpose of government is to uphold the social contract.") However, the further you get into the resolution, you will realize that these answers not only over-simplify the resolution, but in the end will not be helpful to you as you attempt to defend your position.

In addition to being able to explain and define the purpose of government, you have to be ready, willing, and able to defend that position. Your expectations for the government will come under fire. Debaters will grill you on your supporting philosophy, definitions and logic. Although this resolution only specifically asks you to defend and define government's moral obligations, you will soon find that your arguments in this section of philosophy will require supporting arguments from countless other sections of philosophy. Make sure you brush up on all your major governmental philosophy before the new season starts.

But if for some reason you're rushed and only have time to research one philosophy before your first tournament (which should never happen), make it social contract theory. Social contract theory is the quintessential argument of government's moral obligations. It will be brought up time and time again this year, so understanding it right at the beginning of the season is vital.

## Failing to Prove Moral Obligation

The resolution does not ask us whether or not it is a good idea to mitigate international conflicts. The resolution doesn't ask us if the United States does a good job of mitigating international conflicts, what advantages or disadvantages come about from the mitigation of international conflicts, or what is best for other nations during international conflicts. It asks us what a government is morally obligated to do.

The resolution is highly philosophical, with deep roots in philosophies on morality, humanity, duty and the purpose and legitimacy of government. To be able to fully argue the topic of this year's debate, you'll need to make sure you understand the philosophical backing of your case. It's impossible to be able to argue the moral obligations of government without a base understanding of theories of morality.

At the end of the debate round, you need to win three points: 1) Governments have moral obligations 2) Government's moral obligations are defined according to my standard, not my opponent's 3) My standard requires the United States government to mitigate international conflicts. It's very tempting to get sucked into examples debate, policy debate of pros and cons, or even values debate of whose value is better. But none of that really impacts the debate round. Focus your case on moral obligations—failing to do so may very well cost you the round.

## Denying Exceptions

I firmly believe that the resolution is true absolutely all the time, no matter what the circumstances and no matter what definitions you use. The United States is morally obligated to mitigate all international conflicts everywhere, forever, no matter the cause of that conflict and no matter what the conflict is causing. Any time there is a disagreement between two nations, it's the United States' job to fix it.

No one wants to sound like this in their debate round. But many people will. The resolution is broad: it seems to provide a blanket statement that is completely un-defendable. If you attempt to argue that the US must intervene any time there appears to be a conflict between two or more nations, you're giving the negative a lot of ground upon which to call exceptions or provide a counter example. But there are a couple of ways to avoid this dilemma:

### *Values*

Pick a limiting value that narrows down the resolution to something you can defend. A good example would be an affirmative value of Life: the US is only obligated to mitigate international conflicts when human life is at risk. This strategy limits the resolution down to something defendable while at the same time affirming it. Yes, the US does have a moral obligation to mitigate international conflicts—when human life is at risk. The negative team can try to argue that you're adding words onto the resolution, however it would be the negative team that was truly trying to read into the resolution. The resolution never says that the US "always" has an obligation to intervene, or has an obligation to intervene into "every" international conflict. The resolution can be narrowed and affirmed at the same time. (In addition, virtually every alumni judge would agree with you that the affirmative has the right to parametrize the resolution.)

Differentiate in between moral obligations and the obligation to act. It could be argued that the government has a moral obligation towards mitigation of international conflict, but does not necessarily have to act on that obligation. If you can prove a difference between the two, you can separate yourself completely from any arguments regarding exceptions or wise policy decisions and focus only on the clash of values and philosophy.

### *Exceptions to moral obligations*

Can there be natural exceptions to the resolution that should be remembered, but that do not necessarily negate the resolution? I believe there can be. One of the better exceptions would be that the US cannot have a moral obligation if it does not have the ability or knowledge to act. It's impossible to be obligated to do something if you don't have the ability to do something! This argumentation allows exceptions to the resolution and allows the affirmative to take circumstances into account, all while perfectly upholding the resolution.

## Generic Definitions

A government is a “governing body.” A conflict is where “two or more parties differ.” International is “dealing with more than one nation.” Definitions like these are a real waste of your time.

We define terms at the beginning of each debate round not because we believe that the audience has never heard the word “international” before. We define terms so that there will be clarity in the debate round. Your definitions should fit neatly with your case, provide a basis for your case, and sometimes with the hope that you can even define yourself to a win. Using generic definitions will only waste your time during the 1AC, provide further confusion later on in the debate round and give the negative team a reason to challenge and change your definitions to better suit the negative case.

For more on this, check out the Definitions article, which goes into depth on some of the specific questions your definition will need to answer.

## Failing to Know the Big Picture

This resolution can easily come down to examples, specific philosophers and nuances. But while the argumentation of this resolution is complex, the question of the resolution is simple—are governments morally obligated to mitigate international conflicts? By losing track of the big picture, you risk losing the round. All of your arguments should be resolution-centered. So how can you do that when you’re researching?

*Look for Themes.* When you research an example, don’t just look at the specifics and facts: also look at the themes, the values and the lessons learned. That way you will be able to impact these examples to a variety of different cases, and will always have a counter-example ready for whatever your opponent argues. Just don’t forget to impact the themes and values in your applications.

*Answer the Big Questions.* This resolution asks two main questions: Do governments have moral obligations, and if so what do those moral obligations include? All of your research and the majority of your time spent in round should be focused on, or at least impacted to, these two questions.

*Know the Background.* If you look into cases where the government did or did not decide to mitigate international conflicts, don’t just know the outcome of that decision. You should also know the reasons why that decision was made. Did the government intervene because they believed it was their duty, or because it would help lower oil prices? Did they fail to intervene due to a moral reason, or because they did not have the fund to send troops? Knowing the motivations behind each application will help you better be able to dissect the motivations and obligations of government—and will also make you sound really smart in CX.



# Reevaluating Rhetoric, Representations and the Resolution

## Joe Laughon

This section will call for a different, but not exactly new, way of examining the debate and the topic through critical theory. This section will explain what critical theory is, how it is used in debate, both in policy and in Lincoln-Douglas, various critical issues with the rhetoric and representations of the resolution, and how the kritik could be implemented in this year's debate.

Traditionally debate is really quite simple. An evaluative or policy proposition is posed with one debater, or debate team, in favor and one opposed. A reward is given, in the form of a ballot, to the debater or team that best opposed or supported the statement. This reward is given to the affirmative team if they can prove or disprove the statement. The resolution is central to the entire award system. However critical theory says that perhaps there is a different way with how we can examine debate.

Critical theory is founded upon the philosophical notion of the critique or *kritik* in German, which is often how it is spelled in debate. A critique is a thorough and rigorous examination of an idea, set of philosophical notions or human practices. German philosopher Immanuel Kant argues that, "We deal with a concept...critically if we consider it only in reference to our cognitive faculties and consequently to the subjective conditions of thinking it, without undertaking to decide anything about its object." Generally speaking a critique is as Hegel defined it, that is a systematic inquiry into a set of philosophical notions. Critical theory takes this idea of the critique and applies to society, examining human life and ideas with a critical lens. Specifically it looks to promote theories of sociology that criticize and examine the social status quo and look for a way to better it. Critical theorist Max Horkheimer argued that the fundamental purpose of critical theory is, "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them."

As the "founding father" of critical theory, Max Horkheimer wrote *Traditional and Critical Theory* in 1937. He argued for a new social theory to critique and solve society's ills, not simply record them and try to understand them. The two major elements of critical theory are attempting to explain how society got to this specific point in term and using all possible social sciences, such as psychology and political science, in order to prescribe solutions to those problems through a combination of the social sciences. Critical theory began to be used, not just by social theorists, but also by literary theorists as they sought to interpret texts in a critical manner, not just viewing them as texts in a vacuum but to deconstruct the meaning behind the text, specifically the context behind the representations and rhetoric used in the text.

A kritik (as it's spelled on the collegiate debate circuit) is used to criticize the representations and rhetoric of the affirmative and use them as a foundation for why a judge should award their ballot. In policy or Lincoln-Douglas debate, a kritik has a few parts to it; framework, links, impacts, alternative. To simplify it, think of kritik as a disadvantage that is run not against a plan but rather against the philosophical assumptions or rhetoric (that is words and language used) by the affirmative or negative team.

First let's start with framework. Framework is the critical (yeah lame pun intended) part of this position due to the fact that it calls for us to reconfigure how we look at debate. Traditionally the ballot is awarded depending if the judge thought that the resolution is true or false. The

resolution is central to the awarding of the prize (the ballot). However a kritik framework would argue that, while that is important, we must challenge and critique the key assumptions behind the words we use and the ideas we represent through our cases. For the purposes of simplification, there are generally two kinds of kritiks; rhetoric and representations.

The framework for each would be simple. There is something more important going on than the traditional debate “game”, as it were. Words and ideas are being flung around and argued for and these words and ideas impact how we think, how we view the world and ultimately how we act. Kritikal framework argues, for a host of reasons, that the first thing that judge should examine is the unstated assumptions of the case and the rhetoric of the case. Are these assumptions justified? Are they detrimental? Are they morally wrong? If not, then we should proceed to whether or not the resolution is true or false and award the ballot there. If so, then the team that promoted a morally wrong idea or used language that is morally wrong (more on that in a bit), then they should be voted against.

Critics would say that this ignores the traditional format of debate. However it does not totally dismiss it but rather reforms it. This new framework argues that the more important question is not, is the resolution true or false. The resolution need not be central to the debate. Resolutions come and go and yet here we are still debating. The key and unchanging part of debate is the fact that we are shaping minds. Thus we have a responsibility to shape minds in a moral way by using morally justifiable language/rhetoric to promote morally justifiable ideas. The fact of the matter is that despite the competitive nature of debate, it is no different than hearing people talk around us. Those ideas and language also affects how we think and that affects how we act. Would we not challenge those ideas or language if they were morally reprehensible? If a friend of ours began to support abortion or question racial equality, or use language that put someone else down due to their disability or national origin, is it not our moral duty to challenge it? This would go double in a competitive environment. Why would we award a reward to someone who promoted something that had a very real, harmful effect?

That brings me to the next major reason why we should adopt, or at least be tolerant of, kritikal frameworks. The effects of a policy plan are hypothetical. Once the judge votes, the United States Federal government doesn't really do anything. What has really happened is that two teams spoke for ideas using certain rhetoric and one team was rewarded. The impact of advocating for something immoral or using repugnant rhetoric is therefore far more real and has actually impacted something unlike the impacts of a disadvantage. The same goes for Lincoln-Douglas, except more so. There are no policies, just moral propositions. Therefore Lincoln-Douglas is exactly the kind of place to vote on the morals of a debater's ideas or speech because that is exactly what we are debating. Since the impacts are quite real and important (far more important as to whether or not a hypothetical moral proposition that we will hear about 1,000 times is true) since they affect us quite deeply.

So to demonstrate; let's pretend that the affirmative case is a case that says we need to restrict immigration because of the “illegals”. The negative could run a kritik (just like you run a disad) on the term “illegals”. First the negative would argue that language has an impact on us. For instance Caitlin Fausey of Stanford University conducted studies on how depending on the rhetoric used, individuals are more likely to place blame on someone for an accidental action. Furthermore depending on the rhetoric used, individuals were 50% more likely to levy a punishment for said person. Since language is the most accessible thing (since we are writers and speakers), and has impacts that last on us in this room, that is how we should evaluate the

round first and foremost. The judge should vote against the debater who uses rhetoric that demonizes people and leads to violence as a moral stance. If no one uses any such language, then the debate reverts to the traditional framework of “Is the resolution true?”

The next part is the link. The link connects the affirmative debater to the representations/rhetoric you wish to critique. In a rhetoric kritik it is quite simple. Did the debater say the term or not? Usually this is not up for debate, unless it was not very prominently heard. Representations are usually a bit harder. For instance if the affirmative instead represented illegal/undocumented immigrants in a negative light, the links could be contested since that is somewhat subjective (outside of the affirmative saying, “All illegal immigrants are bad people.”)

The next is the impacts. What happens if we use such language or representations? The impacts are similar to the impacts of a disadvantage: bad stuff happens in the real world as a result of the use of this term. Thus it is immoral and should be voted down. For instance, Kevin Johnson, the dean of the UC Davis School of Law, notes that “illegal immigrant/illegals” is a term that promotes a sense of superiority and a term that makes an outsider, thus stripping them of their humanity in their eyes. They are not a person, someone who has needs and wants, but rather are an “illegal”. (Whether or not you accept the argument regarding the immigration debate is up to you, it is just an example. If you prefer, imagine the term “Fetus” when used in context of the pro-life v. pro-choice debate. Fetus is used as a tool to strip the humanity from an unborn child in our eyes, thus legitimizing abortion because it’s not happening to a human, it’s happening to a fetus.) The fancy word for this is called dehumanization and often it is the first step to moralizing violence against another person.

The next bit is a bit difficult. It is called the alternative. Think of the alternative as the counter-plan to the kritik. The affirmative triggered the impacts by saying the word or advocating the ideology that is negative and the alternative solves those impacts in the world. An example of an alternative would be, “Vote for the negative as a means to reject the dehumanizing rhetoric of the affirmative team.” The key part of the alternative is the solvency. Because if the alternative cannot solve, then even if the language or representational choices of the affirmative are bad, the judge’s ballot doesn’t change that for the better and thus would be a less compelling argument. It gives the judge a reason to vote for you, as opposed to against them. The alternative solvency argues that the ballot operates as a way to solve for the problems created by the affirmative. For instance, the ballot is functionally psychological reinforcing, thus reinforce a moral stance/language use instead of an immoral one. Furthermore a vote against that kind rhetoric/stance would be a form of negative reinforcement, stopping it from happening again in round.

Now that we’ve went over critical theory and the structure/utility of a kritik, let’s look at the ways this topic can critically examined. The two that immediately come to mind are imperialism and intelligibility.

## Imperialism

Imperialism is the practice of "an unequal human and territorial relationship, usually in the form of an empire, based on ideas of superiority and practices of dominance, and involving the extension of authority and control of one state or people over another," according to the *Dictionary of Human Geography*. The argument here is that by advocating for a moral obligation

to mitigate international conflicts, it only recreates justifications for imperialism. How so?

For starters moral obligations are often upon those who are superior to others. For instance, a parent's moral obligation to their child is based on the fact that parent has authority over the child and thus is responsible for what happens to the child. The argument here is that the notion that "we" have a moral obligation to do so (let's be real these obligations aren't going to be placed on the Nigerian, Lao or Peruvian governments), implies that somehow we are the "caretaker" of the developing and non-developed world.

The second argument that ties said moral obligation to imperialism is the fact that it is often used as a cover. Let's be real. People love a "good war". It seems that a "good war" is either for dire self defense or where we act with absolutely no concern for ourselves. There is naturally a repulsion to going to war for reasons other than helping others or defending ourselves. But it happens, even though government leaders rarely say it outright. President McKinley, probably genuinely, played on the American people's actual concern for the Cuban people and their struggle for freedom against the Spanish empire in the 1890s. However that didn't stop us from gaining Cuba, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines as functional colonies (two of which we still control and we have a base on the third). Very rarely do humanitarian interventions come without strategic reasons for going to war or strategically convenient results. As soon as American muscle began being flexed, journalist John Flynt criticism this trend when he wrote,

The enemy aggressor is always pursuing a course of larceny, murder, rapine and barbarism. We are always moving forward with high mission, a destiny imposed by the Deity to regenerate our victims, while incidentally capturing their markets; to civilise savage and senile and paranoid peoples, while blundering accidentally into their oil wells

So you may say, "Ok so sometimes my advocacy can be tied to imperialism. Why does it apply in a debate round?" Arguing for this normalizes the idea that the government should do it, even if only in debate rounds. It makes us numb to it. The fancy term for this is what critical theorist Ngugi wa Thiong'o calls "colonization of the mind." We are more receptive to the idea because it is repeated to us constantly, therefore we think nothing of it when we hear the US is militarily involved in some random place because "Well that's what we do," only to realize that we "do it" because we've been conditioned in our everyday to approve of it.

Lastly, there are definitely major impacts to imperialist action. For starters it often creates unforeseen geopolitical conditions. For instance many believe the US should act militarily in Syria because we have a moral obligation to end the suffering of the Syrian people. This may be true. But why is there a Ba'athist government in Syria doing these awful things? Why was there one in Iraq? Well Ba'athism was an Arab movement that backlashed against Western involvement in the Arab world. Syria was once divided between the British and French Mandates in the Middle East as they carved up the old, dead, Ottoman Empire. Ba'athism in Iraq began as a backlash to the Hashemite king that the British set up here (conveniently not asking the Arab or Kurdish people of the new country of Iraq what they thought of it). To paraphrase Dr. Thomas Sowell, perhaps when people say, "We ought to do something," the real response should be, "Something ought to be undone." Our "moral obligation" to save the people of Belgium lead to a geopolitical disaster in central Europe, creating conditions ripe for the rise of an even worse dictator, thus creating an even more dire humanitarian situation.

Secondly, imperialist policies almost always negatively affect the people who live there. As the



British and Russians squabbled over what is now Afghanistan, India and Persia in the “Great Game” and as European powers divided Africa up for themselves, ordinary people had their natural rights violated. Traditionally people will usually object to foreign control of their region resulting in devastating violence destroying communities. The horrors of war in Europe during the 20th century were policies perfected in places such as Africa. The British placed rebel Boers in concentration camps in South Africa, the Germans engaged in systematic genocide in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, and the Belgians used terror and mutilation as a means of slave labor. Sound familiar?

## Intelligibility

This argument is a critical one that can be used on the affirmative against the accusation of imperialism. The argument is that violence goes on against normal people in the developing/ non-developed world because they are ignored and not visible to us, thus violence is normalized because they are seen as distant. This ethical distance is created due to the fact we ignore them. For instance Northern whites often were apathetic to the plight of southern black Americans due to the fact that they weren't visible in the news. However Northern audiences became horrified once it was plastered on their screens and unavoidable. The fact we don't see others as the same as ourselves, means that while violence is intolerable when its against ourselves but its normal when it occurs in a distant “foreign” land. If you don't believe me that we unconsciously do this, think about the reaction to the Boston bombing in America (3 people killed) and the American reaction to a bomb in Iraq the same day that killed 50.

Part of what causes this is the fact our government ignores it. For instance our government does have a policy towards Syria or towards Russia. Thus, we know more about them. For instance my senior year in college debate, we could fairly fluently discuss either of those regions (and plenty of others) fairly easily. However at NPDA there was a resolution regarding the independence of South Yemen. No one in our prep room knew anything about it and nearly everyone at the tournament was mystified by what was going in South Yemen.

The argument is that in order to make this violence real and make us see these folks as fellow human beings to be concerned about, our government must be involved in some way. US action is critical. Its not as if US recognition is what makes these people worthy of recognition, but that US recognition is what makes us, and others pay attention to the plight of other people. Once we recognize some countries are necessary of receiving some sort of people, the way we characterize them changes. For instance when we recognized the People's Republic of China in 1979, the mood towards the PRC changed from demonization to one of partnership. US action is key especially to getting other people to pay attention to other's plight. When the US recognized the Republic of Kosovo, that same day seven other nations on three different continents also recognized Kosovo, leading to 98 other nations doing so. Once the United States began to grow out of our isolationist shell and began to get involved in Latin America, several nations began to successfully fight for independence from Spain and Portugal.

So if US involvement/recognition is key, then how can it beat back charges of imperialism? Well for starters, you can argue it is a prerequisite to solving for any problems that arise with allegedly imperialistic policies. Why? Because we can't be motivated to solve people's problems if we don't see them as equal and close to ourselves.

Furthermore this US involvement usually ends up with better solutions. The refusal to see these problems of violence worth responding to only creates places where violence can occur and no one really cares. For instance we militarily intervened to achieve the independence of Kosovo. Not only did we stop an ethnic cleansing in the making, but compare the Republic of Kosovo to Chechnya. Both were historically oppressed European Muslim people who were dominated by a Slavic Orthodox state who wanted to be independent. The difference is the US got involved in Kosovo and not in Chechnya. Today Kosovo is independent from Kosovo and largely peaceful. Chechnya remains under Russian occupation and is governed with the most arbitrary violence in the region.

Suppose you are somewhat sympathetic to the idea of kritiks. However as with any kind of critique of the established ways of doing things, there will be those who criticize. Here are the most common criticisms of the kritik in debate and the responses to them.

*"I don't get it."*

First of all this isn't an argument. Your opponent not understanding it isn't a reason why you should lose. That's backwards. They didn't do the intellectual work and somehow that means you should get punished. Secondly that kind of ignorance is exactly why kritiks should be run. Ignorance is what lets bad rhetoric and ideas flourish. However if your competitor not understand it, then odds are your judge(s) don't either. Practice explaining in layman's terms what a kritik is. See if you can get a parent or non-debater to understand it. Practice saying it concisely.

*"It decreases education."*

This is claimed because the kritik can trade off with the discussion of whether or not the resolution is true. However this does not mean it decreases education. First of all the framework does not preclude the topic, it just precedes it. Secondly, we gain a better understanding of the topic and it's truthfulness or falsity by examining the words and ideas we use to affirm or negate it. Thirdly, if anything there is an increase in education. How? Because there is more potential clash and clash is what leads to more in depth education.

*"It is unfair to the affirmative."*

Simply untrue. If anything it creates more opportunities for the affirmative. They can argue against the framework, they can say that your arguments contradict your framework, they can "turn" the links, they can impact turn the impacts, they can argue your alternative has no solvency or it is bad. There are plenty of new opportunities for the affirmative. Also the negative now has split their time between the kritik and the topic debate. The affirmative, if he or she wins the kritik, can win the debate quite easily and make for a much easier 2AR.

In conclusion I think there is a strong case for implementing critical arguments into this year's resolution. It is high time to begin critiquing the traditional forms of debate in the NCFCA. Furthermore in a Lincoln-Douglas format, a kritik is entirely warranted. Here are some starting points in which you can analyze people's rhetoric and representations in the resolution and some responses to some common objections.

# Topic Breakdown



# U.S. Foreign Intervention: Theories and Case Studies

Trevor Heise

*“The history of the United States shows that, in spite of the varying trend of the foreign policy of succeeding administrations, this Government has interposed or intervened in the affairs of other states with remarkable regularity, and it may be anticipated that the same general procedure will be followed in the future. It is well that the United States may be prepared for any emergency which may occur...” — U.S. Marine Corps, “Small Wars Manual” (1940).*

The United States, in our relatively short history as a country, has amassed a long and elaborate history of foreign intervention. From 1800 to 1934, United States Marines staged no fewer than 180 foreign landings—a figure that reflects only part of the true expansiveness of US foreign intervention. Though the US’s large wars (the Revolution, War of 1812, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World Wars, Korean War, and Gulf War) attract more major press and boast many of America’s immortalized war heroes and stories, it’s the small wars that have had a profound effect on the day-to-day fate of US interests abroad and the course of world affairs.

Nixon once boasted that America is *“the only great power without a history of imperialistic claims on its neighbors.”* His words should have surprised citizens of countries like Canada, Cuba, Mexico, France, Spain and even Russia—all countries that have found their interests abroad seriously threatened by America’s expansionist ambitions. Even John L. O’Sullivan, the journalist who coined the phrase *manifest destiny* to describe his, and many others’, wish for US expulsion of Indians, French, Spanish, Russians, British and creolized peoples from their previously legally established territorial claims in the New World, once remarked that *“No instance of aggrandizement or lust for territory has stained our annals.* This is what historian George C. Herring calls, *“one of our most cherished and durable myths”*—the myth of an isolationist America. Henry Kissinger says that we’re *“torn between nostalgia for a pristine past and yearning for a perfect future.”* This myth persists perhaps because of US reluctance to acknowledge embarrassing imperialist overreach in our foreign policy tradition. Or maybe it hangs on simply due to the geographical isolation Charles Krauthammer cited in his seminal millennial paper on Democratic Realism. *“We have this continent practically to ourselves and we share it with just two neighbors, both friendly, one so friendly that its people seem intent upon moving in with us.”*

On the other hand, the US has accomplished tremendous good in places like Bosnia and Kosovo where we’ve stopped genocides or internecine conflicts—at some cost to us and enormous benefit to freedom and human rights. We’ve (along with other western governments) done much to eradicate AIDs and malaria in Africa, squelch the cult of thuggee murder in India, and put out drug wars in Colombia. Regardless of whether America’s minor international interventions get insufficient press because they’re painful to acknowledge or simply thought to be too boring to discuss, they’re deeply significant and will, I think, take on more importance as the US is increasingly forced to confront asymmetrical actors, terrorists, rogue states and regimes that pose less-than-world-domination-but-still-significant threats. The point of all this is to bring into your field of view a huge chunk of history that rarely gets discussed but that nevertheless undergirds a lot of what happens in the world. It’s a thrilling and timely subject for debate.

## 1. The Resolution: Language and Interpretation

The most striking fact about the resolution (Resolved: The United States has a moral obligation to mitigate international conflicts) is its specificity. In contrast to most value resolutions, which pose universal dilemmas that transcend, to at least some degree, time and place, this resolution is entirely specific. The verb (“has”; the 3rd person infinitive of “to have”) specifies that the resolution is dealing with a moral obligation that the United States has in the here and now — meaning that the resolution asserts only that the moral obligation in question exists for us, and at the present moment. Those are two pretty significant qualifiers. Thus an actor is specified: the United States. The resolution has nothing to do with how France, England, Iran, the African Union, et al should act towards international relations or conflicts—the only country in question is America. The resolution deals only with moral obligations in the present moment, not with obligations that might have existed America’s past or might exist in our far future. This adds nuance insofar as the resolution specifies a moral obligation, not for international conflicts in general, but only with respect to those we currently face. So saying Hitler’s extermination of minorities called for US intervention proves that we had a moral obligation, however it doesn’t prove that that’s a moral obligation we still have. History under this resolution is only instructive; it’s not probative. To demonstrate the resolution true an affirmative must show that the US has an obligation to intervene to mitigate conflicts that are generated by particular actors in the present day.

The resolution asks whether there exists, for the United States, a moral obligation mitigate international conflicts. But the term “moral obligation” is maddeningly broad. Aristotle said that agents have moral responsibilities if they possess the freedom to make a choice and further argued that “moral responsibility” means to act in a praiseworthy or good manner. That’s not much more clear than what we started with, though. You’re still left with the problem of what’s praiseworthy or good. Ultimately, whether the US has an obligation to intervene depends on what you think states’ responsibilities are in the 21st century and how you construe ethics/morality to apply to collective actors like governments operating in the international sphere. These will be discussed in some detail under the “Ethics” header below.

A difficult aspect of moral obligations is figuring out when they might stop existing. Embedded in the phrase “moral obligation” is quite a bit of ambiguity that I think should be teased out. For example: is it possible to have a moral obligation to do something, but to also have a competing moral obligation that outweighs the first? If so, the affirmative, under this interpretation, could usurp ground by arguing that there’s always a moral obligation to help out in international conflicts, but that in many (or even in most) circumstances, there are even more compelling reasons to stay out. The aff could alternately argue that, almost by definition, governments (including the US) have an obligation to mitigate international conflicts, but that sometimes the way we do that is by abstaining from intervention. Both these interpretations make the debate way easier for the aff and so it’s definitely in the interests of both debaters to figure out a good way to frame the resolution and address this ambiguity before the round gets off to provide an interp that’s fair for everyone.

Prominent journalist and Yale-PhD-historian Max Boot writes, in the introduction to, and explanation of the scope of, his fantastic “The Savage Wars of Peace,” that “There are at least four distinct types of small wars.... punitive (to punish attacks on American citizens or property), protective (to safeguard American citizens or property), pacification (to occupy foreign territory), and profiteering (to grab trade or territorial concessions).” He’s of course defining “small wars”

and not “mitigation of international conflicts,” so there’s a difference there. However, if the resolution is understood to be about international conflicts of a military nature (see para. below for argument to this effect), it’s not at all unreasonable to assume that the resolution is discussing a US response in-kind, and therefore the “small wars” definition of “mitigating international conflicts” seems particularly apropos. But strictly speaking, the resolution asks only if there’s a moral obligation to “mitigate” international conflicts. The implication is that, as long as the US is doing something to ameliorate or alleviate the problem, that’s a fulfillment of the moral obligation—full military intervention isn’t necessarily required. I could see this going either way, with contextual arguments pulling to the one side balanced by strictly textual arguments for the other.

The resolution discusses moral obligations that arise when dealing with “international conflicts,” which obviously raises the question: what’s an international conflict? The New Oxford American Dictionary defines “conflict” as either a protracted, serious disagreement or an armed skirmish. The backdrop context of international relations seems to suggest the latter definition, but doesn’t foreclose the question. Sovereign states can have serious, and even dangerous, disagreements over international resource use, immigration, religion/ideology, and other areas of conflict. However, depending on which theory of moral obligation or international conduct you adopt, the distinction between an armed or unarmed conflict might be a trivial one. The distinction becomes trivial, for example, if you take some strict isolationist tack that brooks neither gentle nudge-intervention nor hot military intervention via troops with guns. The most persuasive argument, to me, in favor of the conflict-means-military interpretation of the resolution revolves around fairness: if the resolution were to be understood to deal with non-military situations, the negative would lose essentially all ground. If there’s basically no cost to the US or risk of loss of life, then of course we have a moral obligation to prefer things that mitigate rather than escalate international conflict! So it seems fairness and context mean we have to be talking about armed intervention in military conflicts. Good negs shouldn’t let the aff weasel out of this burden and should marshal arguments of fairness and ground for their support.

The grammar of the resolution is unfortunately vague in the sense that the resolution postulates a “moral obligation to mitigate international conflicts” but doesn’t say what type of international conflicts it means. Even if we restrict ourselves to military conflicts, there’s still a lot of diversity. There are ethnic cleansings, coup d'etats, religious pogroms, resource wars, wars that involve WMDs or child soldiers, wars that threaten delicate balances of power and wars that are relatively isolated, etc. It’s quite possible that the US has an obligation to intervene in some of these wars but not in all. The resolution seems to be asking for a categorical though. I’m not actually sure of the best way to handle this, so it’s probably a good idea to invest some substantial brainpower into grappling with this dilemma.

## 2. Theories of US Foreign Policy

United States foreign policy has never been animated by any single theory of international relations. Decisions about foreign policy are managed by a wildly bureaucratic apparatus, laid out in full luxurious profusion across three discrete, but confusingly interrelated, branches of government. America’s relations with foreign nations have, at any given point in our national history, been the products of haggling, lobbying, and the conflicting interests of different branches of government and actors in the private sector. These realities make the practice and theory of foreign policy difficult to analyze in a comprehensive way, so simplifications are in

order. I've borrowed some broad-brush labels for categorizing theories of foreign intervention from the historian and writer, Walter Russel Mead to help package big theories of international relations into more readily accessible arguments for and against intervention in conflicts abroad.

## A. Hamiltonianism

Within 24 hours of receiving a half-million dollar donation from Chiquita (the massive North Carolinian multinational American banana company that sells all those bananas at Wal-Mart with the blue and gold-rimmed stickers) the Clinton administration launched into the "banana wars" of the 90s by filing claims at the WTO against the European Union (which, at the time, was granting favorable trade conditions to banana exporters from its former South American colonies). The banana wars are just one of the many instances of America's using of foreign policy clout to advance US commercial interests abroad.

Hamiltonianism, the policy of promoting first and foremost the health of American enterprise and access to international capital and markets abroad, has a long and storied history that stretches back long before its recent invocations in interventions in Iraq over oil and South American banana wars. Jefferson and Hamilton fought fiercely over the formation of a national bank, its effect on international capital flows and the payment of Revolutionary War debts to British creditors. From 1869 to 1893, international trade comprised a hearty 13.4% of America's gross national profit (for comparison, from 1948-1957, international trade was only 7.3% of GNP) — pointing to the great interrelatedness and interdependence of foreign economies with ours. The early US financial panics of 1837 (caused by trading problems in London), 1857 (caused directly by paranoia over the Crimean war), and 1893 (precipitated by situations between Argentine and British banks) were all international in their causes and effects.

In an odd twist of history, the world of the 21st century may, in a few ways, be more like the 19th than the 20th. The founding era was a time of speculation. As Bernard Bailyn in his magisterial *The Peopling of British North America* (the definitive study of migration to, and the colonization of, the United States), points out that much of the initial migration to the new world was fueled by venture capital investors—the Virginia Company that financed the initial Jamestown settlement was a venture capital firm, for example, as were the barons who invested in new world settlements and recruited colonists to boost land values. And the United States was, through much of the 19th century, in the position that 3rd world countries find themselves in now before the IMF: pleading with and prodding rich nations to grant favorable interest rates on loans and focusing on exchange rates to keep currencies from becoming debased.

The 20th century was unlike this. A time of rebuilding (for Europe) and domestic industrial growth (for the US, particularly between 1948 and 1975), international trade played less of an absolutely crucial role in geopolitics than it had in the era before. Globalization has ultimately turned the table full circle. International economies are now exceedingly interdependent once more. One need look no further than the collapse of the global economy following European and American debt- and bubble-fueled slumps post-2008 to find proof of this fact: we're all one now, economically speaking.

Our newfound (or newly re-found) economic interdependence has profound implications for the necessity of international intervention and the applicability of LD applications. For one, the theory I've set forth argues strongly that applications from the 1800s will be more applicable



than those from the 1900s (because of the whole “we used to be really economically interrelated, then weren’t, and now are again” thing).

It’s naïve to argue that there’s no role for economic growth to play in a discussion of the ethics of international intervention. Much of the United States’ economic growth during the 18th century was due to the Monroe doctrine—what Walter Lippman characterized as a tacit agreement between the United States and Britain to maintain a balance of power favorable to trade. Britain’s military provided protection, and the United States provided goods and a credible guarantee of not invading Canada. This tension kept things in stasis and provided a stable platform for a kind of exponential economic growth the world had never before known. Parallels to the present abound. The United States dispatched ships to the Persian Gulf to keep oil-shipping routes free during the Iran-Iraq War in the 90s. Much of the impetus behind the Iraq war was oil, and Hussein’s burning of the oil fields was both an environmental disaster and a really bad move with respect to the US investor goodwill side of things. Lots of research suggests that oil price spikes precipitate, or at least exacerbate, recessions, and it’s certainly in America’s national interests to keep those scenarios from playing out.

Unpleasant as it might be to acknowledge, much of the basis of the new, finance-driven economy is psychological; certainty is hugely important. And when access to resources or trade or international capital is threatened, whether it’s Iran’s nuclear ambitions accelerating to threats of closing the Strait of Hormuz, or chest-pounding efforts to drum up nationalistic *raj militaire* in China and Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku island dispute, there’s a very valid argument for US intervention to nudge the conflict from hot, all out war towards a more amicable resolution that doesn’t tank the global economy.

When big global powers bump shoulders, it’s often the third world that feels the shudder. For example, in the Diaoyu/Senkaku island dispute (China and Japan are fighting over historic claims to a few tiny, totally and abjectly meaningless islands in the East China Sea), trade between the two countries dropped by double digits. It’s the poor of both countries that lose jobs and suffer the blow of the loss in GDP. These lives (economic growth translates into “lives” at the point at which the poor are being forced to forego food) must be weighed into the decision to intervene or not. Of course, no one wants to start a series of proxy wars among any group of superpowers as was the case during the Cold War, but modest intervention to thwart economic harm seems eminently reasonable.

It’s important to note that developed nations spend lots of money and resources, and deploy considerable technology, in poorer nations. The rich world’s resources, enlarged and appropriately tended to, can be a huge boon to developing nations in the form of international assistance and relief work. Thus, keeping the peace by promoting economic growth can yield both immediate benefits and have a positive trickle-down effect abroad.

Of course, the costs of mercantile colonialism, shoehorned in by military intervention, are also huge, so there are certainly arguments on both sides. There’s a great opportunity for the negative to point out the damage done by economic-colonialism-motivated international conflict mitigation. Commodore Perry’s famous opening of Japan for trade and the commensurate fall of the Tokugawa shogunate, for example, were wrought by orders from then-president Millard Fillmore to shell Kanagawa if he were denied entry.

## B. Jacksonianism

Tyger Tyger, burning bright  
What the hammer? what the chain?  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? What dread grasp  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

William Blake's metaphorical beast in *The Tyger* is oft compared to the United States' rising power throughout the 19th century—the comparison with a powerful, prowling, somewhat unsteady beast seems to resonate. Through modernizing development and industrialization, the US has maintained the spirit Jefferson described in a letter to a French correspondent: “[Americans/southerners] are fiery, voluptuous, indolent, unsteady, independent, zealous of their own liberties but trampling on those of others, generous, candid and without attachment or pretensions to any religion but that of their own heart.”

These ideas of a choleric American character are inseparable from discussions of foreign intervention. Politics isn't monolithic. Tip O'Neil famously said that all politics is local, but for the purposes of this discussion, it's important to note that we can extend his statement: all politics is individual. People make political decisions from their narrow, piecemeal outlook on world politics, on the basis of anecdotal experience, prejudice and profoundly inadequate knowledge about complex foreign cultures—not necessarily with any overarching humanitarian vision in mind. This brings us to Jacksonianism, the idea that international interventions are driven primarily by a popular and populist culture of independence, pride, courage, and military honor.

The obvious, go-to example of Jacksonian military enthusiasm and belligerence resulting in a catastrophic quagmire is Vietnam (it's no accident that the word quagmire gained massive cultural currency with its use to describe the situation in Vietnam). The United States dropped no less than three times the explosives in Vietnam than we did in the Second World War. Eight Vietnamese civilians died for every one US troop. The failure of the United States in fending off the Tet Offensive (a campaign by the communist Viet Cong of surprise attacks and ambushes following a holiday cease fire) resulted in the United States shifting more of the fighting role to the South Vietnamese Army in Johnson's strategy of “Vietnamization.” This, in turn, resulted in US-sympathetic Vietnamese suffering atrocities after we left and were no longer able to defend our allies.

In 1973, the government commissioned the RAND Corporation to prepare a massive, comprehensive internal report on US involvement in Indo-China. The report concluded that the war had been an abject failure, a humanitarian travesty, and a political disaster that was ongoing only because politicians wanted to save face and felt that it wouldn't be expedient to backtrack and abort the war. An employee at RAND leaked the report, which was promptly published by the *New York Times* in an act that represented the public opinion coup de grâce for the War.

But US pride-driven military failures aren't unique to this century and haven't always been protested by drum-circle hippies. Andrew Jackson himself, before becoming president, staged a case study of Jacksonianism in the battle of New Orleans. The War of 1812 had already been signed away in the Treaty of Ghent when Jackson led his repel of the British assault on New Orleans, but that didn't change the fact that he'd won the most land decisive battle of US history,

preserved US territorial claims to the new Louisiana purchase, and propelled himself into good political standing in spite of the widespread unpopularity of the War of 1812 itself. Jackson's infamous battling against Indian tribes in Florida and elsewhere was an (successful) attempt to bully the now-state from Spain, and his decimation of the Creek Indians with fabled Davy Crockett led Chief Weatherford to cry, "My people are no more!" These and many others represent prominent instances of a brusque culture of expansion fueled by peoples' desires for American preeminence and honor. Henry Clay's hailing of the "glorious spectacle of eighteen millions of peoples, struggling to burst their chains and to be free" turned out to be the clever and deft repackaging of a base, id instinct to overtake as something more noble — even glorious.

The modern analogue to Jacksonian-era boisterousness in foreign intervention is of course the Iraq war. Coming off the 1989 Soviet collapse and interpreting it as proof of the eternal efficacy of regime change, the political intelligentsia fell for an intervention in Iraq. A great Brown University Costs of War project sums up the situation: "More than 190,000 people have been killed in the 10 years since the war in Iraq began. The war will cost the U.S. \$2.2 trillion, including substantial costs for veterans care through 2053, far exceeding the initial government estimate of \$50 to \$60 billion... More than 70 percent of those who died of direct war violence in Iraq have been civilians — an estimated 134,000. This number does not account for indirect deaths due to increased vulnerability to disease or injury as a result of war-degraded conditions. That number is estimated to be several times higher. Iraq's health care infrastructure remains devastated from sanctions and war. More than half of Iraq's medical doctors left the country during the 2000s, and tens of thousands of Iraqi patients are forced to seek health care outside the country."

The sheer ridiculousness of anything costing about forty times the initial estimates is daunting; the body count is shocking.

A final example of nationalist catastrophe can be found in the proxy wars of the Cold War. In Argentina, for example, the United States supported fascist Augusto Pinochet in his 1973 Coup d'état (the US was not alone in this choice of unsavory bedfellows: there are chilling pictures of an unsettlingly chummy Margaret Thatcher chatting up this war criminal). This was part of the larger Soviet-era strategy of containment, by which the United States supported anti-communist movements and governments around the world in opposition to Russia's seeding of communist governments and arming of revolutionary forces. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was the chief exponent, and largely the architect, of this approach, and his writings contain elaborate defense of it.

But history tells a harsher story than Kissinger would like to convey: in the Chilean coupe, thousands were brutally murdered by the conservative Pinochet government and its military thugs, and thousands were "disappeared" and tortured. In Argentina, where the Soviet-era dirty war involved state-sponsored terrorism against left wing revolutionaries and even more deaths, the kidnapping of children was commonplace and resulted in awful destructions of families and even a law that banned searching for one's biological parents—adding an aura of chilling silence to the tragedy. These atrocities were known about and approved of by the United States, all in the name of engineering the direction of global politics towards humanitarian benefit.

This brings us back to the signal point about decisionmaking: that politics isn't monolithic and that in the day-to-day of making decisions, it's often not the idealistic and thoroughly thought

through theories of international intervention that motivate action abroad, rather it's the prejudices, misinformation-driven errant thoughts, and predisposition of voters that determine what gets done when it comes to intervening to mitigate international conflicts. This has great bearing on the question of whether we have a moral obligation to intervene. If intervention is based on the mercurial, essentially arbitrary and highly fallible whims of voters, intervention would of course seem to be a bad idea.

In addition to the decisionmaking argument, there's a further point about knowledge to be made. Most Americans aren't that conversant with the field of global geography—at least, not enough to have a solid idea of where international conflicts are even happening. Why would we let people make decisions about whether to intervene to solve a humanitarian crisis in Djibouti if those people don't even know what Djibouti is? It'd be one thing if the people drafting high-level policy were calling on the shots on whether to intervene, but even though a republic affords some much-needed distance between citizens and policymakers, the decision to intervene is still ultimately based on what laypeople think, and those thoughts themselves are often products of how the information gets packaged and delivered to them through the media, and how much real decisionmaker-worthy real hard intelligence actually gets into their hands, anyway?

### C. Wilsonianism

Consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our god in this work we have undertaken and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world, we shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of god and all professors for Gods sake; we shall shame the faces of many of gods worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into Curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whether we are going... — John Winthrop.

History is constantly throwing up examples of nations that begin to self-destruct when they begin to commune with ideas of their unique destiny. But superpowers can't often help it, and the US is no exception. Otto Von Bismarck once mused, "God has a special providence for fools, sinners, and the United States of America." From the beginning, America has premised itself, to one extent or another, on an idea of special purpose—that we're in the world on a crusade of sorts, to make it better in a way that we're uniquely able to. That's the core idea of Wilsonianism: the promotion of American values and democracy abroad to share with the world our great gift.

The idea of a hegemonic power extending cultural influence abroad isn't new. In fact, at some level, that's what it means to be a hegemonic power. Christian Rome under Constantine spread religion to the pagan, established the liturgical councils, founded the orthodox churches and produced a dominant religious belief for the seats of world power for the next couple millennia. The art of the time, especially that of late Christian Rome, reflects the cultural and aesthetic arrogance of unchallenged religion ensconced in the power structure of a hegemonic state. The spread of Islam through the Middle East, using the institution of the nation-state as a vector, also aptly illustrates the phenomenon of a superpower leveraging its cultural clout to influence the world to its ideals. And to take the literature of another day and age, Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus portrays the Athenians gleefully holding trial—exporting their societal invention to best effect, even in drama.

The story of cultural hegemony in the United States (of the kind I've termed Wilsonianism) begins with the great missionary revival around the turn of the century. By 1806, northeastern (many were from Massachusetts) seminary students were flooding out into a world that they saw to be ripe for change. Key objectives included the alleviation of the oppression of women, then ending of poverty, the spread of literacy, the abolition of superstition, paganism and feudalism abroad, etc.

These movements were the foundation of later social movements that were to have profound international implications. By 1890, 60% of missionaries were women and by 1900 there were nearly three million women in denominational societies. In 1912, "STOP THE EXPLOITATIVE CHINA RAILWAY LOAN!" broadsides started appearing around—products of the missionaries' attempts to influence conditions in the Sun Yat-sen to Yuan Shih-kai Chinese regime change towards western ideals of education, Christianity, empowerment of women, etc.

Wilsonianism acquired its second wind in the 20th century when international organizations and treaties supplanted the salacious proselytizing of lawless savages as the primary means of spreading Western ideals. The watershed event in international relations of the last few centuries is the fall of the British Empire, the shift from a colonial system of British hegemony (it's not for nothing that she was the "queen of the sea") to what Krauthammer terms the "unipolar moment" where the United States isn't seriously challenged by any international competitors. This shift wasn't without birthing pains, though, and in many ways the Second World War was the event that officially put the stake in the heart of British exceptionalism and provided an opening for the US to fill the gap.

President Woodrow Wilson was a major proponent of the idea of international responsibility for international problems, and communicated his support for the League of Nations (an international organization formed as a predecessor to the United Nations) through his 14 points for peace: "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike." The other major way in which WW2 prefaced full-fledged Wilsonianism was the Marshall Plan.

The Marshall Plan was a massive international aid program through which the United States rebuilt postwar Europe. The plan successfully rejuvenated agricultural and industrial production, and provided a foundation for the building of a free market, democratic economy. There were difficulties, however. The Council on Foreign Relations describes the ideological disagreements between the United States and Britain (one of the main recipients of Marshall Plan funding):

"At the time of George Marshall's famed Harvard speech on June 5, 1947, American and British visions for Europe's economic organisation could hardly have been more divergent. Prime Minister Clement Atlee's government was busy nationalising coal mines, railways, and electricity supply. Central planning was to be the bedrock of British economic security. Marshall's economic deputy, Will Clayton, returned from a visit to Europe in May with a radically different blueprint. Britain was to be part of an economically integrated Europe, which was itself to be unashamedly capitalist and free-trading. In France in particular, Clayton was deeply disturbed by the failures of central planning. The government was combating an inflation crisis with price controls, to which farmers reacted by holding back produce and starving the cities. Looting and hoarding were the rule; the economic bonds of civilised society were in tatters."

This is a powerful illustration of the potential for US intervention to radically restructure the political and economic foundations of multiple societies, even across a broad ideological gulf, to mitigate the possibility of conflict and promote future peace. Admittedly, though, conditions were unique in that Machiavelli's advice to totally decimate the enemy was followed, and the US in some ways had a clean slate to start from—a feature not always the case in our other ventures abroad.

Current Wilsonian and humanitarian interventions take a more surgical approach, but can still have great effectiveness. Eminent thinker and writer Anne-Marie Slaughter summarizes some of the more effective interventions of the recent past in specific language and with an erudition that should definitely be part of any debater's rhetorical arsenal this year:

“On the other hand, President Bill Clinton's decisive action with regard to Kosovo in 1999 saved a country, just as NATO's intervention in Bosnia four years earlier brought the parties to the table and stopped the killing. Similarly, Britain's willingness to place troops off the shore of Sierra Leone in 1999 helped to end a horrific conflict within weeks, and France's intervention in Côte D'Ivoire last spring, under a UN mandate, stopped a post-election civil war that was rapidly spinning out of control.

Australia's willingness to send troops into Timor-Leste in 1999, again under a UN mandate, may have not only saved that country, but helped transform Indonesia as well. Indeed, one sign of Indonesia's rising influence is that its army—which had terrorized and massacred East Timorese—could be called upon today in the service of human rights in its region. Likewise, Brazil's decision to send troops into Haiti in 2004 as part of a UN Stabilization Force burnished the country's image as a responsible regional power.”

The future also provides opportunities aplenty for the United States to intervene and mitigate international conflicts for humanitarian reasons. The widespread and horrific oppression of women in Muslim countries, escalating disputes over increasingly pressured international resources like water and food, and the rise of state terrorism and asymmetrical actors all pose problems the US could hypothetically solve or at least potential pain we could maybe alleviate.

### 3. Ethics

The question of whether to intervene or not is, to a large degree, of course based on how effective such intervention would be. If there were nearly no chance of bettering a situation, the costs would obviously overshadow the amount of good done, and intervention would be undesirable. But the moral calculation at hand isn't as simple as a crude, blind weighing of dollars and lives, and in any case, we need some kind of metric to relate dollars to lives.

#### A. Paternalism & Determination: Theories of Government

John Locke set forth the definitive, Enlightenment-era theory of government in his *Second Treatise of Government* in his argument that humans leave a state of nature to form governments. The idea says that, in the anarchic state of nature with no government or state, individuals have a right to defend themselves. But, as Hobbes noted, this state of affairs is still

“nasty, brutish, solitary and short” (or something like that). So people collectivize their individual rights to lawful defense in the formation of civil governments. Thus governments’ legitimate purpose is to defend people against threats to their lives, liberties, and property. There’s no further purpose of government and actions beyond this sphere ought to be construed as illegitimate. Under this understanding, interventions to mitigate international conflicts seem unjustified. After all, it’s not that government’s citizens that are being threatened.

But there are problems with Lockean natural rights theory. For instance, say you had life in that you weren’t dead, but you didn’t have food or water or anything with which to sustain your life. Rousseau’s exhortation that “There’s security in a jail cell but is that enough to make prisons desirable?” feels appropriate. It seems like this state of things wouldn’t really meet anyone’s definition of a good life, even if governments were fulfilling that basic role of keeping us defended against incursions against our lives, liberties and properties. So maybe the purpose of government is more broad and complicated than simple defense of negative rights—maybe governments ought also to more consciously promote wellbeing. This idea lends itself more easily to arguments for international intervention.

Then there’s the idea of self-determination. If countries have some right to self-determination and democratic self-direction, then international interventions would seem unwarranted. After all, what prima facie right does the United States have to make decisions for other countries that contradict with those other countries’ citizens’ decisions. This logic is weakened, though, in the case of tyrannies that aren’t themselves representative of, or responsive to, their people’s wishes. Few would say that the US shouldn’t topple a terrible tyrant because that tyrant is his people’s chosen representative—of course he’s not! All these are facts to consider when weighing the strength of a case for or against intervention.

As I pointed out earlier, one of the key problems in sorting out the obligations of the nation state is deciding when moral obligations might stop existing. If governments are merely instruments for defense of rights, what’s the distinction between defending the rights of one’s own nation’s citizens and defending those of another nation? It seems that the difference is accidental, not meaningful. But if it’s true that the obligations of the government of the United States are the same to US citizens as they are to foreign peoples, then when do you stop intervening? We can’t police the whole world. Such considerations complicate our picture of our obligations and serve to illustrate the complexity of the topic. Good debaters will probably weigh all of these considerations and not adopt any single metric as the only way of weighing the need to intervene.

## B. Certainty & Efficacy

The Iraq war was largely premised on the assumptions that Saddam Hussein was in possession of weapons of mass destruction, and that he would be willing to use them. Those claims turned out not to be true. But they raise interesting questions about the level of proof and/or certainty we ought to require before countenancing an international intervention to mitigate an international conflict. I’d like to mention a few specific areas of uncertainty that should be addressed in rounds:

Replacement regime. Many of the contemporary disputes over US foreign policy are animated by the recent fall of Egyptian, Libyan, Tunisian, and (impending) Syrian regimes in the Arab

Spring. It's been a bad few years for dictators. In Egypt, the US had propped up Hosni Mubarak for decades because, as the saying goes, the devil you know is better than the one you don't. Once we dropped support for him, though, the question immediately arose: who should replace Mubarak? and has been a thorn in the side of the administration and a source of significant tumult for Egypt since. The urgency is more acute in Syria, where a majority of the debate over whether to support the rebels centers around whether they could be appropriately identified, and which rebel group ought to take power once Assad's been ousted.

Standards of proof are important, as well. What level of assurance are we to require that our efforts at intervention won't backfire and/or will actually work? Joseph Nye, one of the most significant scholars of international relations of our century points out the following:

"Even in the era of alleged American hegemony, studies show that only one-fifth of America's efforts to compel change in other countries through military threats were successful, while economic sanctions worked in only half of all cases. Yet many believe that America's current preponderance in power resources is hegemonic, and that it will decline, like that of Britain before it. Some Americans react emotionally to that prospect, though it would be ahistorical to believe that the US will have a preponderant share of power resources forever."

The US's international reputation is significant as well. If negative perceptions of intervention backfire, the results can be calamitous. The classic example of this is the arming of the Mujahideen. The United States armed the Afghan Mujahideen (which is where Osama Bin Laden got his start) to provide resistance to the Russian occupation of Afghanistan as part of the previously discussed strategy of containment. It wasn't until the towers fell that September that we'd seriously considered the possibility of backlash. We literally created a monster. Other ways bad international reputation can hurt US policymaking involve allies being less willing to come to our aid, as was the case in Afghanistan and Iraq.

#### 4. General Comments

Lincoln Douglas, and academic debate in general, is basically about fostering intelligent and informative discussions about the issues we face. This central assumption has meaning for how we debate.

In framing resolutions, the affirmative should choose definitions, not with an eye to what's the most winnable interpretation, but rather what provides the most interesting and productive and relevant and fair debate. The act of defining a resolution should be a conscious act that's thought through from an informed perspective — always go for the more fair definition over the quick win.

Remember that the resolution deals in the present tense with a specific ethical actor. This means that it's crucial to make yourself thoroughly familiar with the ins and outs of the current foreign interventions the US is contemplating—these are ultimately what the debate is about. Learn to use history frequently, but in an even balance with broad, statistical support, anecdotal reference, and current analysis.

There's a disturbing trend in LD to use only historical examples, and only conventional ones at that. This needs to be broken through. Ethical questions are very informed by fact, particularly in



specific and situational resolutions like this one. Don't be afraid to harness to your side specific "proofs" of your point beyond mere historical analogy. Also, when you do use historical examples, be careful that you're using ones that are specific and provide a good analogy to, or metaphor for, the situation you're discussing rather than loosely using historical examples that are common and ready-access.

It's important to bear in mind throughout the round that the issues discussed are actually serious and have real-world significance for the masses of dispossessed and oppressed unfortunates around the world. Never think of your arguments in terms of volleys to win a round; always think of your debate arguments as serious engagements with a field of study in favor of, or in opposition to, particular ideas. Keep the debate grounded in reality, and you'll ultimately do better and win more.



# The Drug War as an International Conflict

Joseph Laughon

This resolution argues that America has a moral duty to mitigate international conflicts. One of the assumptions that will be made is that those conflicts will be purely of a military matter. However that simply isn't the case. International conflicts are often fueled by concerns other than political. Often issues of criminality turn into full blown wars. The United States is often called into these conflicts due to America's commitment to the War on Drugs since 1971. This article will examine a brief history of the War on Drugs, how it brought America overseas and show some key applications for the negative.

## The Beginning of the "War on Drugs"

America has had regulations on substances since the 1860s with local regulations on opium. Increased trade with Latin America and East Asia increased the availability of coca and opiate based products in the United States, leading to call for regulation on these substances. During the progressive era, the call for regulation increased into outright prohibition. In 1920 both alcohol and heroin were prohibited and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics was created in 1930. While in 1933, the US government realized that it could not stop the consumption and sale of an addictive substance through Prohibition, and that doing so it created a violent black market, that logic didn't carry over to narcotics.

However the real escalation of the drug war began in the 1970s. The international conflict in Vietnam had the US involved since the French pulled out in 1954. Under the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations the US was giving aid, support and intelligence to the Republic of Vietnam. During the Johnson administration it escalated into all out war. By the 1960s, thousands of American servicemen were stationed in southeast Asia—South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, South Korea and Japan—which in turn increased the heroin trade's customer base one-hundred fold. The story of American servicemen addicted to narcotics only highlighted the increase of cocaine and heroin, trafficked from South America and the Mediterranean. This was not limited to the United States but also had begun in Europe and elsewhere. In 1961, the UN convinced the US to sign onto a treaty banning psychotropic substances, and then another in 1971 banning narcotics in general. In 1970, the US passed the Controlled Substances Act. The Act organized substances into different schedules. Substances that are higher up on the schedule list hold greater penalties for possession, production, distribution and use. Today the Act is the legal foundation of the War on Drugs.

## The Drug War Goes Overseas

From the beginning the drug war was an international issue. The United States had largely gotten into its own domestic drug war via international pressure from the United Nations. Why not ban narcotics? Everyone at the UN was doing it (Ok bad joke). I mean, it was the 60s, y'know (Ok I'm done)? Operation Intercept in 1969 during the Nixon administration had led to a near shutdown of the US-Mexico border. Nixon notified President Ordaz that he would begin strengthening US screening of every vehicle for marijuana coming from Mexico in order to pressure the Mexican government to increase the crackdown on marijuana trafficking.

The domestic crackdown has since utterly failed. Drug abuse rates, according to the Center for Disease Control, has remained fairly stagnant since the 1970s, dipping and rising with various narcotic trends; 20,000 die of drug abuse every year; and the price of narcotics, especially powder cocaine, remain as cheap as they could be. This is largely due to the fact that 16 million Americans annually pay \$2 billion to 500,000 drug dealers, 50,000 of them are large scale distributors. Against them are arrayed 2,700 DEA agents and roughly 8,000 federalized local and state police officers. Furthermore with 7,000 miles of border, limited resources for patrolling all of them, and 11 million shipping containers coming into the United States every year, stopping even a substantial amount of drugs coming into the country before dealers can get ahold of it also seems like a Sisyphusean nature. So the United States began to focus on controlling supply at the origin points.

President George H.W. Bush even argued in 1989, when we had invaded Panama to depose President Noriega, that we had a duty to take on drug conflicts overseas. He argued, "For nearly two years, the United States...worked...to resolve the crisis in Panama. The goals of the United States has been to safeguard the lives of Americans, to defend democracy in Panama [and] to combat drug trafficking..." Citing a moral obligation in our drug wars is pretty common. Our drug war in Colombia was inspired by such moral obligations, as the Colombian Minister of Defense said the United States "must" help Colombia fight its drug lords. General James Jones of NATO says that we "must" end the drug trade in Afghanistan. So where have these moral obligations taken us?

## Bush and Noriega: A Couple of "Wild and Crazy Guys"

The first was in 1989. President Manuel Noriega, was the strongman of Panama while the United States still controlled the Panama Canal Zone. Recently Noriega had been indicted by a federal court in Miami for drug trafficking, which is fairly ironic since he was receiving aid money in order to stop drug trafficking. Furthermore there were democratic elections which he had annulled in order to maintain power. The last straw with the United States came in the form of two violent encounters between US servicemen and their families with the Panamanian Defense Forces. In December of that year, President Bush ordered the US military to depose Noriega, which it did swiftly. While the new president was put in place, he eventually staged a hungerstrike to call attention to US neglect of Panama post-invasion. Anywhere from 250 to 3,000 civilians died, and 20,000 more lost their homes and businesses. While the invasion force did capture Noriega and he was tried and convicted on most of the drug charges, humorously one of the charges had to be dropped as the DEA had confused a package of tamales for a package of narcotics (I mean they are addictive). However after the invasion Panama remains a huge source of trafficking and the International Narcotics Control Strategy has reported that Panamanian drug trafficking has increased since the invasion.

## To Colombia We Go

However the major development of the drug war overseas came with the US policy known as Plan Colombia. Originally proposed in 1996 by President Andres Castrana as a policy to help alleviate Colombian poverty and thus discourage the drug trade, it became the forefront of America's involvement in international military conflicts regarding narcotics. The Colombian

government was facing a two-tiered threat. The first was political, as the FARC, a leftist guerrilla group, waged a war against the center-right Colombian government. The second was the massive drug cartels who had teamed up with the FARC, providing cash for protection. The United States originally was planning on an aid package that comprised primarily of socio-economic aid with .8% of the aid going towards the Colombian military. However under the influence of Senator Biden and Undersecretary of State Pickering, the tone of the aid package became militarized. Throughout the life of the program, the military took up and takes up anywhere from 76% to 99.58% of the aid money. While the program originally was allotted \$7.5 billion dollars for three years, it has ballooned \$41 billion dollars over ten years. Not only did the program aid the country with the worst human rights record in the continent after Cuba but also the primary element was the aerial eradication which focused on spraying coca plants with herbicide. Today this day 8% of the arable land in Colombia has been sprayed with herbicide, displacing 17,000 people. As coca production moved south, so did the war on drugs, as we expanded our aerial spraying program to other Andean countries, starting in 2006 under the Bush administration. Despite continued criticism, this is the main blueprint for military interventions meant to deal with narcotics.

## Peru, Mexico, Afghanistan, Oh My!

This model, to a limited extent, has served as the blueprint for US's involvement in international narcotics based conflicts across the world. For instance in 2012, Peru has poised to take over as the world's largest producer of coca, the base ingredient in cocaine. President Valdes has led the way, with the US assisting him, in implementing American style "reforms" by copying much of the Plan Colombia program, especially by using military force in order to crush cartels.

Some saw Plan Colombia as a model we could use to deprive other terrorist groups for their income. Afghanistan today is the source of 92% of the world's non-pharmaceutical opiates (such as heroin) and the lion's share of the world's cannabis (typically hashish and marijuana). While the Taliban cracked down on it during their rule of Afghanistan, when the coalition forces deposed them, the Taliban began to adopt a similar strategy in relation to poppy farmers. They offered a deal similar to what the FARC offered them; protection for money. Furthermore the Taliban could use local anger at the central government destroying poppy fields into a recruiting drive against the NATO forces. The United States, in conjunction with the Afghan and Colombian governments set about training a National Interdiction Unit to combat the growth of poppy and cannabis in the same way it is eradicated in Colombia.

However the most visible front on the international war on drugs is in our ally to the south; Mexico. A huge portion of the narcotics that flows into the United States are trafficked in by cartels in Mexico, the most powerful being Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel. In 2006, President Felipe Calderon sent 25,000 troops to the Mexican state of Michoacan to use military force against the cartels. This set off a three way war where the cartels battled each other and the Mexican security forces. This effort has resulted in the deaths of nearly 70,000 people by 2013. Due to our proximity to the carnage and the fact that American demand for drugs fuels the war, there have been calls for a "Plan Mexico" to help our ally control the violence and the drugs. This plan, called the Merida Initiative, consists of \$1.2 billion given in 3 years. While, like Plan Colombia, the lion's share of the funding is towards the Mexican military, judicial reform and institution building plays a much larger role and it is a less ambitious program. Since the

narcotics trafficked by Mexican drug cartels aren't grown in Mexico, there are no aerial eradication programs but rather intelligence building and training.

## Has It Worked?

These interventions in foreign narcotics-fueled conflicts have not been without their criticism. With some further in depth research, a negative can easily show our well-intentioned "moral obligation" to end drug trafficking and stop narco-wars has only made the United States and the relevant countries worse off.

The first major criticism is that it doesn't work. The intended effect is that less drugs are produced, trafficked, sold, bought and used. But the exact opposite so far as occurred. In the United States, the intended market for most of the world's illegal narcotics, the drug abuse rates are stagnant, as mentioned before, whereas narcotics use among high school seniors is up by 30%. Furthermore Colombian cocaine is actually cheaper than it was in 1971. The specific figures for the various theaters of conflict are equally depressing. In Colombia, coca production has actually increased by 81% and overall Andean production of coca has risen by 8%. In Mexico, not only has the conflict continued unabated, but also according to the former Secretary of Foreign Affairs for Mexico, the amount of Mexican drug users has risen to 465,000 users. In Afghanistan, it was a total failure. The opiate trade is currently 52% of the nation's GDP and it is currently grown by over 200,000 families. As of March 2013, US forces in Afghanistan have taken a "hands-off" approach towards opiate production in Afghanistan. We've given up.

But why do they fail so often? Well for one, economic demand is simply too high. The international illicit drug trade is currently valued at \$321 billion. If the drug trade was its own country it would have the 33rd highest GDP in the world, larger than Ireland, Portugal and Greece's respective GDPs. That economic demand *will* be met by someone. Secondly, putting down one origin supply only creates another. The crackdown on Mexican marijuana has led to an increase in the production of American-grown marijuana. The arduous takedown of the "French Connection" heroin, trafficked into the United States by the American Mafia, only led to trafficking of near-pure heroin from Southeast Asia by the Harlem gangster Frank Lucas. At their height, the Lucas organization was making \$1 million a day in revenue. For years law enforcement wasn't even aware of his existence. The focus on the aerial routes from Colombia into Florida only led to the transit routes that go through Mexico to this day. It's a vicious game of "whack-a-mole" in which the US government is constantly playing catch up. In his eye opening book *Convictions*, former federal prosecutor and Oregon's Attorney General John Kroger noted that prosecutors steer away from narcotics because it is like showing up to work every day and banging your head against a wall. However the criticism of our drug war goes beyond simple inefficiency.

## Debt, Violence, and Disease

Another major criticism is that our policies attempting to mitigate these drug conflicts is that it costs lives overall. A 32-year veteran of the Maryland State Police's anti-narcotics squad, Neil Franklin, calculated that there have been 6,000 lives lost (not including Mexico) in the US-led drug war since 2009 alone. The death toll in Mexico is also a chilling result of a militarized drug policy.

Like any international conflict, there is rarely anyone with clean hands. Our drug war is like any other. The governments we partner with to end drug trafficking are usually just as corrupt as the traffickers themselves, if in fact there can be a distinction made. For instance prior to our deposing of Noriega, he was receiving US aid money for stopping drug trafficking while he was an indicted drug trafficker himself. Routine allegations have been leveled, with some level of official US support, that elements within the Afghan government (all the way up to the Karzai family) encourage and support drug trafficking. In Mexico, one half of security officers fail a background check and in Baja California, the major route for narcotics, the ratio jumps to 90%. In Colombia, our policy aligned us with the Colombian military, which itself was tied to right-wing terrorist organizations like the AUC, which has conducted 804 assassinations, 203 kidnappings and over 75 mass-murders involving over 50 victims. Lastly in Mexico, even our banal program for training intelligence officers has devolved into something much darker. In 2008, US security firms were revealed to be training Mexican intelligence officers how to torture individuals using extreme levels of violence in Guanajuato, Mexico. To this day the Mexican government defends the training as “necessary.”

Furthermore one of the policies that has attracted the most negative attention is our aerial eradication policy in Colombia. As mentioned before we have sprayed over 8% of the total arable land of Colombia with herbicides. This eradication program creates an immense amount of deforestation as coca growers then cut down immense amounts of the rain forest in order to make up lost hectares. Ironically it pushes more farmers into becoming cocalers, as their legal crops are destroyed by indiscriminate spraying, in order to make up lost cash quickly. Meanwhile in rural communities, groundwater is poisoned, crops are killed, livestock are diseased and even people are struck with ailments as a result of coming in contact with the chemicals. The end result, ironically enough, is the creation of an herbicide resistant strain of coca called “Boliviana Negra”.

Lastly our insistence on taking the drug war overseas to solve internal conflicts in places like Colombia and Mexico create geopolitical strife as some regional actors do not see our intentions as simply concerned with narcotics. For instance our 2009 agreement with Colombia set the groundwork for the creation of nine permanent US bases in Colombia. Every single president in South America, outside Colombia has opposed them. The former president of Venezuela called it stoking the “winds of war” and Colombian senator Jorge Robledo has accused the base agreement of instigating more tensions between Colombia and the leftist countries of Latin America. This has sparked something of a Latin American arms race, according to the Brookings Institute. The amount spent on military arms in Latin America has doubled since the 1990s, when Plan Colombia first began.

## Topicality

There is one last thing. If you use the plethora of applications about our failed moral obligations in regards to narcotics, you may run into opposition claiming that the war on drugs overseas is not an “international conflict” because it is a law enforcement issue, not a military issue. However this is false. First of all, one of the major criticisms of the war on drugs in its totality, is the militarization of law enforcement as military force is used to catch criminals. US law since 1876 has allowed the use of the US military in law enforcement issues as long as it is authorized by Congress, an authorization granted in 1981 during the Reagan administration. Secondly, several sources describe overseas drug wars as “international conflicts.” For instance;

Pedro Gerson's *A Moral Perspective on Drugs* appearing in *Latin America(n) Matters* on December 2nd 2012, calls for the use of international conflict jurisprudence when in regards to the drug war. Why? Well the obvious implication is because it's an international conflict. Joshua Goldstein and Jon C. Peverhouse's commonly used textbook *International Relations* says in its fifth chapter, labeled "International Conflict," that, "Drug trafficking creates several kinds of conflict that draw in state and nonstate actors alike."

The United States Institute of Peace categorized the drug war in Colombia as an "international conflict." Oh and by the way, the United State Institute of Peace is a think tank that was explicitly set up by Congress to, "...to prevent and mitigate international conflict." I'd say that's pretty relevant.

The 2009 Bruges Colloquium on "Armed Conflicts and Parties to Armed Conflicts under IHL: Confronting Legal Categories to Contemporary Realities" uses international humanitarian law (IHL) to define "International Armed Conflict" as a conflict, "involving two or more states." By the nature of US's involvement overseas, our conflicts involve two or more states.

## Conclusion

The American policy of using military force to confront the abuse of narcotics is one that is ripe for use on the negative. For starters it is clearly topical, especially when using field contextual sources to define the key term in the resolution. Furthermore it is a grand example of what will go wrong when simple moral obligation, instead of well researched facts, consists of the core of our foreign policy. While our government certainly has moral obligations, it is not to mitigate these international conflicts but rather to stay out of them, for everyone's sake.



# American Humanitarian Intervention: A Primer

Joseph Laughon

Ofentimes a discussion of America's international obligations and America's involvement in humanitarian disasters, man-made and otherwise turns into a discussion of America's roots. Oftentimes those who are against humanitarian intervention will bemoan the fact that we began as a quiet, tiny republic and now are a large, powerful, active international force. Even more so, people wonder how we got from point A to point B.

To really gain a grasp on a resolution, one must know the history. America did not start as a large international force. It grew through the course of American history. This debate is nothing new but rather is by and large the same debate that has been had, just with different names and places. This article will go over the development of the debate over America's role in the world, the traditional development of America's involvement in humanitarian disasters, and the usual arguments for and against foreign interventions for non-strategic reasons.

## The Founding Era

America's foreign policy during the War of Independence was almost entirely focused on national survival and attempts at international recognition. As a result, the American Congress signed several treaties such as one with Morocco in 1777, the Treaty of Alliance with France in 1778 and the Treaty of Aranjuez in 1779. Also Congress made several informal alliances with Indian nations along the frontier. However the beginnings of a foreign policy disagreement began as early as 1775. Many believed that the Quebecois, dissatisfied with British rule of Canada, could be natural allies against the British Crown. French Canadians were invited to the First Continental Congress in 1774, although the invitation was declined. However others, remembering their own war against the French and their English, Protestant background, distrusted the Catholic Quebecois. Nonetheless, in order to create a second front, Congress authorized the failed invasion of Quebec in 1775.

The disagreement broke open into two separate political parties after the War of Independence. Troubles between France and the United Kingdom spread to the United States. The Federalist Party, with its roots deep in New England with its trading links to England, felt more culturally aligned with the mother country and took the more cautious approach and advocated a tepidly pro-British policy. The Democratic-Republicans, which was led by Jefferson, advocated for a more pro-French policy, due to our wartime debt to France. This realist/idealist split in American foreign policy would play out over and over again in our history, to this very day.

However a myth that will be commonly repeated this year will be about how the American founders were isolationists or were at the least noninterventionists. As a living fossil who debated the 2007-2008 isolationism year, I can assure you that if I had a nickel for everytime I heard someone crow about the founders on the affirmative, I'd be living on my own private island. Don't let other debaters get away with repeating this trope. The founders were just as split about foreign policy as we are today. You will hear much about how in Washington advocated for a "detached" foreign policy, how Thomas Paine advocated against European alliances and most famously you will get sick of Jefferson's warning about "entangling alliances."

But this is only a sliver of the Founders' views. The common belief was that while America is young, it should remain aloof from international disputes, but as America matures it could become an active international power. Thomas Jefferson in 1780 wrote about how America could soon become an "empire of liberty." Alexander Hamilton hoped that America would, "operative of great things." What were these "great things"? Many founders hoped America would be a net exporter of liberty, because we had a "...duty to share with the rest of mankind this most precious gift," as Henry Clay put it. Even John Quincy Adams and Washington boasted that America could, "bid defiance to any power on earth," in the service of a just cause. Soon, Paine wrote, America's power could, "... begin the world over again."

## America Grows Up

This belief soon manifested itself in a number of ways. America under the Jefferson administration dramatically expanded, the federal government signed over 20 treaties with the Indian nations, and America grew more confident after surviving the War of 1812 and the victory at New Orleans in 1815. This increase in American confidence led to the Monroe Doctrine, written by then-Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. The Doctrine asserted that the hemisphere would be from then on off limits to European powers and intrigue. This was critical because the 1820s was a hotbed of revolutionary activity in Latin America as one nation after another threw off European rule. South American revolutionary Simon Bolivar welcomed the Monroe Doctrine as proof of American good faith. The Doctrine was intended to protect the independence of the new countries. No less than forty years after the independence of America, American foreign policy was aimed at the independence of nations around it. The Doctrine was asserted to warn both the Russians and the British from intervention in the Republics of Hawaii and Texas. By the 1880s, the Garfield Administration had used the Doctrine as justification for American membership in the Pan-American Conference of 1890.

As America's confidence grew, so did its economic power. Thanks to the pro-industrial Republican Party being elected in 1860, the Lincoln administration had begun a program of increasing the railroad due to the American Civil War. By 1890, more than 129,000 miles of track had been laid in the United States. Increased internal transportation raised the American GDP by 7.2%. America also enjoyed in the 19th century a "Second Industrial Revolution" as it saw a mass flood of new technological patents. By the end of the Civil War, America had access to iron warships, repeating rifles, grenades, and even machine guns. The Civil War also modernized American naval strategy. Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote the influential *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, which called for a modern navy and an active American foreign policy. Soon America would have the chance to use this new military might.

## The Development of American Intervention

American humanitarian interventions usually follow a specific pattern. There is a narrative of abuses abroad, there is usually initial military success, then a counter-narrative of interpreting those abuses, finally a mixed bag of results. Since the number of interventions that America has done is nearly infinite, I will focus on three that have come to define American foreign policy; the Spanish-American War, the First World War and the Kosovo War. These are chosen because they are textbook cases of humanitarian intervention: military foreign intervention on the basis of humanitarian concerns as opposed to strategic reasons.

### *The Spanish-American War*

After America regained both confidence and technological capacity, it flexed its muscle against the Spanish. It began with a compelling narrative that the Spanish were engaging in human rights abuses in Cuba. The drive for Cuban independence had captured America's attention and sympathies since the 1860s. However when General Valeriano Wyler had begun setting up concentration camps, the first of its kind, to defeat the insurgency, President McKinley called it, "...not civilized warfare but extermination." The American public was incensed. He sent the USS *Maine* into Havana Bay where it sunk due to a mysterious explosion, beginning a war between the Spanish empire and the United States. The United States unquestionably enjoyed military success. The US Navy destroyed the entire Spanish fleet in Manila Bay in the Philippines, and within ten weeks, the US Army took Puerto Rico, Guam and Cuba, with the help of local resistance fighters. However the historical counter-narrative is a bit different. William Randolph Hearst's chain of newspapers was accused of stoking the war through yellow journalism and many became convinced that the *Maine* sunk due to an internal explosion, not a Spanish mine. Either way, the results of the war were certainly mixed. The US became bogged in a costly three year counterinsurgency and nation-building effort in the Philippines, costing over 4,200 American lives. Today, of the four territories the US took from the Spanish, two are independent; Cuba and the Philippines, while three are liberal democracies, excepting Cuba which in 1959 turned communist.

### *The First World War*

The development of American involvement in the war was very similar to the Spanish-American War. While President Wilson was favorable to the British and French, the American public, with a large German and Irish-American population, was hesitant of a large European war. However early in the war, a convincing narrative of war crimes committed by the Germans began to sway many. The German offensive plan called for an invasion through Belgium, which violated its sovereignty. Stories of crucified women, rape, murder, mutilation and arson spread through the world. Furthermore the German policy of unrestricted submarine warfare began to take American civilian lives on the high seas. While the US and her allies were initially successful in defeating the German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, the geopolitical results were far from clean. The collapse of the German empire, the rise of German nationalist extremism, western involvement in the Middle East and the resultant world war makes it difficult to claim it was truly a success. A little over twenty short years later, Belgium was again invaded and occupied by Germany.

### *The Kosovo War*

The Kosovo War represents the zenith of modern American humanitarian intervention. After the failure of the Somali operation, the fact that the Gulf War didn't keep President Bush elected in 1992, the gross violence of the Rwandan genocide and the American navel gazing over Bosnia, the Clinton administration was not eager for more pacific policy. After the massacre at Srebrenica, the story in Kosovo began to look alarmingly similar. The ethnic Albanians of Kosovo began to push for independence and Serbs began ethnically cleansing 850,000 Albanians in what was called Operation Horseshoe in 1998. Those who remained behind were subject to random killings, sexual abuse and destruction of property. It was estimated originally that 10,000 Kosovar Albanians were killed. The United States began an air campaign knocking out Serb military targets. The US clearly had initial military success as the targets were

confirmed 99% of the time. However the narrative began to bog down as some questioned the 10,000 figure from the Clinton administration and it became apparent that Serb civilians were hit. The strategic results are not perfect, as Serb-Albanian tensions remain high today, but Kosovo is largely independent, few Americans died, and Serb war criminals are now standing trial.

## Arguments For and Against

Like any debate that has existed this long in American history, there are a plethora of arguments that each side musters. Critics will often argue that there are usually other motives, strategic and otherwise, for these “so-called humanitarian” interventions. For instance linguist Noam Chomsky’s main critique of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti operations were that America’s real motivations were about securing a line to our Persian Gulf oil, not any concern for Iraqi and Kuwaiti freedoms. Tariq Ali consistently criticized the Kosovo operation was simply trying to revive a then-irrelevant NATO after the Cold War. These criticisms are also aimed at our modern day interventions in Uganda and Libya.

Another line of criticism is that America is incredibly inconsistent with how we intervene. Former Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger notes that we criticize those who ally themselves with rogue nations while we meet with North Korea. The Clinton Administration intervened for genocide against Europeans but not against Africans. We advocate for Kosovar independence but not the independence of Chechnya or South Ossetia. We’ve acted in favor of the Arab Spring in Syria and Libya but approved its crushing in Bahrain and in Yemen.

The more poignant attacks argue that America’s scoreboard is in the negative thanks to our interventions. We’ve gained inconsistent results like Cuba and Puerto Rico and the utter collapse of European and Middle Eastern stability after WWI. Furthermore they argue, these wars have cost us hundreds of billions of dollars, not to mention using increasingly scarce American military muscle. For instance Ramzy Mardini, a fellow at the Iraq Institute for Strategic Studies in Beirut, noted, “Regardless of whether genuine democracy is viable or even sustainable, the Iraq war did not serve any strategic net gain for the United States.” While we spend time on interventions in the Middle East, China and Russia build up their military presence in the Pacific.

However proponents will argue that all in all, an American policy of intervening in foreign disputes has been worth it in terms of lives lost, human rights and international stability. For instance, researchers Bethany Lacina and Nils Petter Gleditsch of the Peace Research Institute Oslo, have noted that there are 55,000 deaths as a direct result of war-related violence, which is one half of what it was in the 1990s (100,000 deaths a year), one third of what it was during the Cold War (180,000 a year from 1950-1989), and one hundredth of what it was during the Second World War. Less lives are being lost in conflict in an American led international scene. Furthermore according to Freedom House, more countries are listed as “free” or “partly free” than any other time in human history. Lastly, in the 1990s one half of all treaties broke down but now 88% of peace treaties hold, saving more lives and increasing international stability.

America’s international involvements are complicated. There is a lot at stake when a nation goes overseas with the intention of deposing a government and nation building. This is why the Founders had such profound disagreements on the issue. They knew America had an immense

capability to change the world, they just didn't agree on how to do that. There is a large possibility of failed missions, strategic miscalculations and lost lives. However this is also a great chance of making the world more stable, human rights violations less common and saving lives that would otherwise be lost.



# Applications

Blaire Bayliss

We all have a hard time finding examples, especially at the beginning of the year. But whether you're writing your own case, or just trying to get a handle on what other debaters will be running, it's always a good idea to start off the year with some background. Here are a couple of big (and not-so-big!) examples that will have you prepared to hit anything.

This history of international conflict will give you important background knowledge and a basis upon which to knowledgably argue the resolution and a couple. History is nuanced—not all wars are slice-and-bake, hero-and-villain, win-or-lose. Conflicts are complicated and can be seen from multiple positions. This article approaches them as such, noting the details and attempting to show both sides of the story.

## The Soviet War in Afghanistan

Starting in 1919, after the Saur revolution in Afghanistan, Afghanistan began to accept aid from Russia. Russia boosted the economy, developed the country's infrastructure and helped to strengthen Afghanistan's military forces. However, despite this aid, Afghanistan was vulnerable. Pakistan used its strong military forces to push Afghanistan politics. As tension grew, the President of Afghanistan organized a counter, preparing for a military attack. Pakistan retaliated, which led to an outbreak of insurgencies, revolutions and policy reforms. Then in 1979, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Adolph Dubs was kidnapped by the insurgents. An investigation revealed that the Afghanistan government had authorized the kidnapping, and the KGB may have assisted the insurgents in the kidnapping. Rescue attempts failed, and the Ambassador was killed. The United States' presence in the war was greatly limited from that point on. The Soviet Forces meanwhile began to believe that the source of the conflict came from Afghanistan's own president, and began to plan a liberation movement. Disguising themselves as Afghani soldiers, the Soviet forces penetrated government buildings. President Hafizullah Amin was killed, and the Soviet objectives for liberation were completed. While at first the Soviet forces believed that they were nothing more than backup for the weaker Afghanistan army, they began to take on a stronger role over time until they were the leading force driving the offensive against the rebels.

The international community was outraged by the intervention. Thirty-four Islamic nations condemned the Soviet intervention and the United Nations passed a resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The United States also publicly announced its disapproval of Russia's intervention tactics. Russia ignored the requests and instead attempted to continue the liberation movement.

In 1988, the Soviet Union negotiated an exit strategy with the surrounding nations and began to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. A new president was elected shortly afterwards, and a new constitution was adopted. Afghanistan and Pakistan settled their major disagreements and signed the Geneva Accords. The international conflict had been settled.

Although it was generally believed that Afghanistan would not be able to survive on its own, the forces of Afghanistan were able to counter the rebels. The civil war continued long after the Soviet troops had withdrawn from Afghanistan. The civil war eventually drew to a stalemate, and the region briefly stabilized under the new president. The regime lasted until 1992, when Afghanistan fell to the rebels. Ironically, this fall has been traced back to the Soviet Union's trade laws at the time, which disallowed the sale of oil to Afghanistan.

The international community is still debating to this day whether the Soviet Union's intervention into the situation was legal, and whether or not the advantages of the intervention were enough to outweigh the losses experienced.

Lessons Learned: Despite the international community's disapproval of Soviet Intervention, and the United States' lack of assistance in the intervention, positive results were achieved. However these positive results were achieved alongside with mass destruction, chaos and a loss of life on both sides of the conflict. This is a rare example of an international conflict where the United States was not directly involved.

## The Korean War

The Korean War was a war fought between North and South Korea, lasting from 1950 to 1953. Following World War II, the Korean peninsula was divided in half along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. This parallel became a border that eventually split into North and South Korea. As different governments, voting systems and ways of life were established along the border, tensions between the two States increased. In 1950, those tensions escalated into war as North Korea crossed the border and began to invade South Korea.

The United States was the largest supporter of South Korea, with 88% of the international troops supporting South Korea coming from the United States. The United States' decision to support South Korea was made mainly not for the benefit of South Korea, but for the countries around it. Experts believed that protecting South Korea would prevent the Korean Peninsula from being hostile to the surrounding countries. Japan especially was considered to be a "prize to be won" at the time, and a very useful ally to have. Based on its proximity to the Korean Peninsula, it was believed that Japan would be especially vulnerable if a hostile Korea were to exist. Thus, the United States protected South Korea in order to protect those countries around South Korea, especially Japan.

In addition, the United States believed that a hostile Korea would endanger the existence of the United Nations, and would lead to an eventual takeover of communism. The expectation was that a hostile Korea would lead to a global war of democratic versus communistic countries. Such a war was said to be nipped in the bud by a stand in South Korea.

In 1954, the war came to a close and the division of the Koreas was finalized through the Korean Armistice Agreement. However, tensions between the two countries continue to this day. Although the United States did play a large part in this conflict, it is important to note that this was not mitigation. The United States in no way reduced the severity of the conflict. Instead, we chose to engage ourselves in the fight. In addition, we were not the only major world power engaged in this fight. The United Nations chose to support South Korea, and used its influence in the world to ask other nations to do the same. During the war, twenty member nations of the



United Nations individually provided support to South Korea, through assistance, aid and donated troops.

Lessons Learned: The Korean War was won by North Korea partially because of assistance by the United States. However, the victory cannot be attributed solely to the United States, nor can the United States' actions be called mitigation.

## The Imaginary US-Mexican Border

During the 1820s-1940s, the US-Mexican border was anything but clear. Historians have called it a time of “fuzzy mobile frontiers.” Although the border had been drawn on a map, it was incredibly difficult to get citizens of both countries to respect that border. Difficulties with border patrol essentially created a time where the border was constantly being relocated, and simultaneously opened and closed. In her book *The Legacy of Conquest*, Patricia Nelson Limerick called the US-Mexican border a “social fiction.” Or as Patrick Ettinger, Associate Professor of History at California State University, Sacramento put it:

“From upstate Maine to Puget Sound, from San Diego to the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas, federal officials struggled to adapt national immigration policies to challenging local conditions, all the while battling wits with resourceful smugglers and determined immigrants. In effect, the period saw the simultaneous ‘drawing’ and ‘erasing’ of the official border, and its gradual articulation and elaboration in the midst of consistently successful efforts to undermine it.”<sup>1</sup>

Lessons Learned: While we imagine our borders as fixed and definite points, they have actually been ambiguous and subject to change in the past. This provides proof for the concept that borders are imaginary and that it is no great crime to cross them.

## The Six Day War

The Six Day War was fought between Israel and surrounding neighbors Egypt, Jordan and Syria in between June 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of the year 1967. Following rising tension between Israel and its neighbors, Jordan initiated attacks against Israel. Israel countered, and attacks both to and from Egypt, Jordan and Syria followed. At the time of the attack, Israel claimed that Egypt had struck first. However it has since then changed its story, claiming that Israel struck Egypt first in a preemptive move.

Israel completed its final attacks on June 10<sup>th</sup>, having seized the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, and a ceasefire was called. Historians say that the war was essential to the political atmosphere at the time, not only because it changed the world geographically, but also because it proved that Israel was ready, willing and able to initiate attacks that could change the future of the entire region. It established Israel as a military power with technology to be feared, and that reputation helped to keep Israel safe in the years to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Ettinger, Patrick. *Imaginary Lines*. Texas State University Press. 2009. <http://utpress.utexas.edu/index.php/books/ettima>

Allegations have been made that the US and the UK interfered in the war in support of Israel. Supposedly they had provided aid, military support and even US boots on the ground in Israel. However, most of these claims have been disputed. It has also been said that the Soviet Union favored the Arab states, and thus prevented the US from aiding Israel during the time of the war. It is difficult to state with certainty which states assisted and which did not.

Lessons Learned: The US isn't always public about its international mitigation efforts. Conflict can serve a purpose.

## The War on Terror

After the 2001 terrorist attack on 9/11, then-President George W. Bush declared the War on Terror. The result has been an international manhunt against Al-Qaida and other hostile groups that might pose a terrorist threat against the United States. This war has led to US occupation and fighting within Iraq, Kashmir, Yemen, and Pakistan. It is one of the main reasons the US continues to ally itself with Pakistan and one reason why it is difficult for troops to withdraw from Afghanistan.

The War on Terror has in some ways been considered a success. Osama Bin Laden has been killed, as have the top four leaders of Al Qaida. Attacks have been averted and small victories have been seen. However many consider the War on Terror to be a failure due to its high cost, high demand for military personnel, complicated logistics, the strain that it puts on the United States' relations with other countries and our inability to actually win the war or come to any conclusion of fighting.

Lessons Learned: Ideological wars can result in positive benefits, but they might never end, are harder to plan logistically, and are harder to justify ideologically.

## The Georgia/Russia Conflict

The Georgia/Russia conflict was the result of rising tensions between the two countries, escalating in 2008. Both countries had been accused of military buildup and border skirmishes were not uncommon. When Georgia (a country that had formerly been annexed by Russia before it fought for its independence) received a NATO membership action plan independently from Russia, tension turned into war. During the night before August 8, Georgia launched the first strike towards South Ossetia, aiming to reclaim land which it had lost to Russia during its move for independence. By the end of the war, Georgia had successfully claimed back some land.

The South Ossetia War between Georgia and Russia lasted for only five days. The short duration of the war is attributed mainly to the French president of the European Union, who personally mediated the conflict. He helped the countries sign a preliminary ceasefire agreement within five days of the start of the war. The countries held to this preliminary ceasefire until the official agreement was reached three days later in Georgia, four days later in Russia. Tension continues between Russia and Georgia to this day, but all-out war seems to have been averted.

Lessons Learned: The United States isn't always expected to mitigate international conflict, nor is it the only country capable of doing so.

## Indo-Pakistani Wars

It's hard to think of a time when India and Pakistan were on friendly terms. To many it seems as though the two countries have always been at war, and likely will always be at war.

The First Kashmir War between India and Pakistan occurred in 1947. The state of Kashmir and Jammu was given the choice to accede to any of the surrounding states. Fearing that the state of Kashmir might choose to accede into India, some in Pakistan chose to move preemptively. Tribal forces in Pakistan attacked and occupied the state, leading Kashmir to sign an agreement with India, choosing not to accede into Pakistan. The fight over Kashmir continued between the countries, and eventually ended with the division of Kashmir.

The Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 was again started by the territorial dispute of Kashmir and Jammu. Pakistan launched Operation Gibraltar, which attempted to overturn India's rule in the territories of Kashmir that it controlled. This war led to massive casualties and eventually a stalemate. Peace between the two countries was mediated by the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 was caused by political tensions in Pakistan. The political battle between the leaders of East and West Pakistan, combined with Bangladesh's Declaration of Independence from Pakistan, led millions of Pakistani citizens to take refuge in India. India assisted, intervening in the conflict in Bangladesh. The war ended when East Pakistan surrendered to the joint forces of India and Bangladesh, and India helped to set Bangladesh apart as a sovereign country.

The Kargil War was, yet again, about the territorial dispute in Kashmir. In 1999, Pakistani militants joined Kashmir insurgents to march across the border into the territories of Kashmir that India controlled. India retaliated with military force, driving the invaders out of the land. At this point, the international community began to fear what would happen if the two countries engaged in full scale military conflict. Led by the United States, the international community pressured Pakistan to withdraw its forces. Fighting ceased within the year.

Lessons Learned: United States mitigation can make a war stop, but we can't make it end. By that, I mean that in some cases our solutions are only temporary and fail to address the root of the problem. A forced ceasefire is not the same as a lasting peace.

## World Wars One and Two

I'm sure you've all studied World Wars One and Two, so I'll be brief.

World War One was fought by Germany, Austria-Hungary and some consider Italy forming the Central Powers, and the rest of the world joining the Allies. The war began on June 28, 1914 with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. This assassination had caused a worldwide war. By July, Germany and Austria-Hungary were invading the rest of Europe. The allies were able to drive the countries back.

However, the weak nations left by the war and Germany's humiliation in defeat were both factors that lead to World War Two.

World War Two is quite possibly the most well-known war in American history. The war was started by Germany, who aimed to exterminate the Jewish people and take over the world. The end of the war is not universally agreed upon, but the year was 1939.

Lessons Learned: Don't just end a war. Tie up the loose ends afterwards.

## The Falklands War

This war was fought between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Argentina offered the first attack, moving into the Falkland Islands and South Georgia with the intent of invasion. The attack began based upon an Argentinian belief that the territories rightfully belonged to Argentina, and should be considered sovereign land of Argentina.

The war lasted 72 days, and ended with Argentina's surrender to British forces. The result was the collapse of the military junta in Argentina and a strengthened belief in Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom. However, Argentina has not relinquished the belief that the territories truly belong to Argentina. This belief was even written into the Argentinian constitution in 1994, and is a belief still held to this day.

Lessons Learned: You can be right and still lose the war.

## Iran-Iraq War

Otherwise known as the First Persian Gulf War, the war was caused by a series of border disputes, Iraq's desire to replace Iran as the leading power in the area, and a fear by the leaders of Iraq that the Iranian revolution would lead to a revolution within their own country unless they took action.

Despite Iraq's quick and unexpected attack, Iranian forces quickly countered. Iran conquered the invaders and regained all lost territory within two years. It then launched an offensive attack into Iraq, which lasted for six years before the United Nations successfully passed a resolution which lead to the agreement of a ceasefire.

Lessons Learned: Sometimes UN resolutions actually do accomplish something.

# Cases



# Social Christianity Aff

## Strategy Notes

Joseph Laughon

This affirmative argues that the United States does indeed have a moral obligation to act. This is argued on fairly different grounds. Rather than focus on political ideologies such as Wilsonian liberalism, liberal internationalism, neoconservatism, and getting into the messy discussion of unilateralism or multilateralism, this focuses on how a Christian should look at our obligations to our fellow people and how American government should act accordingly. This strategy page will give a short premise of the case, its strengths, its weaknesses and how to refute those weaknesses.

The premise is fairly simple. Basic Christian theology upholds human dignity. Using sources from theologians and the Word, it makes a strong case for human dignity. Furthermore, using classic Protestant theology, it makes a case that biblical principles cannot be divorced from political affairs; and thus foreign policy. It gives the horrific tragedy of Rwanda as an example of what happens when we try to separate the two. Furthermore Rwanda shows how the US has an obligation to lessen conflicts, not just because it is a government like any other and thus should be dictated by principle, but also because when it refuses to act, the world refuses to act. Lastly, it argues that the American led NATO campaign in Kosovo was not only a humanitarian success, but shows how American foreign policy can uphold human dignity. If human dignity is more likely to be upheld when America acts, then it can be assumed the resolution is true.

The strengths of this case arise from its ideological grounding. It uses a broad base of Christian sources (the Word, the Catholic Catechism, Protestant Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper) to prove its main point true. Not only can it appeal to a wide Christian audience, regardless of denomination, but it also appears to the very conservative, Christian audience you will likely be debating in front of. Not to mention the condemnation of the Clinton administration's inaction and the praise of American military use, also makes it ideologically tempting.

At the same time, it is not simply mere pandering. Human dignity just makes a great value. Instead of bickering over "absolute" (its probably pretty absolute), over "non-absolute," you get the trump card of "eternal" and "God-commanded." Bam. Debate is over. Furthermore you can almost guaranteed outweigh and subsume their value. Very few judges are going to inherently want to agree that human dignity can be sacrificed for some other value (ex. economic well-being or security). This comparison should be easy to make. You don't have to say their value is bad, simply that human dignity is simply more rewarding. Secondly, probably every value they can bring up is simply a facet of human dignity. We value economic well-being or security because it most likely supports human dignity. Their value is only of any worth insofar as it relates to human dignity. Pursuit of any value, divorced from a concern for human dignity, becomes a monstrosity (ex. economic well being becomes the abuse of a minority for the sake of the majority, security becomes aggression, individual rights become anomic selfishness).

Furthermore the examples of Rwanda and Kosovo are pretty much slam dunk examples of interventionist foreign policy without violating Godwin's law (hint: Google it if you are unaware. Then use it in every LD debate please.). The sources supporting this are pretty impeccable.

The big weakness of the case is who's saying it. Let's be real honest here. The Christianity in the league has a got a real Protestant, Reformed flavor to it. Nothing wrong with that, as I'm writing to you as a Reformed Protestant. Citing a pope (admittedly a universally beloved pope) and the Catholic Catechism, will (unfortunately) raise some eyebrows. Just move around this "argument" if you are in front of a more parent-style judge (who may share the prejudices of the opponent's argument). Note that a statement is true regardless of whether or not the author is Catholic. The Catechism also affirms the Trinity, is it all of a sudden untrue? Pope John Paul II was incredibly pro-life and anti-communist, should we start donating to Planned Parenthood and the US Communist Party? Furthermore, you can point out that the Protestant criticism of the Catholic Church is that some doctrine and practices are not based in the Bible. Yet clearly affirmations of human dignity are clearly biblical, as evidenced by the numerous citations of Scripture. Lastly, find some Protestant theologian who talks about human dignity (ex. Baptist theologians during the Civil Rights movement, the Lutheran Church in East Germany, and the great Jurgen Moltmann, who is Reformed). The fact that such a widespread grouping of Christians, regardless of denomination, can back the concept of human dignity, means it's probably true. Use this attack to highlight your value. If you are in front of a judge who is a college student (or let's be real; Catholic), call them out for basically blacklisting any Catholic author from a debate league that is home to a lot of Catholics (ex. the winner of Stoa TP nationals one year). Put them on the defensive.

Similar to this weakness, is the whole "UN" thing. The UN isn't very popular in this league. Furthermore, there are some pretty crazy things in the UNDHR. Simple. Focus on the message, not the messenger. Also any accusation that the UNDHR is an attack on national sovereignty is refuted by the fact the US Senate ratified the treaty that created the UN. Oops.

Lastly, the main weakness is the whole "But you can't use the Bible against me!" thing. This is pretty commonly stated sometimes but handled correctly it shouldn't hurt you. First and foremost, note that it's bitterly ironic that in a Christian league, started for the purpose of creating godly debaters, that the Bible isn't verboten. Secondly, your own case refutes this. What they are functionally calling for is the separation of the political (i.e debate) from the spiritual. Too bad your case already calls this out. No one is "using the Bible" against anyone here. The negative still has the ground to contest the theology of those statements or instead claim that the whole "wise as serpents" thing means we shouldn't interfere in international conflicts.

However this doesn't mean that you shouldn't focus on defending the applications in the case either. Run examples long enough and people will try and find evidence to refute it. Get ready for this. Don't make your winning strategy, "Assuming the other guy didn't research." Sadly, it is a safe assumption sometimes, just not one you should make. Also those who had siblings or coaches in the NATO team policy year may be familiar with Kosovo and the usual arguments against the NATO intervention. Also believe it or not, there are bonafide Serb sympathizers in the community. They are thankfully rare, but they exist. So do your homework, because they do theirs.



Last note: This times out to a little under 10 minutes. You might have figured out, you don't have 10 minutes. Read it, make it your own and edit to get it down to 7 flat. Don't be "that guy" who reads this out of the book.



# Social Christianity Aff

*“On one hand there is a growing moral sensitivity alert to the value of every individual as a human being without any distinction of race, nationality, religion, political opinion, or social class. On the other hand these proclamations are contradicted in practice. How can these solemn affirmations be reconciled with the widespread attacks on human life... These attacks go directly against respect for life; they threaten the very meaning of democratic coexistence, and our cities risk becoming societies of people who are rejected, marginalized, uprooted, and oppressed...”*-- John Paul II in *Laborem Exercens*, 1981.

It is because of this quotation from the late John Paul II, that I affirm today’s resolution, *“Resolved: The United States has a moral obligation to mitigate international conflicts.”* To analyze what this resolution means in depth, I propose the following observation.

## Observation: Resolution Analysis

### *A. Definitions.*

**The United States:** the executive and legislative and judicial branches of the federal government of the United States.

*WordNet® 3.0, Princeton University.*

**Moral obligation:** an obligation arising out of considerations of right and wrong.

*WordNet 3.0, Princeton University.*

**Mitigate:** to lessen in force or intensity, as wrath, grief, harshness, or pain.

*Random House Dictionary, Random House, Inc.*

**International conflict:** Conflicts between different nation-states, people and organizations within different nation-states and inter-group conflicts within one country.<sup>1</sup>

**Human Dignity:** An individual or group's sense of self-respect and self-worth, physical and psychological integrity and empowerment.

*Duhaime Legal Dictionary*

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<sup>1</sup> “Traditionally, the term ‘international conflict’ referred to conflicts between different nation-states and conflicts between people and organizations in different nation-states. Increasingly, however, it also applies to inter-group conflicts within one country when one group is fighting for independence or increased social, political, or economic power.” From: *International Conflict* by Cate Malek, of UC Boulder and Conflict Research Consortium. May 2013, *Conflict Research Consortium*, a project of the University of Colorado.

## *B. The Resolution Restated.*

Thus in layperson's terms the resolution paraphrased is: The United States government is morally required to lessen conflicts overseas either between nation-states, people groups or organizations.

## *C. Burdens of the Affirmative.*

My job as the affirmative today is to prove to you that my value is the most valuable concept that exists. Thus it will be the lens by which we view the question of the resolution. That is my first burden. My second burden is to prove that my value is more likely to be upheld if the US government lessens conflicts overseas. If true, then the resolution is true, since the US lessening conflicts upholds the most valuable concept. My value today will be Human Dignity.

Contention 1: Human Dignity is the highest value.

Human dignity is the concept that each person deserves to be empowered, protecting their self-worth and physical integrity. In short, each person deserves to not be coerced, to not be oppressed and to not live in a state of misery. There are several reasons why this should be the premier value and should determine the way we evaluate the question of the resolution.

### *A. We are created with human dignity.*

The Catechism of the Church upholds human dignity as it proclaims that, "*Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons.*"<sup>2</sup>

This is evident when the Word proclaims that, "*So God created man in His image...*"<sup>3</sup> Every person is the very Imago Dei, the image of God and thus deserves to be treated as we would treat God Himself.

### *B. We are commanded to uphold human dignity.*

Values come and go but we should first value those of eternal value. The easiest way to determine if a value has eternal value is to ask ourselves, "What are we commanded to do?" Clearly we are commanded to uphold human dignity. Jesus Himself identifies with the weak and the marginalized in society and in the world when He says, "*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.*"<sup>4</sup> The Psalmist extends this to an obligation to deliver the needy out of the hand of the wicked.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part One, Section Two, Chapter One, Article I, Paragraph Six.

<sup>3</sup> The Bible. Genesis 1:27. New International Version.

<sup>4</sup> The Bible. Matthew 25:35-36. New International Version.

<sup>5</sup> The Bible. Psalm 82:4. New International Version.

*C. Human dignity is a foundation for a just society.*

A just society is one in which the rule of law prevails and protects the rights of the people, especially the “least of these.” Clearly a society that values human dignity would be a more just and better society to live in. This is why it is upheld in international law as ratified by the United States government. The United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that the, “...*recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world...*”<sup>6</sup>

Just as we are created with dignity by our Creator, we are commanded to uphold the dignity of others and it is the foundation for any civilized society. Therefore we must treat it as the premier value today. Thus it will serve as the scope by which we look at this resolution and determine its truthfulness or falsity.

Contention 2: We have a duty to uphold human dignity in American foreign policy.

Many may say, “Yes human dignity is all well and good, but it should be upheld on a private level. The church and state should have nothing to do with each other.” However this is entirely false and self-defeating. It is hypocritical to extol human dignity and then ignore when “private individuals” or foreign nations faraway violate it with impunity by wreaking ungodly violence on other people.

*A. Moral obligations need to be upheld in all spheres, not just the private.*

Abraham Kuyper, Dutch theologian and former Prime Minister of Netherlands, explained that we should uphold, “...*the Sovereignty of the Triune God over the whole Cosmos, in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible.*”<sup>7</sup> Political problems and “economic” problems are really just sin problems.

To truly deal with society’s ills we must deal with the underlying issue at hand. Kuyper explains that, “*For, indeed, without sin there would have been neither magistrate nor state-order...Neither bar of justice nor police, nor army, nor navy, is conceivable in a world without sin...Who binds up, where nothing is broken?*”<sup>8</sup> If the government is going to address people’s problems we must therefore be guided by biblical principles.

*B. Separation is disaster for human dignity.*

Isolating and separating our biblical mandates from the political sphere of life has been a disastrous experiment in American foreign policy. Case in point is the United States’ failure to

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<sup>6</sup> The United Nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble, 1948.

<sup>7</sup> Abraham Kuyper, Lecture on Calvinism.  
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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

uphold human dignity in Rwanda. Congressman Donald Payne and Theodore Dagne, African political specialist, noted that the election of the Clinton administration ushered in an era of separation between moral principles and our foreign policy. Thus our government became, "...became reluctant to intervene in African conflicts."<sup>9</sup> During this era of separation, the United States refused to act in the face of the Rwandan genocide, resulting in a complete lack of international will to act. The UN Security Council ordered the withdrawal of its already meager forces and the region was left to itself. Hundreds of thousands were murdered and millions were displaced.<sup>10</sup> Human dignity, on the largest scale since the Holocaust, was not just ignored but brutally repressed.

This tragic episode demonstrates two truths. First, that without governmental action, human dignity cannot be expected to be upheld in international conflicts. Secondly, without action from the most powerful country on earth, the international community will refuse to act. When others can't and won't act, the moral obligation falls upon us.

### Contention 3: American action can uphold human dignity.

Now that we have demonstrated that we have a moral obligation to uphold human dignity and specifically uphold it through the government when necessary, lastly we must demonstrate this obligation carries over to international conflicts.

#### A. *Human dignity belongs to all.*

It is clear that if we have a moral obligation to uphold human dignity and to do so through all human institutions, that applies to all human beings equally.

#### B. *Application: Kosovo.*

##### B1. *The Threat to Human Dignity.*

The violent nationalist government of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, and their Serb militia proxies, began to threaten the human dignity of millions with their violent actions throughout the Balkans. In 1999, the Albanian people of Kosovo, a region claimed by Serbia, were being attacked. Reports of thousands of deaths at the hands of Serb violence was only matched by the fact that the Serbian government had begun to engage in a massive campaign of ethnic cleansing. Due to their hatred for God's creation, "*Serbian forces and paramilitaries implemented a systematic campaign to ethnically cleanse Kosovo,*" a campaign that resulted in 90% of Albanians being violently forced out.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Honorable Donald M. Payne (D-NJ) and Theodore S. Dagne, advisor to the president of South Sudan. "Rwanda: Seven Years After the Genocide." *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Winter 2002. Pages 38-43.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> U.S. State Department, "Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo: An Accounting." December 1999.

*B2. American action upheld human dignity.*

American leadership marshalled and cajoled the nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to respond to, "...*the greatest challenge for European security since World War II.*" Former secretary general of NATO, Javier Solana found that, "*For the first time, a defensive alliance launched a military campaign to avoid a humanitarian tragedy outside its own borders. For the first time, an alliance of sovereign nations fought not to conquer or preserve territory but to protect the values on which the alliance was founded. And despite many challenges, NATO prevailed.*"<sup>12</sup>

In response to American leadership, Serbian forces withdrew from Kosovo<sup>13</sup>, the dictator Slobodan Milosevic was arrested for war crimes<sup>14</sup>, and Kosovo became internationally recognized as independent, governing its own affairs.<sup>15</sup>

Conclusion: Clearly we can see that human dignity deserves our support overseas and thus the United States government does indeed have a moral obligation to stop international violence. Will we deliver the vulnerable from slaughter as the author of Proverbs extols, or we will be like Ezekiel's watchman; seeing the sword coming and not blowing the trumpet?

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<sup>12</sup> Javier Solana, former NATO secretary general, former High Representative for the Common Security and Foreign Policy of the EU, former Foreign Minister of Spain, and former Secretary General of the Council of the European Union, "NATO's Success in Kosovo." *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Steven Lee Myers, "Crisis in the Balkans: Withdrawal; Last Serbian Troops Pull Out of Kosovo." *New York Times*. June 21st 1999.

<sup>14</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation "Milosevic Arrested." April 1st 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Nebi Qena, "Kosovo Independence Day," *The Huffington Post*, February 17, 2013.





# Blind Leading The Blind Neg

Strategy Notes

Blaire Bayliss

The premise of this case is that international conflicts are delicate things, the ins and outs of which can only be fully understood by the parties involved. This case argues that when outside sources try to intervene, the result will only be that misinformed decisions will be made and the results of those decisions will be detrimental. Note: this does not necessarily mean that all international intervention attempts will be a failure. The line to draw is that the intervention will be a failure when the conflicting parties do not want to be helped. Essentially, the United States can in some instances be obligated to intervene, but only when the host country wants and accepts America's help.

This stance negates the resolution because the resolution makes a blanket statement that the US is always obligated to mitigate international conflicts. Point out that the resolution does not make any exceptions for motivations, nor does it take into account specific circumstances as exceptions.

The value of National sovereignty is not just your run of the mill National Sovereignty strategy. It specifically argues that National Sovereignty should be valued not only for an idealistic and philosophical reason, but also for a pragmatic reason. This value can be defended from multiple angles, but only really attacked from one. The biggest argument you will run into is "What if the government is doing bad things?" Aff will likely argue that if governments are using their sovereignty to do bad things, that sovereignty does not need to be upheld. But that argument will not hold against this case since you have already proven that if that sovereignty is not upheld, even WORSE things will happen. Your argument is not that all ruling authorities ought to be followed, respected and upheld- rather it is that those local bodies understand their situations better than any other bodies. Thus, unless the aff can prove that the US knows better than anyone else how to run the world and all the governments in it, they have not actually refuted your value. Pretty awesome, right?

The first application in the case is Mexico, where the US was indecisive enough to put a man into power, only to remove him just after. The biggest argument against this application is that this was a civil conflict, not an international conflict. There are two responses. 1) Check the aff definition of 'international' or 'nation'. Most of the time, it will be vague enough for you to argue that this actually was an international dispute- two groups of people, two different proposed governing structures, and as the conflict progressed they even gained distinct power over different parts of the land. By most definitions, it was indeed an international conflict. 2) If you can't win the above argument, point out that this application merely proves that the US has been less than knowledgeable about circumstances before, and is supported by a truly international example right afterwards, since the fight against terrorism is undoubtedly an international conflict.

The last example is of PMSCs. Although this example does not deal with one specific conflict or another, it does deal with a consistent mistake that the US makes and has made for decades in regards to its dealings with international conflicts.

The aff team may try to argue that you need more specific examples of failure or need to prove that your examples are international conflicts. However, this is a weak argument when you consider that most of these examples are international by definition. In addition, you have provided one specific example as well as multiple mistakes that the US consistently makes. Given your strategy, evidence, examples and philosophies, the affirmative should have little to no ground to argue upon, given that you stick to your value and your story.

# Blind Leading The Blind Neg

Henry S. Bienen, then professor at Princeton University, once wrote to the *New York Times* that, “Since this perspective starts with the assumption that unless one knows what is possible in specific contexts, and unless one has a good understanding of local factors that are operating, policies are likely to fail or to be counterproductive. No accurate analysis of the trade-offs between costs and benefits of different policies can be made without a deep understanding of the specific configurations of power in given countries.”

Today, American Foreign policy allows the blind to lead the blind. With an outsider’s viewpoint and oftentimes a complete misunderstanding of the situation at hand, the United States has made one mistake after another in regards to international conflict. But no matter how good the intentions, blind interventionism will not benefit anyone. It is for this reason that I negate the resolution that the United States has a moral obligation to mitigate international conflict.

The negative value that I’m going to be upholding is that of National Sovereignty. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* defines national sovereignty as “Supreme authority within a territory.” In the context of today’s debate round, the value of National Sovereignty meant that if ever intervention becomes necessary, the intervention should be carried out in a manner that respects the other nation and that nation’s leaders. In my two contentions, I’m going to be showing you how National sovereignty must be upheld, and how only the negative position today can uphold National sovereignty, starting off with:

## Contention One: National Sovereignty is Essential

Recent events in the Middle East have shown us that a government can only rule when it has the full support and approval of the people. Without the consent and will of the people backing it, a government will be forced to reform. However, when the will of the people is vague and undirected, that society will not reform but crumble.

This was clearly seen in the United States’ mitigation of conflict between the people and government of Mexico 1910-1920. In 1910 rumblings of a Mexican civil war began to spread. Despite the fact that the United States disapproved of the rebellion, the rebels won out and Mexican dictator Diaz was replaced by Madero. However, this leader turned out to be little better than the former. But unlike the revolution of just three years prior, this time the US did help to change Mexican leadership. In 1913 US Ambassador Henry Wilson assisted in replacing him with a third leader. Less than a year later, president Woodrow Wilson unraveled this progress, pushing for a more democratic Mexico. His policies lead the rebels to oust the leader they had just elected months before.

Because of misinformed and indecisive policy decisions, the United States became a comedy of errors as we helped to overthrow the very leaders we ourselves appointed.

Sadly, examples such as these are far from uncommon. Similar ignorance was seen recently in the United States’ inability to come up with a suitable way to distinguish civilians from terrorists

in Iraq. For some time, a “terrorist” was defined as any adult male, and the title of civilian was saved solely for women and children.

When foreign governments compromise another nation’s sovereignty, assistance begins to look less like intervention and a lot more like invasion. If the US attempts to mitigate a conflict without the consent of the countries involved, it will only lead to more suffering and prolonged conflict. This brings me to:

## Contention Two: Assistance Can Backfire

When the United States attempts to mitigate a conflict, we expect that it will help to lessen the time spent in conflict or at least the number of lives lost. But history has shown that in some cases, the exact opposite occurs. Lou Pingeot, Program Coordinator at the Global Policy Forum, discussed the dangers of US intervention in his book *Dangerous Partnership: Private Military & Security Companies and the UN*.

Lou Pingeot discussed how the United States often hires Private Military Security Contractors to pick up slack when it doesn’t have enough soldiers to carry on. These PMSCs sometimes do their jobs. However, many times PMSCs take advantage of US ignorance by failing to do their jobs, prolonging wars, and even inducing violent conflicts. Because PMSCs rely on conflict for employment, they have been known to worsen conflict in order to stay employed, and the US has such limited knowledge of the conflict that they are often able to get away with their crimes.

In Iraq, PMSCs were locally convicted of unjustified violence and of raping and murdering civilians. However, the same PMSCs were never tried by the US government, and in fact, many were hired again later on. In Afghanistan, PMSCs hired by the United States were discovered by NATO to have been assisting the Taliban. Eric Orts, Professor of Legal Studies and Management, Wharton School at UPenn, even wrote in his paper “Corporate Governance, Stakeholder Accountability, And Sustainable Peace,” that the use of PMSCs has only been found to hamper development, prevent democracy and uproot peaceful societies. And yet the US government continues to use them to try to mitigate international conflicts, despite the wishes of all those countries who have seen what PMSCs are truly capable of.

When foreign governments are ignorant of a country’s true needs, but still push their own agendas outside of what that country’s governing body would normally allow, it should be no surprise that huge mistakes are made. As we’ve seen, the mindset of the resolution fails to look at morality as it unjustly deprives nations of their sovereignty, and it fails to look at reality as so-called assistance ends up hurting the very people it was supposed to protect. For this reason, I ask you to reject this destructive mindset as you negate the resolution.